
DISASTER KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE TOURISTS : A CASE STUDY OF SHIMLA

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most booming industry both at national and international level. Shimla being a tourism hub in the northern region attracts a substantial number of people from around the country and the world. The paper tends to analyse about the way tourists deal in case of any calamity and aims at analysis their level of awareness in dealing with the hazard. People's awareness and capacity is of utmost importance in dealing with disaster because they are the one to witness it first hand. The paper thus, focuses on finding ways for effective disaster management skills

Keywords: Disaster, Tourism, Shimla

Introduction

Due to high speed in transports, advancement of information technology, expansion of mass media and sharing of international information the world has become the Global village. As high pressure of population, lack of quality constrictions, bribery and expansion of terrorism, we face different types of disasters at local, regional, national and international levels. The disaster does not have any boundary and can take place at any time and at any place. In fact tourism industry is also facing a huge threats due to terrorism and different disasters. India having big geographical area and faces different disasters in whole year. Although, we cannot stop the natural disasters but through preparedness and with basic crisis management skills the community at local level will be able to reduce the impact of any disasters. The disaster knowledge, strategy and disaster crisis kit in any emergency can be so effective for solvability of any community in India. India is home of different disasters in many forms like earthquake, flood, cyclone, landslide, cloud burst and urban fire, therefore it is an urgent need to expend this disaster management knowledge at local, regional and national level to save lives of human beings and animals.

The Shimla is the capital of Himachal Pradesh and is located in north of India in Himalaya Mountain. Although, tourists come in both summer and winter sessions but summer session is more attractive for tourists. The main disasters can be here like earthquake, landslide, urban fire, cloud burst.

This paper shows the level of tourists in disaster knowledge. Six hundred tourists including local, national and international have been surveyed by an intensive questionnaire. The result shows that the average of tourist understands the importance of disaster knowledge but they do not have proper skills on disaster crisis management. However, international tourists had some skills regarding disaster crisis management specially for earthquake and fire management. This paper will give an assessment of different tourist status in disaster management.

The below table shows the list of the total tourists surveyed in Himachal Pradesh in different places of the Shimla Region.

Country of Origin	Mall Road	Lakkar Bazaar	Kufri	Total No. of Tourists	Total No. of %age
UK	50	35	10	95	
Australia	45	8	2	55	
Japan	60	10	0	70	
Canada	43	12	10	65	
Finland	13	11	1	25	
National Tourists	85	55	40	180	
Local Laymen	75	25	10	110	
Total				600	

(Source: Field Survey based on questionnaire , Oct.2016.)

Maximum number of international tourists visiting Shimla are from UK(15.8%). Japan and Canada also attracts significant number that is 11.6% and 10.8 % respectively. Shimla is one of the most attracted tourist destination domestically contributing 30% in this sample.

Country of Origin	Male	% age	Female	% age	Total No. of Tourists
UK	61		34		95
Australia	42		13		55
Japan	40		30		70
Canada	47		18		65
Finland	18		7		25
National Tourists	155		25		180
Local Laymen	85		25		110
Total	448		152		600

(Source: Field Survey based on questionnaire , Oct.2016.)

The above table depicts that males have outnumbered the females as far as tourism is concerned. Of the total number of tourists, 74.6% of them were males. Japan however stood out with 42.8% of female tourism in Shimla. among the national tourist, it was again the male population which seems dominant with around 86% of them being males. Out of 600 people, 310 of them were international tourists and 32.9% of them were females which is substantially more than national tourists, attracting only 13.8% of women.

The table below shows the educational levels among the Tourists

S. No.	Educational Levels	Total no. of Tourists	Total no. of %age
1.	School	55	
2.	College	245	
3.	University	185	
4.	Others	115	
	Total	600	100%

(Source: Field Survey based on questionnaire , Oct.2016.)

The above study reported that among the visiting tourists at least 40.8% of them had attained higher education and 30.8% of them were at university level. This implies that nearly 71% of tourists visiting Shimla had attained higher education. Less than 10% of tourists were educated up to school level.

The table below shows the women’s perception of the disaster risk in Delhi.

S. No.	Major Disaster Risks in Shimla Region	Total no. of women	Total no. of %age	Preferences
1.	Landslide	105	%	2
2.	Earthquake	345	%	1
3.	Fire	84	%	3
4.	Terrorism	66	%	4
	Total	600	100%	

(Source: Field Survey based on questionnaire , Oct.2016.)

The data explains that women awareness and perception regarding an earthquake is maximum(57.5%). However there response in case of fire hazard and terrorism is limited. Landslides also lesser number of women.

The table below shows the previous disaster experience in Shimla Region.

S. No.	Name of Towns	Earthquake	Landslide	Fire	Terrorism	Total
1.	Mall Road	105	165	30	15	315
2.	Lakkar Bazaar	70	140	25	20	255
3.	Kufri	11	14	3	2	30
	Total	186	319	58	37	600

(Source: Field Survey based on questionnaire , Oct.2016.)

This table aims to analyse about previous disaster experiences in Shimla. It shows that landslides have been dominant form of disaster and terrorism being the least. The data also shows that the tourists at Mall road has experienced maximum number of disasters in one or other form (52.5% of total disaster events). Mall road has reported maximum of earthquakes, whereas Lakkar Bazaar experienced maximum number of terrorism. Fire incidents were dominant in region of Mall Road and Lakkar Bazaar. 5% of total disasters were reported in Kufri making it least in number of disaster events.

The table shows some suggestions by the tourists to reduce the disaster risk in Shimla Region.

Major Suggestions	Total no. of Tourists	Total no. of %age	Preferences
Provide pamphlets of disaster management skills in Hindi and English both	105	%	3
Through Mass Media	75	%	4
Radio programmes	20	%	5
Provide one page disaster management skills to the tourists.	170	%	2
Organise short documentary films on disaster management skills	230	%	1
Total	600	100%	

(Source: Field Survey based on questionnaire , Oct.2016.)

Capacity building and people's participation are one of few components of disaster risk reduction. In this pursuit the table tends to analyse the suggestions made by the tourists. 38% of the tourists are of the view that short documentary films on disaster management skills can decrease the risk. A substantial 28% of them also believe in providing one page disaster management skills. Awareness through pamphlets in both Hindi and English along with awareness through mass media also become some of the preferred tools.

Conclusion

The major aim of this research paper was to investigate and describe the knowledge and attitudes of many different tourists regarding disaster management. This study has proven to be successful, because it provides much information about different level of disaster skills at local, national and international levels. In this Shimla region, it is important to understand that there is an urgent need to create disaster management awareness among local, national and international tourists as in disaster crisis the government will come in seen very late. Therefore, local people can play an important role to reduce the impact of any disasters in future.

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