

Tourism Potential of Lesser-Known, Spiritual Tourism Sites Related to Ramayana: A Case Study of Chitrakoot; on the Matter of Overall Strategic Framework Development For This Site

Dr. Amit Tiwari¹, Mr. Abhay Tank², Dr. Shivang Dwivedi³

¹Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management,
Gwalior (An Autonomous Body Under Ministry of Tourism, GOI) Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

²Undergraduate Tourism Student (BBA - TT), Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management,
(An Autonomous Body Under Ministry of Tourism, GOI) Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

³Assistant Professor, Shri Vaishnav Vidyapeeth Vishwavidyalaya,
Shri Vaishnav School of Management, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Tourism is an essential human activity which have got lot of perspectives in terms of various attractions available to the visitors. India is such a diverse land of varied type of scenic attractions of different kind. Spirituality is one of the important ingredients of such available attractions in India at a large, subsequently eras related to Ramayana have got lot of impression on common human societies all together. Spiritual tourist are such devotees who are fundamental follower of any deity or shrine which he/she usually connects with in case of lord Ram or Ramayan every such place related to lord Ram or Ramayan era are the spiritual tourism destinations referring Lord Ram or Ramayana era. According to Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, the historic Ramayan Circuit (places of reference of Ram and Ramayan era) as propagate by Ministry's various schemes like **PRASAD, Ramayan Circuit** had made the requisite developmental framework possible for many such spiritual tourism destinations of Ramayan era. Tourism destination of any capacity may not get succeeded in terms of availing right kind of tourist footprint without having a blend of *accessibility, infrastructural development, heritage and its conservation, marketing strategies* towards promotions and lastly *involvement of local community* towards creating a popular and worthy destination for the visitors.

This paper is a case study about lesser-known popular spiritual tourism destination named as Chitrakoot which is eventually known as a well-connected place with lord Ram and further accredited as a part of Ramayan circuit proposed by MOT. This case study is an identical work of alignment of all ground level key strategic framework by which tourism facilities, infrastructure, and overall destination image of Chitrakoot as a worthy spiritual tourism destination maybe enhanced. On the contrary, this case study is also about display of various factors which +are technically absent for Chitrakoot to be a popular place of tourism repute. The image of such destinations and its alignment as an established tourist destination is also contributed by this case study through outcome oriented strategic framework for such repute destination of spiritual destination like Chitrakoot.

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KEYWORDS: Chitrakoot, Ramayana circuit, spiritual tourism, tourism destination, tourism potential

INTRODUCTION

India is an unique and blended destination with richness of heritage and spiritual cum religious furver by which people and masses are motivated to travel beyond the boundaries for so called spiritual or religious tourism purposes. India is a motherland of multilingual, multicultural and varied sects devoted to such god and goddess which have relevance in the communities' lives by which they are interconnected to their roots through the preachings of their ancestors and chronologically they used to transform such cultural vibes in their next generation. In this context, tourism in India is considered as an ancient principal derived by Adi Shankaracharya known as *teerthatan, deshatan and Paryatan* (Kumar & Sangeeta, July 2015). While Indians were following these religious footprints as a visitor to satisfy their aadhyatamik appetite, they were actually following the footprints of god characters like **Ram and Krishna** and in that particular quest, generations had followed a pattern to visit all such places or destinations which are directly or indirectly connected to these Dev characters in general. (Rana P. B & Martin J, 2015) Countrymen's like Indians have varied god and goddesses of different nature to whom they devoted for are: Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Ganesh, Parvati, Navgraha and many other devotional characters associated with different forms of nature and cosmic world, Further in this process, the earlier generations named as vedic people identified agni, vaayu, varun, and indra as other important devtas and they used to perform yagna and hom(sacrifice). All these are ritualistic patterns showcased by the vedic societies. (Chandra, 1998)

India is a rich ritualistic country where lord Ram is a symbol of jan chetna and he considered as a character of mass faith and belief by which common masses of India from centuries are devoted to such charismatic character of Lord Shri Ram or Prabhu Shri Ram; which is their own personal interpretation about their deity Shri Ram. (Dr Kumar). Thus a character who is popular among masses for his own nature and actions for being a heroic and God personality, hence an unique identity of Ram is considered as a god character and called up as Shri Ram who is calm, quiet, composed and considered as god of gods called **jan jan ke ram** (hinduism.net) In Order to understand the popularity of lord Ram among the masses, it is very essential to consider the magnitude of faith based popularity of shri ram as **jan jan ke ram** meant for ram is an universal character who is broadly known as god of masses here in india and probably everywhere in this world. Lord ram or Bhagwan Ram had been authenticated as a god character by two authentic epics written by maharishi Valmiki and Tulsidas respectively within two different wider eras.

In this quest Maharshi Valmiki describe Ram's aura and briefed as greater character to whose eyes resembled with lotus petlas as described by Maharshi Valmiki in this epic book Ramayana as under;

रामः कमल पात्र आकाशः सर्व भूत मनो हरः ।

रूप दाक्षिण्य सम्पन्नः प्रसूतो जनक आत्मजे ॥ 5-35-8

(Ramayan, Valmiki , 2024)

The meaning of this verse describes about Ram as majestic character who attracts every mankind which itself a self-proclaimed fact that Ram is a god himself or called as Narayan in the ***nar roop*** (in the form of normal human being). As a part of understanding lord shri Ram, in this paper references taken from epic *Shri Ramcharitmanas*, it used to state Ram as one of incarnations or avatar of operator among Trinity god i.e. Lord Vishnu; the depiction of such being addressed by famous chaupai quoted by Tulsidas in *Shri Ramcharitmanas* as under:

मंगल भवन अमंगल हारी

द्रवहु सुदसरथ अजिर बिहारी (Dainik Bhaskar, 2024)

The meaning of same is being addressed as the god who established *dharma* and ensures the removal of evil powers or evils present in this materialistic world; and this is absolutely seems or exists in one god character according to Tulsidas and he is Shri Ram. (Byjus.com, 2024) As Ram is one of the most famous God character to whom masses are connected and considering as one of the noble example for making such ideal life path which Ram has shown to all these devotees as their God. Whatever it has been depicted throughout the life of shri ram was similar to a normal human being that is what people used to call him *Maryada Purshottam*; which means the human incarnation of God which depicts ideal man's image, who have certain principal pathways for his life which is full of *limitations or Maryada* or a notion of being within the limit of a normal common man. The reasons of having lot of faith on the god character of Ram were varied in nature and during changed eras and different dimensions of timeframe had also eventually did not hindered the faith of masses for Ram as god character rather history is an evidence itself where people or masses are still having faith on Ram as God character despite of having change of different eras, centuries, and they are moving within 21st century in this modern world. (Akkinapragada & Chaganti, 2023)

Thus, Ram is a running grassroot cause for many such human beings which are very profound and following the footprints of Ram as one of his visited place during his course of life and that is known as Shri Ram vangaman path or Shri Ram teerth which is a

sum total of places of varied types within the country India, from north to south and East to West. (Art of Living, 2024) As a part of Shri Ram's Life, there are many places which have significant importance in order to having faith on Shri Ram as God, hence such *teerths* (all places in reference to Shri Ram's life) considered as *puneet teerth* which is really meaningful from the touristic and devotees – *Ram bhakt's* point of view. Accordingly, Ministry of Tourism GOI, there are various important places of religious potential directly connected to Shri Ram are also known as Ramayan Circuit; are such place of reference where Shri Ram's footprints were recorded. These places are under the national map of entire country and these places are known for being a part of Ramayan Circuit where Shri Ram visited during his life. (Ministry of Tourism, 2019)

According to Ministry of Tourism GOI, Shri Ram related domestic tourist inflow in the country is substantially very large and people are visiting these places from different or various states of country. Ram is one of the important character and inspiring source maybe called as attraction for such visitors or tourists hence all the mentioned places like Ayodhya, Buxar & Darbhanga (Bihar), Bhadrachalam (Telangana), Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh & Uttar Pradesh), Hampi (Karnataka), Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh), Mahendragiri (Odisha), Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra), Nandigram, Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu), Shringverpur and Sitamarhi. All these places are directly or indirectly connected with lord Shri Ram's footprints as these places were visited by Ram himself in his life, hence all are significant enough to be a established religious tourism destination of important Ramayan Circuit. According to Collins Dictionary, A Tourist Circuit is to be understood as phenomena which is a combination of two words *Tourist* and *Circuit*; out of which tourist is to be understood by countable noun in terms of a person who willingly visits a place for pleasure and interest of own in the quest of executing a holiday time available to him/her. Second word circuit is also a countable noun which profoundly states about completion of some route or routing executed by a visitor, hence tourist circuit is to be understood as meaningful places of touristic reference visited by tourist group in a defined nearby route in a rounded manner. (Collins Dictionary, 2024) Among all these tourist places under Ramayan Circuit have got lot of ritualistic and religious importance by which spiritual tourist are willing to visit these places. A simple potential display of these destinations are mentioned under:

➤ **Ayodhya:** A birthplace of lord Shri Ram and very popular tourist destination of India, where

recently Shri Ram Temple established. Ram Lala is *virajmaan* at that temple as main deity. Unique and picturesque place to be visited by every Hindu.

- **Buxar (Bihar):** *Tadika vadh* event was taken place and this town at present resides in the state of Bihar where Ram and Laxman accorded their teachings at the place called Baxar.
- **Bhadrachalam (Telangana):** A place of historic importance where Ravana abducted Sita situated in the modern day's Telangana. An epic center of Bhagwati Sita.
- **Hampi (Karnataka):** Hampi is an identical place as derived by the name of Kiskindha samrajya believed to be the ruling capital of vanara samarajya. It lies in the state of Karnataka.
- **Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh):** A place of Ramayan Circuit where the story of *dandkaranya* or *aaranyak* being executed in this town which is a popular city of state of Chhattisgarh.
- **Mahendragiri (Odisha):** According to Indian mythology, an incarnation of lord Vishnu known as Parshuram, he used to owe this mountain range for his sleeping purpose as he had *shraap* that he could not attain earth called *Prithvi* for his rest and relaxation, this lies in the state of Odisha.
- **Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra):** This modern town of state of Maharashtra known as *Nashika uttkernan* of *Shurpnakha* by Lord Laxman, in order to protect Sita from *Rakshashi Shurpnakha*. By default the name of Nashik is formed due to *Nashika vidirnan*.
- **Nandigram:** Ram's brother Bharat ruled from this place instead of Kingdom's capital Ayodhya due to his guilt against himself for being making Lord Ram Exile.
- **Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu):** Rameswaram is known as one of the highly important religious tourism place in India devoted to Lord Shiva as it is one of the important *Jyotirlingas*. This place was visited by Ram's *sena* and lord Ram worshiped Shiva. This is a famous town in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- **Shringverpur:** Once upon a time at the time of commencement of exile of 14 years Shri Ram accompanied by Sita and Laxman visited this place as a part of his exile. This place is in the state of Uttar Pradesh near Prayagraj
- **Sitamarhi:** This small-town place in the modern Bihar state was known as *Mithilanchal* where Sita have got birth and this was a place of remembrance for Lord Shri Ram as well.

All these different towns in the country possesses one commonality that all are related to Lord Ram directly or indirectly. In this quest one of the important places related to Ram is being discussed here in this paper as under:

Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh & Uttar Pradesh):

Chitrakoot is a sacred town known for its spiritual values where lord Shri Ram during his life had visited that place. Chitrakoot is a place which is known for its existence within the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh as well. Chitrakoot in the state of Madhya Pradesh lies as a town and a Nagar panchayat in the Satna District of Madhya Pradesh. This is a town having rich vibrations of religious, cultural, historical and archeological repute in the region of Baghelkhand. Simultaneously, Chitrakoot Dham also known as karwi is located in the state of Uttar Pradesh. This place is full of Hindu scriptures, temples where masses use to pray on the occasion of amavasya, somwati amavasya, Deepawali, Sankranti, Ram Navmi, etc. This Chitrakoot region is included within the states of MP and UP with their respective districts. Chitrakoot district in the Uttar Pradesh was formed on 4 September 1998. Chitrakoot is an ideal association of many sacred parvat malas that includes kamadgiri, hanuman dhara, Janki kund, Lakshman Pahadi and Devangana, all these are sacred religious places where devotees used to perform parikrama or pradakshina.

There are 'n' number of places of spiritual importance such as;

➤ **Kamadgiri:**

A natural space embedded with lot of greenery and forest surrounded with many temples devoted to varied *devi-devtas* which usually comes in between of the city and can be considered as a centrifugal mass within the Chitrakoot and suburb. The parikrama path around the hill is an identical activity or ritual which every visitor has to perform as a round circular path trip by own. This particular parikrama is devoted to kamad naath ji, which is a synonym of Lord Ram. The contextual meaning for the same is related to a deity who fulfil the all desires, can be called as kamata naath. This 5 km of parikrama path is filled with several sacred temples. One of the most famous and important of reference is Bharat Milap temple, where Ram and Bharat meet together first time after the declared exile. Though Bharat tried every possible way to make Ram return to Ayodhya, but could not succeeded. On the event of each Amavasya there are grand fairs are being celebrated by the locals.

➤ **Ramghat:**

It is considered as one of the popular ghat from the perspective of religious tourist, this serene ghat is

conjoint with Mandakini river. It is believed and stated that Mahakavi Tulsidas availed darshan of Shri Ram, Sita and Laxman on the same ghat. This ghat is the center of all religious activities in Chitrakoot and people used to perform *snanadhi*, religious dip in the holy river.

➤ **Janaki Kund**

This kund is also situated on the bank of Mandakini River and it is believed that goddess Sita performed rituals and pray for the wellbeing of *Raghukul* and wished that if Ram along with Laxman and Sita successfully returns back from exile, she would perform puja(rituals) well before completion of 14 years of exile.

➤ **Bharat Milap Temple**

This Temple is believed to be such sacred place where two beloved brothers meet each other while fighting to each other for making one self's wish fulfil. Bharat was fighting to make ram return back to Ayodhya on the contrary Ram was strict to his exile and was fighting to make Bharat return back to Ayodhya and can rule Ayodhya for 14 years in lieu of his absence. This temple is in the vicinity of Kamad giri, a sacred parvat.

➤ **Sati Anasuya Ashrama**

Sati Anasuya Ashram is a holy sacred place which was usually an ashram of rishi Atri who is the husband of Anasuya, a lady who dwells with her *satitva* (*The aura of energy attained by a lady through her worships and tapascharya devoted to her husband.*) It is stated that once upon a time the trinity God – Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh had taken her *pariksha* on the course of her satitva and wished to be feeded by herself than Anasuya accepted the trinities wish and made all three gods a new born baby and feeded. After that all three trinity gods blessed her for being motherly figure for Brahma, Vishna and Mahesh. This Ashram is a unique place where predatory animals change their attitude towards other living beings. Goddess sita had been blessed by anasuya and she had preached her over satitva and other important aspects of a married women's life.

➤ **Pampapur**

This place is an identical place where several caves are formed via natural processes and during different era's, different people used to approach this place for shelter purposes within these caves. These caves are situated in the valley of Devangana.

➤ **Gupt-Godavari**

A water body which is known as source of secret water source trickles down in the shape of stream through conjoint caves or pair of caves which is usually rise up to the level of knee. An unpretended

secret meeting between Lord Ram and Laxman taken place in these caves which is mystical and several interpretations on the same are being addressed and therefore it is an important place from the perspective of spiritual value, sacredness along with secret value is the core USP.

➤ **Sphatik Shila**

A conjoint point of two giant massive rocks which is considered as an evidence of footprints of Lord Ram and Goddess Sita, Sphatik means a crystal type rock by which *Sphatik Shila* being derived as an important place for the devotees. A dense forest is surrounded by this unique and pristine place, where river Mandakini flooded around and creates magical effects on the visitor. Here the story of a crow who, tickles on Goddess Sita's foot, as an outcome Lord Ram punishes him in this place only by taking of his eye through a divine arrow.

➤ **Ram Shaiya**

This place is an identical place, located in between Chitrakoot and Bharatkoot which is naturally an isolated place. As per the epics, there are evidences that such place is in the reference of sleeping or resting place for Lord Ram, Goddess Sita and Laxman, or this can be understood as a habitat made up by Ram during his exile at this place, which is covered by the forest of Chitrakoot.

➤ **Hanuman Dhara**

A unique location at the height of several feet at a steep hill side is a natural spring or waterbody set to be crafted by Lord Ram to assuage Hanuman, once all the vanara sena, mainly Hanuman returns to Ayodhya after setting Lanka afire and followed by conquering Lanka to vibhishan. After the battle and reaching the Ayodhya, Hanuman spoke to Ram and stated that the motive of my life is fulfilled, now kindly permit me to take the abode. Then Shri Ram instructed to remain on mrityulok in lieu of abode instructed him to took bath in the same natural spring by which he considers himself attain the abode livingly, henceforth people used to take holy bath to attain abode as an outcome of the excellency of their life through the ritualistic karmas at the hanuman dhara.

➤ **Bharat Koop**

A small place located bit far from Chitrakoot where Bharat had stored water from major pilgrimage places of India. Bharat koop is a paranomic place of spiritual significance.

➤ **Rajapur**

Rajpur is a small town under the district of Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh where Goswami Tulsidas took birth and the profile of Shri Ram documented as Shri

Ramcharitmanas taken shape. This Place have got small temple dedicated to Tulsidas.

➤ **Marpha Temple**

This place is around 4 km away from Gupt Godavari, known for its natural beauty, temples and ruins of Chandel Fort.

Thus, Chitrakoot is such a unique place enbibed with natural pristine beauty, ghats. Rivers, temples, divinity, and full of mystical places of uniqueness where Bhagwan Ram's exile's longest time was spent, further it is also stated by epic Ramayana that it is the very same place where Bharat meet with his brother Ramchandra and requested to return back Ayodhya as a ruler and may consider his plea for becoming king so that Ayodhya may be blessed again. In another context of discussion as mentioned above due to sati Anasuya the Trinity God (Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh) taken birth as the small kid at the same place called Chitrakoot.

चित्रकूट के घाट पे, भई संतन की भीर | तुलसीदास
चंदन घिसे, तिलक करें रघूबीर |

Historical Perspective of Chitrakoot

This place is unique historical point of contact where Lord Ram had devoted an important time of his exile further the author of Shri Ramcharitmanas had also been identified his roots in the historical vicinity of Chitrakoot. It is a town at Nagar panchayat in the district of Satna, Madhya Pradesh, and itself a district in Uttar Pradesh known as Head Quarter known as Karwi. This place is blend of many spiritual destinations which are unique and divine which consist of many fervours of different reputed like divinity spirituality and above all a saga of lovely fight of Brotherhoodness between Ram and Bharat. This place had lost his importance during Mughal time followed by British era, though any tourism destination is not appealing enough until the institutions, government, locals and communities specifically pays attention towards establishing the development of such destinations. Further after Britishers the local governments within the independent India with the help of locals had tried to restore its spiritual importance and thereafter Chitrakoot is considered as one of the epic centres of Ramayan Circuit which is considered as an important place for spiritual and religious nature.

The Historical perspective of Chitrakoot is quite attainable and above all the spirituality, sacredness, Ram as an element of centrifugal character in this historic city of Chitrakoot was maintained throughout the different eras. Probably Saint, mahatmas, and spiritual gurus are the driving force along with locals

and historians those have protected the monuments connected with different deities throughout the chitrakoot. Tourism is a popular activity throughout the country among the orthodox tourism, spirituality is a key factor, that too Ram and Ram related spirituality matters a lot. People those are devotees throughout their generations had followed the path of Ram bhakti through teerthaton, especially visiting various sacred places of chitrakoot like *hanuman dhara, Sphatik Shila, Bharakoot, Kamadgiri, etc.*

Spirituality and pilgrimage

As a process of understanding tourism destinations mainly in the context of spiritual tourism destinations it is an important imperative to understand the terms pilgrimage and spirituality. Though, both of these words are in close association in terms of their meaning but they do differentiate in terms of their understanding. Firstly, the term Pilgrimage according to experts like Crim is about internal pilgrimage that is travel of soul. Secondly it is about distinct visit of a holy place in the form of devotee's faith to that holy place. (Crim, 1981) On the contrary, the second term spirituality is to be understood as such trip of a soul in an extroverted manner that means a journey with the demonstrative purposes but purely lies within soul. The experts like Kreiner and N. Kliot express their views about connection between tourism and religion and advocate that there is difference between touristic and pilgrimage behaviour of an individual. (Kreiner & Kliot, 2000)

Research Methodology:

This research paper basically works upon the potentiality of such lesser-known touristic places from the perspective of strategic framework development towards making such destinations more popular through adopting such executional strategies for making destination more potential than that of its present situation. This is basically a case study which is worked upon observational method using secondary data sources available in the format of books, journals, project reports, studies and many other reliable relevant sources available on internet.

Research Design:

The research design for this case-based research paper is made up through observational methods compared and prepared through secondary data and its functional interpretation as per the understanding of authors through brainstorming and creating a hypothetical discussion-based pattern on the basis of understanding and the knowledge level, stimulated and crafted by prior studies evaluated on their mental levels.

Scope of Study – Case Study

Spiritual tourism that too places related to Ramayan circuit, lies in the religious country like India is apparently a unique and always useful area of academic study reason being such studies emphasize on creating new as a contribution or outcome of such study. In the matter of this particular study, eventually this case study can contribute an overall strategic framework towards development of such sites, since the study is also evaluated through the SWOT analysis of city of Chitrakoot in terms of its potentiality for becoming a popular tourism destination.

An overview of tourism opportunities lying in city of Chitrakoot

As a spiritual and religious tourism place Chitrakoot have enormous opportunities for development and maybe expanded as potential tourism destination as well for the futuristic time other than that of spiritual and religious tourism. And according to experts like Ranjit Kumar and Shoyab Khan tourism resources of varied nature lies in the city of Chitrakoot, this is other than that of main religious tourism, other kinds of tourism ingredients available in the city of Chitrakoot (Kumar & Khan, 2021) are as under;

➤ Nature and Eco Tourism

There are many virgins forest land of ample capacity that may contribute to the tourism vicinity of Chitrakoot. In this context, Institutions can cope up with the concept of resort and development of ecotourism spots of variety with a mix of nature and environment.

➤ Wildlife Tourism

The forest land and the wildlife sanctuaries surrounded by vicinity of Chitrakoot may have a lot of contribution in wildlife tourism as a rich diversifies wildlife of almost 230 sq. kms named as Ranipur wildlife sanctuary founded in 1977 is a prominent destination for attracting the tourist

➤ Water sports Tourism

Many scenic attractions including waterfalls, dams, various canals and lakes in the vicinity of Mandakini River and Jagdal waterfall which not only provides the base for adventure water sports activities but also offers wide range of boating, swimming, canoeing, along with the exotic and wilderness locations

➤ Resort Tourism

The mega water bodies by the name of Mandakini river, river side costal areas of wider range offers a lot of scope for considerable opportunities for resort tourism activities is a sum total of wide potential of resort tourism at Chitrakoot

➤ Health Tourism

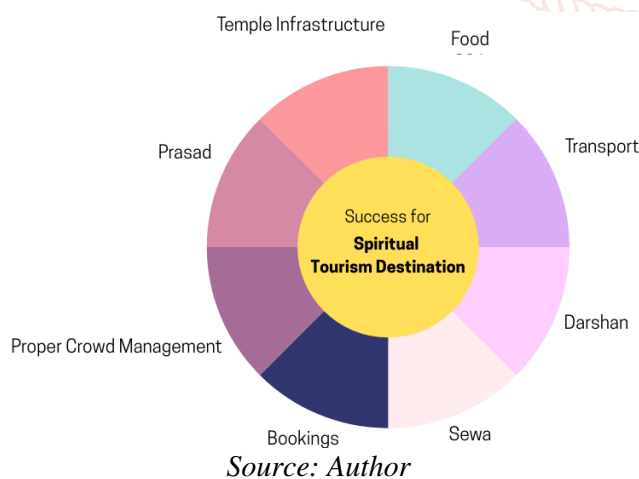
Goodness of Mental and Physical health is an outcome of such quality tourism destination where mountain river, forest, along with the religious destination occurs with good quality of scenic and beauty and amenities with goodness of environment in the purest form of water and air.

➤ Culture and Festivity Tourism

Chitrakoot is one such place where adequate cultural activities like festivals and events are systematically aligned throughout the year which ensures the festivity art and scope of folk and tribal fairs and festivals such as bhagoria in Jhabna can be identified as festival travel circuit for the city of Chitrakoot

Expectations from a Spiritual Tourism Destination

India is a known land for divine characters which usually have impact on common masses therefore India is filled with such spiritual tourism destinations of different reputations where within 100 kms area there are permanent spiritual epic centres known as temples or shrines. In general, it is observed as a circuit of various places of same or other spiritual importance, in total this is called as Spiritual Tourism Destinations. According to experts, the expectations of tourists mainly those are devotees, they as a traveller prefer to look forward such spiritual destination, along with other fulfilment needs such as food, transport, darshans, seva, accessibility followed by goodness of temple related management i.e. booking, crowd management, facilities, prasad, etc. (Sharma, Awasthi, & Agrawal, 2020) As per the opinion of the expert, tourism destination of Spiritual nature is considered succeeded one it have got the following amenities.



Other than that, of mentioned above, there are certain other expectations on ground of tourism facilities as sought by the tourist itself are as under:

Medical facilities, Hygiene, Services of various nature, temple management, maintenance of tourist site, Souvenir availability, Availability of sufficient

information, Cooperation of shopkeepers, Transport facility and Safety, Tourist guide availability, Availability of rooms in hotels, dharmshalas and lodges, etc.

Tourism Potential Analysis of Destination

Any specific tourism destination may not be considered popular until it works upon various potential areas such as attraction, amenities, infrastructure, amalgamation of adequate facilities like human resources and varieties of other things of different nature important for establishing a tourism destination. In view of the same, tourism potentialities of lesser-known tourism destinations such as Chitrakoot, authorities have to work upon establishment of strategic framework development by which the popularity maybe widespread and destination maybe aligned as much popular than now. Indian tourism destinations of spiritual or religious tourism nature are all about figuring out the devotee's peace of mind as an outcome of such spiritual visit of the destination. Though lesser-known tourism destination is to established certain benchmarks for being a popular destination by word of mouth, despite of fact Chitrakoot does posses a destination value of its own. An analysis on destination's strengths and weaknesses and on the contrary evaluation of opportunities against the threats possessed with the destination like Chitrakoot is called as Strategic analysis theory of SWOT. (Business Research Methodology, 2024)

Strengths:

- Rich Heritage and Arts: Depiction of Mythological characters associated with Ram and Ramayan.
- Richness of Nature: Tranquillity and scenic beauty with richness of water bodies and the serene Mandakini River
- Authentic Culture: Richness of cultural accustoms, traditions, customs and rituals are still practiced.
- Goodness of Accessibility: The destination is well connected with the mainland of the Country.

Weaknesses:

- Low season Duration: Tourism inflow in the city is limited enough, though Ram is always a source of Inspiration for the tourist
- Lack ness of quality Tourism Services: Poor tourist services
- Insufficient Infrastructure: Potentiality addressed by tourism destination is not supported by infrastructure or amenities class.
- Low awareness mechanism: The Marketing and Promotional aspect of Chitrakoot as a tourist destination is very lower level.

Opportunities:

- Adventure Tourism Potentialities: Nature space and water bodies are rich in number.
- Eco-scenic places are rich in numbers: Potential sustainable tourism and nature-based destinations
- Varieties of accommodation facilities maybe expended: Building of varieties of hotels, guesthouses, and homestays, etc.
- Wide Investment opportunities for the infrastructure: Growing areas of Improved roads, transportation, and public amenities.

Threats:

- Overcrowding: Uncontrollable and unplanned tourism development may hamper environmental degradation.
- Close cut throat Competition among stakeholders: Comparison drawn from established pilgrimage sites.
- Natural Calamities: The destination is vulnerable due to act of Godlike floods and other natural calamities.
- Politically Instable: The Local politics locus is not so conducive or pro tourism.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF TOURISM DESTINATION: CHITRAKOOT

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| Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rich Heritage and Arts: Richness of Nature: Authentic Culture: Goodness of Accessibility. | <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 5px; margin: 2px;">S</div> <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 5px; margin: 2px;">W</div> | Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low season Duration: Lack ness of quality Tourism Services: Insufficient Infrastructure Low awareness mechanism: |
| Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adventure Tourism Potentialities. Eco-scenic places are rich in numbers. Varieties of accommodation facilities maybe expended. Wide Investment opportunities for the Infrastructure | <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #00BFFF; padding: 5px; margin: 2px;">O</div> <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #0000FF; padding: 5px; margin: 2px;">T</div> | Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcrowding: Close cut throat Competition among stakeholders: Natural Calamities: Politically Instable: |

Source: Author

Comparison with other successful spiritual tourism destinations:

When it comes to the comparison of different tourism destinations of potential, it eventually helps the researcher to draw a thin line by which one can evaluate the strategic framework for being a successful tourism destination. In this matter, as mentioned above discussion allows the researcher to propagate better than that of existing successful models of existing spiritual tourism destination which provides specific strategic framework of having right resources at right place along with right kind of policy framework with proper execution.

In this regard, popular spiritual tourism destination may be followed by lesser-known spiritual tourism destination. Devasthanam Tirupati and Varanasi models are bit identical and influential in this approach for being strategically developed spiritual tourism destination.

How to Reach: Chitrakoot

Chitrakoot as a destination is great in terms of accessibility. It is properly connected with the major cities of the country with National Highways & other Road tracks, railways with nearby station Karwi and also being connected with nearby aerodrome with nearby towns which are well connected with road to Chitrakoot.

Key Strategic Framework; Towards a developed spiritual tourism destination:

There are n number of factors which may be considered as key for being successful strategic framework for such tourism destination, are as under:

➤ Accessibility

As an important source of development for any specific tourism destination such as chitrakoot it is phenomenal to have goodness of accessibility facilities for the visitors mainly devotees. In this context the experts had expressed their comprehensive views in order to understand any barriers encountered by tourists addressed as accessibility the tourism industry altogether. (Buhalis, 2010)

➤ Infrastructure

Any destination may not be succeeded without having quality and complex infrastructure by which the tourist destination maybe enriched in all aspects.

➤ Heritage and Conservation

Spiritual Tourism destinations like Chitrakoot are rich with heritage of both natural and manmade entities. The conservation and preservation of all such heritage is very much essential at every level.

➤ Marketing & Promotion

Both Promotional and marketing terminologies are not only vibrant from the perspective of existence rather the scalability of such destinations as well.

➤ Community Involvement

Destination success at the grassroot level lies always within the community involvement without the same success rate of any destination is almost negligible.

➤ Economic Impact

In view of the success of the destination, the overall bottom line that everyone (stakeholders) is looking forward is economic impact creation i.e. either employability, revenue generation and image building through economic benefits.

Conclusion:

Tourism potential assessment of a lesser known tourism destination mainly of spiritual sites like Chitrakoot is always been a destination of varied product mix i.e. heritage, architecture, history, mythology, and scenic natural beauty at it best, but all these product mix are of no use until destination's potential identity is of lesser known tourism destination i.e. because an overall strategic framework is missing towards making a strong policy for creating expected elements available at a destination at every point of time right through state of art infrastructure to amenities of varied nature with luxury, safety and all such parameters which makes a destination more popular.

Therefore, in this case study as an outcome, the institutions and policy makers should have pressed the evaluation criteria hard for making such factors enable which are expected by a spiritual tourist at such destination. As a stakeholder community right through the services like food, transport, darshan, seva, booking, proper crowd management, prasad and temple infrastructure are key areas to be addressed by the strategy to be adopted by flag bearers of spiritual tourism destination.

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