

Sustainable Tourism in Himachal: Unveiling Hidden Destinations to Mitigate Over-Tourism

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Keywords

- Sustainable tourism
- Over-tourism,
- Himachal Pradesh,
- Hidden destinations,
- Responsible travel,
- Offbeat tourism,
- Ecological preservation,
- Community-based tourism

Abstract

Himachal Pradesh, renowned for its scenic landscapes, is witnessing rapid tourism growth accompanied by increasing environmental and socio-cultural pressures. Popular destinations such as Dharamshala, Shimla, and Manali are experiencing over-tourism, posing significant threats to the ecological balance and authenticity of local cultural heritage. This study examines the potential of sustainable tourism development through the promotion of lesser-known destinations to redistribute tourist flows and mitigate adverse impacts. Using a mixed-methods approach, primary data were collected from 63 participants through snowball sampling via telephonic and WhatsApp interviews, supported by secondary sources. The study identified 152 previously undocumented tourist attraction sites across the state. These destinations encompass significant cultural, historical, natural, adventure, and eco-tourism potential, with detailed information on districts, tehsils, and nearby attractions. The findings highlight how strategic management and promotion of offbeat destinations can support sustainable tourism development. The study contributes practical insights for achieving long-term social, environmental, and economic sustainability while enhancing community benefits in Himachal Pradesh.

JEL Classification: Q01, L83, Q26, Q56, Q57, R11, Z32, O18

Introduction

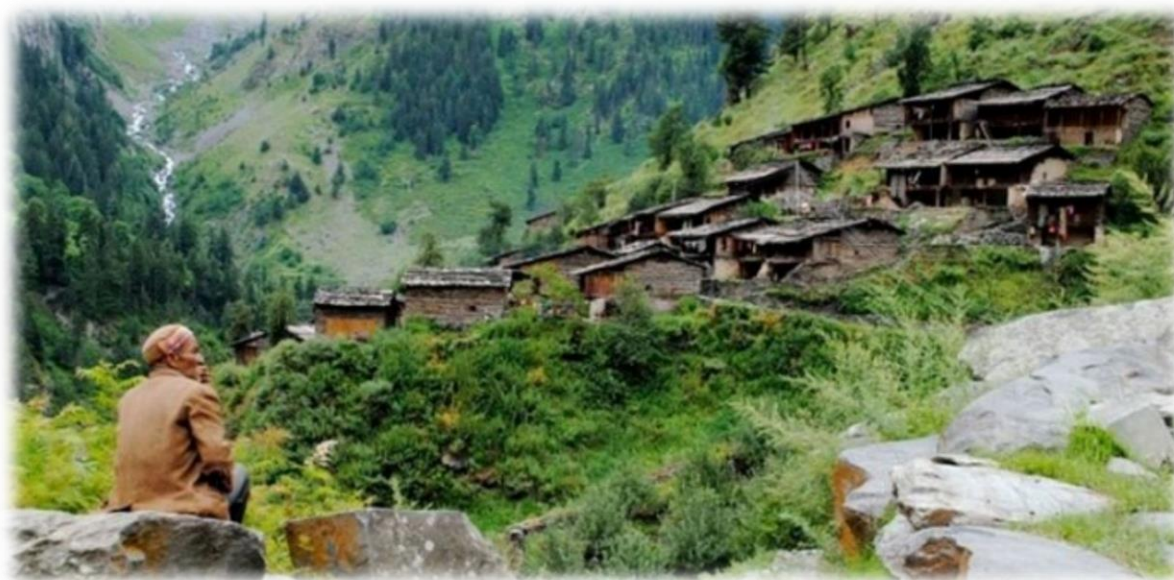
Overview of Himachal Pradesh as a leading tourism destination in India:

The hill stations of Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala and Dalhousie, as well as the heterogeneous geography of Himachal Pradesh including the Great Himalayan National Park which is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the extensive network of trekking paths, are famous (Chand & Kumari, 2022; Nag et al., 2024). Adventure tourism is a significant destination in the state where people go to engage in trekking, paragliding, river rafting, skiing, and camping (Kumar, 2018; Kumar et al., 2025). Another important factor is spiritual tourism, whereby the attractions include Jakhoo Temple, Tabo Monastery, and the Tibetan settlement of McLeod Ganj (Chauhan et al., 2021; Nag et al., 2024). Fairs and festivals, such as Kullu Dussehra and Manimahesh Yatra, are also a sign of cultural vibrancy (HPTDC, 2023; Nag et al., 2025). Although there are initiatives focused on supporting eco-tourism and sustainable development (Gupta, 2015; Bisht et al., 2024), the growth of tourist flows has also created conditions of deforestation, biodiversity degradation, pollution, and solid waste problems in tourist destinations like Shimla, Manali, and Dharamshala (Kuniyal et al., 2003; Sharma, 2022). The lack of infrastructure, small roads, and parking, as well as overcrowding, add further pressure on the lives and services of the locals (Shekhar, 2023; HPPCB, 2023), and over-tourism interferes with the traditional way of life and access to resources (Sharma and Rewal Chugh, 2024).

Sustainable tourism as the method to redistribute visitor flows:

There is a need to redistribute visitors to destinations that are less frequented, ease congestion, develop local economies, and safeguard the environment and cultural values, which can only be achieved through sustainable tourism (Butler, 1999; Pechlaner et al., 2024). Studies indicate that diversification of the destination based on digital technologies and sustainable planning has the potential to deal with visitor pressure and create a balanced tourism (Zolfani et al., 2015; Torabi et al., 2023; Nag et al., 2024).

Fig 1: The picture of the village has been taken from The Tribune article titled "*Mule path to Bara Bhangal restored*", published by Tribune News Service on July 20, 2021.



The rest of the work is structured as follows: Section 2 Review of Literature, Section 3 Objectives, Section 4 Methodology, Section 5 The Impact of Over-Tourism in Himachal Pradesh, Section 6 List of lesser-known destinations 7 Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development, Section 8 Recommendations, Section 9 Conclusion.

Review of Literature

Over-Tourism and Its Socio-Environmental Impacts in Himachal Pradesh

The over-tourist activity in Himachal Pradesh has also led to high levels of environmental degradation (which include deforestation, loss of biodiversity and pollution). Research has shown that the development of tourism infrastructure in vulnerable ecological destinations like Shimla and Manali has been shown to aggravate soil erosion and endanger the native flora and fauna (Kant & Gupta, 2021). The solid waste disposal in tourist spots has also added to the pollution of river water in Beas and Sutlej. Tourism in high seasons destroys local infrastructures in areas such as Kullu and Dharamshala causing congestion, insufficient sanitation and diminished standards of living of residents and tourists (Kumar and Rana, 2018).

The effects of socio-cultural are also quite strong, and overtourism leads to cultural commodification and loss of local identity, especially in places like the Kangra Valley (Shekhar, 2023). The increasing house prices and cost of living have forced out local communities (Bisht et al., 2025). Climate and ecosystem stress have also been aggravated by excessive utilization of resources, lack of water, and growing vehicular traffic, as well as the consumption of high levels of energy (Tariyal et al., 2013). The existing literature also points to the lack of holistic policies to deal with over-tourism and promote the idea of community-based, integrated, and technology-enabled sustainable tourism (Nv et al., 2024; Nag et al., 2025).

Sustainable tourism and its use in rural destinations

Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is the framework that focuses on economic, environmental, and social sustainability and has been extensively used in the rural tourism study (Elkington, 1997; Narbel and Muff, 2017). Researchers claim that community involvement improves economic development and maintains cultural and ecological soundness (Fong et al., 2016). CBT models have proven effective in the disbursement of incomes, conservation, and livelihood diversification in the rural setting (Juma & Khademi-Vidra, 2019). In Himachal Pradesh, CBT and eco-tourism projects in other areas like Jibhi and Spiti Valley have facilitated the creation of local jobs, cultural tourism, conservation of biodiversity and responsible tourist behaviour supported by policy interventions and the participation of NGOs (Gogoi and Maheshwari, 2024; Thakur et al., 2023; Suryani et al., 2023).

Objectives of the study

1. Explore the secret tourist places in the 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Analyse what activities exist at such newly discovered locations.
3. Examine the tourist activities at these newly discovered sites.

Methodology

This research used a mixed-methods approach, combining both primary and secondary data sources for the identification and analysis of emerging tourism destinations in Himachal Pradesh.

Research Design:

A qualitative and exploratory research design was used to unveil the lesser-known areas of tourists in the 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh. The research focuses on the newly identified tourist locations and attractions, and activities within these locations.

Data Collection

a. Primary Data

Interviews: In total, 63 in-depth interviews were conducted with residents of Himachal Pradesh, tourism stakeholders, and travellers using snowball sampling. Interviews were conducted through telephone and other social media aid to ensure better accessibility and suitability for the participants. This method involves setting destinations based on experience, exhibiting unexplored tourist attractions, and showcasing scenic beauty along with existing tourist-based activities.

b. Secondary Data

Various research journals, articles, Reports, government websites, books, other websites, state and district tourism reports etc., were reviewed rigorously to verify the main conclusions. Further, the reviews of the local folklore, historical texts and archive text were used to make this result-oriented paper.

Sampling Technique

The study employed the snowball method where the initial interviewees were the local guides, residents, and small business owners who referred to more interviewees. This helped especially in the discovery of offbeat destinations that have not been represented well in mainstream of tourism literature.

The Impact of Over-Tourism in Himachal Pradesh

Over-tourism in Himachal Pradesh has resulted in severe environmental degradation, especially in popular destinations like Shimla, Manali, and Dharamshala. Some of the key issues are:

Environmental Degradation in Over-Visited Regions

Deforestation: The construction of roads, hotels, and infrastructure to accommodate tourists results in the loss of forest cover and threatens biodiversity.

Water Scarcity: Tourism increases water usage, over and above the supply in rural areas, causing a water crisis. For example, during peak tourism periods, water scarcity is highly acute in Manali (Kumar & Poonam, 2023).

Waste Management Challenges: Huge waste is generated from tourism, including plastics and non-biodegradable waste items, which are too much for the local waste management systems to handle, polluting rivers and landscapes (Sharma, 2024).

Socio-Cultural Implications

The tourism influx often results in the dilution of traditional customs and rituals as people adjust to suit the demands of the outside world, thereby losing their cultural identity and commodification of local culture: handicrafts, festivities, and localised customary activities are constantly commercialised, losing authentic elements (Jabarova, 2025).

Economic Challenges

Over-Dependence on a Few Destinations: Touristy places such as Manali and Shimla become over-exploited and underdeveloped at the same time, as lesser-visited areas suffer in the economy (Sharma & Rewal Chugh, 2024). **Uneven Distribution of Tourism Revenue:** The wealth generated by tourism often goes to large stakeholders, such as hotel chains, rather than to local communities (Singh, 2021).

Here’s a list of lesser-known destinations with their respective districts, tehsils/nearby famous places, special attractions, and activities:

Place name	District	Tehsil/near by famous places	Special Attractions	Activities
Jot	Chamba	Chowari	Highest altitude tourists’ destinations in Chamba	Trekking
Dham-Garaon	Chamba	Dalhousie	Remote village near Jot	Hiking
Sirdi	Chamba	Bharmour	Make an original Gaddi Dress	Nature Walks, Cultural Exploration

Chowari Valley	Chamba	Chamba	Old town, Stunning Views, Chowari Village Temples, Traditional Himachali Architecture	Photography, Cultural Exploration
Lahla village	Chamba	Bharmour	Remote village, Stunning Views	Trekking
Kugti village	Chamba	Bharmour	Gateway to the Mani Mahesh Kailash Yatra, Agri-village, Orchard tourism and Pilgrimage	Trekking and Photography
Laake wali Mata	Chamba	NayaGraon, Holi	Local Deity Temple, Spiritual Significance, Stunning Views	Photography
Bharmani trek	Chamba	Bharmour	Local Deity Temple, Spiritual Significance, Challenging Terrain, Stunning Views	Pilgrimage
Mahal Nag Lake	Chamba	Teesa	Glacial lake, Natural Beauty,	Nature Walks
Chalhia trek	Chamba	Bharmour	Scenic landscape, Natural Beauty	Trekking, Camping
Lam dal	Chamba	Kareri	Glacial lake, Panoramic Himalayan Views	Trekking to Lam Dal Lake, Camping
Sunaina Mata	Chamba	Chamba	Panoramic Views, temple	Visit the Temple
Arjun gufa	Kullu	Manali	Stunning Natural Beauty, Peaceful Atmosphere, Cave	Visit the Cave, Picnicking by the Beas River, Spiritual Visit
Shangarh	Kullu	Sainj	Shangarh Meadows, Shangchul Mahadev Temple, Barshangarh	Village Hopping & Food Tasting & Stargazing, Experience Local

			Waterfalls, Railla Village & Fort, Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP), Hidden Waterfalls & Forest Trails	Culture & Festivals,
Brighu lake	Kullu	Manali	Glacial Alpine Lake, Panoramic Himalayan Views, Alpine Meadows & Wildflowers, Rich Biodiversity	Bird Watching & Nature Exploration, Spiritual Retreat
Rumsu village	Kullu	Manali	Traditional Kath Kuni Architecture, Kailash Rath Rumsu Temple, Jana Waterfall, Sajla Waterfall, Kasherri Viewpoint and Village	Cultural Exploration, Photography, Bird Watching & Nature Walks
Rama Dug	Kullu	Rohtang Manali	Scenic beauty	Trekking and camping
Sor Dal	Kullu	Manali	Scenic beauty	Trekking
Halan village	Kullu	Bhuntar	Scenic Beauty, Traditional Himachali Culture, Ancient Temples, Apple Orchards, Panoramic Views	Trekking Village Walks, Camping, Photography, Adventure Activities, Cultural Experiences, and Bird Watching
Shonda Dhar	Kullu	Diyar	Scenic Views, Tranquil and Peaceful Atmosphere, Ideal for Nature Walks	Picnicking, Photography, Stargazing, Village Visits
Sarachi village	Kullu	Banjar	Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP), Rolla Trek, Lambri Top, Rakhundi Top,	Camping, Wildlife & Bird Watching, & Nature Walks, Village Tourism & Cultural

			Traditional Himachali Temples and houses, Apple & Walnut Orchards, Tranquil Village Life, Seasonal Festivals & Fairs	Experiences, Apple Orchard Tour
Grahan	Kullu	Kasol	Endless Deodar Forests, Crystal-clear River Views, Waterfalls of all Sizes, Lush Green Vegetation, Panoramic Views of Parvati Valley, Peaceful, Unspoiled Village Life, Traditional Himalayan Culture	Trekking to Grahan Village, Nature Walks and Photography of Scenic Landscapes, Bird Watching, Cultural Exploration of Grahan Village, River Side Relaxation and Meditation, Camping
Bara bhangal village	Kangra	Multhan	Breathtaking Landscape, One of the most isolated villages in Himachal Pradesh, accessible only by foot via challenging high-altitude treks, Indigenous Culture, Rivers & Glacial Formations, Wildlife & Flora, Traditional Hospitality, Ancient Trade Route	Mountaineering, Camping & Wilderness Exploration, Cultural Immersion & Rural Tourism, Photography & Stargazing, Adventure & Survival Training, River Crossings & Glacier Exploration, Wildlife
Waru pass	Kangra	Palampur	flora and fauna Stunning Panoramic Views, Glacial Terrain, Remote & Untouched, Shepherd's Migration Route,	Mountaineering, Camping, Videography, Bird Watching & Wildlife Spotting, Glacial Exploration

			High-Altitude Flora & Fauna	
Jalsu pass	Kangra	Baijnath	Stunning Panoramic Views, Glacial Terrain, Remote & Untouched, Shepherd's Migration Route, High-Altitude Flora & Fauna	Trekking Camping, Videography, Bird Watching & Wildlife Spotting
Gaj pass	Kangra	Shahpur	Stunning Panoramic Views, Glacial Terrain, Remote & Untouched, Shepherd's Migration Route, High-Altitude Flora & Fauna	Mountaineering, Camping, Photography & Videography
Kundli pass	Kangra	Dharamshala	Stunning Panoramic Views, Glacial Terrain, Remote & Untouched, Shepherd's Migration Route, High-Altitude Flora & Fauna	Hiking, Camping, Videography, Bird Watching & Glacial Exploration
Toral pass	Kangra	Dharamshala	Stunning Panoramic Views, Glacial Terrain, Remote & Untouched, Shepherd's Migration Route, High-Altitude Flora & Fauna	Trekking, Camping, Photography & Videography, Bird Watching & Wildlife Spotting
Talang pass	Kangra	Dharamshala	Stunning Panoramic Views, Glacial Terrain, Remote & Untouched, Shepherd's Migration Route, High-Altitude Flora & Fauna, Camping	Trekking & Mountaineering, Camping & Wilderness Survival, Photography, Bird Watching & Wildlife Spotting.

			in Pristine Locations, Adventurous Terrain	
Balh Village	Kangra	Naddi, Dharamshala	picturesque landscapes, Dhauladhar Range Views, Triund and Indrahar Pass Trek, kareri Lake Trek & Guna Mata Temple trek,	Sightseeing, Enjoy Local Cuisine, Photography
Khabroo waterfall	Kangra	Shahpur	Waterfall, the peaceful sound of nature, including birds chirping, wind blowing, and the waterfall itself	Trekking, Relaxing and meditating by the waterfall, enjoying the peace and tranquillity, Wildlife watching
Jia village	Kangra	Palampur	Lush greenery, The Hydel Project, Adi Himani Chamunda trek, Views of surrounding hills and mountains, the scenic village on the bank of the Baner River, offering a tranquil environment	Trekking to the Adi Himani Chamunda peak, Taking leisurely walks along the riverbank
Himani Chamunda	Kangra	Jia	Aadi Himani Chamunda Temple, Views of the entire Kangra valley from the trek,	Photography, Enjoying the serene environment
Nurpur fort	Kangra	Dhameri	Nurpur Fort (Dhameri Fort), Brij Raj Swami Temple, Natural Beauty	Photography, Explore Nurpur Fort
Lunj valley	Kangra	Tatapani	Hot water springs, Serene natural beauty with lush green landscape,	Angling, water sports, hot springs , Scenic walks Photography

Salli village	Kangra	Rait	Way to bleni pass, Scenic views, lush greenery, traditional Himachali village life	Village walks, hiking, Photography, Enjoying the peaceful environment for relaxation
Drini valley	Kangra	Shahpur	Rural charm and natural beauty, Scenic landscapes and traditional Himachali village lifestyle, tranquil and serene environment perfect for rural tourism	Village walks, Photography, Participating in village festivals and cultural events
Rawa village	Kangra	Shahpur	Way to Gaj pass, Unique cultural and architectural style influenced by Rajasthan, Scenic views of the surrounding landscape, Royal Rajput Rana (Rawal) heritage	Exploring the village's traditional architecture and heritage, Nature walks
Chobu waterfall	Kangra	Baijnath	waterfall	Trekking, Photography, Nature Walks
Tea garden of Baijnath	Kangra	Baijnath	Scenic Tea Gardens, Traditional Tea Production, Panoramic Views, ancient Baijnath Temple	Tea Tasting, Tea Garden Walks, Visit Baijnath Temple, Nature Walks
Baragran village	Kangra	Multhan	Old style architecture, old Baragran village	Angling, trekking, Nature Walks
Kamlah fort	Mandi	Dharampur	Kamlah Fort's, Baba Kamlayah Temple, Stunning Views	Trekking to Kamlah Fort, Exploring the Fort's Chambers,

				Religious Visit, Historical Exploration
Pangna valley	Mandi	Karsog	Apple Orchards, scenic beauty, lush green landscapes, Kath Kuni Temple (Pangna Fort), Pangna Village	Cultural Exploration, Scenic Drives Local Cuisine
Awah devi peak	Hamirp ur	Tauni devi	Highest point of Hamirpur district, Awah Devi Temple	Religious & Spiritual Experiences, Attend Festivals & Special Pujas, Hiking, Photography, Explore Local Villages, Local Himachali Food
Sujanpur	Hamirp ur	Sujanpur	Sujanpur Fort, Chaugan (Ground), Gauri Shankar Temple, Murli Manohar Temple, Narbadeshwar Temple,	Sightseeing and Heritage Exploration, religious and Cultural Experiences, Photography & Birdwatching, Himachali Cuisine, Buy handwoven woollens, Kangra paintings, and traditional Himachali handicrafts
Narbadeshwa r Temple	Hamirp ur	Sujanpur	Rich Wall Paintings, Bhitti Style Architecture, several smaller shrines dedicated to Durga, Ganesh, Laxmi Narayana, and Mahisasur	Heritage Exploration, Religious Visits & Sightseeing

			Mardini surround the main temple, making it a significant pilgrimage site	
Deotsidh temple	Hamirpur	Shahtalai	temple is dedicated to Baba Balak Nath, Cave Temple, Unique Offerings (Devotees present sweetened Indian bread (Rota) and goats (which are nurtured, not sacrificed) as offerings), scenic Views, Cable Car Ride	Pilgrimage & Spiritual Retreat, Trekking & Nature Walks & Sightseeing, Cultural Experience
Tauni devi temple	Hamirpur	Tauni Devi	300-year-old temple dedicated to Goddess Tauni, Unique Rituals (Devotees knock stones together while making wishes), Apart from Tauni Devi, the temple houses idols of Sai Baba, Baba Balaknath, Shani Dev, Lord Shiva, and Hanuman	Cultural Experience, Photography & Sightseeing & Nature Walks, Historical Exploration
Nadaun fort	Hamirpur	Nadaun	Historical Significance, Architectural Marvel, Religious Importance, Visitors can also explore Sujanpur Tira Fort, Bil-Kaleshwar Temple, and the Tomb of Pir-Sahib.	Heritage Walks, Nature Walks & Picnics, Religious Visits, Adventure & Sightseeing

TAL mahal	Hamirpur	Tikkar	Taal's royal lake and ruins of the palace (Mahal), Kunah Khadd river, lake	Exploring local legends and historical tales at Taal and Mahal Moriyan, Photography
Kuarsa village	Chamba	Holi	Scenic beauty, Rural Village Experience	Trekking and Nature Walks, Photography
Bharwali	Chamba	Holi	Scenic Natural Beauty, Rural Village Experience	Village Exploration, Trekking and Hiking
Nitya café	Kangra	Palampur	Scenic Views of Dhauladhar Ranges, Serene Location in the Foothills, Trekking Access,	Short Hike to the Café, Trekking to Waterfalls, Camping, Smoothie and Food Tasting, Sunset Viewing
Jakhni Mata temple	Kangra	Palampur	Temple of Mata Jakhni, Tea Gardens, Scenic Hiking Trails, Tranquil Environment	Camping and Trekking, Photography, Tea Garden Tour, Spiritual and Religious Exploration
Old Vindyavasini temple	Kangra	Palampur	Vindyavasini Temple, Natural Beauty, Local Village Exploration, Tea Gardens Visit	Cultural Festivals, Photography, Relaxation and Meditation
Kandi village	Kangra	Palampur	Natural landscape	Trekking
Matha Saur	Kullu	Lug valley	Mathasaur Lake, Jai Maa Fungni Temple, Bhalyani Ground, Katrusi Narayan Temple	Trekking, Cultural Exploration, Wildlife Spotting, Photography, Nature Walks, Horse Grazing Sightings
Mata Fungni temple	Kullu	Lug valley	Fungni Mata Temple, Rural Culture &	Trekking, camping, Adventure Activities

			Traditions, situated in the last village of the Lug valley, namely Tiun.	
Dehnasar Lake	Kangra	Barot	Stunning Scenic Views, Sacred Pilgrimage Site, Tranquil and Remote Location	Pilgrimage, Photography and Nature Walks
Vyas pher	Kullu	Lug valley	Sage Vyasa meditated in this region	Trekking
Shoja garh	Kullu	Lug valley	peaceful nature escapes, photographs	Adventure activities
Katrusi Narayan temple	Kullu	Lug valley	Local deity	dedicated to Lord Vishnu
Harni valley	Chamba	Jot	Herb tourism, mountain view, flora and fauna	camping and hiking, Camping, Photography
Laake Wali Mata	Chamba	Holi	Cascading Waterfalls and Brooks, Scenic Terrain and Rugged Landscape, Mountain Views, temple	Camping, Photography, Waterfall Exploration
Gasani valley	Chamba	Holi	Natural landscape	Trekking and Adventure
Kakri Sawai	Chamba	Holi	Rural Charm, Scenic Beauty, Traditional Architecture, Cultural Heritage	Explore the Village Life, Photography, Nature Walks
Ullansa valley	Chamba	Jot	picturesque views, Apple Orchard	Nature Walks and Trekking, Apple Orchard Visit, Picnicking

Dehra end point	Kangra	Dehra	sunset views, picnics, and relaxation	Nature Walks, photography
Haripur Guler fort	Kangra	Dehra	Fort, Heritage Significance	Bird Watching, Nature Walks
Hot spring	Kangra	Tatvani	Shiva Temple, Hot Springs, Shallow River, Peaceful Environment	Bathing in Hot Springs, Spiritual Visit to Shiva Temple, Relaxation and Meditation
Teda temple	Kangra	Jawala ji	Local deity temple	Trekking, Photography
Vindhya vashni temple	Kangra	Palampur	Temple, Stunning Views of Dhauladhar Range, Sacred Natural Surroundings, Tea Garden Exploration	Photography, Nature Walks, Picnicking
Solah singhi fort	Una	Talwara	Solsinghi Fort, Solah Singhi Dhar Range	Photography, Sightseeing, Nature Walks
Handola bridge	Una	Nehla village	Scenic Beauty, Architectural Wonder,	Photography, Nature Walks, Sightseeing
Baba sahib Singh fort	Una	Una	Gurdwara, Historic Mausoleum built in a unique blend of Indian and Afghani architectural styles, Religious Significance of Sikhism	Cultural Exploration, Photography, Historical Tour, Local Sightseeing
Jakhni Mata temple	Kangra	Palampur	Sacred Temple dedicated to Devi Latti Jakhni, Peaceful Ambiance,	Religious purpose, Nature Walks, Sightseeing
Gareeb Nath Mahadev	Una	Una	Ancient Temple dedicated to Siddha Garib Nath, surrounded by the serene Gobind	Worship & Prayers, Sightseeing,

			Sagar Lake and hills, the temple offers a peaceful and scenic environment	
Kaleshwar Mahadev	Kangra	Pragpur	Historic lord Shiva temple, Serene Location, Spiritual Atmosphere	Cultural Exploration, Sightseeing, Meditation & Spiritual Retreat
Shiv shakti temple	Chamba	Chhatrari	Peaceful and spiritual atmosphere, ideal for devotees and seekers of tranquillity	Exploring nearby natural attractions or trekking in the region.
Gasota Mahadev mandir	Hamirpur	Jahoo	Ancient 400-year-old temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, Sacred Shivling, Gasota Cattle Fair	Sightseeing, Photography
Sainj valley	Kullu	Sangrah	scenic beauty, rich biodiversity, traditional Himachali architecture, Rupi Palace and Pundrik Rishi Lake,	Sightseeing, Trekking, Exploring local villages
Sural Bhatori	Chamba	Pangi	Lush greenery	Sightseeing, Photography
Chaasak bhatori	Chamba	Pangi	Flaura and Fauna	Trekking
Hudan bhatori	Chamba	Pangi	Hudan lake	Trekking
Parmar bhatori	Chamba	Pangi	Buddhist temple	Trekking and religious purpose
Manrega park	Mandi	Siraj	toy train, an artificial lake	Artificial Park
Sheta Dhar	Kullu	Chiuni	Local deity	Trekking and nature walk

Bhakli nature park	Mandi	Pandoh	Natural landscape	Eco tourism park
Dhumavati temple	Mandi	Dhuandhar	Ancient temple dedicated to Goddess Dhumavati	Exploring the nearby Pandoh Dam and natural beauty
Devidarh	Mandi	Jiuni Valley	Serene and offbeat destination, Home to the sacred Kamrunag Temple, Ideal getaway for peace seekers and nature lovers	Photography, Exploring local culture and traditions, Camping, birdwatching
Janjehli valley	Mandi	Janjehli	Pristine valley surrounded by dense deodar and oak forests, Offbeat and less crowded destination, ideal for nature lovers, Rich biodiversity with diverse flora and fauna	Picnicking, camping, Birdwatching and wildlife spotting, Photography
Vakhli nature park	Mandi	Pandoh dam	Majestic high ridges, deep gorges, and slow-moving glaciers, Dense virgin forests and lush green meadows, UNESCO World Heritage Site with rich biodiversity, Home to rare Himalayan wildlife, including the elusive snow leopard.	Hiking through scenic trails, Wildlife photography and birdwatching, camping in designated eco-friendly zones, Exploring local culture and traditional villages, Meditation and relaxation in the serene natural surroundings
Krishana temple	Kinnaur	Yulla kanda	Krishna temple with exquisite wooden architecture, Scenic Himalayan	worship and religious rituals, Meditation and spiritual retreats,

			backdrop offering breathtaking views, Peaceful ambiance, ideal for spiritual seekers	Exploring traditional Himachali architecture and photography.
Sorang lake	Kinnaur	Kalingo	Breathtaking Scenic Beauty, Sacred Rituals & Festivals, Rare Flora & Fauna	camping, photography, and meditation, Spiritual Retreat, Bird Watching, Sightseeing
Laida village	Kullu	Banjar	Natural beauty, culture, weather	local food, Photography, Visit Local Temples
Raila village	Kullu	Sainj	Twin towers	Explore Local Culture, Traditional Homestays, Village Walks, Agriculture and Farming, Local Cuisine, Photography, Visit Local Temples, Handicrafts and Weaving, Stargazing, Participate in Festivals, Relax and Unwind
Jhujer water fall	Mandi	Karsog	Natural beauty, Natural waterfall	Sightseeing and Photography, Picnicking, Hiking, Nature Walks, Birdwatching, Meditation and Relaxation, Adventure Activities
Markanay risi temple	Bilaspur	Ghagas	Local deity temple	Trekking, offer prayers and seek blessings, attend rituals and aarti

				ceremonies, explore temple architecture and carvings, earn about the temple's history, Enjoy the serene and divine atmosphere
Tiun fort	Bilaspur	Harlog	historical and cultural significance, fort, architectural importance	Picnicking, Historical Exploration, Nature Walks
Sriun fort	Bilaspur	Jhandutta	lush greenery, fort, historical and architectural importance	Photography, Historical Exploration, Picnicking
Patta Chanalag village	Bilaspur	Badla Dhar	Patta Chanalag Village	Cultural Exploration, Nature Walks
Bandla Dhar	Bilaspur	Sadar	Bandla Village, Bandla Dhar, Paragliding Site, Govind Sagar Lake, 2nd Highest Paragliding Spot in Himachal	Paragliding, Nature Walks, Environmental Initiatives
Hadimba Temple	Bilaspur	Sariun	Hadimba Temple, Panoramic Views, Spiritual Significance	Pilgrimage Tourism, Nature Walks & Photography
Chhanjiar Dhar	Bilaspur	Ghumarwin	Ancient Shiv Temple made by Pandavas, Spiritual & Cultural Importance	Religious Visits, Trekking & Exploration, Heritage & Photography
Bahadurpur fort	Bilaspur	Tepra village	natural beauty, lush greenery, historical architecture, highest point of the district, fort	Cultural tourism and Picnicking

Kathpol tibba	Bilaspur	Barmana	Scenic beauty, picnics and short hikes, temple of Goddess Shoolini Devi	Adventure and culture tourism
Rukmani Kund	Bilaspur	Salasi village	ancient water resource, temples	Religious tourism
Sda shiv temple	Una	Bahi Village	Lord Shiva temple, Sda shiv tilla	Religious purpose
Dhyunsar Mahadev	Una	Bangana	Lord shiva temple, natural beauty	Religious purpose
Sujanpur fort	Hamirpur	Sujanpur	temples, fort, grand Baradari (hall).	Cultural tourism
Shani temple	Hamirpur	lambloo	natural beauty, picturesque landscapes	Religious site
Khothi village	Kinnaur	Kalpa	Kinnauri architecture, wooden houses, ancient temples, apple orchards	Heritage, religious and adventure tourism
Hindustan-Tibet Road	Shimla-Kinnaur		Shimla – Colonial architecture, Mall Road, Ridge, Jakhoo Temple Rampur Bushahr – Padam Palace, Lavi Fair, Satluj riverside views Sarahan – Bhimakali Temple, Apple orchards, Gateway to Kinnaur Sangla Valley – Baspa River, Kamru Fort, Chitkul (last inhabited village) Kalpa – Kinner Kailash views, Suicide Point, Roghi Village	Road Trips & Bike Expeditions-Scenic drives, challenging terrains Trekking & Hiking-Shali Tibba Trek, Kinnaur Kailash Trek, Spiti treks Camping & Stargazing -Sangla, Chitkul, Nako, Spiti Cultural & Heritage Exploration – Buddhist monasteries, Wildlife & Nature Exploration – Great Himalayan National Park,

			Nako – Nako Lake, Nako Monastery, Tibetan culture Tabo – Tabo Monastery (oldest Buddhist monastery), Meditation caves Pooh – Apricot orchards, traditional Kinnauri culture Khab – Confluence of Satluj & Spiti Rivers, Shipki La pass (India-Tibet border) Sumdo – Entry point to Spiti Valley, ancient trade route	snow leopard spotting, Local Cuisine & Gastronomy – Tibetan food, Kinnauri apples, traditional Himachali dishes
Muling kaara Bhabha valley	Kinnaur	Bhaba Nagar	landscapes, apple orchards, traditional Kinnauri culture	Adventure tourism
Kuppar kharapathar	Shimla	kharapathar	lush green meadows, dense forests, and tranquil environment	Trekking, camping, picnics
Junga	Shimla	Chopal	Wildlife Sanctuary	Raja ka palace, paragliding
Bijjat Maharaj temple	Sirmaur	Chopal	Temple of Bijjat Maharaj	cultural tourism
Dodra Kwar valley	Shimla	Dodra	Nature lovers, remote Dodra, Kwar and many old architecture villages	adventure tourism, offbeat destinations
Meling Mahadev	Lahaul Spiti	Udaipur	ancient temple, serene Chandra River, natural beauty	short treks, religious tourism
Neelkanth Mahadev track	Lahaul Spiti	Lahaul	Neelkanth Kailash peak, small temple of lord Shiva	Adventure tourism, religious tourism

Ghepan lake track	Lahaul Spiti	Sissu	green meadows, dense forests, and rugged terrains, offering panoramic views of the Himalayas, wildflowers	Trekking, religious
Mayad valley	Lahaul Spiti	Udaipur	Triloknath Temple, lush alpine meadows, and the tranquil Chandrabhaga River	Village tours, and exploring the region's rich cultural heritage
Kangri Dhar	Solan	Arki	holy palace specially dedicated to Dev Badubara, traditional architecture, Pandavas and their spiritual significance.	Religious tourism
Harsang Dhar	Solan	Arki	Temple of God Harsang	trekking, village life
Katphol ka tibba	Solan	Arki	temple of Baba Balak Nath	Trekking
Karol tibba	Solan	Solan	Highest peak of Solan region	Trekking
Sarahan	Sirmaur	Pachhad	Scenic Beauty, Gateway to Kinnaur Valley	Trekking, paragliding
temple of Maa Bhangayni	Sirmaur	Haripurdhar	Maa Bhangayni Temple, Chureshwar Temple View, Historical Significance, Festivals & Fairs	Spiritual Experience, Sightseeing, Cultural Exploration
Baba Badolia	Sirmaur	Renuka ji	Baba Badolia Temple (Dedicated to Jal Devta), Majestic Waterfall (200-300 ft high), Unique	Religious Tourism, Waterfall Viewing, Nature Exploration, Local Culture &

			Phenomenon (Temple remains undamaged despite floods), Scenic Beauty & Spiritual Significance	Traditions Experience
Paudiwala	Sirmaur	Nahan	Paudiwala Shiv Temple (Associated with "Swarg Ki Seedhi"), Mysterious Growing Shivling, Mythological & Historical Significance, Scenic Beauty & Dense Forests, Annual Shivratri Fair	Pilgrimage & Spiritual Tourism & Nature Walks, Sightseeing, Local Culture & Festivals
Simbalbara National Park	Sirmaur	Paonta Sahib	Flora and Fauna, Birdwatching, Kludeo Temple, Scenic Beauty and Natural Landscape, Nature Walks	Birdwatching, Visit to Kludeo Temple
Sirmaur village	Sirmaur	Paonta Sahib	Scenic Beauty, serene Environment	Village Walks, Relaxation & Retreat
Chandpur Dhar	Sirmaur	Shillai	Shirgul Maharaj Temple, Makar Sankranti Mela, Natural Beauty, Aavat Village	Cultural Exploration, Nature Walks and Scenic Views, Peaceful Retreat
Bhurshing Mahadev temple	Sirmaur	Nahan	Bhureshwar Mahadev Temple, Divya Shila, Scenic Views, Historical Significance	Photography, Spiritual Experience, Exploring Local Legends, Coin Throwing Ritual at Divya Shila
Suketi Fossil Park	Sirmaur	Nahan	Suketi Fossil Park, Shivalik Hills, Fossil Remains, Fossilized Tree	Fossil Exploration, Nature Walks and Scenic Views,

			Trunks and Marine Life Remains	Geological Insightstal
Titiyana village	Sirmaur	Paonta Sahib	Scenic Beauty, serene Environment	Village Walks, Nature Photography, Relaxation & Retreat
Juinidhar	Sirmaur	Renuka ji	Stunning Landscapes, Rich Cultural Heritage, Offbeat Destination	Camping & Nature Stay, Photography & Sightseeing
Shilliguri	Sirmaur	Shalai	Fruit Orchards, Scenic Nature Walks, Breathtaking Hill Views, Local Temples	Trekking, Fruit Picking, Photography
Haripurdhar	Sirmaur	Haripurdhar	Maa Bhangayani Temple, Haripurdhar Fort (Killa), Scenic Views, Old Temples	Temple Visit, Historical Exploration, Nature Walks, Winter Activities
Jaitak Fort	Sirmaur	Nahan	Jaitak Hill, Scenic Views, Jaitak Khel of Kanets	Historical Exploration, Photography & Sightseeing
Sirmauri Tal village	Sirmaur	Paonta Sahib	Natural Beauty	Village Interaction, Nature Walks, Village Interaction
Chaupal town	Sirmaur	Chaupal	Craft industry, Churdhar Mahadev Peak, Khirki Peak, Apple Orchards, Reyuni and Chharki	Local architecture exploration, Apple Orchard Tours, Photography and Scenic Views, Cultural Exploration, Visit to Local Markets
Deohari village	Kullu	Sainj valley	Peace, rural experience, natural beauty and cultural significance,	Cultural Immersion, Spiritual and

			Deohari Devi Temple, Pundrik Rishi Lake, Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP)	Religious Exploration
Jaitak fort	Sirmaur	Nahan	Bird's Eye View of the Surrounding Areas, Historical Significance, Gurkha Legacy	Trekking to the Fort, Exploring Historical Structures, Relaxing Amidst Nature
Bharara village	Shimla	Kumharsain	picturesque natural beauty, lush greenery, terraced fields, and beautiful landscapes	Camping, village tours, and exploring the region's rich cultural heritage
Junga village	Shimla	Chail	Junga Palace, Snow-capped mountains, Lush green hills, Dense forests (kail, deodar, pine, ban trees), Colonial architecture, Proximity to Shimla, Chail, and Kufri, Kalka-Shimla Railway (UNESCO World Heritage Site)	Camping, Birdwatching, Nature photography, Exploring Forest trails, Scenic drives, Heritage tours (Junga Palace), Adventure activities, Relaxing retreats
Stoned Kumbh Shiv Temple	Shimla	Chail	Chail Wildlife Sanctuary, Shiv temple	Spiritual Retreat, Photography & Videography, Exploring the Cave
Dlunder Kali Mata Mandir	Shimla	Chopal	Dlunder Kali Mata Mandir, Apple & Apricot Orchards,	Trekking & Hiking, Spiritual Retreat & Sightseeing, Snowfall Experience, Nature Walks & Picnics
Mangli village	Chamba	Chaurah	Mangli Village, Churah Valley,	Photography & Sightseeing,

			Bhanodi Temple, Chamba Kailash Viewpoint, Traditional Himachali villages with rich cultural heritage.	Camping & Nature Walks, Spiritual & Cultural Exploration, Birdwatching & Wildlife Spotting
Kanchna Mata Temple	Mandi	Sarkaghat	Kanchna Mata Temple, Sarkaghat Town,	Pilgrimage & Religious Tourism, Cultural Exploration, & Sightseeing
Triloknath Village	Lahaul and Spiti	Udaipur	Triloknath Temple, Chandra and Bhaga Rivers, Pauri Festival, Surrounding Himalayan Peaks	Pilgrimage & Cultural Tourism, Photography & Sightseeing, Fishing & Picnicking, Camping & Stargazing

Through data collection, we found 152 new tourism destinations across 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh. These include Kangra (31), Chamba (25), Kullu (20), Mandi (10), Shimla (9), Kinnaur (4), Lahaul-Spiti (5), Solan (4), Sirmaur (17), Bilaspur (10), Hamirpur (11), and Una (6). Each district unveiled unique offbeat locations with rich cultural and natural heritage. Kangra and Chamba revealed unexplored valleys and ancient temples. Kullu and Mandi had unexplored trekking trails and serene landscapes. Shimla and Kinnaur had unexplored villages and traditional architecture. Lahaul-Spiti and Sirmaur had some of the least accessible yet breath-taking high-altitude destinations. Bilaspur, Hamirpur, and Una contributed the lesser-known historical and ecological sites.

Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development

Promotion of Homestays and Local owned tourism businesses.

Himachal Pradesh has also encouraged homestays as a sustainable tourism policy to empower locals in rural households to ensure the equitable distribution of benefits. The Himachal Pradesh Homestay Scheme (2008) promotes the residents to provide accommodation in their own houses without altering the cultural nature and also earns them additional revenues (Raj and Rana, 2022). Homestays improve the interaction between the host and guest and enable the tourists to be exposed to local lifestyles, customs and cuisine.

In addition to the homestays, small guesthouses, food and village cafes, handicraft stores, and guided trekking services have become major sources of livelihood in areas such as Tirthan Valley and Spiti Valley; all of which are owned by locals. Such micro-enterprises limit the economic leakage, keep the tourism earnings in the destination area, and enhance significant cultural interaction, which enhances destination authenticity (Kumar & Chhatwal, 2023).

Building Capacity and Skill Development.

Sustainable tourism is focused on capacity building. The training, offered by NGOs and the state government, is based on the hospitality, eco-tourism, waste management, guiding, and entrepreneurship sphere and enhances livelihood opportunities (Das et al., 2015). HPTDC has special attention to women and young people by training them (HPTDC, 2023). The skill programmes are also used to support the traditional crafts, folklore, culinary heritage, and digital marketing (Shekhar et al., 2023). Low-impact activities and renewable energy solutions (Spiti, Kinnaur and Lahaul -Spiti) are becoming increasingly a part of the ecologically sensitive regions (Thakur & Katoch, 2021; Negi et al., 2021). A community-based conservation of biodiversity is achieved through community-led biodiversity conservation.

The Great Himalayan National Park includes community-based projects, whereby tourism and biodiversity are combined through wildlife surveillance, guided tours and awareness campaigns with the help of indigenous knowledge and contemporary practices (Rana and Thakur, 2020; Sharma et al., 2019).

Recommendation and Conclusion.

Sustainability requires tourism diversification, environmentally friendly infrastructure, energy conservation, and cooperation with stakeholders. The research finds that the lesser-known destinations can be encouraged to reduce over-tourism to the destinations of Shimla, Kullu–Manali and Dharamshala and to encourage ecological conservation, cultural preservation, and community empowerment making Himachal Pradesh a model to sustainable mountain tourism.

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