

TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN THE GROWTH OF TOURIST FLOW IN KHAJURAHO BUNDELKHAND DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES

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Abstract

Acclaimed as the World Heritage Site by UNESCO, Khajuraho temples, famous for their erotic sculptures and nagara-style architecture attracts tourist population for several decades. Kandariya Mahadeva temple being the most famous among the 22 temples at Khajuraho, this Hindu temple is the largest and arguably the most prepossessing temple of the medieval groups of shrines and temples found in Khajuraho. Witnessing a swarm of foreign and domestic tourists all year round, in the last 10 years, there has been a recessive pattern seen among the foreign travellers in Khajuraho mostly due to infrastructural challenges and scarcity of essential amenities from the tourism industry. This paper addresses the challenges faced by the tourism industry and understanding the growth pattern of tourists' influx at Khajuraho in the past two decades. Based on the findings, a conclusive inference has been framed that shall help the tourism department to arrest challenges and revive the old popularity of the place.

Keywords: Tourism, Erotic Sculptures, heritage site, Temples, Khajuraho,

Introduction

Currently, tourism has become one of the most valuable attributes to developing nations worldwide for fostering economic growth that acts as the pivot of a vehicle for cultural and economic development (Srivastava, 2018). It influences the holistic developmental needs of a nation and society in multidimensional ways. Therefore, its growth and trends along with its contribution to the Indian economy are essential to understand for analysing the role played by tourism in boosting up the economic development of any country.

Madhya Pradesh (MP) situated at the heart of the Indian subcontinent, is often referred to as the "Heart of Incredible India" (Kishnani, 2019). Surrounded by Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan, this state is decked up by some magnificent monuments, exquisitely carved stupas, temples, and forts. In 2019, the domestic tourist's arrival in MP was considered to be around to be 88 million while the foreign tourists' arrival was accounted to be 0.32 million which significantly shows the popularity of this State amongst others in the Indian province (Statista.com, 2021). While most Indian temples are considered to be the sacred sites for worship and pilgrimage, a group of 22 temples at Khajuraho have significantly gained much international prominence for the explicit beauty depicted through thousands of erotic sculptures that are adorned in its exterior walls (Vijayakumar, 2017). This paper shall intend to explore the growth and trends of Indian tourism in Khajuraho Bundelkhand region located in central India.

The history of Khajuraho and how this unique amalgamation of culture, religion and tourism in the temples attracted millions of tourists all over the world for the past 20 years shall also be evaluated as a part of this study.

The Khajuraho group of 22 temples, built by the Chandela rulers backs in the 10th century are famous for erotic sculptures and exquisite architecture (Sahni & Hazarika, 2020). Out of these 22 temples, Kendariya Mahadeva temple happens to be the most famous Hindu temple at Khajuraho. Built around 1025-1050 AD and being the tallest and the most ornate temple among the remaining, Kendariya Mahadeva temple exudes fitness and grandeur. However, all these 22 temples in the Bundelkhand region of central India remained as one of the most preferred tourist destinations for several decades. In 2005, approximately 74,787 tourists from 94 different countries visited Khajuraho temples in India. French tourists remained the biggest group visiting this city, totalling 9173 out of 74,787 (Hindustan Times, 2006). Apart from France, tourists from Spain, Britain, US, Canada, and South Africa also visited this place making it one of the most preferred and liked tourist spots in the country.

Famous for nagara-style architecture that symbolises erotica, Khajuraho was recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1986 for 'human creativity' (UNESCO, 2021). Although the actual reason behind Khajuraho's erotic art still remained a work of mystery, in the past twenty years, several research scholars have been working to find out the mystery of this place and how this region attracts millions of visitors every year since the date of its construction by the Chandella dynasty. Interestingly, this place receives over 350,000 visitors annually and highest population concentrating the Kendariya Mahadeva Temple during Mahashivratri. Despite having countless controversies, this world heritage site is a popular tourism spot and daily witnesses several thousand tourists from across the world who wish to visit the place for enjoying the beauty of its artwork

Before 2016, the temple town in Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a steady increase in tourist footfall visiting the World Heritage site. As in 2006, only 1.64L domestic tourists visited the place while this number increased to 2.79L/year in 2015 (Indianexpress.com, 2016). However, the total number of foreign tourists significantly got lowered reasons being limited or faulty infrastructure and facilities provided by the tourism sector to foreign travellers. Meanwhile, the coronavirus pandemic that has taken havoc in a multitude of industries globally, has also flattened the tourism growth in Khajuraho (TOI, 2021). Evidence suggests that the world-famous heritage site that used to witness a stream of visitors every year, now amid coronavirus pandemic, wear a deserted look. Therefore, to recommend measures for the tourism sector, understanding the growing pattern and trend of tourists' inflow are necessary.

The main theme of this research paper is to understand the growing pattern and trend of tourism in the Khajuraho, Bundelkhand district of MP. This study has been based on evaluating the history of this built architecture and related controversies regarding the temples. Proper analysis of the history and tourism trend shall provide a proper picturesque relating to the reasons behind tourist's preference for this place. However, foreign tourist footfall has been considerably lowered which sheds light on the loopholes of MP tourism. This study shall suggest strategies that could help

tourism to win back their foreign tourists and contribute positively to the economic treasure land of the country.

Conceptual framework

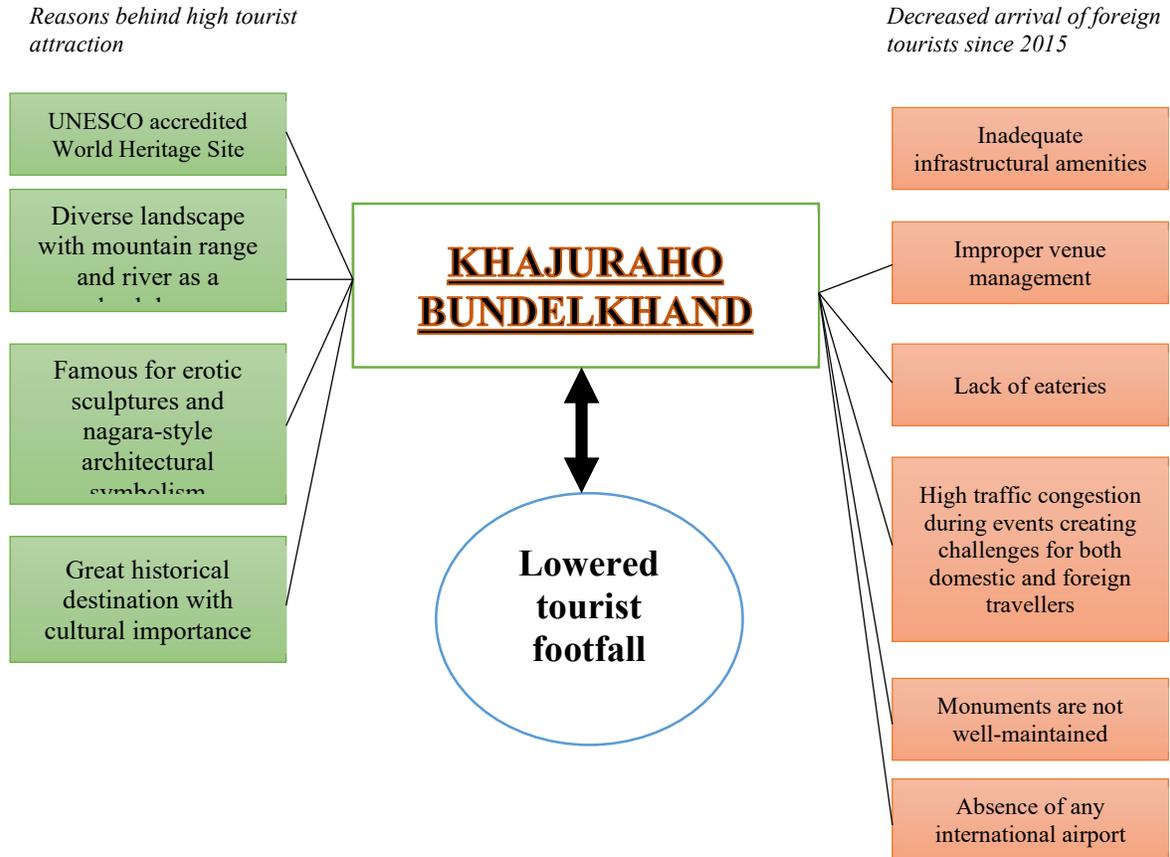


Figure 1: Conceptual framework (Source: Created by the researcher)

Literature gap

Over the last decade, Khajuraho temple town in Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a gradual decrease in travellers' population visiting the UNESCO World Heritage site. Especially, the foreign tourist inflow has been remarkably reduced which reflects some of the major challenges or limitations faced by MP tourism. Unlike previous literature like (Kushwah, R. S., & Chaturvedi, 2019; Mishra, 2017) that dealt with the impact of Khajuraho tourism on environment and how this major site attracts thousands of pilgrimages from across the world, this article will offer an insight into the modern societal image regarding explicit imagery of sensual acts and erotica displayed throughout the exterior walls of the temple. These sculptures have controversial thoughts among visitors which apart from infrastructural challenges also influence the mindset of travellers worldwide. Tourists have a natural attraction towards this place however, some find these mystifying carvings to be extremely explicit, rousing, and sensual which shall also be discussed in this article. Overall, delving into the mystery of Khajuraho construction and surrounding tourism facilities will enable the researcher to determine tourism growth and pattern in the place which shall help to further

frame down some recommending measures that would have the potential to revive lost crowd in the place.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the systematic analysis of a research process that is used for addressing the research troubles and proceeds to represent the research objectives in a coherent manner (Novikov & Novikov, 2019). In this segment, a researcher generally explains varying steps considered to resolve a research problem.

Research approach

Out of deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches, the researcher selected the deductive approach as it explores a known phenomenon or theory and tests whether the added theory is valid in given circumstances. In this case, the history and related controversies surrounding the Khajuraho temples and the increased preference for visiting this place are directly co-related. However, considering the infrastructural challenges, this tourism destination witnessed a fall in tourist's footfalls. This reason together with some other flaws presented by the temple and its tourism industry has been evaluated with the help of this approach.

Research design

Descriptive research design aims to describe a situation systematically and accurately by using a variety of research methods to investigate the research variables (Siedlecki, 2020). The history behind the building of Khajuraho temples, and the challenges faced by tourists have been well-described with the help of descriptive design. Despite having scenic beauty and being built on ancient history that depicts Indian culture and beliefs, the tourist availability in this place is limited with further reduction in foreign tourists' influx into the region. Understanding this pattern of tourism growth and how the challenges influence tourist's perceptions and needs for the place needs to be described in detail. This justifies the relevance of selecting this research design.

Data collection methods

This section describes the method that helps in accumulating figures, facts and concepts from different sources for addressing the research problem. Out of primary and secondary data collection methods, the researcher has selected a secondary method as it could provide a broader understanding of the researched topic. The growth trend and pattern of tourists for the past 20 years could be accumulated only from administrative records of Khajuraho. The primary data collection method could not be adopted as interviewing tourism departmental heads would have elicited a similar result as these individuals would have collected information from their administrative records. This rules out the possibility of selecting the primary data collection method and justifies the relevance of secondary articles. Apart from the administrative records, data from the regional office of Khajuraho, Tourist arrival report and Department of Khajuraho tourism have been used in this study. Apart from governmental sources, several journals, articles, and websites have also been considered to learn about the history of Khajuraho.

Data analysis

The data collected from secondary governmental sources and journals have been thematically analysed to understand the tourism growth, pattern, and trend in Khajuraho. The researcher frames relevant themes based on the research findings that highlight the challenges experienced by tourists in Khajuraho. Moreover, the history of the erotic sculptures of Khajuraho that mostly attracts foreign and domestic tourists has also been analysed and evaluated by developing requisite themes.

Historical underpinning and construction mystery of Khajuraho temples

Khajuraho is a modern, isolated and small village positioned on the left bank of Khudar-Nala, in Chhatrapur district of Madhya Pradesh. Ruled by Chandelas dynasty back in the 10th century, they built eighty Khajuraho temples over 200 years. But with the invasion of Mughal armies back in 14th century, these temples were gradually destroyed and abandoned since then. Vijayakumar (2017) opined that due to constant negligence, dense shrubs surrounded the temples probably camouflaged them from the hands of destruction by the conservative Islamic rules back in 1977. Out of the total 80 massive temples that were originally built by the Chandelar dynasty, only 22 among them are currently dominating in a state of reasonable preservation. Later, these 22 remaining temples were further divided into western and eastern groups spread over an area of 8 sq. miles and are now listed as the World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Table 1: Temples at Khajuraho and their related religion

(Source: Srivastava, 2018)

| Sr. No. | Temple Name | Completed in CE | Religion | Deity |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1 | Duladeva | 1125 | Hindu | Shiva |
| 2 | Chaturbhuja | 1110 | Hindu | Vishnu |
| 3 | Javeri | 1090 | Hindu | Vishnu |
| 4 | Vamana | 1062 | Hindu | Vamana |
| 5 | KandariyaMahadeva | 1029 | Hindu | Shiva |
| 6 | Shantinatha | 1027 | Jain | Shantinatha |
| 7 | Adinatha | 1027 | Jain | Adinatha |
| 8 | Chitragupta | 1023 | Hindu | Sun, Chitragupta |
| 9 | Devi Jagadambi | 1023 | Hindu | Devi, Parvati |
| 10 | Ganesha | 1000 | Hindu | Shiva |
| 11 | Vishnu-Garuda | 1000 | Hindu | Vishnu |
| 12 | Matangeshwara | 1000 | Hindu | Shiva |
| 13 | Vishvanatha | 999 | Hindu | Shiva |
| 14 | Mahishasuramardini | 995 | Hindu | Mahishasuramardini |
| 15 | Ghantai | 960 | Jain | Adinatha |
| 16 | Parshvanatha | 954 | Jain | Parshvanatha |
| 17 | Varaha | 950 | Hindu | Vishnu |
| 18 | Lakshmana | 939 | Hindu | Vaikuntha Vishnu |
| 19 | Brahma | 925 | Hindu | Vishnu |

| | | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----|-------|------------------|
| 20 | Hanumana | 922 | Hindu | Hanumana |
| 21 | LalgunMahadeva | 900 | Hindu | Shiva |
| 22 | Chausath Yogini | 885 | Hindu | Devi, 64 Yoginis |

Chausath Yogini, Kandariya Mahadeva Temple and Devi Jagadambi temple out of the 22 remaining temples are the most famous among the tourists mostly due to their grandeur.

Menon (2019) highlighted the fact that throughout the Indian history, powerful rulers have commissioned megalithic temples in an attempt to reflect their power and to leave a formidable legacy behind. However, it has forever remained a mystery regarding the puzzling intention of the Chandela rulers to adorn temples with unusual erotic imagery. Some theorised it to have mythological connections while others indicated probable customs and rituals of Chandela rulers. Shah (2019) believed that the erotic carvings on the exterior wall of Khajuraho temple probably indicated love and courtship between the Moon God and his female love. While Chausath Yogini temple is famous for 64 idols present in its circular periphery, Kandariya Mahadeva temple has makara tarana at its entrance that makes it most attractive among the tourists.

Art historian Shobita Punja claimed that the erotic sculptures of these temples depict divine consummation between Parvati and Lord Shiva on their wedding night (Vijayakumar, 2017). While Fischer (2020) claimed these erotic sculptures to depict tantric sexual practices that ancient tantric yogis perform during meditation. This group of researchers believed sexual imagery to represent a society where consummation and sexual activities were not tabooed rather considered an integral part of society.

Vedic cosmologists however interpreted these erotic cravings with an opposing view. While they agreed that these sculptured indeed represented tantric tradition however not carved to elicit sexual desire rather cease them (Caruana, 2020). These scholars believed that Chandela rulers were followers of some tantric cult that presents a belief that devotees should never be perturbed by sexual desires in their pursuit of God instead, these cravings were put in the exterior walls for them to resist or overcome desires before entering the temples. However, the true significance of the cravings of these erotic sculptures remained a mystery with the construction of many theories and beliefs, tourists have always been attracted towards unresolved mysteries and Khajuraho never failed to amaze travellers with its exquisite beauty of the traditional nagara-style architecture.

Dichotomous existence of Khajuraho temples

At Khajuraho Bundelkhand region, the dichotomy of being considered as the transgression of Indian culture on one hand while on the other hand, is represented as an epitome of Indian liberalness to international tourists-continues to exist (Bahuguna & Vijayan, 2018). The brochures and posters that are used by the MP tourism to market the Khajuraho temples feature the scintillating erotic sculptures at Khajuraho. The government has widely featured Khajuraho as "Incredible India" in pamphlets. Therefore, this featuring of temples as "Incredible India" and is deemed as the World Heritage Site signify the prominence of the temples as a representation of Indian culture. Rakhra (2020) opined that the advertisements note often features inconspicuous

information related to the underplay of erotic sensual depicting through sculptures and present both international and domestic tourists as the purest form of spirituality and love.

As a side note on a brochure produced by the MP government, the erotic scenes that are sculpted on the exterior walls of the temples certainly do not signify anything coarse or sordid about society rather these represent some of the finest sculptural compositions that reflect emotions and societal sensitiveness (Menon, 2018). While it is a true fact that there are several carvings on the temple walls depicting erotic or obscene pictures as stated by the travellers, it shall be noted that not more than 10% of those sculptures denote erotica. In an attempt to attract more foreign travellers, the tourism ministry organises an annual dance festival as a symbol of re-imagining Indian culture stemming from traditions and beliefs (Srivastava, 2018). Khajuraho thus becomes a region or a place where cultural, social, and spiritual images of the country are propagated and created.

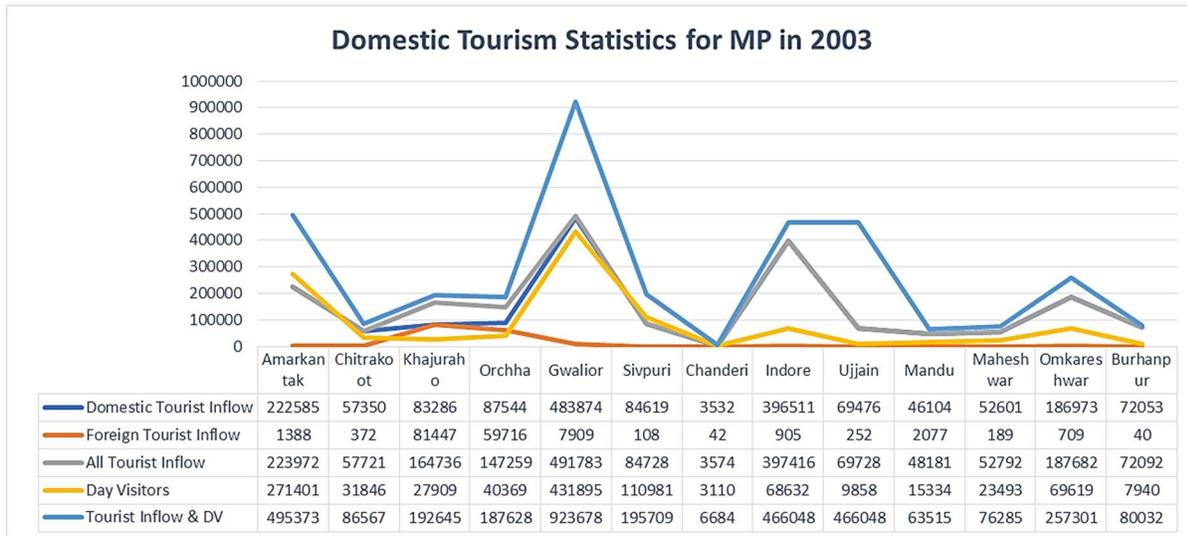
Table 2: Domestic tourism statistics for MP in 2003

(Source: Vijayakumar, 2017)

| Centre | Domestic Tourist Inflow | Foreign Tourist Inflow | All Tourist Inflow | Day Visitors | Tourist Inflow & DV |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Amarkantak | 222585 | 1388 | 223972 | 271401 | 495373 |
| Chitrakoot | 57350 | 372 | 57721 | 31846 | 86567 |
| Khajuraho | 83286 | 81447 | 164736 | 27909 | 192645 |
| Orchha | 87544 | 59716 | 147259 | 40369 | 187628 |
| Gwalior | 483874 | 7909 | 491783 | 431895 | 923678 |
| Sivpuri | 84619 | 108 | 84728 | 110981 | 195709 |
| Chanderi | 3532 | 42 | 3574 | 3110 | 6684 |
| Indore | 396511 | 905 | 397416 | 68632 | 466048 |
| Ujjain | 69476 | 252 | 69728 | 9858 | 466048 |
| Mandu | 46104 | 2077 | 48181 | 15334 | 63515 |
| Maheshwar | 52601 | 189 | 52792 | 23493 | 76285 |
| Omkareshwar | 186973 | 709 | 187682 | 69619 | 257301 |
| Burhanpur | 72053 | 40 | 72092 | 7940 | 80032 |
| All Centers | 3463822 | 181194 | 3645046 | 1878870 | 5523916 |

Figure 2: Domestic tourism statistics for MP in 2003

(Source: Vijayakumar, 2017)



Source: MS-Excel

Sharma et al. (2019) opined that although comparisons of Bundelkhand, Khajuraho to other tourist locations like Lijiang, China is inevitable due to the similar sexual undertones drawn by both these destinations, the uniqueness and eccentricity of Khajuraho due to a distinct amalgamation of eroticism, culture and religion in an ancient, isolated town make the town of temples idiosyncratic and solitary in its own sense. World-famous artists and celebrity dancers from all over the country participate in this annual dance festival making it a cultural attraction for tourists all over the world.

Tourism pattern in Khajuraho region

With the popularity of being celebrated as the UNESCO accredited World Heritage Site and with intense marketing advertisements, Khajuraho becomes populated by tourist footfalls after Delhi's Mughal monuments and Agra's Taj Mahal. With a population of 25,000 only, this isolated town in MP witnessed around a million tourist footfalls in 2015 in comparison to the neighbouring states of UP and Taj Mahal that tend to be the most attractive and tourist-rich places in the country (Census, 2011). Although mentioned earlier, the mystical cravings in the walls of temples and the history of Indian culture serve as the major source of tourist attraction, the tour operators and companies also play a pivotal role in luring both domestic and foreign travellers in Khajuraho.

Charag et al. (2018) opined that almost every temple in Khajuraho receives domestic tourists mostly due to their profound interest in Indian art and culture. However, Kandariya Mahadeva Temple out of the 22 temples has the maximum population density due to its refined and impressive architecture giving an insight into the region's royal past. While some tourists visit the place due to religious faiths, majority of them apart from their interest in art and culture, visit this temple because of being fascinated by the erotic sculptures and artistic works. Figure 2.4 shows that only 19% of the total tourists visiting the place are those who enter the temples either to enjoy the architectural beauty of the place or for recreational purposes. The figure also shows that around 29% of the tourists are fascinated by the unabashed sexuality represented by the place. Not interested in understanding any history or architecture presented by the place, these group of tourists only visit the place to enjoy the sculptures carved into the walls of the temples and the

category mostly represents the Indian population (Srivastava, 2018). Usually, foreigners are likely to be more interested in knowing and understanding the history of architectural design. Dutta & Adane (2018) claimed that the popularity of Khajuraho with western tourists have presented a new stature of the place in Indian eyes, as Khajuraho lately has become a symbol of pride for the Indians rather than a hard-to-explain societal embarrassment.

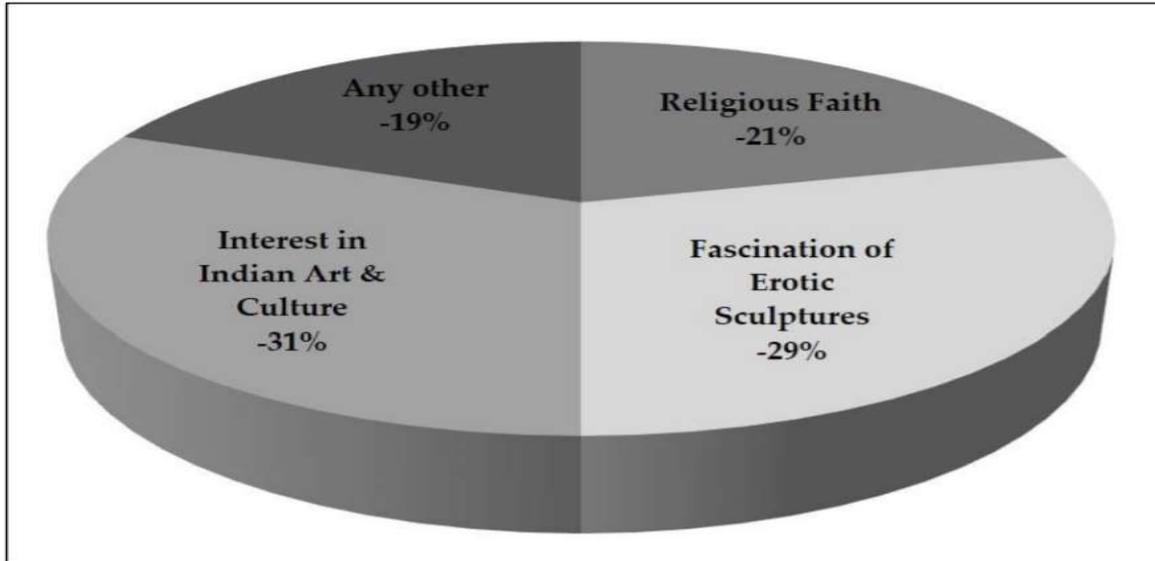


Figure 3: Reasons behind increasing popularity of Khajuraho
(Source: Srivastava, 2018)

Tourist's inflow and high popularity of Khajuraho

The Khajuraho's erotic carvings lure a lot of foreign and domestic travellers who are interested specifically in artwork and Indian culture. Shah (2019) showed that there are several kinds of carvings on the walls of Khajuraho temples that portray the life of *purushartha* for Hinduism-*artha*, *dharma*, *moksha* and *kama*, i.e., the four essentials of life. The Vindya mountain range in Khajuraho apart from the temples, also attract a lot of tourists considering the breathtaking scenic beauty the place offers. After Taj Mahal, Khajuraho has become the most talked-about, controversial, and frequently visited monument in India. 13 years data of the inflow of tourists in Khajuraho has been statistically represented down below-

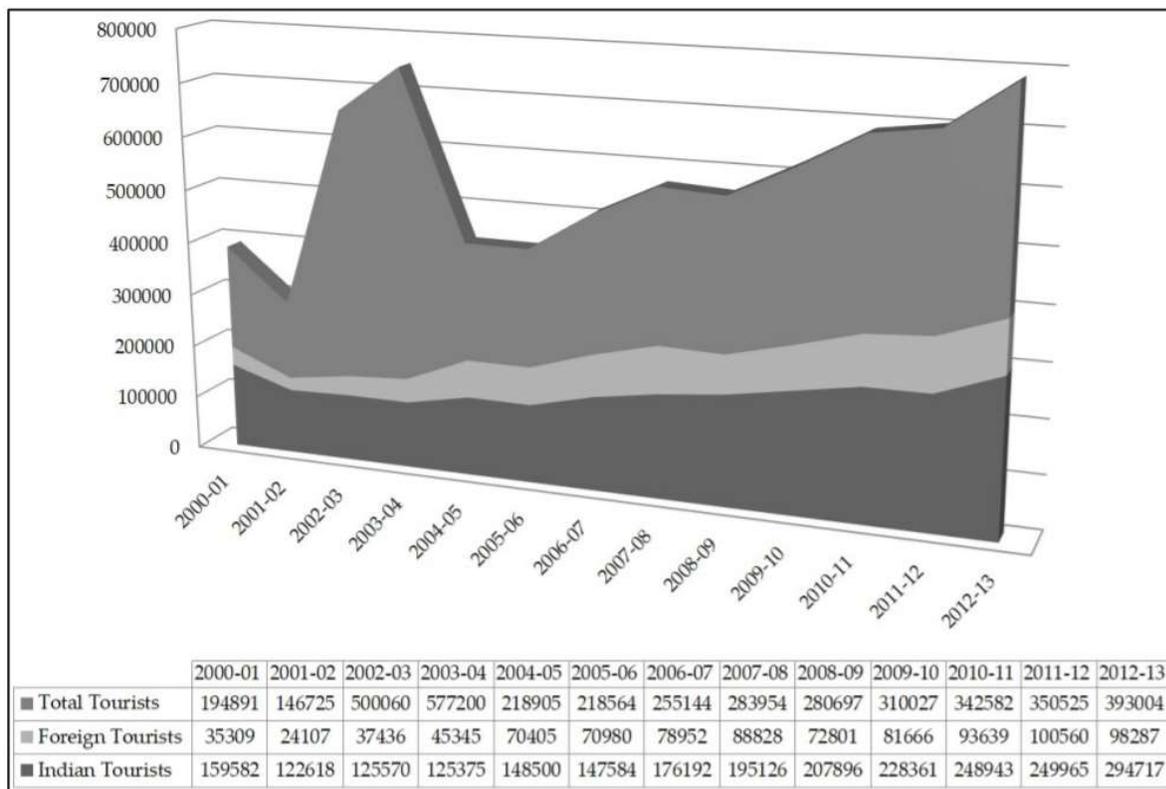


Figure 4: Tourist's inflow statistics from 2000 to 2013
 (Source: Srivastava, 2018)

In 2017, the Union Ministry has informed that a total of 4.21 lakh visitors entered the state and this number increased exponentially with the increasing number of foreign travellers visiting the state since 2012 (Srivastava, 2018). However, the most interesting fact is that Khajuraho alone attracts around 25% of the total tourism population, most getting attracted to Kandariya Mahadeva temple of the western region. Apart from enjoying the scenic beauty and history offered by the sculptures of the temples, some other reasons behind high popularity of this small, isolated village are discussed as follows.

Organisation of festivals

The MP tourism organises different festivals in February or March to celebrate the Hindu spring month of Phalguna in Khajuraho (Khajurahoonline.in, 2021). These festivals, in turn, helps to promote tourism and attract more travellers from foreign lands.

Mahashivratri- This is one of the most famous festivals organised in Khajuraho to celebrate the marriage between Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. On this occasion, the Matangeshvara temple and Kandariya Mahadeva temple which stands on the highest ground draws around 50,000 pilgrims every year (RVA Temples, 2021).

Lokranjan Festival- Immediately following the Khajuraho dance festival, Lokranjan festival also involves many dancers and followers that is organised every year by the Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad. A variety of dance kala of MP is displayed in this festival like Tamasha, Nautanki, Nacha, Swang, etc (Festivals of India, 2021).

Physical and economic growth in Khajuraho

Because of the ancient temples, Khajuraho has historical significance. Since this area witnesses, a lot of foreign travellers, most of the economy is dependent on tourism. Directly or indirectly, almost every household of this region is positively benefitted from tourism. Most of the households believe that they get funds for performing activities like farming and agriculture mostly from tourism (Khajurahoonline.in, 2021). This denotes the importance of tourism for the physical as well as economic development of the region.

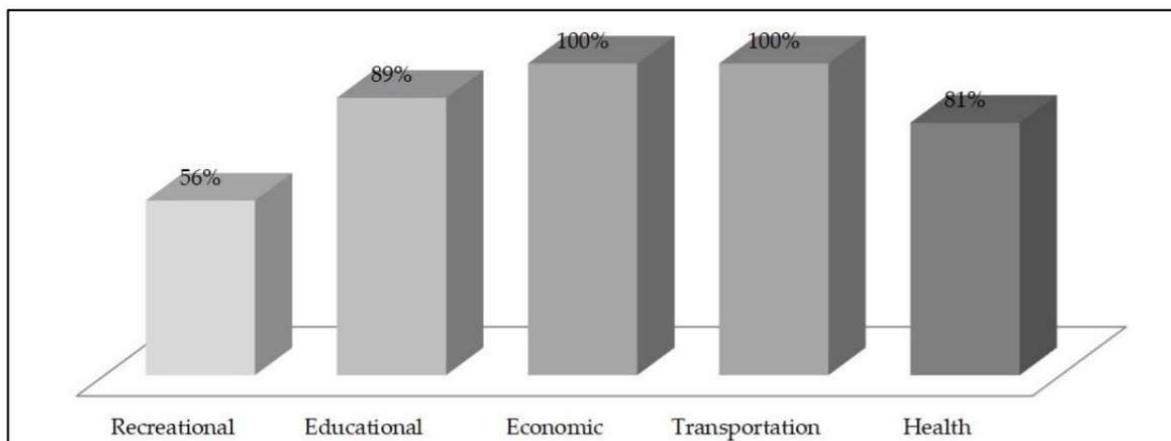


Figure 5: Physical growth and availability of amenities due to tourism

(Source: Srivastava, 2018)

In an attempt to satisfy the needs of foreign travellers, several high-class hotels have been constructed on the outskirts of this village. Other relative amenities like sanitation, transportation, availability of restaurants and motels are also needed to promote a continuous influx of foreign travellers into the town (Som et al. 2020). In addition to this, the streets are paved and cleaned while water supply and drainage facilities are also adequately provided which helps to promote tourism in the place. Despite the availability of infrastructural facilities and the transformation of the small, isolated village into an eye-catching tourism destination, in the last few years, this place witnessed a reduced population of foreign travellers which negatively impacted the economic growth of this place. Reasons as explained in the following segment.

Stalled foreign travellers' entry into Khajuraho

Over the last decade, Khajuraho witnessed a decrease in tourist footfalls as their perception and needs for the essential amenities usually change with every passing year. In a news article, a member of the Dharohar Guide Association highlighted the lowered foreign tourist's footfalls in the place. The tourism departments usually consider those travellers who at least spend a night as tourist in the place. However, majority of them now travel from nearby places while carrying their own food and belongings. This affects the economic growth of the place as motels, restaurants and other related infrastructural facilities are totally dependent on tourism (Indianexpress.com, 2016). Some tourists indicated poor connectivity and harassment of foreign travellers as the reasons behind low tourist population.

Apart from this, Covid-19 pandemic has also flattened the curve of tourist's visits to the place. Most of the population residing in Khajuraho is either directly or indirectly associated with tourism activities. However, the increased paranoia of tourists regarding the spread of virus and governmental decisions for an extended lockdown to bend down the Covid-19 curve have taken a serious toll on tourism activities (Economic Times, 2020). Although the role of Covid-19 pandemic on tourist's footfall could not be resolved, the tourism department could strategize activities that could help in engaging more tourists and attract them while mediating a growth trend and pattern of the tourist's inflow in Khajuraho. This study shall help the departments to plan those activities strategically thus, incurring high economic and physical growth of the region.

Data Analysis

Table 3: Indian Tourist Arrivals at Khajuraho

| Year | Indian Visitors | Year | Indian Visitors |
|---------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1999-00 | 180621 | 2010-11 | 265815 |
| 2000-01 | 173071 | 2011-12 | 265015 |
| 2001-02 | 133926 | 2012-13 | 312810 |
| 2002-03 | 126002 | 2013-14 | 259509 |
| 2003-04 | 125375 | 2014-15 | 272405 |
| 2004-05 | 148500 | 2015-16 | 320803 |
| 2005-06 | 147584 | 2016-17 | 278040 |
| 2006-07 | 190527 | 2017-18 | 295563 |
| 2007-08 | 210370 | 2018-19 | 368692 |
| 2008-09 | 222337 | 2019-20 | 248111 |
| 2009-10 | 227670 | 2020-21 | 104432 |

Source: Regional Office, Khajuraho

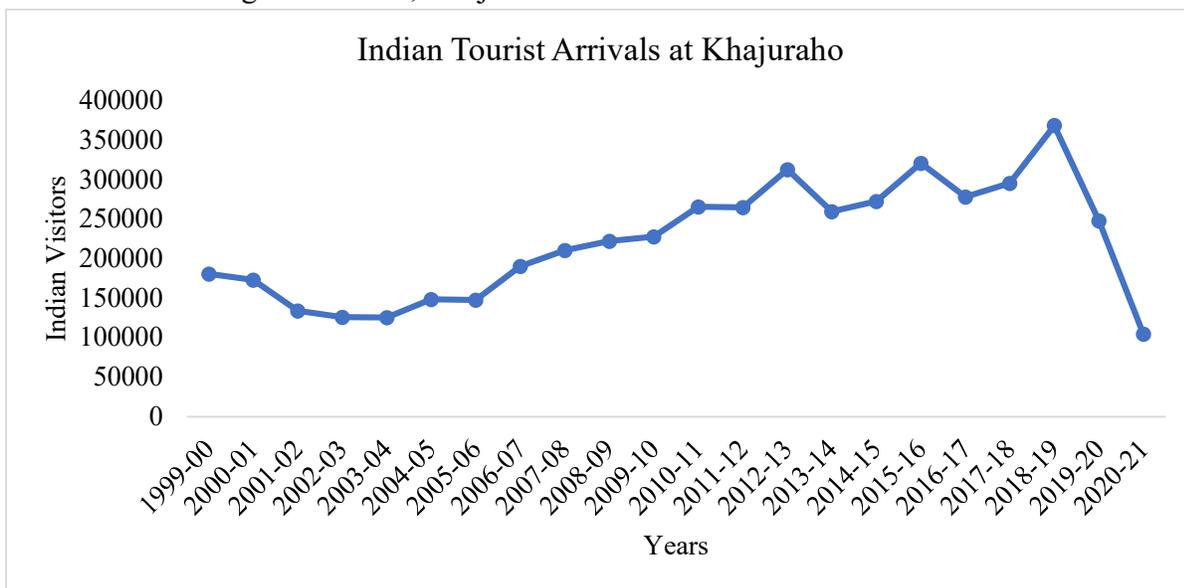


Figure 6.: Indian Tourist Arrivals at Khajuraho

Source: MS-Excel

The above graph shows the data related to Indian visitors of Khajuraho. The pattern of Indian visitors is showing the upward trends. The growth of Indian visitors to Khajuraho depicts the increasing growth for overall two decades. From the year 2019-20 and 2020-21, the domestic visitors are less in Khajuraho due to the covid pandemics situation.

Table 4: Foreign Tourist Arrivals at Khajuraho

| Year | Foreigner Visitors | Year | Foreigner Visitors |
|---------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|
| 1999-00 | 64724 | 2010-11 | 95406 |
| 2000-01 | 53825 | 2011-12 | 101440 |
| 2001-02 | 29134 | 2012-13 | 99131 |
| 2002-03 | 27826 | 2013-14 | 80369 |
| 2003-04 | 45291 | 2014-15 | 71956 |
| 2004-05 | 70405 | 2015-16 | 65796 |
| 2005-06 | 70977 | 2016-17 | 66191 |
| 2006-07 | 79685 | 2017-18 | 64848 |
| 2007-08 | 89659 | 2018-19 | 58588 |
| 2008-09 | 73797 | 2019-20 | 41391 |
| 2009-10 | 96727 | 2020-21 | 27 |

Source: Regional Office, Khajuraho

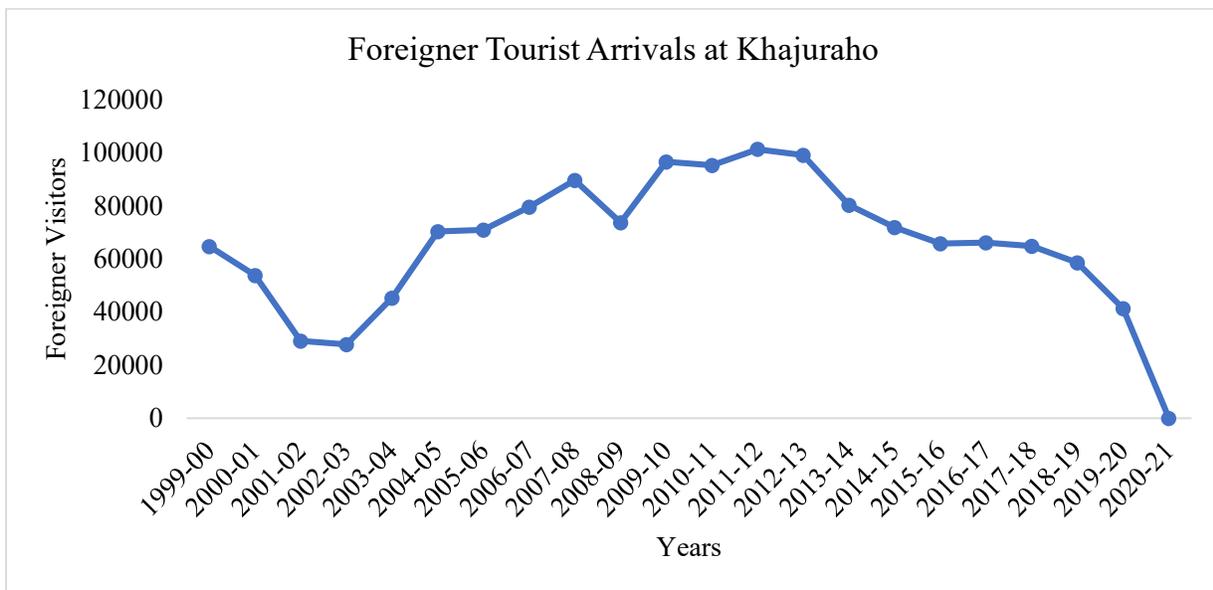


Figure 7: Foreigner Tourist Arrivals at Khajuraho Source: MS-Excel

The above graph shows the data related to foreign visitors of Khajuraho. The pattern of foreign visitors is showing the fluctuation trend. There is moderate growth illustrates for overall two decades. From the year 2019-20 and 2020-21, the foreign visitors are less in Khajuraho due to the covid pandemics situation.

Table 5: Percentage Share of Indian and Foreign Visitors with Respect to Madhya Pradesh Visitors

| Year | % Share of Indian Visitors | % Share of Foreign Visitors | Year | % Share of Indian Visitors | % Share of Foreign Visitors |
|---------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2007-08 | 1.51 | 38.98 | 2014-15 | 0.43 | 22.49 |
| 2008-09 | 1.01 | 29.52 | 2015-16 | 0.41 | 15.67 |
| 2009-10 | 0.99 | 48.36 | 2016-17 | 0.18 | 18.39 |
| 2010-11 | 0.70 | 38.16 | 2017-18 | 0.38 | 18.01 |
| 2011-12 | 0.60 | 37.57 | 2018-19 | 0.44 | 15.83 |
| 2012-13 | 0.59 | 35.40 | 2019-20 | 0.28 | 12.93 |
| 2013-14 | 0.41 | 28.70 | | | |

Source: Report on Tourist Department

The above table shows the data related to percentage share of Khajuraho visitors with respect to Madhya Pradesh. The Indian and foreign visitors are present in the Khajuraho and Madhya Pradesh. The data clearly observes that the more Indian visitors are visited to Madhya Pradesh but nearly 1-2 per cent visitors only visited to Khajuraho. Moreover, the more foreign visitors are visited to Khajuraho that is approximately 12-48 per cent.

Table 6: Average Per Capita Per Day Tourist Expenditure

| Year | % Change of WSP (Wholesale Price Index) ((Assumed) | Average Per Capita Expenditure | |
|---------|--|--------------------------------|---------------|
| | | Domestic (Rs.) | Foreign (Rs.) |
| 2000-01 | 5% | 1000 | 4000 |
| 2001-02 | 5% | 1050 | 4200 |
| 2002-03 | 5% | 1103 | 4410 |
| 2003-04 | 5% | 1158 | 4631 |
| 2004-05 | 5% | 1216 | 4862 |
| 2005-06 | 5% | 1277 | 5105 |
| 2006-07 | 5% | 1341 | 5360 |
| 2007-08 | 5% | 1408 | 5628 |
| 2008-09 | 5% | 1478 | 5910 |
| 2009-10 | 5% | 1552 | 6205 |
| 2010-11 | 5% | 1630 | 6516 |
| 2011-12 | 5% | 1711 | 6841 |
| 2012-13 | 5% | 1797 | 7183 |

| | | | |
|---------|----|------|-------|
| 2013-14 | 5% | 1887 | 7543 |
| 2014-15 | 5% | 1981 | 7920 |
| 2015-16 | 5% | 2080 | 8316 |
| 2016-17 | 5% | 2184 | 8731 |
| 2017-18 | 5% | 2293 | 9168 |
| 2018-19 | 5% | 2408 | 9626 |
| 2019-20 | 5% | 2528 | 10108 |
| 2020-21 | 5% | 2655 | 10613 |

Source: Report on Tourist Department

The table above shows that the per capita change in tourist expenditure per day according to percentage change of wholesale price index. The percentage change assumed was 5 % for every year. The average per capita expenditure of domestic tourist and foreign tourist is increases year after year. The estimated average per day per capita expenditure of domestic tourists in Madhya Pradesh is Rs. 1000 whereas for the foreign tourist it becomes Rs. 4000 in the year 2000-01. Also, the estimated domestic tourist's expenditure per day is Rs. 2655 whereas for the foreign tourist per day expenditure required is Rs. 10613 in the year 2020-21.

Conclusion and recommendation

Khajura, the common date palm, has given Khajuraho its name. Famous for ancient intricate sculptures and nagara-styled architecture, the Khajuraho group of temples stand graceful and raised amidst several controversies regarding their construction in the medieval period. Since its inception between 950-1050 CE by the Chandela dynasty, these famous Khajuraho sculpted temples have been hogging the limelight attracting millions of tourists all over the world. Based on the archaeological Survey of India (ASI), back in 2016, the total number of tourists visiting the region surpassed the 66035-mark making it one of the most visited tourist destinations in the country (Hindustan Times, 2019). However, this number gradually reduced to 60759 in 2018 and with every passing month, the number further recessed highlighting a major challenge faced by the tourism department or the temples alone.

Based on the study findings, the stalled growth pattern of Khajuraho tourism is mainly due to Covid-19 restrictions and faulty infrastructural facilities offered by the tourism department. Since 2018, the foreign tourists' footfall gradually decreased while most of them complained about the challenging connectivity, sanitation availability and inadequacy of other essential amenities as the major issues concerning the Khajuraho tourism (Indianexpress.com, 2016). Covid-19 restrictions during the lockdown period have broken the backbone of Khajuraho tourism as the city now fails to witness the swarm of foreign travellers thus, affecting the economic condition of the state. Much of the government treasury comes from the tourism department and with coronavirus on its swing, the economic input has been grounded since the past few months. This necessitates the induction of few measures that could promise to revive the sector and bring back the old-lost crowd into the city.

As mentioned by some of the foreign tourists that infrastructural and connectivity challenges hinder their footfalls into the city, the tourism sector must consider arresting this issue by

incorporating modern facilities like infrastructural modifications catering for the needs of tourists with an additional option to enjoy the scenic beauty of the place from hotels itself. As a post-covid strategy, the tourism department must offer quality services and ensure proper adherence to the covid-19 protocols like adequate sanitisation process with clean towels and sanitisation facilities. Kandariya Mahadeva Temple is the most famous Hindu temple among the 22 remaining temples at Khajuraho considering its vastness and beauty. This magnificent temple has more than 800 sculptures carved both on the interior as well as the exterior walls of the temple and is also considered to be the celestial abode of Lord Shiva. Amongst the Western Groups of Khajuraho Temples, Kandariya Temple is the most popular that itself attracts thousand more travellers during Mahashivratri and other popular festivals. During these occasions, the density of travellers usually remains thick and with covid-19 restrictions, the tourism department might face immense challenges to adjust to this “new normal” situation. Therefore, with proper adherence to the aforementioned recommendations, it would be easier for the department to maintain a steady flow of tourists into the place and revive the popularity of the architectural symbolism of medieval India. The present study was carried out to analyze the trends and patterns of patterns in the growth of tourist flow in Khajuraho Bundelkhand. The study found that the Indian visitors showing the upward trend. Moreover, the moderate growth of foreign visitors showed in the last two decades. When the researcher studied the percentage share of visitors of Khajuraho with respect to Madhya Pradesh then the researcher observed that, more Indian visitors are visited to Madhya Pradesh but in the less percentages it visited to Khajuraho. Whereas, the foreign visitors more visited to Khajuraho due to historical places. Also, the per capita change in tourist expenditure per day according to percentage change of wholesale price index observed that, though there is a percentage change assumed was 5 % for every year, there is increase in the tourist expenditure observed year after year.

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