

---

# Khajuraho: Tourism and Its Impact

Shuchi Srivastava<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Department of Anthropology, National P. G. College, Autonomous College of University of Lucknow, Lucknow – 226 024, Uttar Pradesh, India (Email: [shuchi.anthro@gmail.com](mailto:shuchi.anthro@gmail.com))

---

Received: 30 September 2018; Revised: 01 November 2018; Accepted: 08 December 2018  
Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology 6 (2018): 1115-1125

---

**Abstract:** *In present time, tourism has become a worldwide phenomenon. It impacts significantly societies around the globe in various ways. Khajuraho is a world fame site because of its temple architecture and exquisite sculpture. It is a very popular and well visited tourist destination in India and is included in the UNESCO list of the World Heritage Sites. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to study the different aspects of tourism in Khajuraho and its impact on the development dynamics among the ethnic populations living in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, India. Primary as well as secondary sources of data have been used for the holistic study. A sample of 100 individuals was randomly selected. On the basis of results, it has been concluded that tourism in Khajuraho has started contributing to state and regional development in a significant way and has also shown multiplier effect in social, cultural, economic, educational, religious and spiritual life of people of the state and local region, thus, fulfilling all the objectives of successful tourism.*

---

**Keywords:** Khajuraho, Sculptures, Temples, Architecture, Heritage, Tourism, Development

---

## Introduction

In present time, tourism has become a worldwide phenomenon. It impacts significantly societies around the globe in various ways. Almost 7% of the total population of the world resort to tourism. It has been estimated that by 2020 there will be 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals and they will be spending around \$200 billion (Kapoor, 2001). This scenario will create new jobs in this sector. Due to its incredible economic prospective it has been described as a “Smokeless Industry”, without environmental damage, providing only economic gain without any cost either economically or socially. Thus, tourism has become one of the valuable attributes to most developing nations which can act as the pivot of the vehicle for economic growth and development. Tourism influences holistic development needs of the society in multidimensional ways. It is therefore necessary to create a general picture of possible implications and impact of tourism, economically and socially. It has been observed that many studies on tourism have been reported from various dimensions (Negi, 1987; Chopra, 1991; Sharma, 2000; G Bagri, 2002). In India ‘tourism’ is a new emerging field

and limited studies have been done so far. Khajuraho is well known all over the world for its temple architecture and exquisite sculpture. It is a very popular and well visited tourist destination in India and is included in the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) list of the World Heritage Sites in the year 1986. So, it is one of the 22 world heritage sites. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to study the different aspects of tourism in Khajuraho and its impact on the development dynamics among the ethnic populations living in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, India.

## **Methodology**

Primary as well as secondary sources of data have been used for the holistic study of tourism in Khajuraho village, District Chhattarpur of Madhya Pradesh. A sample of 100 individuals was randomly selected. All the respondents were interviewed intensively. Observation and case study method were used extensively. The data was collected from May 2014 to April 2015.

## **Location**

Khajuraho is a small modern village. It is located on the left bank of Khudar-Nala, a tributary of the Ken River, in Rajnagar Tehsil in Chhatarpur District of northern Madhya Pradesh. Khajuraho is situated at a distance of 47 km to the east of Chhatarpur, 55 km to the south of Mahoba, 400 km to the north of Jhansi, 40 km to south-west of Panna. It is located 600 km south - east to Delhi (Smith, 2011).

Railway station is about 9 km away from the Khajuraho. The airport is much closer to the village than the railway station. There is no bus service from the railway station to the village at present. Only autos and taxis are mean of transportation from railway station to village. Khajuraho covering an area of about 21 sq. km. is surrounded by the hilly ranges of Vindhya Mountains as its beautiful setting. A small stream flows by the village in the midst of lush forest and the wild natural growth tends to enhance the scenic beauty of the place. The nearby hills supplied the builders with massive slabs of stone needed for erecting the huge structures which are built entirely of sandstone.

## **Climate**

The region of Madhya Pradesh in which Khajuraho lies is well watered and relatively fertile. Khajuraho has an extreme tropical climate. It offers pleasant climatic conditions from October to February. The summer months are rather hot and hot wind blow during May and June. Even during winter months particularly October, November, February and March the midday is rather hot. The rainy season is spread over three months, i.e. from mid of June to mid of September. A moderate monsoon is the natural device which not only refills the Khajuraho village tanks but feed the surrounding forests also. This temperate climatic conditions and mountainous geography have created a rich variety of local flora and fauna. It is slack season for tourist to visit, picnic and wander amidst the temples. The environmental setting in Khajuraho is rural

and is considered as tension-free area for the domestic as well as for the foreign tourists.

## Demography

According to census 2011, Khajuraho had a population of 24,504 persons. Of these, 53% are males and 47% are females. In Khajuraho, 15% of the population is under 6 years of age. Khajuraho has an average literacy rate of 61.3%, higher than the national average of 59.5%. Male literacy is 68.9%, and female literacy is 52.76% (Ritu, 2013).

## Temples at Khajuraho

The temples at Khajuraho were built between the 9th and 11th centuries by the warrior kings of Chandela dynasty (Singh, 2007). Local tradition lists 85 temples in Khajuraho out of which only 22 temples are surviving after various stages of preservation and maintenance. Of these, Kandariya Mahadeva is the largest temple. All these temples are scattered over an area of about 9 square miles. Not all temples are related to Hinduism, as some are Jain temples in the Eastern Group. All these temples are known more about the sculptures and architectures than about the religion, worship and deities (Table 1).

**Table 1: Temples and Related Religion**

Sl. 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

To unravel the mystery of the 85 temples, the Archaeological Survey of India initiated an intensive survey in 1980. The finding of 18 mounds and other associated structures with definite evidence of the remains gave some acceptance to the common belief that the remains of many more temples could be found outside the range of the 10 kms. diameter. The 18 mounds, which showed definite evidence of archaeological remains, were demarcated (Table 2).

**Table 2: Reported Archaeological Mounds, Khajuraho**

Sl. No.	Mound Name	Local Name
1	Mound No. 1	Satdhara 1
2	Mound No. 2	Satdhara 2
3	Mound No.3	Satdhara 3a and 3b
4	Mound No. 4	Satdhara 4
5	Mound No. 5	Bhainsa
6	Mound No. 6	Sirmaura
7	Mound No. 7	Lakhuri
8	Mound No. 8	Batasa
9	Mound No.9	Panchkonda
10	Mound No. 10	Bagichi
11	Mound No. 11	Kharaintia
12	Mound No. 12	Khajaru
13	Mound No. 13	Baniani
14	Mound No. 14	Marhian
15	Mound No. 15	Pachhare
16	Mound No. 16	Tilokhar
17	Mound No. 17	Jakhnaura
18	Mound No. 18	Bijamandal

Till the year 2000, excavations were undertaken in the large Satdhara group of mounds and the largest of the Bijamandal group of mounds. With both the mounds excavated, the antiquity and monumentality of the creations at Khajuraho has got increased, further excavations are continued in the remaining mounds (Archaeological Survey of India, n.d.).

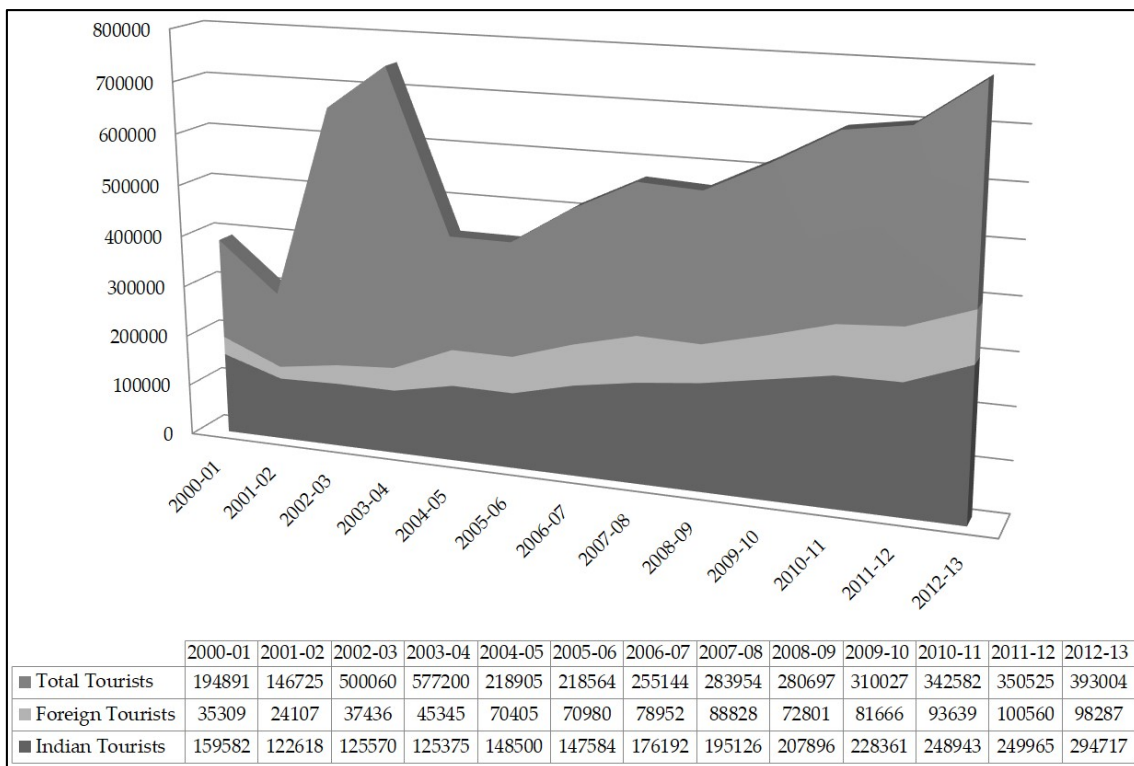
### **Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents**

The age range of 100 respondents, including 72 males and 28 females, was from 20 years to 60 years. Three religious communities who are living in Khajuraho village were taken for the study and are represented by 86% Hindu, 12% Muslims and 2% Christian. The educational level of the respondents varies from non-matric (29%), high school (14%), inter (21%), graduates (26%) to post graduate (10%). 37% of the respondents are working in government services and 63% are in business. 42% of the

respondents have monthly income between 10000/- to Rs. 20000/-, followed by those who have Rs. 5000/- to 10000/- (34%), more than Rs. 20000/- (14%), and up to Rs. 5000/- monthly income.

### Khajuraho as a Tourist Place

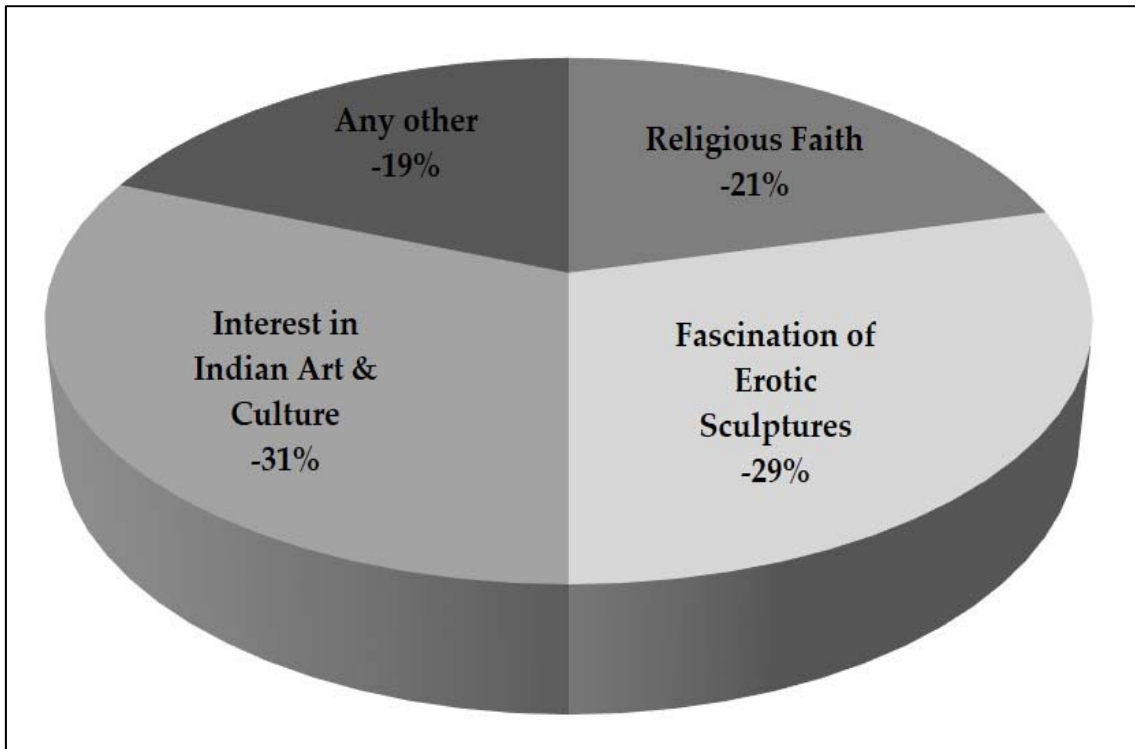
The Khajuraho sculptures attract a lot of foreign tourists as well who are interested in the Indian art and culture. These temples are most famous for their erotic sculptures, although these forms are less than 10 per cent of Khajuraho’s rich sculpture heritage. There are several different kinds of carvings here also. The art work symbolically portrait the purushartha of life in Hiduism - dharma, artha, kama and moksha, i.e., the four essential and appropriate goals of life. The erotic sculptures are related to the kama stage. The Vindhya mountain range makes it more fascinating to tourists, it forms the beautiful background. Khajuraho after TajMahal has become the most frequently visited monument in India. Art lovers from all the corners of the world come to see the Khajuraho sculptures every year. Thirteen years data of inflow of tourists in Khajuraho (Ritu, 2013) is presented in figure 1.



**Figure 1: Year-wise Inflow of Indian and Foreign Tourists in Khajuraho (2000-2013)**  
(Courtesy Archaeological Survey of India, Bhopal Circle 2013; Ritu 2013)

The Union Tourism Ministry (2017) has informed that a total of around 4.21 lakh tourists visited the state of M.P. in 2015. The figure had increased year on year from 2012 when 2,75,930 foreigners visited the state. The number of foreigners visited the state in the year 2013 was 2,80,333 and in year 2014 and 2015 it was increased to

respectively 3,16,915 and 3,63,195. Most interesting fact is that Khajuraho alone has received 25% of the total number of foreign tourists. So, the state government is spending crores of rupees to promote tourism here. It was also informed by the ministry that between the years 2013 and 2015, the government earned a big amount of Rs 35,000 crore from the foreign tourists visiting the country. Main Reasons of increasing tourism in Khajuraho according to respondents are revealed in figure 2.



**Figure 2: Main Reason of Increasing Tourism in Khajuraho**

Figure 2 shows that only 19% tourists are those who come here either to just enjoy holidays or for honeymoon purpose and to attend and celebrate the festivals organized here and 21% has come here due to their religious faith. Many tourists are more fascinating towards the unabashed sexuality (29%), not to antecedents of the temples and they are not interested in understanding the history and architecture, they only come to look. In this category maximum number is of Indian tourists. The percentage of those tourists who are interested in Indian art and culture is 31. Generally, foreigners are more interested in understanding the significance of the temples. Ichaporia (1983) claims that Khajuraho's popularity with western tourists has given it new stature in Indian eyes: it has become a symbol of Indians proudly proclaimed, rather than a hard-to-explain embarrassment.

### **Organization of Festivals**

During the Hindu spring month of Phalgun, the months of February/March with pleasant climatic conditions, different festivals are organized in Khajuraho to promote tourism:

**Mahashivratri:** The most important festival of Khajuraho is Mahashivratri which is celebrated across India as Lord Shiva's marriage with Goddess Parvati. This festival runs from the end of February through till March. Religious rites and the worshipping of Shiva dominate the festival's activities. The Matangeshvara temple stands on the highest ground and remains the only one in worship, draws about 50,000 pilgrims each year.

**Khajuraho Dance Festival:** Mostly festival take place between February and March. The week-long Khajuraho Dance Festival, organized annually by the Kala Parishad in Madhya Pradesh, concludes with enchanting classical dance performances by international dancers. The Festival showcases various classical styles of Indian dance such as Kathak, Bharat Natyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri and Kathakali. Modern Indian dance is a recent addition. Besides the amusing performances, one can find a number of craftsmen showcasing their artifacts and crafts to curious visitors. This festival has become popular among both local and foreign tourists.

**Lokranjan Festival:** For the common person there is the Lokranjan Festival which is held immediately following the Khajuraho Festival and involves many more performers and audience. This Festival is organized by the Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad and its duration is one week. The event is a platform for dancers to showcase their talent and a wonderful event for tourists to witness the variety of dance forms of M.P. like Nautanki, Tamasha, Raslila, Swang, Nacha etc.

## **Entertainment at Khajuraho**

**Accommodation:** The village of Khajuraho survives by the tourist trade so accommodation is available in plenty. There is a wide variety of hotels including high class, medium class and budget hotels. These are run by either government authorities like Madhya Pradesh Tourism Corporation and Indian Tourism Development Corporation or on private basis.

**Fooding:** Khajuraho caters to the tourist trade with a wide range of restaurants, cafes and stalls. These serve variety of dishes, familiar to every visitor, foreign or Indian. A few expats have set up shop in here and their place serve a variety of authentic European food as well as beer and other alcoholic drinks. At hotels, the in-house dining facilities take care of houseguests.

**Shopping:** Apart from the government emporia, there are numerous private outlets in where one can find collection of various crafts from all parts of Madhya Pradesh. The excellent craftsmen of Khajuraho have over the years developed a tradition of handicrafts and handlooms. Textile weaving is a major craft in village including variety of saris and other Indian wear. Miniature stone-carved replicas of erotic sculptures are favorite items for shopping in Khajuraho including Iron, brass and stone sculptures depicting Kama Sutra poses. These are available at all the handicraft stores in the village.

**Light and Sound Show and Guided Tour:** The Western group temples offer a professional light and sound show every evening in the open lawns in the temple complex, firstly in English language then in Hindi. The show is about an hour long and covers the history, philosophy and art of sculpting of these temples. The western group has the facility of a guided tour for tourists which cover seven-eight temples. There is also an audio guided tour developed by Archaeological Survey of India to describe the historical facts related to the temples.

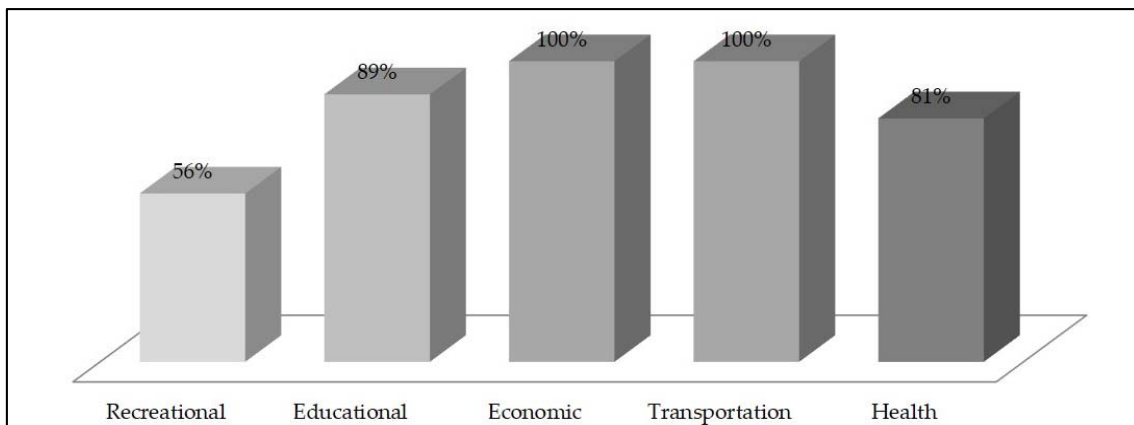
**Local Transportation:** The best way to get around and see the temple as well as the village life of Khajuraho is bicycle, which easily get on rent at the shops near the main temple complex. Other modes for local journey are Auto rickshaw and car. The Auto rickshaws provide a comfortable ride around the small village.

**Surrounding Tourist Sites:** Apart from archaeological and architectural magnificence, Khajuraho also provides scope for excursions. There are numerous places of interest within a distance of 100 km of tourist attractions. Some of them are Rajnagar Lake, Bhimsagar Lake, Raneh Fall, Rajgarh Palace, Pandav Fall, Gangau Wild Sanctuary, Burha Tal, Panna, Majhgawan Mines, Dhubela Museum, Mahoba, Ajaygarh Fort, Bijawar and Jata Shankar.

### Physical Growth and Economy in Khajuraho

Khajuraho has a great historical significance because it is a place of ancient temples. Since the place attract tourists from different parts of the country as well as abroad, the maximum portion of the economy of this area depends on tourism. Be it in a direct manner or indirect, almost every household of this region gets benefited from tourism.

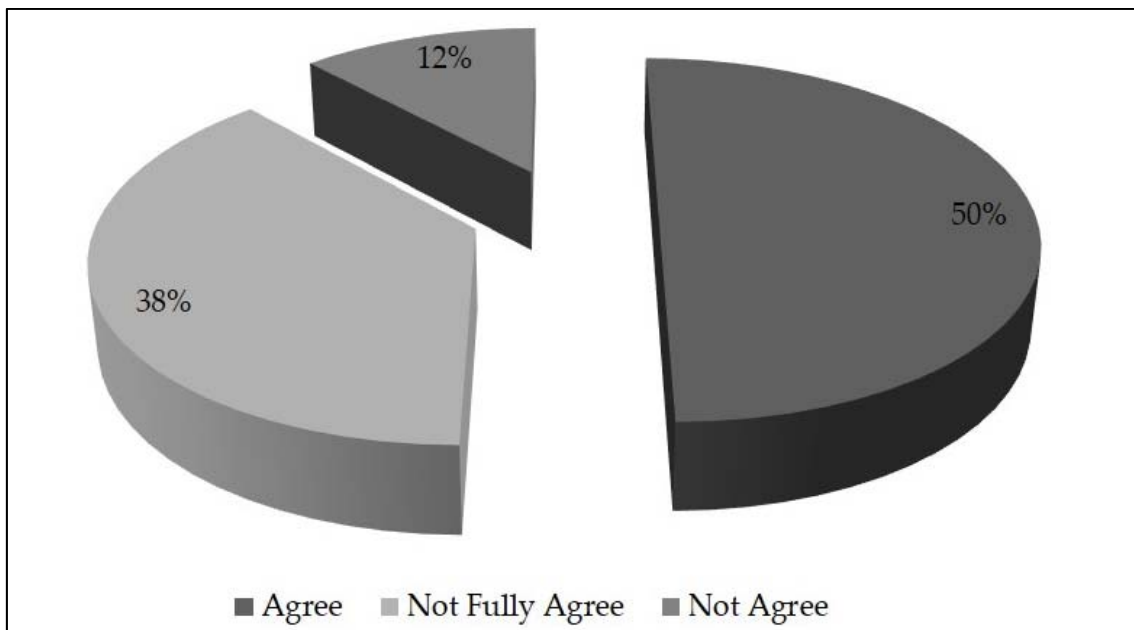
Agriculture and farming form contributors to the economy of this historical place. The peoples of the region are doing other activities such as driving taxies, autos and tourist buses and running shops, hotels, restaurants etc. Thus, the livelihood of the Khajuraho peoples are majorly depends on tourism. So, 61% respondents reported that they are getting funds for development of tourism by the government in any form, 29% respondents denied in this regard.



**Figure 3: Increment in Availability of Various Facilities due to Tourism**



The influx of a large number of tourists during the last two-three decades has given impetus to Khajuraho physical growth. This village witnessed the growth of tourist infrastructure during this period, primarily in the form of hotels and the proliferation of tourist related commercial activities. High class hotels are also constructed on outskirts of the village. Other amenities are also provided to the town. All round improvement of infrastructure facilities and amenities are acknowledged by the local residents. The streets are clean and paved. Drainage and water supply has been provided to all. This physical development has transformed this once sleepy village into a reasonably attractive settlement. Figure 3 shows that 100% respondents acknowledged economic growth and development in transportation, while 89% accepted development in educational facilities followed by health (81%) and recreational facilities (56%). Thus, they all have accepted the socio-cultural impact of tourism, tourists and their activities. But there are various small effects of tourism (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Mal Effect of Tourism on Environment and Health of Local People**

Total 88% respondents realize that there are various hazardous effects of tourism on natural environment of Khajuraho and health of local residents. They have reported that the haphazard manner constructions and commercial expansion has spoiled the beauty. Agriculture & Tourism both are responsible towards deteriorating environmental condition in Khajuraho. As Khajuraho’s soil is not very fertile, so the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is seriously affecting the quality of soil lands poisonous. Apart from its inhabitants, Khajuraho has a floating population of lacs of tourists per year. The garbage and litter produced by them is thrown in the open. There are 5 five-star hotels at Khajuraho but none is equipped with recycling, waste or water treatment plant. Worse still, most of these hotels are disposing off their waste and sewage in open grounds. The heavily increased vehicular traffic especially diesel

driven auto and tempos is causing emission of noxious gases. The land around Khajuraho has been cleared for agricultural and other miscellaneous purposes and the remaining of its greenery too is being rooted off under increasing pressure of growing urbanization and vested human interests. Due to dense habitation and improper land use, the watershed is disrupted.

## **Khajuraho Development Plan**

According to Development Alternatives Newsletter (n.d.), Khajuraho and its environment have been dealt by the State Government as a Special Area to control its unusual development problems. In 1975 a draft of Khajuraho Development Plan was produced which came into existence from 10 March 1978 and is replaced by Khajuraho Development Plan of 1991 that refers to the development vision to 2011. INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art, Culture and Heritage, New Delhi) initiated an extensive study for the sustainable development of the Khajuraho in January 1998 to suggest integrated planning strategy for the next thirty years and it was completed within a period of one year. On the line of landscape planning and environmental cleanliness and beautification of the World Heritage Sites of Khajuraho, the Conservation and Sustainable Development Strategy document for the Khajuraho Heritage Region includes some action proposals: Integrated Heritage Management, Sustainable Tourism Development and Integrated Community Development. With the passage of time, the comprehensive regional development plan (Master Plan) of Khajuraho is prepared, called “Khajuraho Vikas Yojana 2011”, under the act of “Madhya Pradesh Nagar Tatha Gram Nivesh Adhiniyam 1973”. A holistic development of tourism as well as preservation of glorious temples of international recognition is the main focus of this plan. Implementation of development schemes, especially IRDP and TRYSEM, would have enabled the local villagers to integrate their economy with development of tourism in better way. A lot of the handicrafts are being sold in Khajuraho come from other parts of the country, so the outsiders and migrants are also getting benefit by economic development of Khajuraho.

It is found that 89% people were aware about availability of development programmes for local area and people, either they were enormously aware (58%) or they have only some knowledge (31%) about it, while only 11% respondents were totally unaware in this regard. But it was suggested by all the respondents there are various possibilities for more development plans.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of results, it may be concluded that tourism in Khajuraho has started contributing to state and regional development in a significant way and has also shown multiplier effect in social, cultural, economic, educational, religious and spiritual life of people of the state and local region, thus, fulfilling all the following objectives of successful tourism: (1) Socio-economic development of area, (2) Increasing employment opportunities, (3) Developing domestic tourism especially for the budget category, (4) Preservation of national heritage and environment, (5) Development of

international tourism and optimization of foreign exchange earnings, (6) Diversification of the tourism product and (7) Increase in India's share in world tourism.

## References

- Chopra, S. 1991. *Tourism and Development in India*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House.
- G, Bagri, S. C. 2002. *Emerging issues and trends in Tourism Promotion*. Garhwal, India.  
[http://www.devalt.org/newsletter/mar00/of\\_1.htm](http://www.devalt.org/newsletter/mar00/of_1.htm). Retrieved on August 4, 2017.
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhopal/number-of-foreign-tourists-in-mp-dip-by-15-khajuraho-gets-25-footfall/articleshow/59837575.cms>. Retrieved on August 13, 2017.
- <https://whc.unesco.org/document/162840>. Retrieved on August 4, 2018.
- Ichaporia, N. 1983. Tourism at Khajuraho, an Indian Enigma. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 10 (1), pp. 75-92.
- Kapoor, A. K. 2011. Environment, Tourism and Development: The Case of Khajuraho, India. *International Conference on Chemical, Environment and Biological Sciences*. (ICCEBS' 2011).
- Negi, J. 1987. *Tourism Development and Resource Conservation*. New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Company.
- Ritu. 2013. *The Art and Architecture of Khajuraho Temples: Lakshmana and Kandariya Mahadeva*. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.
- Sharma, J. K. 2000. *Tourism and Development: Design for Ecological Sustainability*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.
- Singh, R. 2007. Landscape of Sacred Territory of Khajuraho, *City Society and Planning* (Eds: Thakur, Pomeroy, et al.), Vol. 2.
- Smith, V. A. 2011. *Khajuraho Unveiled*. Greenage Books, Australia.