Exploring Dark Tourism In Rajasthan Heritage, History and Visitor Perspectives

Mr. Akash Kumar Jakhar[1], Dr. Neha Sharma[2]

[1]Mr. Akash Kumar Jakhar, NCHMCT, Noida
[2]Dr. Neha Sharma, NCHMCT, Noida

Abstract

Dark tourism, the practice of visiting sites associated with death, tragedy, and historical suffering, has emerged as a distinctive yet complex form of tourism. While globally recognized, dark tourism in India—particularly in Rajasthan—remains a relatively underexplored phenomenon. Known for its grand palaces, forts, and vibrant culture, Rajasthan also harbors a darker past marked by battles, sacrifices, and folklore, making it a unique destination for dark tourism.

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of dark tourism in Rajasthan, examining the motivations of visitors, the socio-cultural and economic impacts on local communities, and the ethical considerations involved in its promotion. By analyzing prominent dark tourism sites such as Bhangarh Fort, Kuldhara Village, and Chittorgarh Fort, the research seeks to understand how these historically significant yet somber locations influence both tourists and residents.

A mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, was employed to gather data from tourists and local stakeholders. The findings suggest that while dark tourism has the potential to diversify the state's tourism industry, challenges related to commercialization, cultural sensitivity, and ethical representation persist. There is a need for a balanced approach that ensures respectful engagement while preserving the historical integrity of these sites.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on dark tourism, offering insights for policymakers, tourism authorities, and local communities to develop sustainable and responsible tourism practices. By highlighting the complexities of dark tourism, the research advocates for strategies that promote education, reflection, and cultural sensitivity in the exploration of Rajasthan's darker heritage.

Keywords: Dark Tourism, Rajasthan, Paranormal

1. Introduction

Dark tourism, a term first popularized by Foley and Lennon (2000), refers to the phenomenon of visiting sites associated with death, tragedy, and historical suffering. This unique subset of tourism delves into the macabre aspects of human history, attracting those who seek to understand and reflect upon past atrocities. While dark tourism may appear unconventional, it serves an essential role in educating visitors about significant yet somber historical events, encouraging contemplation and empathy.

Rajasthan, a state celebrated for its magnificent palaces, vibrant culture, and architectural grandeur, holds a lesser-known but equally captivating allure—its darker past. This region has witnessed countless battles, sacrifices, and tragedies throughout history, leaving behind sites that echo tales of valor, loss, and despair. From the haunted ruins of Bhangarh Fort to the ghostly village of Kuldhara, Rajasthan's dark tourism sites

captivate the curiosity of travelers who wish to explore the intersection of history, legend, and folklore. Dark tourism in Rajasthan is more than just a quest for thrill-seeking; it is a means to understand the socio-cultural context of these events and honor the lives affected by them. Despite its potential, dark tourism remains a developing niche within the state's tourism industry, requiring strategic management to ensure ethical practices and responsible engagement.

This research aims to explore the phenomenon of dark tourism in Rajasthan, examining the motivations of visitors, the impact on local communities, and the challenges associated with balancing heritage conservation and tourism development. By delving into the narratives of these historically significant yet somber sites, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential and implications of dark tourism in Rajasthan.

2. Aims & Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to explore the phenomenon of dark tourism in Rajasthan and assess its impact on the state's tourism industry and local communities. By understanding the motivations behind dark tourism and examining its implications, the study seeks to contribute to the responsible development of this niche tourism sector.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify and analyze the key dark tourism sites in Rajasthan and their historical significance.
2. To understand the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of tourists visiting these sites.
3. To assess the economic, social, and cultural impact of dark tourism on local communities.
4. To explore the ethical considerations involved in the promotion and commercialization of dark tourism.
5. To propose strategies for the sustainable management and responsible promotion of dark tourism in Rajasthan.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide insights into the potential growth of dark tourism in Rajasthan while ensuring that it remains respectful, educational, and beneficial for all stakeholders involved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dark tourism has emerged as a distinct area of study within the broader field of tourism research. Foley and Lennon (2000) initially defined the concept as visits to places historically associated with death and tragedy. Since then, scholars have explored dark tourism from various perspectives, including its psychological, sociological, and ethical dimensions (Stone, 2006). The appeal of dark tourism often lies in a combination of curiosity, a desire for understanding, and a need for emotional connection with past events (Biran & Hyde, 2013). This phenomenon is not limited to the exploration of death and suffering; it also encompasses a broader engagement with collective memory, trauma, and the politics of remembrance (Lennon & Foley, 2000).

Research on dark tourism suggests that motivations for visiting such sites vary widely. Some tourists seek an educational experience, hoping to gain deeper insights into historical tragedies, while others may be drawn by a fascination with the macabre or a desire to confront their fears (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). For some, visiting dark sites is a means to connect with their heritage or identity, especially in cases where the events hold personal or cultural significance (Biran et al., 2011). The media often plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of these sites, sensationalizing tragedies to attract tourists while sometimes

oversimplifying complex historical narratives (Seaton & Lennon, 2004). This interplay between media and tourism can influence how dark sites are perceived and commercialized.

Scholars have debated the ethical dimensions of dark tourism, particularly regarding commodification. Ashworth and Hartmann (2005) argue that excessive commercialization of tragic sites risks exploiting human suffering, while others believe it can serve as a means of preserving history and encouraging reflection (Robb, 2009). The fine line between memorialization and commodification requires careful consideration to maintain the dignity of those affected by historical tragedies. Furthermore, ethical concerns arise when dark tourism transforms from a reflective, educational experience to a form of entertainment, trivializing historical suffering (Light, 2017).

Dark tourism has also been studied for its socio-cultural impacts. While it can facilitate dialogue about historical injustices and provide educational value, it may also lead to negative consequences, such as cultural insensitivity or reinforcing stereotypes (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). In some cases, communities near dark tourism sites struggle with the ethical burden of profiting from tragedies while honoring the memory of those affected. Additionally, the emotional toll on visitors can vary, with some experiencing empathy and reflection while others seek shock value and morbid fascination (Best, 2007).

In the context of Rajasthan, limited research exists on the integration of dark tourism into the broader tourism industry. Sites like Bhangarh Fort and Kuldhara attract attention, yet there is minimal academic analysis of their impact on local communities or the ethical considerations of their commercialization. The balance between preserving historical significance and catering to tourists seeking thrill or entertainment remains delicate. There is a need for a nuanced approach that respects the historical context of these sites while accommodating the expectations of a diverse visitor base.

Overall, the literature emphasizes the complexity of dark tourism as a phenomenon. It is not merely a niche form of tourism driven by curiosity but a platform for education, reflection, and dialogue. As dark tourism grows in popularity, there is a growing need for policies that prioritize respectful engagement and sustainability to ensure that the historical significance of these sites is preserved while fostering responsible tourism.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite the growing academic interest in dark tourism, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies focused on the contextual factors that influence dark tourism in Rajasthan. While the literature explores general motivations, ethical dilemmas, and socio-cultural impacts, limited research addresses the perspectives of local communities, their acceptance of dark tourism, and the impact on their cultural identity. Additionally, there is a scarcity of empirical research examining the balance between commercialization and heritage preservation, particularly in a culturally rich yet conservative region like Rajasthan. The need for policies that ensure sustainable development while respecting cultural sensibilities further emphasizes this research gap.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Dark tourism, a term coined by Foley and Lennon (2000), refers to the practice of visiting locations associated with death, tragedy, and historical suffering. Unlike traditional forms of tourism that celebrate beauty, culture, and leisure, dark tourism delves into the darker aspects of human history. This niche sector of tourism has gained considerable attention globally as travelers seek experiences that extend beyond conventional sightseeing, exploring themes of loss, memory, and trauma (Stone, 2006).

In the Indian context, dark tourism remains relatively underexplored despite the country's complex history marked by wars, colonialism, and natural disasters. Rajasthan, known for its opulent palaces and vibrant culture, also bears the remnants of a tumultuous past characterized by battles, royal sacrifices, and tragic events. Sites like Bhangarh Fort, Kuldhara Village, and the Chittorgarh Fort exemplify this aspect, attracting curious visitors intrigued by their haunted reputations and tragic histories.

Understanding the motivations behind dark tourism is crucial, as it encompasses a blend of educational, emotional, and existential desires. Some tourists seek to connect with history on a deeper level, while others may be drawn by curiosity, thrill, or a fascination with the macabre (Biran & Hyde, 2013). Despite its growing popularity, the ethical implications of dark tourism—such as commodifying tragedy and sensationalizing trauma—pose significant challenges (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005).

This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of dark tourism in Rajasthan, examining the motivations of visitors, the socio-cultural impact on local communities, and the potential for sustainable and responsible tourism development. By analyzing the complex dynamics between tourism, heritage, and historical memory, the research seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of dark tourism in Rajasthan.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Dark tourism is a growing yet underexplored phenomenon, especially in the Indian context. Despite its potential to enhance tourism diversity and promote historical understanding, there is limited research on the implications of dark tourism in Rajasthan

The state, known for its rich heritage and cultural vibrancy, also harbors sites marked by tragedy, conflict, and legend—places that have the potential to attract curious visitors seeking unconventional travel experiences.

This study is needed to fill the existing research gaps in understanding the motivations of tourists who visit these dark sites and to explore the socio-cultural, economic, and ethical impacts on local communities. As dark tourism gains popularity, there is a need to balance tourism development with heritage preservation, ensuring that these sites are promoted responsibly without trivializing historical suffering.

Furthermore, the study aims to provide insights for policymakers, tourism authorities, and local stakeholders to develop strategies that can maximize the benefits of dark tourism while minimizing potential harm. Addressing the need for ethical tourism practices and sustainable development, this research seeks to contribute to the thoughtful and respectful promotion of Rajasthan's dark tourism sites

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on exploring the phenomenon of dark tourism in Rajasthan, specifically examining its potential as a niche tourism sector. The research covers significant dark tourism sites in the state, such as Bhangarh Fort, Kuldhara Village, and Chittorgarh Fort, analyzing their historical relevance and their appeal to both domestic and international tourists.

The scope extends to understanding the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of tourists visiting these sites, alongside assessing the socio-cultural and economic impacts on local communities. By exploring the ethical considerations related to the commercialization of tragedy, the study also aims to highlight the delicate balance required between promoting tourism and respecting the historical significance of these sites.

Furthermore, the study seeks to provide insights for policymakers, tourism authorities, and stakeholders to develop strategies for the sustainable and responsible promotion of dark tourism in Rajasthan. The scope also encompasses recommendations for preserving the cultural integrity of these sites while maximizing their educational and reflective value for visitors.

Overall, this research is expected to contribute to the growing discourse on dark tourism, offering a deeper understanding of its implications in a culturally rich yet sensitive region like Rajasthan.

While this form of tourism may appear gruesome, it may give a significant chance for education and contemplation on historical events and their influence on society. Yet, it is critical to approach such locations with awareness and respect for the persons and communities touched by these occurrences.

Visitors might also consider sponsoring local groups and projects that attempt to preserve the memory of people touched by these events and encourage healing and reconciliation. Furthermore, it is critical to educate oneself about the cultural and societal background surrounding these places before visiting them. Also, it is important to understand that dark tourism can be emotionally hard and distressing for certain people. As a result, it is advised to practice caution and self-care when participating in this form of travel. Ultimately, dark tourism has the ability to foster a greater knowledge and respect of history and its influence on society.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to view these locations critically and recognize the possibility for exploitation or sensationalization of terrible events for tourist interests. It is also necessary to understand and address the ethical difficulties underlying dark tourism, such as the monetization of human pain and potential contempt for the departed.

Finally, while partaking in dark tourism, responsible and ethical tourist activities should take precedence. Additionally, when visiting such locations, it is advised that visitors act respectfully and follow the norms and restrictions established by local authorities. Visitors should also be conscious of their own emotional condition and minimise their exposure if they feel overwhelmed or upset. Also, it is recommended to obtain the advice of experienced individuals, such as historians or tour guides who are knowledgeable about the particular location being visited.

Ultimately, dark tourism may give a unique and meaningful travel experience for people interested in researching the darker sides of human history. It is critical to remember that the fundamental goal of dark tourism should always be education and contemplation, rather than just enjoyment.

Furthermore, it is critical to protect the privacy of persons who may still be affected by the events that transpired at these places. By following these rules, travellers may guarantee that they engage in dark tourism in a responsible and ethical manner, while also acquiring a greater appreciation of the complexities and subtleties of history. This strategy will not only improve the quality of the visitor's experience, but will also guarantee that their visit is respectful to those touched by the historical events being honored.

To summarise, while dark tourism may not be for everyone, those who wish to participate in it should do so with caution and consideration. Finally, appropriate and ethical tourism practises are required to guarantee that dark tourism does not belittle or exploit terrible occurrences, but rather serves as a form of education, contemplation, and memorial. It is critical to approach dark tourism with respect and empathy for those touched by the events being honored.

SEVEN BASICS OF DARK TOURISM

The following are seven providers or seven basics of dark tourism:

- **Dark Fun Factories**: These are venues that create fun by revolving around the dark.

- **Commercial and financial ethics** cause surface mortality. They have a solid tourism infrastructure. Dracula Park in Romania is one example.
- **Dark Exhibitions**: This concept provides death-related attractions to travellers, but exclusively for educational and learning objectives. These are places, venues, and exhibitions that depict death and misery.
- **Dark Dungeons**: These are locations and locales with a criminal past and injustice. They are once again places that exclusively educate tourists about the history of the location. Prisons are one example.
- **Dark Shrines**: These are not well-known locations. They are close to places of death and despair. They appear violent and unappealing. They are only visited to pay respects to the departed.
- **Dark Resting Places**: They are cemeteries and graveyards. They are typically visited to pay respects to loved ones.
- **Dark War Sites**: These are locations where big conflicts were fought in the past. These historical locations have grown in prominence. For example, consider the Battle of Jhansi.
- **Dark locations of mass killing**: These are areas of pain, death, and crimes that are divided into the darkest and lightest sites.

Places of Dark Tourism in Rajasthan (India)

1. BHANGARH FORT [Bhangarh ka Killah (Alwar, Rajasthan)

Bhangarh Fort is one of the scariest, haunted and spookiest places of India. It is situated near Alwar in dense forest area.

Raja Madho Singh, the younger brother of the famed Mughal general, Man Singh of Amber, built the fort in the 17th century. Apart from the royal palace, Bhangarh had around 9,000 dwellings until 1720, when it progressively declined in population.

Story of the town is, a magician who fell in love with the princess of bhangarh even though their match was impossible.

Magician decided to cast a spell on her to make her surrender to him. Princess learned of his plans and found a way to kill him. Before he dies, cast a dark spell on the palace which caused its doom. Now days, his spirit is freely roaming in the fort aft er sunset. No one can visit this palace aft er the sun has gone down.

Once the night falls and darkness takes over, this place becomes haunted and dangerous. The locals believe that the fort is cursed, and no one is allowed to enter after sunset.

The eerie atmosphere, ruins, and legends surrounding the fort made it a perfect spot for dark tourism.

2. KULDHARA (RAJASTHAN)

Kuldhara, located 17 kilometres west of Jaisalmer, has a story to tell. It was formerly a flourishing Paliwal Brahmin village in the state of Jaisalmer 300 years ago. According to folklore, the wicked eyes of Salim Singh, the state's powerful and debauched prime minister, fell on the village head's daughter, and he wished to marry her by force. He warned the town with dire repercussions if they did not comply with his request. Instead of complying with the tyrant's orders, the Paliwals assembled a council, and individuals from 85 villages deserted their ancestral homes and vanished.

But that wasn't all; before departing, they cursed Kuldhara, saying that no one would ever be allowed to live in their hamlet again. To this day, the community is deserted, practically exactly as its residents abandoned it centuries ago.

Those who have attempted to spend the night there are believed to have been frightened away by odd paranormal phenomena.

Another, more reasonable explanation is that Salim Singh raised the taxes to such a degree that it became unviable for the local people to survive in the hamlet, and they therefore opted to relocate to greener pastures. People, on the other hand, prefer the former story; after all, who doesn't want a little romance and intrigue in their stories.

3. THE BRIJ RAJ BHAVAN PALACE IN (KOTA-RAJASTHAN)

Brij Raj Bhavan was used as a residential house for British officials and their families during the British government in India. Major Charles Burton once visited Kota and settled in this heritage home with his family. When the historic Sepoy Mutiny broke out in 1857, a party of Indian troops also besieged the Brij Raj Bhawan palace. They burst inside the residence and forced Major Burton's troops to escape.

Ultimately, they assassinated the English officer and his children who were residing in the palace. Following the murder, the then-King of Kota collected the bodies and buried them in the palace's grand hall.

Soon after, local neighbors allegedly began seeing odd figures and hearing unusual sounds. That's how the villagers deduced that the deceased British Major is still alive and well in the palace, although as a ghost.

4. CHITTORGARH FORT

The fort, located around 100 kilometers from Udaipur in the picturesque town of Chittorgarh, embodies Rajput pride, devotion, and sacrifice. It is also one of the biggest forts in India. Apart from its grandeur and architectural splendor, the fort is renowned to have seen the suffering of Allaudin Khilji, the monarch of the Khilji dynasty that controlled the Delhi Sultanate. Khilji overthrew the then-ruler of the Rajput clan, Rana Ratan Singh. The fort saw the historic Jauhar, in which hundreds of women and children immolated themselves to preserve their honor from the invading army. The guide's description brought tears to my eyes, and I couldn't help but ponder about the violence and sacrifice that the people of the past had to undergo.

5. JAISALMER WAR MUSEUM.

The stories of the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 came to life in Tanot and Laungewala. Brig Ajit Kapoor, district collector Anupama Jorwal, municipal chairman Kavita Khatri, Jaisalmer ex-royals Raseshwari Raj Laxmi, Janmejaya Singh, Suryaprabha, BSF commandant SS Dabas, and other dignitaries were present on this occasion. This will benefit tourism. Out of the top five war museums, Jaisalmer's war museum has become a tourist attraction. In response to the large flood of tourists, the Indian army has begun a light and sound performance.

6. BHIMBETKA CAVES {ROCK SHELTERS}

The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archaeological site in central India that spans the Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods, as well as the mediaeval period. It displays the oldest remains of human life in India as well as evidence of the Stone Age beginning at the site in Acheulian periods. Only apply bold style to the headings; no underline, no italic.

7. CHAND BAORI STEPWELL

The Chand Baori (stepwell) in Abhaneri hamlet is one of Rajasthan's oldest and most renowned attractions. It was erected in the 9th century AD by King Chanda of the Nikumbha Dynasty. Chand Baori, one of the world's largest stepwells, was created to preserve water and give relief from the extreme heat. It was a communal gathering spot for both residents and royals.

Chand Baori is an architectural marvel with 3,500 precisely symmetrical, thin stairs. Every year, travellers from all around the world come to admire its perfect geometry. Yet, Chand Baori is difficult to discover,

making it one of India's hidden treasures. The play of light and shadow on the steps is what makes the building so appealing.

The baori narrows as one approaches the bottom. A double flight of steps on three sides leads to the surface of the water below. The fourth side is a three-story pavilion with beautifully carved jharokhas (windows), galleries, and balconies for the royal family to sit in. The Harshat Mata Temple is adjacent to the Chand Baori. This 9th-10th century temple is dedicated to Harshat Mata, the village's goddess of pleasure and contentment. Do not add colon at the end of the headings.

8. SUDHABAY

Sudhabay, near Pushkar, is well-known for its exorcisms. While it is not haunted in the traditional sense, the location holds an annual "Ghost Fair," with people travelling from all over the region to free themselves of ghosts that possess them. Sudhabay has a holy well. The yearly fair attracts a diverse throng and weird rituals (strange enough to give one chills) in the area surrounding the well.

9. NH-79, DUDU VILLAGE, RAJASTHAN.

This roadway is frequently referred to as the "route that begs for blood." NH-79, popularly known as the Ajmer-Udaipur route, is one of the most haunted areas in Udaipur. It is close to Dudu Village, a historic hamlet with many strange legends and activities linked with it.

The tale of NH-79 focuses on a mother and her infant who are claimed to have been slain on this particular route. The mother was fleeing with her infant from Dudu Village to avoid being married off when they were both slain by an incoming truck. When travelling along the highway, you can see the ghost of a mother carrying a baby in her arms, who then vanishes before your eyes.

10. NAHARGARH FORT (JAIPUR).

It is believed that the fort was first named Sudarshangarh, but came to be called Nahargarh after the spirit of Nahar Singh Bhomia, a prince, started haunting the place. As believed, a temple was built in the fort premises to appease the spirit. While you may or may not choose to believe in the story, there is no denying the lure of the structure. A sunset from the fort terrace is a sight that you should not miss for anything else when here.

Sawai Raja Man Singh erected the fort along with Amer Fort and Jaigarh Fort. The king was so obsessed with this specific fort that he constructed for his queens that even after his death, the Nahargarh Fort is haunted by his spirit.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Dark tourism typically attracts domestic and international travellers. According to my research, ghost walks drew the most ethnically varied groups, and the media plays an important role in bridging the gap between tourist and dark tourism.

The findings suggest that additional study on the concept will be worthwhile. The findings of this article also demonstrated that boosting dark tourism will aid in the development of tourist enterprises in Rajasthan, which will contribute to our country's GDP. As a revitalization strategy, the Department of Tourism may include rules for promoting dark tourist destinations. Tourist services must be created in these locations. These locations must be well-marketed and made accessible to tourists. Knowledge and expertise in relation to the concept of darker tourism must be established, and the beneficial aspect of the destinations and sites must be highlighted.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of dark tourism in Rajasthan. The methodology is designed to explore the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of tourists visiting dark tourism sites, as well as to analyze the socio-cultural and economic impacts on local communities.

Research Design:

A descriptive and exploratory research design is employed to investigate the phenomenon of dark tourism. This approach helps in analyzing existing literature while also gathering primary data to understand the perspectives of tourists and local stakeholders.

Data Collection Methods:

Primary Data:

Surveys: Structured questionnaires using Google Forms were distributed online to tourists who have visited or expressed interest in visiting dark tourism sites in Rajasthan. The questionnaire included both open-ended and close-ended questions to obtain diverse insights.

Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with local residents, tourism professionals, and site managers to understand the socio-cultural and economic implications of dark tourism on the community.

Secondary Data:

Academic journals, research articles, government reports, and published literature on dark tourism and heritage tourism were analyzed to provide a theoretical foundation for the study.

Online resources, news articles, and websites related to tourism in Rajasthan were also examined.

Sampling Method:

Sample Size: A total of 110 respondents participated in the survey, including tourists, local residents, and stakeholders.

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling was used due to time constraints and accessibility issues. This method enabled quick data collection from a diverse group of respondents.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution and percentage analysis, were used to interpret survey data.

Qualitative Analysis: Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the interview responses, identifying common patterns, themes, and insights.

Limitations of the Methodology:

The reliance on convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings.

The study primarily focuses on specific dark tourism sites in Rajasthan, and results may not represent the entire scope of dark tourism in India.

Due to time constraints and logistical challenges, field surveys could not be conducted extensively.

Ethical Considerations:

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained before data collection.

Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured to protect the privacy of respondents.

Sensitive topics related to tragedy and loss were approached with respect and empathy.

This research methodology is aimed at providing a holistic view of dark tourism in Rajasthan while ensuring a balance between ethical research practices and insightful analysis.

Limitations of the study:

Scarcity of literatures- While plenty of literatures on leisure and religious tourism are accessible, there is a dearth of valuable literature on the development of dark tourism sites in the state of Rajasthan, owing to the fact that dark tourism is still a relatively new idea in India.

Usage of secondary data- The validity of the data could not be confirmed because the only source of data for this study was secondary.

The study is limited to Rajasthan. It does not provide a comprehensive picture of dark tourism in India.

Failure to use primary data- Primary data could not be gathered for the purposes of this investigation. Surveys on tourist perceptions and opinions might help to illuminate the research.

Information scarcity- In many circumstances, there was a scarcity of credible information. As a result, even if the material was significant, it could not be included in the research.

Because of the COVID-19 problem, virtual data gathering methods are being deployed. Due to the pandemic situation, social media platforms are the only way to collect data. The field survey method could not be used. Before to the epidemic, tourism destinations were observed. There was no new site observation.

While there has been no field survey, the convenience sampling approach has been used to obtain data. Respondents include friends, family, coworkers, and references. The current study article is constrained by time restrictions and a small number of respondents.

PROBLEM FACED BY DARK TOURISM.

1. **Lack of Promotion**: The biggest difficulty confronting India's travel business is a lack of exposure. Prospective tourists are unaware of the existence of Dark Tourism sites in India.

2. **Absence of tourist administrations at objectives**: Because just a few people consider this type of tourism, many travel offices or organizations are unable to provide genuine administrations to visitors. This motivates visitors not to return to the location.

3. **Inadequate Maintenance of Dark Tourist Sites**: All Dark Spots should be properly maintained in terms of look, tidiness, and so on. However, there is no adequate spot assistance because of ignorance of these areas.

4. **Limited Accessibilit**y: Because these locations are not well recognized, there is no formal procedure in place to gain access to them. Travelers can't peacefully travel to all of the destinations they choose because of the low level of openness towards certain areas.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic information: maximum of respondents are youngsters (18 to 30 years old). Among 110 respondents, 52% are male and 48% are female.

## Have you heard about the term "Dark Tourism"?
39 responses
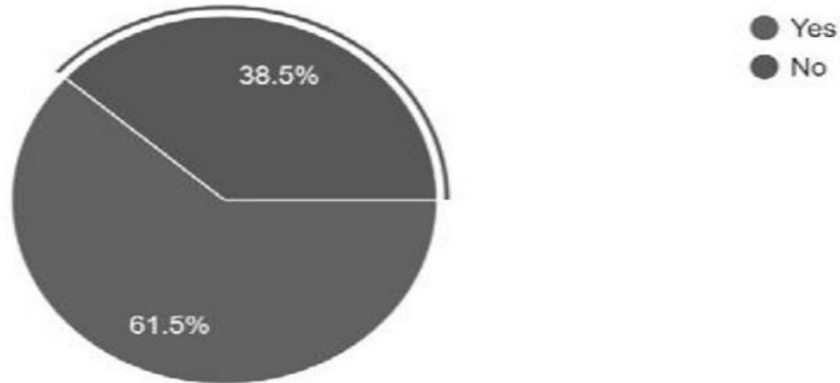
After collection of primary data, it is analyzed that 61.5 % of respondents are aware about the term "Dark tourism" while for 38.5 % it is a new term. So maximum of people are aware with the term 'Dark tourism'

Have you visited Bhangarh /Kuldhara/ Jouhar Palace of Padmini/ Haldi Ghati/Bada Bagh or such kind of places that are haunted or connected to some tragedy or disaster in Rajasthan?
39 responses
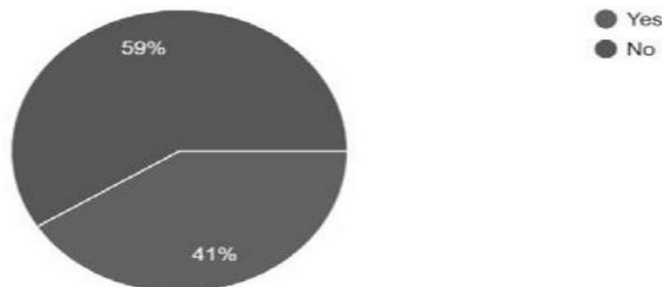
It was discovered that 41% of respondents have visited Rajasthan's dark sites. In contrast, 59% of respondents have no such experience. Several people have not visited Rajasthan's dark places. These are new tourist destinations for them, and they may draw a large number of inexperienced domestic visitors.

If you visited or planning to visit than what factors attracted you visit such dark spots of Rajasthan?
39 responses

● Not visited
● To see paranormal activities
● To find the truth behind the story
● To see the beauty of place
● Emotional attachment with the place
● For educational purpose
● To know the history of place

According to the findings, 38.5% of respondents have been or wish to visit dark places to learn about the

history of the location. And 17.9% of respondents like to observe the natural beauty and authenticity of a location. 10.3% of respondents are interested in seeing paranormal activity, and 10.3% want to know the truth behind the tale. 2.6% of respondents are visiting or plan to visit such locations for educational purposes.

20.5% of respondents are uninterested in seeing Rajasthan's dark places.

As a result, the majority of respondents (79.5%) are intrigued and drawn to dark places and may become future dark tourists.

Maximum of these places are far from cities. Do you like to visit such places after end of pandemic?
39 responses
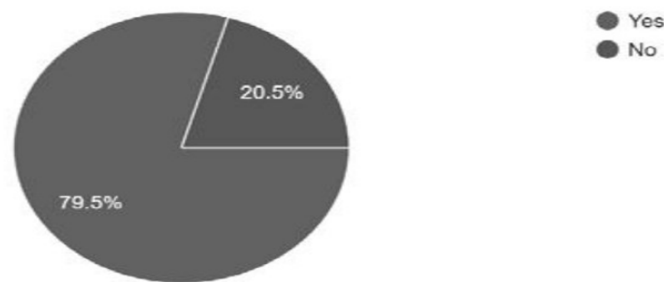
According to the findings, the majority of respondents (79.5%) want to visit dark tourist locations after the epidemic, despite the fact that they are located far from cities. This might be the explanation since they are located distant from cities, are less polluted, and have less people.

Do you feel that these sites which are ignored from societies and govt. (Only few are known and protected) and many are unaware, must be promoted?
39 responses

It is apparent that the majority of respondents (92.3%) desired the growth of Dark tourism in Rajasthan, which must be adequately marketed in order to raise awareness and attract more tourists

RESEARCH DESIGN

Questionnaire Designing: For the current study, a structured questionnaire is created using Google Forms, and data is gathered digitally. It comprises of both open and closed inquiries designed to elicit important information. An online survey instrument was delivered via the Whatsapp app, the Instagram app, and by mail.

Table 1

1.	Type of Research	Descriptive Research
2.	**Area of Research**	**Rajasthan**
3.	**Focus Area**	**Dark Tourism Sites of Rajasthan**
4.	**Type of Respondents**	**Potential Tourist of Rajasthan and Residents {No Specific Demographics}**
5.	**Population**	**Dark Tourists in Rajasthan**
6.	**Sample Size**	**110**
7.	**Sampling Method**	**Convenience Sampling**

Table 2

S. No	Data Collection	Method & Techniques
1.	Primary data collection method	Online survey instrument (Google form)
2.	Secondary data collection	News, articles, Journals, blogs, e books, government reports, pre-vious research papers

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Rajasthan has the potential for dark tourism. It has both dark tourist supply and dark tourism demand. The majority of Rajasthani tourists are unaware of Rajasthan's dark locations, and those who are informed are unfamiliar with such locales.

With the COVID- 19 split, fewer people like to travel. Visitors' preferences are shifting away from crowded traditional destinations and towards less crowded, newer destinations. After the outbreak, most people want to visit Rajasthan's dark tourism attractions.

Most people are familiar with the phrase "dark tourism," but are unaware of additional dark places outside Bhangarh Fort. They are concerned about safety and cleanliness following the coronavirus collapse. As a result of wanting these characteristics to be a part of Dark Tourism in Rajasthan and the establishment of legislation.

Individuals are interested in visiting Rajasthan's dark spots and prefer to promote them to their friends and family. As a result, smart advertising techniques will attract a huge number of visitors and assist Rajasthan tourism in regaining its footing.

The majority of tourists/potential tourists are drawn to gloomy locations in order to learn about the history of the location and to discover the truth behind the narrative.

Some people are captivated by ghost homes and haunted areas and go to observe paranormal occurrences.

SUGGESTIONS

Rajasthan, which is constantly on the bucket list of Indian tourists, has a big potential for Dark tourism. These are sites associated with death, tragedy, trauma, and calamity.

Rajasthan is known for its historical monuments, forts, and palaces. But, it is now dark destinations. The increasing number of Bhanagrh forts indicates that people in Rajasthan are interested in new tourism items. Tourists' preferences are trending away from heritage and towards newly revealed attractions and intriguing locations.

During weekends, we may discover a lot of young people and thrill seekers in Bhangarh. The allure of such locales entices people to return.

Bhangarh is renowned as the spookiest spot in India. It is well-known for being the most haunted. According to the researcher, the government has created the fort, large clean roadways linking to highways, cleaning and upkeep of forts, ticketing procedure, food and parking facilities.

The agricultural region near Alwar (80 kilometres from Jaipur) has grown significantly since Bhangarh's promotion. Individuals are employed, women and children benefit from such progress, and they are provided with improved living conditions.

The development of tourism attractions in rural areas not only aids in the growth of the local community and economy. Nonetheless, it also draws individuals from metropolitan areas who wish to experience nature and country living.

For the sake of public safety and health, the Indian government imposed a lockdown, which has resulted in increased screen time for social media users. In all, 376 million Indians utilize social media. (Statista, 15 July 2020)

According to a poll, 75% of Indian social media users spend time on Whatsapp, Facebook, and Twitter. In the first week of the lockdown, screen time climbed from 150 minutes per day (on average) to 280 minutes per day (Coronavirus: 87% Rise in Social Media Use amid Lockdown; Indians Spend 4 Hours on Facebook, WhatsApp, 30 March 2020).

It should be emphasized that social media and digital platforms are becoming the most effective media outlets for marketing, campaigning, and promotion.

The government should use this epidemic period to promote niche tourism items and dark tourism spots in order to attract domestic tourists. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are excellent channels for effectively marketing Rajasthan tourism and its new tourism attractions.

Appealing activities on official social sites, virtual cultural programmes, short clips of places with USPs, webinars, and online artistic gatherings on festivals may generate interest among the general public and turn them into prospective Rajasthan visitors.

Rajasthan has a lot of potential for dark tourism. Rajasthan tourism has suffered as a result of the epidemic. Only a few tourists are expected. As a result, the Rajasthan government's tourism agency may focus on infrastructure development and building (road construction, fort/palace maintenance) at this time in order to establish new tourism locations.

As a result of the epidemic, we have been compelled to consider safety and cleanliness. As a result, the government must take action to make the regions clean and safe.

Cleaning and maintaining a beautiful environment is not just the responsibility of the government, but also of tourists.

Several tourist training programmes and webinars can assist in educating tourists about their responsibilities to keep the environment as lovely as it is. Corona tells us not to over-exploit natural resources for our own benefit.

Everyone's life should be governed by the principles of reuse, minimal waste, and no spitting. Several dark tourist sites are still hidden and unprotected.

These sites must be carefully conserved.

The government can take efforts to discover the true facts and history of the location, and restoration work must be completed to provide a glimpse of what existed in history and to put an end to false legends.

Several responses advised that infrastructure and roads be built to help the tourism spot. Several responders are concerned about the safety of tourism sites, as well as the knowledge and advertising of those locations.

One of the senior responses suggested that the government take measures to discover the truth/facts behind dark spots and preserve the historical sanskriti/places that may be used as tourist destinations, mark such locations, and enhance their circumstances. Some form of restoration effort is required to provide a glimpse of what was in past.

The Rajasthan government should disseminate more information on these palaces to encourage greater interaction. For a good perspective, there should be additional facilities for travelers in terms of safety. Another great recommendation is that these sites be marketed more and that actions be done to deter the government and the people who live nearby from spreading false rumours about them.

Apart from restoring history, preserving and promoting dark spots, some have highlighted the need of hotels and professional tourist guides in these areas, as well as better tourism services.

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