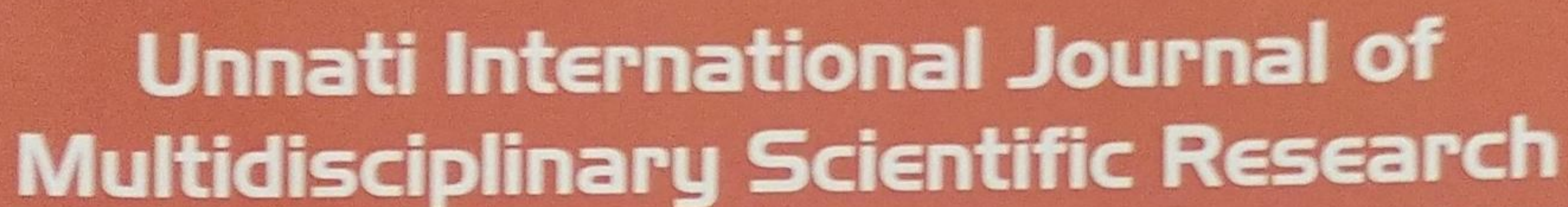


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Email : ncrd2016@gmail.com

CONTENTS

S. No.	Paper Title	Author Name	Page No.
1	Marketing Policies in Indian Banking Sector – Case Study of Public Sector Banks	Swati Shukla Dr. A.P. Shrivastava	1-6
2	Manjula Padmanabhan's 'Harvest': Flashing Light on Indian economic scenario	Mrs. Nazli Khan	7-10
3	Status of Elderly Persons in Changing Family Structure: An Indian Scenario	Smita Roy	11-15
4	Role of Digital Marketing in Building Rural Entrepreneurship	Mrs. Nisha Tomar Ms. Surbhi Pahuja	16-20
5	Human Resource is one of the Potential Resources	Dr. Namrata Patil	21-29
6	Impact of Resource Planning Strategy on Patient Satisfaction In Healthcare Sector	Dr. Mamta Vyas Shikha Kumrawat	30-34
7	Internet Banking as a part of digital banking	Smt. Ashvini D. Sakalkar	35-37
8	A study of Application of Blockchain Technology in Agriculture Sector	Manya Jain	38-44
9	Information technology role as accelerator of industry and trade	Ms Shagun Bakshi	45-51
10	Current and Future Applications of Block Chain Technology	Ms. Poojam Bathla	52-56
11	Efficacy of Aqueous and Ethanolic Extracts of Some Medicinal Plants Traditionally Used By Tribes of District Guna, Madhya Pradesh, India for Potential Antibacterial Screening	Manju Jain P. N. Shrivastava Rakesh Samar	57-62
12	India's Product for the Tourism: An Appraisal	Sanjay Barolia	63-65

India's Product for the Tourism: An Appraisal

Sanjay Barolia

Asstt. Professor, Deptt. of History, Dr. Harisingh Gour University, Sagar, M.P.

Every industry offers something to its consumers so that the viability of the industry could be sustained. The Tourism industry is no exception to this dogma. It offers such products to the tourist to invite attraction of the targeted consumer. The Tourism Product is a collection of tangible and intangible components, including both the products of the industry, such as accommodation, transport and entertainment but also things such as accessibility, weather, value for money, contacts with local people and the extent to which expectations are realized.¹ In view of this, it becomes necessary to think about the extent to which the travel and tourism industry can influence a tourist's overall enjoyment of a holiday. In fact the tourism product is a tourism experience.² India has made rapid progress in energizing this sector since independence.

It was the first Five Year plan that tourism occupied certain focus of the policy makers in 1952.³ India, being a huge country has always been a source of attraction since ancient times. Max Mueller had described her as a paradise on the Earth, having contrasts from tropics to snows. India offers virtually all the elements of a tourist place worth visiting. Nature has endowed her with landscape beauty, flora and fauna. Besides she has also cultivated a rich and diverse culture not to find elsewhere. The tourist products of India may be enumerated as under:

The Scenic Beauty :- India is known for its scenic beauty in the world both for its variety and quality. She has a land frontier of 15200 kilometers and a coastline of about 6000 kilometers. Physically the mainland comprises four well defined regions namely, the great mountain zone, the extensive middle section of Indo-Gangetic Plain, the desert region and the Southern Peninsula.⁴ The Ladakh region of India matches the moonscape for its

desolate beauty. In the Kashmir valley, in Himachal Pradesh, in Uttar Pradesh Hills and in the North-Eastern Hills of the country, it seems that the nature has all the time been conspiring with the mountains, the air, the flora and fauna to create an enriching paradise that few people can forget. Our Himalayas occupy a major place in our songs and legends.⁵ Himalayas comprise three almost parallel ranges interspersed with large plateaus and valleys of some of which like Kashmir and Kullu valleys are fertile, extensive and extremely rich in scenic beauty. Some of the highest peaks in the world are found in this regions.⁶ The Indo-Gangetic plain is formed by the basins of three great river systems, the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, which is very fertile.

Of the two desert regions of India, the great desert extends from the end of Rann of Kutch to beyond the Luni River North West. The Little desert extends from Luni River between Jaisalmer and Jodhpur in Rajasthan.⁷ The southern Peninsula is flanked on one side by the Eastern Ghats and on the other by Western Ghats. The coastal regions of Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are very wide and beautiful. Further, the southern tip of the plateau is formed by the Nilgiri Hills where the eastern and Western Ghats meet.⁸ In addition to this India is endowed with beautiful lakes, falls, wide valleys and beautiful sceneries to enjoy and appreciate.

Wildlife Reserves :- Earlier India was known as the destination of big-game hunters. 'Shikar' and 'Machan' were the vocabulary of tourists whose goal was trophies of Tigers and Elephants. Since then the government has taken a conscious policy decision to conserve nature's heritage. Government of India has launched Project Tiger and Project elephant for their conservation. We have many sanctuaries in India for animals and