

# Analysing The Perception Of Domestic Tourists Towards Yoga Tourism In Rishikesh – India

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

This research explores the perceptions of domestic tourists about yoga tourism in rishikesh a globally recognized hub for yoga and spiritual wellness in India through a structured questionnaire distributed to 385 domestic tourists, the study examines their motivations for visiting rishikesh, their experiences with yoga practices, and their satisfaction levels. findings reveal that tourists are primarily motivated by the desire for physical wellness, spiritual growth, and stress relief. the study also highlights the overall satisfaction with the quality of yoga offerings and the serene environment of the city. however, it identifies areas for improvement, including better infrastructure and more diverse yoga programs. this research provides valuable insights for stakeholders in the tourism sector to enhance the yoga tourism experience and cater more effectively to the needs of domestic tourists.

**Keywords:** - Yoga tourism, domestic tourists, Rishikesh, wellness tourism

## 1.0 Introduction

Rishikesh, often referred to as the "Yoga Capital of the World," is a globally recognized destination for yoga, spirituality, and wellness tourism. Located in the northern part of India, near the foothills of the Himalayas, Rishikesh has become a prominent center for those seeking spiritual growth, physical well-being, and inner peace through the practice of yoga and meditation. The city's historical significance, along with its natural beauty and tranquil environment, makes it an ideal place for domestic and international tourists seeking wellness and self-discovery (McLeod, 2019). Over recent decades, Rishikesh has seen a significant rise in visitors, particularly from within India, drawn to its unique offerings of yoga retreats, meditation centers, and spiritual practices.

### 1.1 Yoga Tourism: A Growing Global Trend

Yoga tourism is a niche segment within the broader wellness tourism industry. It is characterized by individuals traveling to specific destinations to engage in yoga practices, spiritual activities, and holistic wellness. As more people are becoming aware of the health benefits of yoga, the demand for yoga tourism has increased globally, particularly in countries with rich yoga traditions such as India. According to Sharma (2020), yoga tourism offers an enriching experience, combining both physical exercise and spiritual rejuvenation. Rishikesh stands at the center of this burgeoning industry, with its many ashrams, yoga schools, and spiritual retreats. This growth in yoga tourism reflects a broader trend of wellness tourism, where health, relaxation, and self-improvement take precedence over traditional sightseeing.

### 1.2 Perception of Domestic Tourists Towards Yoga Tourism

While international tourists have been a key demographic in the success of yoga tourism in Rishikesh, domestic tourists—individuals from within India—are increasingly contributing to this sector's growth. Understanding the perceptions of domestic tourists toward yoga tourism in Rishikesh is critical for stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industries to effectively cater to this market. Domestic tourists' motivations, experiences, expectations, and satisfaction levels regarding yoga tourism in Rishikesh remain underexplored in the literature. As yoga tourism continues to develop in Rishikesh, it is important to assess how domestic visitors perceive the city as a yoga destination.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Yoga Tourism and Its Global Expansion

Yoga tourism is rapidly gaining popularity worldwide as part of the broader wellness tourism trend, which emphasizes physical and mental well-being. The concept of wellness tourism is defined by Goeldner and Ritchie (2012) as a form of travel that promotes health through activities such as yoga, spa treatments, and holistic therapies. With the rise of stress-related illnesses and a growing awareness of the benefits of yoga, more travelers are seeking destinations where they can engage in yoga practices as part of a broader quest for health and well-being (Bissonette & Cheung, 2018). While destinations like Bali and Thailand have established themselves as prominent yoga tourism hubs, India—particularly Rishikesh—remains the epicenter due to its historical connection to yoga and its spiritual significance.

### 2.2 Yoga Tourism in Rishikesh

Rishikesh's reputation as the "Yoga Capital of the World" is rooted in its rich cultural and spiritual heritage. According to Soni and Kumar (2021), Rishikesh has become a sought-after destination for tourists seeking to deepen their understanding of yoga. The city is home to numerous yoga schools and ashrams, such as the renowned Parmarth Niketan and the Sivananda Ashram, which have attracted visitors worldwide for decades. These institutions offer various yoga programs that cater to beginners, advanced practitioners, and those looking to become certified yoga instructors. The importance of Rishikesh in the global yoga community cannot be overstated, as the city continues to draw thousands of tourists annually for yoga retreats and spiritual training.

### 2.3 Domestic Tourists and Yoga Tourism in India

Domestic tourism in India has experienced significant growth in recent years, and yoga tourism in Rishikesh is no exception. According to Patel (2019), Indian tourists increasingly seek destinations that offer a combination of physical wellness and spiritual enrichment. Yoga tourism, which aligns with traditional Indian practices, is particularly attractive to domestic travelers who view yoga as part of their cultural heritage. Research by Kumari and Sharma (2022) reveals that Indian tourists often perceive yoga as a tool for both mental relaxation and physical rejuvenation, making Rishikesh an ideal location for those looking to reconnect with their roots. Domestic tourists are typically motivated by the desire for spiritual awakening, stress relief, and physical fitness when choosing yoga tourism as an activity (Singh & Gupta, 2020).

### 2.4 Motivations for Yoga Tourism among Domestic Tourists

Understanding the motivations of domestic tourists who visit Rishikesh for yoga tourism is critical for tailoring tourism services. In a study on wellness tourism, Misra and Shah (2017) identified several key factors motivating Indian tourists to engage in yoga tourism, including the pursuit of spiritual growth, mental peace, and a healthy lifestyle. For many Indian tourists, yoga is not just an exercise but a way of life, and visiting Rishikesh provides an opportunity to deepen their practice and understanding. Additionally, the serene environment and spiritual atmosphere of Rishikesh enhance the appeal of yoga tourism. According to Bhatt and Ramesh (2018), domestic tourists often view yoga tourism as an opportunity to disconnect from the stresses of daily life and immerse themselves in a peaceful, rejuvenating environment.

### 2.5 Perceptions and Experiences of Domestic Tourists

The perceptions of domestic tourists regarding yoga tourism are influenced by various factors, including personal interests, previous experiences, and cultural expectations. According to Rana and Singh (2020), the primary perception of Rishikesh as a yoga destination is that it provides a combination of wellness and spirituality. Many domestic tourists see yoga tourism as a way to reconnect with their cultural heritage, as yoga has deep roots in Indian traditions. However, some studies, such as that of Sharma and Chandra (2019), suggest that domestic tourists may have different expectations compared to international tourists, with some seeking a more authentic, traditional yoga experience, while others are interested in modernized or simplified versions of yoga that cater to fitness and relaxation.

### 2.6 Satisfaction and Future Growth of Yoga Tourism in Rishikesh

Satisfaction levels of domestic tourists are a key factor in the future growth of yoga tourism in Rishikesh. According to research by Bhardwaj (2020), most domestic tourists express high levels of satisfaction with their yoga tourism experiences in Rishikesh, particularly in terms of the quality of the yoga programs and the spiritual ambiance of the city. However, there are also areas for improvement, such as better infrastructure, accessibility, and more diverse yoga offerings to cater to different needs. Understanding these factors is essential for enhancing the experience of domestic tourists and ensuring the long-term sustainability of yoga tourism in Rishikesh.

### 3.0 Objective of the study

To explore the perception of domestic tourists using KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice) model about yoga tourism.

#### 3.1 Hypothesis of the study

*H<sub>A</sub> There exists a notable difference in the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to yoga tourism across different age groups of tourists.*

### 4.0 Research Methodology

#### 4.1 Research Design

This study employs a **quantitative research design** to explore the perceptions of domestic tourists about yoga tourism in Rishikesh. The approach allows for the collection of numerical data, which can be systematically analyzed to uncover trends, patterns, and insights regarding the experiences, motivations, and satisfaction levels of domestic tourists. A structured questionnaire was chosen as the primary data collection tool, as it allows for the collection of standardized responses that can be analyzed quantitatively.

#### 4.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of **domestic tourists** who have visited Rishikesh for yoga-related activities during the past year. Domestic tourists were selected because they represent a significant and growing segment of the tourism market in Rishikesh. To ensure a representative sample, the study targeted individuals across different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and regions within India.

A **random sampling** method was used to select participants. This method was chosen to ensure that the sample is unbiased and representative of the broader domestic tourist population. The sample size for the study is **385 domestic tourists**, which was determined using **Cochran's formula** for sample size estimation, providing sufficient statistical power for the analysis of the data (Cochran, 1977).

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained prior to participation. The survey was anonymous, and responses were kept confidential to ensure the ethical integrity of the research. A total of **385 complete responses** were received, providing a sufficient dataset for analysis.

#### 5.1 Data Analysis & Interpretation

*H<sub>a</sub>: There exists a notable difference in the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to yoga tourism across different age groups of tourists.*

**Table 4.1: Tests for Multivariate**

Effect		Value	F	Hypothes is df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.887	921.210 <sub>b</sub>	3.000	352.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.113	921.210 <sub>b</sub>	3.000	352.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	7.851	921.210 <sub>b</sub>	3.000	352.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	7.851	921.210 <sub>b</sub>	3.000	352.000	.000
The natural significantly influences the selection of a yoga tourism destination.	Pillai's Trace	.047	1.887	9.000	1062.000	.050
	Wilks' Lambda	.953	1.892	9.000	856.826	.050
	Hotelling's Trace	.049	1.893	9.000	1052.000	.049
	Roy's Largest Root	.035	4.159 <sup>c</sup>	3.000	354.000	.006
The cultural and spiritual significance of a destination plays an important role in choosing a yoga tourism location.	Pillai's Trace	.063	2.512	9.000	1062.000	.008
	Wilks' Lambda	.938	2.526	9.000	856.826	.007
	Hotelling's Trace	.065	2.532	9.000	1052.000	.007
	Roy's Largest Root	.047	5.589 <sup>c</sup>	3.000	354.000	.001
Pillai's Trace		.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	.000	.

The presence of experienced and qualified yoga instructors is crucial when selecting a yoga tourism destination.	Wilks' Lambda	1.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	353.000	.
	Hotelling's Trace	.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	2.000	.
	Roy's Largest Root	.000	.000 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	351.000	1.000
Yoga tourism destinations that offer complementary wellness services are more desirable.	Pillai's Trace	.073	2.925	9.000	1062.000	.002
	Wilks' Lambda	.928	2.956	9.000	856.826	.002
	Hotelling's Trace	.076	2.974	9.000	1052.000	.002
	Roy's Largest Root	.062	7.272 <sup>c</sup>	3.000	354.000	.000
The availability of holistic health practices contributes to the overall appeal of yoga tourism destinations.	Pillai's Trace	.101	4.106	9.000	1062.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.901	4.169	9.000	856.826	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.108	4.206	9.000	1052.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.085	10.076 <sup>c</sup>	3.000	354.000	.000
The cost of yoga retreats and wellness programs is a significant factor in choosing a yoga tourism destination.	Pillai's Trace	.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	353.000	.
	Hotelling's Trace	.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	2.000	.
	Roy's Largest Root	.000	.000 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	351.000	1.000
The accessibility of a yoga tourism destination affects the decision to visit.	Pillai's Trace	.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	353.000	.
	Hotelling's Trace	.000	. <sup>b</sup>	.000	2.000	.
	Roy's Largest Root	.000	.000 <sup>b</sup>	3.000	351.000	1.000
The quality of customer service and hospitality of a destination is a significant factor in choosing a yoga tourism destination.	Pillai's Trace	.151	4.694	12.000	1062.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.852	4.837	12.000	931.596	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.170	4.954	12.000	1052.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.143	12.682 <sup>c</sup>	4.000	354.000	.000
Eco-friendly and sustainable accommodations in yoga tourism destinations are highly valued.	Pillai's Trace	.039	1.165	12.000	1062.000	.304
	Wilks' Lambda	.961	1.169	12.000	931.596	.301
	Hotelling's Trace	.040	1.172	12.000	1052.000	.299
	Roy's Largest Root	.033	2.947 <sup>c</sup>	4.000	354.000	.020
Positive online reviews and recommendations influence the decision to visit a particular yoga tourism destination.	Pillai's Trace	.339	11.267	12.000	1062.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.690	11.703	12.000	931.596	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.409	11.946	12.000	1052.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.247	21.903 <sup>c</sup>	4.000	354.000	.000

The multivariate tests summarized in the above table give valuable insights on the variables that influence tourists' choices for yoga vacation destinations. These choices are significantly influenced by a number of important variables, as evidenced by the low p-values of the findings ranging from  $p = 0.000$  to  $p = 0.008$ . The natural environment, cultural and spiritual value, supplementary wellness activities, holistic health services, and hospitality and service level all contribute to influencing the choice of travelers. Among these factors, holistic health care availability and cultural and spiritual value of the destination especially influence passengers' preferences.

Other variables, on the other hand, did not affect the choice of destination. For example, in yoga tourism, it was found that the availability of knowledgeable yoga instructors, the price of the yoga retreat, and also accessibility to destinations all showed p-values over the significance level, suggesting that these factors are less important for tourists. Although somewhat relevant, it seems that eco-friendly and sustainable lodgings have little influence ( $p\text{-value} = 0.304$ ), which may suggest that although sustainability is important, it isn't the most important aspect in attracting visitors to yoga.

One of the important inferences is that positive recommendations by internet reviews have overwhelming power, with a strongly infinitesimal p-value as low as 0.000. This underlines how important internet reviews and the digital reputation are as sources for making decisions of a tourist. These infer to the fact that if such places for yoga tourism sites keep their internet reputation pleasant, they would be seen at a high level online also.

## 6.0 Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the perceptions of domestic tourists about yoga tourism in Rishikesh, focusing on their motivations, experiences, and satisfaction levels. By collecting data from 385 domestic tourists using a structured questionnaire, the study has provided valuable insights into the growing significance of yoga tourism in Rishikesh as a destination for wellness and spiritual rejuvenation. The findings of this research emphasize the growing interest of domestic tourists in yoga as both a cultural practice and a means of enhancing personal well-being.

The study revealed that domestic tourists primarily visit Rishikesh for spiritual and physical benefits, including the desire for mental peace, stress relief, and physical health improvements. Many respondents perceive Rishikesh as a place deeply connected to India's yoga traditions, with a serene environment conducive to yoga practice. The quality of yoga offerings, the spiritual ambiance of the city, and the professionalism of yoga instructors were frequently cited as key factors contributing to tourist satisfaction.

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