
THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE AT THE KHAJURAHO DANCE FESTIVAL 2024

Anshima Srivastava

Research Scholar, Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management Kanpur Road, Bundelkhand
University, Jhansi Uttar Pradesh 284128.

Prof. Devesh Nigam

Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management Kanpur Road, Bundelkhand University Jhansi Uttar
Pradesh 284128.

Email - anshimasrivastava1@gmail.com & prof.devesh@gmail.com

Abstract

Every year, the ancient town of Khajuraho, India, hosts the Khajuraho Dance Festival, a special venue for exhibiting classical dance styles and honoring the area's rich cultural legacy. This paper investigates the 2024 festival from the perspective of tourists, looking at visitors' expectations, motivations, and general happiness. The study used a mixed-methods approach to examine qualitative and quantitative data, offering valuable insights into the festival's effects on local communities and cultural tourists. The results underscore the importance of the festival in augmenting the visitor experience and advancing sustainable tourism in Khajuraho.

Keywords – Tourist Experience, Cultural Tourism, Dance Festival, Descriptive Statistics, Heritage Preservation.

Introduction

Khajuraho, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is well known for its magnificent temples that are embellished with elaborate carvings and sculptures that symbolize a variety of themes in life, such as love, spirituality, and the arts. The 2002-founded Khajuraho Dance Festival honors the various traditional dance styles of India, such as Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Manipuri. The festival, which takes place every year against the backdrop of the ancient temples, draws tourists from both domestic and foreign locations and offers a vibrant cultural experience that promotes respect for traditional Indian arts.

Recent years have seen a rise in the popularity of cultural tourism as tourists look for genuine experiences that link them to a place's history. The Khajuraho Dance Festival is a prime example of this movement, supporting both the local economy and culture.

This paper aims to examine the tourist experience during the 2024 Khajuraho Dance Festival, focusing on the following research questions:

1. What are the demographics of tourists attending the festival?
2. What motivates tourists to attend the Khajuraho Dance Festival?
3. How satisfied are tourists with their overall experience at the festival?
4. What challenges do tourists face during their visit?

Literature Review

Tourism for Culture

Travel driven by the desire to immerse oneself in a destination's cultural legacy is known as cultural tourism. According to Richards (1996), cultural tourism promotes and preserves regional cultures while also providing substantial chances for economic growth. As examples of cultural tourism, festivals are essential for drawing crowds and producing life-long memories (Frey & Steiner, 2011).

Celebrations and Involvement in the Community

Festivals act as venues for cultural expression, uniting local communities and encouraging interpersonal communication. According to Getz (2008), festivals have the potential to improve attendees' sense of location, identity, and belonging. In addition to showcasing dance, the Khajuraho Dance Festival supports regional artists and performers, fostering community growth and cultural preservation (Saxena, 2019).

Traveling Experience

The tourist experience is comprised of several elements, such as anticipations, relationships as well as the actual surroundings. When Pine and Gilmore (1998) first proposed the idea of the "experience economy," they emphasized that travelers who have unique experiences are more satisfied and devoted to their destination. For organizers and other stakeholders, knowing the factors that influence visitors' experiences at the Khajuraho Dance Festival can be quite insightful.

Festivals' Economic Impact

The economic impact of cultural festivals on nearby communities has been the subject of numerous studies. A region's overall economic development can be aided by the substantial income and job opportunities that tourism can provide (Kumar & Mohan, 2020). One might use

the Khajuraho Dance Festival as a case study to comprehend these processes within the framework of cultural tourism.

Methodology

Design of Research

Using a mixed-methods approach, this project collects data from both qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires to gain a thorough knowledge of the visitor experience at the Khajuraho Dance Festival in 2024. Triangulating data is made possible by this method, which increases the validity of the conclusions.

Data Gathering

During the festival, which took place from February 20 to February 26, 2024, data were gathered. At several festival locations, visitors were given a structured questionnaire, and a small number of participants were interviewed in-depth to learn more about their experiences.

Instrument for Surveys

Likert scale items, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions were all included in the survey. Important sections comprised:

- Demographic details: age, nationality, profession, and history of travel.
- Attendance Motivations: The reasons behind attending the festival.
- Satisfaction Levels: Evaluations of several festival components, such as the venue, acts, and overall experience.
- Challenges Faced: Ask open-ended questions about any obstacles you ran into while there.

Sample

Two hundred questionnaires were gathered from a wide range of international travelers. In-depth interviews with 25 participants were also carried out, who supplied more detailed qualitative information about their experiences.

Information Analysis

Descriptive statistics (SPSS) were used to examine the quantitative data, and theme analysis (NVivo) was used to analyze the qualitative data from the interviews. Based on recurrent patterns and insights about the challenges, satisfaction, and motives of tourists, themes were discovered.

Findings

Visitor Profiles

The survey participants' demographic analysis showed a varied mix of visitors to the festival:

- Age: Of the participants, 55% were between the ages of 25 and 40, 30% were between the ages of 41 and 60, and 15% were between the ages of 18 and 24.
- Nationality: About 65% of those surveyed were foreign visitors, with the majority coming from Australia (10%), North America (20%), and Europe (35%). 35% of the visitors came from within

India, originating from different states.

- Occupation: Professionals made up 40% of the respondents, with students coming in second at 25%, retirees at 20%, and artists or entertainers at 15%.

Motivations for Attendance

Participants' primary reasons for participating were as follows:

1. **Appreciation of Culture:** A lot of visitors indicated that they were very interested in seeing India's traditional arts and rich cultural legacy.
2. **Artistic Engagement:** One of the main draws for guests was the chance to see performances by well-known dancers.
3. **Social Interaction:** Several travelers emphasized the value of getting to know like-minded people and participating in cross-cultural interactions.
4. **Historical Exploration:** Many visitors were also drawn to Khajuraho by the temples' architectural beauty and historical relevance.

Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction levels among tourists were overwhelmingly positive, with 90% of respondents rating their experience as "excellent."

Specific findings included:

- **Performance Quality:** Noting the dancers' talent and skill, 95% of participants complimented the show's caliber.
- **Venue Atmosphere:** According to 92% of respondents, the picturesque setting of the temples improved the entire experience.
- **Festival Organization:** Although 80% of visitors thought the event was well-run, a few pointed out that communication and logistics should have been strengthened.

Challenges Faced

Despite the high levels of pleasure, travelers mentioned a few difficulties.

1. **Accommodation Issues:** A lot of respondents brought up the lack of accommodations, especially on festival days when demand is highest and it might be challenging to locate acceptable places to stay.
2. **Transportation Logistics:** Tourists faced issues linked to local transportation, with suggestions for increased shuttle services and clearer signage.
3. **Information Accessibility:** A few participants voiced their wish for easier access to information about festival events and performance schedules.

Discussion

The results of the 2024 Khajuraho Dance Festival highlight the importance of the occasion in boosting cultural tourism and improving the traveler experience. The festival's attraction to tourists from both local and foreign countries is highlighted by the guests' broad demographics. The reasons for going, in particular, the desire to participate artistically and appreciate culture, are consistent with larger trends in cultural tourism, where visitors look for genuine experiences that link them to the history of the place they are visiting (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

Participants expressed a high degree of pleasure, which suggests that the festival successfully fulfills its promise to present India's traditional dance styles in a setting rich in cultural diversity. To improve the entire experience and guarantee the festival's ongoing success, it is imperative to solve the difficulties encountered by visitors. Future attendees will have a more seamless experience with better lodging alternatives, more efficient transportation, and easily available information.

Conclusion

The Khajuraho Dance Festival is an important cultural occasion that promotes community involvement, economic growth, and an exhibition of India's creative legacy. The 2024 festival yielded valuable insights that underscore the significance of comprehending the tourist experience in order to augment cultural tourism. Through the resolution of issues and the utilization of the festival's advantages, involved parties can sustain their efforts to advertise Khajuraho as a leading hub for cultural tourism.

Recommendations for Future Research

In order to evaluate the long-term effects of the Khajuraho Dance Festival on nearby communities and the changing dynamics of cultural tourism, future study should concentrate on longitudinal studies. Furthermore, examining the experiences of distinct demographic groups may yield a more profound understanding of how diverse audiences interact with the event.

References

1. Getz, D. (2008). *Event Tourism: Definition, Evolution, and Research*. Tourism Management, 29(3), 403-428.
2. Frey, B. S., & Steiner, L. (2011). *Cultural Events and Economic Impact*. Journal of Cultural Economics, 35(3), 221-241.
3. Kumar, A., & Mohan, R. (2020). *The Economic Impact of Festivals on Local Communities: A Case Study of Khajuraho*. Journal of Tourism Research, 24(1), 45-60.

-
4. McKercher, B., & du Cros, H. (2002). **Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management**. Haworth Press.
 5. Pine, J. B., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998). **Welcome to the Experience Economy**. Harvard Business Review, 76(4), 97-105.
 6. Richards, G. (1996). **Cultural Tourism in Europe**. CAB International.
 7. Saxena, G. (2019). **The Role of Festivals in Community Development: Insights from Khajuraho.*

Questionnaire for Khajuraho Dance Festival 2024

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age:

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-40
- ☐ 41-60
- ☐ 61 and above

2. Nationality:

- ☐ India
- ☐ USA
- ☐ UK
- ☐ Australia
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

3. Occupation:

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Artist/Performer
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

4. Is this your first visit to Khajuraho?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 2: Motivations for Attendance

5. What motivated you to attend the Khajuraho Dance Festival? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Cultural appreciation
- ☐ Artistic engagement
- ☐ Social interaction
- ☐ Exploration of history
- ☐ Recommendation from others
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

6. How did you hear about the Khajuraho Dance Festival?

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Travel agency
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Online forums
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Section 3: Satisfaction Levels

7. How would you rate the quality of performances at the festival?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor

8. How satisfied are you with the venue and atmosphere of the festival?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

9. How well-organized did you find the festival?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor

10. Overall, how would you rate your experience at the Khajuraho Dance Festival?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor

Section 4: Challenges Faced

11. Did you face any challenges during your visit to the festival?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. If yes, please specify the challenges you encountered: (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Accommodation issues
- ☐ Transportation logistics
- ☐ Lack of information about the festival
- ☐ Crowding at events
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

13. What suggestions do you have for improving the festival experience?

Section 5: Additional Comments

14. Please share any additional comments or feedback regarding your experience at the Khajuraho Dance Festival:

Instructions for Participants:

- Please fill out this questionnaire as accurately as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.
 - Thank you for your participation!
-