

## **Community Perspective on Role of Souvenirs in Tourism Promotion– A Case Study of Basholi, Jammu, J&K**

**Manjeet Singh**

*Asst. Professor, Department of Tourism and Travel Management, Central University of Jammu, J&K, India*

---

### **Abstract**

*Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to find out the local community perspective towards the role of souvenirs in the promotion of tourism at a destination.*

*Design - The aim of this study is to find out that how a souvenir can be instrumental in creating the image of a destination. The study area chosen for this research was Basholi*

*Methodology - The study sought to find out the possible barriers being faced by the host community to market the product well, as the souvenirs of Basholi have the potential to be internationally acclaimed. A structured interview was conducted with the craftsmen and the local host community of the site involved in the production, marketing and sales of these souvenirs*

*Approach - India has a rich cultural heritage with each state being distinct, the capacity of Indian producers to generate diverse handicraft products is tremendous. Further, the people living in the rural areas of the respective states are engaged in the production of these items. Almost all areas of the country are affected by tourism directly or indirectly, as it becomes one of the largest industries, in terms of revenue generation, products and services*

*Findings - The research paper concludes that majority of the residents of the destination believe that the souvenirs of Basholi and specially the Miniature Paintings have played an important role in the promotion of tourism and providing economic and social benefits to the residents by offering employment and financial freedom.*

*Originality of the research – The study highlights that souvenirs have been instrumental in bringing name and fame to the destination and also attracting tourists and art lovers from all over the country as well as the world. The paper can serve as a ground for future research which can focus on finding out ways and means to enhance the number of individuals to take up handicraft and souvenir business as their livelihood and how they can help in promoting tourism*

**Keywords** *Tourism, Souvenirs, Host Community, Destination Promotion*

---

Date of Submission: 30-10-2017

Date of acceptance: 16-11-2017

---

### **I. Introduction**

Local handicrafts which constitute the souvenirs of a destination have been the most sought after objects by most of the travellers. Handicrafts represent, among other things, local culture and heritage. The possession of hand-made item, therefore, symbolizes attachment to the host society. Nothing perhaps, can exhibit the tourists' visit to the destination better than a hand-made product, which is often termed authentic. Many tourists are on the look out for an authentic item to buy as souvenir. The purchase of mementoes and souvenirs is an established behaviour associated with many activities. Few people will take a vacation without acquiring some form of evidence to tangibilize the experiences gained (Gordon, 1986; Littrell, Baizerman, Kean, Gahring, Niemeyer, Reilly, & Stout, 1994).

Despite the significance of the souvenir in the tourism experience (Shenhav-Keller, 1993), little research has been found that investigates the usage and motivations for souvenir purchase. Among the products that tourists purchase, textile crafts and apparel items constitute a substantial portion (Anderson, 1993; Littrell, 1996; Traveler's Notes, 1995). The Souvenir industry in India has a significant role in the economic development of the nation. It provides numerous employment opportunities to a large number of people in the country, which may be direct like the artisans and indirect like those who are employed in the supply of raw materials and in trading of finished products.

Markwick (2001) Souvenirs are often originally produced for local markets, many crafts are increasingly, sometimes exclusively, produced for external markets. This is particularly so where the external market has grown alongside tourism, as in Malta. Where crafts are specifically produced for tourists, the term 'tourist art' is sometimes used in tourism research literature. The term 'tourist art' was coined by Graburn

(1976: 39) specifically to associate this production with an 'external audience' that is typically unfamiliar with the culture and aesthetic criteria of the producer's society.

The present study is based on Basholi, which is famous for its souvenirs and specially the paintings. The Souvenirs have been the source of income as well as social recognition for the residents of the destination. The souvenirs and handicrafts are world renowned and have brought name and fame to the artists as well as the destination. The souvenirs have been a vital instrument in attracting tourists from all across India and from world over as well. The souvenirs have made them visible at the international level by creating a niche market for their product which is internationally acclaimed for its peculiarity and quality. The souvenirs have provided them with the opportunity of employment and becoming self reliant and at the same time offering employment to the others. The souvenirs have helped in the promotion of responsible tourism in the region by the way of attracting art and nature loving tourists to the destination, who are generally supposed to follow responsible tourism practices.

## **II. Review of Literature**

A growing literature critically evaluates the potential of 'green consumers' as change agents (Miller, 2003). It is thought that, despite the constraints and the possibly small numbers involved, at least some people are trying to make a difference to the world through the holidays that they buy. The purchase decisions of these consumers might have some ethical basis and be grounded in altruistic motivations.

The handicraft industries are of great interest as the handmade articles constitute ideal souvenirs and, if widely produced they can act as powerful tourist attractions. At the same time the performance of the craft industries is dependent on tourism in terms of tourist arrivals, expenditure, length of stay and so on.

Caruna (1978) stated that the crafts are produced through skills by the use of relatively simple tools, without involving large economies of scale. The relative flexibility that this allows means that products can be variously fashioned to suit diverse, individual tastes. Although output is low and production costs relatively high, the products find a market if their distinctiveness justifies higher prices in the view of prospective buyers.

Markwick (2001) in his study - Tourism and the development of handicraft production in the Maltese islands, found out that the constraint in the field of souvenir promotion most commonly cited by the respondent firms related to the small size of the domestic market, coupled in some cases with an inability to exploit scale economies. This was closely followed by shortages of labour with appropriate design and artistic skills, whilst almost as many firms cited high government-induced costs and compliance costs (e.g. VAT) as a constraint. However, equally important were other constraints relating specifically to the market orientation of the firms thus, limitations on linkages to the tourism industry, together with poor support services, were also frequently cited constraints.

Mbaiwa (2004), states that souvenirs are a cultural tourism product. Cultural products and attractions play an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of the world culture to attractions that underpin local identities (Richards, 2001). Littrel (1997) notes that culture can be viewed as comprising what people think (attitudes, beliefs, ideas and values), what people do (normative behaviour patterns, or way of life) and what people make (artworks, artefacts, cultural products). Culture is therefore composed of processes (the ideas and way of life of people) and the products of those processes (buildings, artefacts, art, customs, atmosphere) (Richards, 2001). Berwick (2003) notes that culture is an artefact of human social practice which has visual outcomes that reflect the messages of particular organisations and send them to individual participants. Basket making in the Okavango Delta is a cultural product that shows how local communities are taking social and economic benefits out of it and thus can be used for the development of cultural and responsible tourism in the area.

Souvenirs are a tangible part of the tourism experience. Souvenirs provide an excellent opportunity to potential worldwide advertising and potentially lucrative economic activity. Hitchcock and Teague (2002) defined Souvenirs as the material counterpart of travels, events, relationships and memories of all kinds and a Souvenir's "function is to store or stimulate memories".

In the study of Hoven and Eggen in 2005, they found that the definition of Souvenir is unable to be definitely defined. This is because the souvenir's definitions come from people's, psychologies and the variety of people's opinions. Three definitions were selected by the focus group in their study as;

- A Souvenir is something which has emotional value to you
- A Souvenir symbolizes a relation between people, moments, feelings, phases, locations or situations
- A Souvenir is something with which someone can consciously evoke memories.

Souvenirs may be mass-produced goods or expensive handmade items (Blundell, 1993). The mix of souvenir products available to tourists is not universal. Commodities targeted to the souvenir trade include, but are not limited to, mass-produced items and figurines; arts and crafts (Turner & Reisinger 2001); gem stones; jewelry (Turner & Reisinger 2001); leather goods; housewares; objects that depict wildlife and nature; markers

(e.g., plates, mugs, tea towels, and T-shirts) depicting by word, picture or symbol the place represented by the souvenir (Blundell 1993; Gordon 1986); antiques (Grado, Strauss, & Lord 1997); collectibles (Michael 2002); clothing (Asplet & Cooper 2000; Turner & Reisinger 2001); postcards (Markwick 2001); and local products such as foods and clothing (Gordon 1986).

Researchers in the tourism field have carried out a number of studies concerning linkages between beliefs of craft souvenir purchases, shopping orientations, and intentions to purchase particular product(s) or at specific shopping venue (Kim & Littrell, 1999; Yu & Littrell, 2003). Yet, there is no systematic investigation on how to connect beliefs about craft souvenir shopping with various shopping activities while travelling, including types of products purchased, shopping outlets, information sources, and expenditure.

Tourism has been a mixed blessing for the Souvenir industry and the local environment of the destination. On the one hand tourism has contributed to the growth of Souvenir industry, the retention of many 'authentic' features and its significance in local communities. On the other hand, the environment has not remained untouched by tourism.

The commercialization of Souvenirs that tourism has brought about results in production responsive to external demand at different levels. Tourists typically purchase larger, more expensive items, such as table cloths, as personal mementos but also buy a range of smaller, cheaper items as gifts for relatives and friends.

### III. Study Area

The study area for the present study is Basholi (Originally known as Vishwasthali) is a small beautiful town and a famous area in Kathua district in the state of Jammu & Kashmir, India. It is situated on the right bank of River Ravi at an altitude of 1876 ft. It was founded by Raja Bhupat Pal sometimes in 1635. It was known for magnificent palaces which are now in ruins and miniatures paintings (Basholi Paintings). Basholi has a population of around 5865 (as pre India Census 2001), out of which 53% are males and 47% are females with an average literacy rate of Basholi is 77%, higher than the national average of 59.5%. This has been the birth place of many bureaucrats, writers, artists, diplomats and professionals of state and national level as well.

Basholi is world famous for its paintings called Basholi Miniature Paintings, which are considered to be the pioneer in the field of Pahari paintings, and which later evolved into the much elaborate Kangra paintings. The style was further spread to the Hill States of Kulu, Mandi, Bilaspur, Chamba, Kangra and many others as the destination is in close proximity to Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Before the construction of Ranjit Sagar Dam and the artificial lake, the people of Basholi preferred to travel to Himachal Pradesh and Punjab to trade rather than going to the other towns of Jammu.

### IV. Research Methodology

A structured questionnaire was designed for collecting data from the residents of Basholi, twenty two questions were framed in the questionnaire to collect the information from the respondents related to the areas like tourists coming to Basholi, important souvenirs produced in the region, community involvement in responsible tourism promotion, support from government and the issues faced by the artists in the marketing of their souvenirs. For conducting the in depth interviews and getting primary information from the respondents, a visit was made to the study area wherein random sampling method was used to choose the respondents. Sixteen respondents from different walks of the life, right from students to retired govt. officials, school teachers, artists and skilled labourers were interviewed for their responses. The responses were noted down as per their statements, which were later translated into English for obtaining the required results.

### V. Results & Findings

**Table 1.1:** Responses received from local host community

Respondent #	Name (Gender / Age / Occupation)	Nature / Inflow of Tourists	Famous Souvenirs	Perceived Constraints / Limiting Factors in marketing of Souvenirs	Role of Souvenir in Promoting Tourism (Out of 10)
1	<b>Rajinder Sharma</b> (M/62/ Retired Govt Employee)	Locals / residents staying outside Basholi	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, Lack of marketing Knowledge, Partiality in opportunities, Basholi Paiting School, Ranjeet Sagar Dam	8
2	<b>Mr. Yogesh Sharma</b> (M/70/ Retired Govt Employee)	Locals / people from near by villages, people from Punjab & Himachal.	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, Low revenue generation from artefacts	7
3	<b>Sanjeev Kumar</b> (M/24/ Student)	Locals/ migrated people of Basohli	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina	Lack of support from govt, Partiality in opportunities, Basholi Paiting School,	6

4	<b>Manoj Kumar (M/32/works in project Dam)</b>	Locals/ natives of Basohli Staying outside Basohli	Shawls Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt	7
5	<b>Vikas Dutta (M/34 Shopkeeper)</b>	Locals/ Relatives of Locals	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Basholi Paiting School, Ranjeet Sagar Dam	6
6	<b>Ajit Kumar (M/58 Shopkeeper &amp; Steamer driver)</b>	Locals/ people from nearby villages	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, Basholi Paiting School,	7
7	<b>Ankush Balowria (M/24 Student)</b>	Locals and people from outside	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	No guidance from the elders or the concerned departments	7
8	<b>Inderjeet Singh (M/40 Welder)</b>	Locals/ People from neighbouring villages, Residents staying outside Basohli	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Good artists have left this particular area and are living in other parts of the country or the state. No support from government	6
9	<b>Rajesh Kohli (M/48 Carpenter)</b>	Locals/ natives of Basohli Staying outside Basohli	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, People have moved out from Basholi	8
10	<b>Nititn Sharma (M/26 Student)</b>	Locals/ Residents staying outside Basohli	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, Lack of marketing Knowledge, Partiality in opportunities, Basholi Paiting School, Ranjeet Sagar Dam	6
11	<b>Dharampal (M/48 Teacher/Painter)</b>	Locals/ people from nearby villages	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, Lack of marketing Knowledge, Partiality in opportunities, Basholi Paiting School, Ranjeet Sagar Dam, No painting museum or shop to display the work of the artists, No recognition from the government	9
12	<b>Pappu Kumar (M/45 Meson)</b>	Locals/ people from nearby villages, residents staying outside	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt	7
14	<b>Chander Shekhar (M/38 Teacher/ Ramllela Artist)</b>	Locals/ people from nearby villages, residents staying outside and people from Punjab & Himachal.	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	Lack of support from govt, No place to promote the creations of artists	8
15	<b>Sanjay (M/45 Govt Employee)</b>	Locals/ Residents staying outside Basohli	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	No marketplace as such in jammu, most of them do not have the resources to move to other places and showcase their products	7
16	<b>Ashok Kumar Yadav (M/29/Govt Employee)</b>	Locals and people working at Basholi from other parts of India	Basholi Paintings & Pashmina Shawls	No walk in client to the destination	6

Majority of the respondents were of the view that Basholi is still an untapped destination in the field of tourism, increase in the number of tourists would lead to increase in the negative impacts on tourism, but also mentioned that it is an inevitable consequence of desirable economic development. Mr Yogesh Sharma, who is a retired government employee stressed on the point that if government interventions are made to bring tourism flow into

the region that would certainly help in the overall development and promotion of the region and would bring the dying art of basholi to forefront again.

Community based tourism promotes that tourists should have a greater knowledge and understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues. A couple of the respondents were of the view that the reasons why tourism had not been sustainable to date was because there was no proper support from the government to promote the cause as well as promoting the art and craft of the destination to attract more tourists to the destination. Mr Dharampal, who is working as a teacher in a govt school and also does painting in his free time, was of the opinion that the activities of the state government and development bodies had not been in favour of Basholi, as they had moved away the art and craft training centre from Basholi to Kathua. Due to which the people who wanted to learn or practice Basholi art are left with no option than to discontinue it.

One of the principles of community based tourism take account of the active involvement of local residents in decision making and the local economy. The respondents differed in their response to this principle as according to them; there is no support or guidance from the government side for the promotion of tourism and marketing of the souvenirs which are produced at this particular destination. Mr Chander Shekhar, a Ramleela artist said that the local residents are not taken into consideration while planning and executing the strategies of promotion of the destination.

Another principle of community based tourism involves creating meaningful links between tourists and residents. The respondents laid emphasis on the need to improve the quality of the training to local tourism providers, to ensure they were ambassadors for the tourism at the destination, upon which the tourism industry was based.

The other findings of the paper are as under:

- Basholi Miniature Paintings in Pahari style and Pashmina Shawls are the most important souvenirs produced from the Basholi region.
- Generating self employment has been the most important aspect of souvenirs at the destination.
- The souvenirs have been influential in attraction tourists as well as art lovers from across the country and across the globe.
- Souvenirs have played a vital role in creating the overall image of the destination in the mind of the residents as well as the other people directly or indirectly attached with the destination.
- Very few people had this souvenir business as their family business and those who know it doesn't pursue it on a larger scale as according to them the artists and the artisans do not get proper support in promotion and marketing of the souvenirs.
- The artists have been invited to display their art through India and throughout world as well.
- As per the artists, they are not being paid as per the weightage of their art. They are being paid less for their creations.

The various possible barriers being faced by the host community to market the product well are:

1. Lack of initiative and support from the government
2. Lack of proper marketing knowledge of the souvenirs produced by the artists
3. The local artists are not given equal importance to the artists from the other regions of the country.
4. The local artists are deprived of the opportunities as provided to the other counterpart artists from other states.
5. The artifacts produced are not given proper weightage in the market due to which the artists become reluctant to promote them in the same market again.
6. Due to the construction of Ranjit Sagar Dam on the way to Basholi, the distance from the main town has increased from 36 kms to 71 kms due to which many potential buyers and traders have curtailed their visits to Basholi. Creation of Atal Setu will definitely help to overcome this issue by helping the artisans to connect to Himachal Pradesh and Punjab through it.
7. The centre of learning for Basholi Miniature Painting has been shifted from Basholi to Kathua, because of which the pursuing and the potential artists are facing problems to learn and continue this art further.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The research paper concludes that majority of the residents of the destination do believe that the souvenirs of Basholi and specially the Miniature Paintings have played an important role in the promotion of tourism and providing economic and social benefits to the residents by offering employment and financial freedom. The souvenirs have been instrumental in bringing name and fame to the destination and also attracting tourists and art lovers from all over the country as well as the world. The unenthusiastic approach of government and outward movement of the quality artist from Basholi are few of the main barriers as per community for the role of souvenirs in tourism promotion

### Future Research:

The future research would focus on finding out ways and means to enhance the number of individuals to take up handicraft and souvenir business as their livelihood and how they can help in promoting tourism.

The future research would also try to assess the impact of tourism on the social and economic status of the residents of the destination.

### References

- [1]. Anderson, L. F. (1993). *Iowa Women as Tourists and Consumers of Souvenirs* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Iowa State University, Ames.
- [2]. Berwick P. 2003. The impact of visual data gathering on the cultural psyche. A Paper Presented at the *Limits of Tourism Conference* at the University of Waikato, School of Management, New Zealand, 8–11 December
- [3]. Bramwell, et. al. (2008). Research Perspectives on Responsible Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(3), 253-257.
- [4]. Budeanu, A. (2007). Sustainable Tourist Behaviour – A Discussion of Opportunities for Change. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31, 499-508.
- [5]. DOI: 10.1111/j.1470-6431.2007.00606.x
- [6]. Caruna, M. 1978. *Handicraft Production in Malta*. BA thesis, Malta: University of Malta.
- [7]. Fabricius, M. and Goodwin, H. (2002) *Responsible Tourism in Destinations: The Cape Town Declaration*.
- [8]. Gordon, B. (1986). The Souvenir: Messenger of the Extraordinary. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 20(3), 135-146.
- [9]. Hall, D. and Brown, F. (2006) *Tourism and Welfare: Ethics, Responsibility and Sustained Well-being*. Wallingford: CABI
- [10]. Hitchcock, M., & Teague, K. (2002). Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- [11]. Hoven, E. V. D., & Eggen, B. (2005). *Personal Souvenirs as Ambient Intelligent Objects*.
- [12]. Janesen-Verbeke, M. (1991). Leisure Shopping: A Magic Concept for the Tourism Industry. *Tourism Management*, 12, 9-14.
- [13]. Kim, S., & Littrell, M.A. (1999). Predicting Souvenir Purchase Intentions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38(2), 153-162.
- [14]. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759903800208>
- [15]. Littrell, M. A., Baizerman, S., Kean, R., Gahring, S., Niemeyer, S., Reilly, R., & Stout, J. A. (1994). Souvenirs and Tourism Styles. *Journal of Tourism Research*, 33(1), 3-11.
- [16]. Littrell, M. A. (1996). *Shopping Experiences and Marketing of Culture to Tourists*. Paper Presented at the Conference on Tourism and Culture: Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, United Kingdom: Northumberland.
- [17]. Littrell MA. 1997. Shopping experiences and Marketing of Culture to Tourists. In *Tourism and Culture: Image, Identity and Marketing*, Robinson M, Evans N, Callaghan P (eds). Centre for Travel and Tourism, University of Northumbria: 107–120.
- [18]. Markwick, M. C. (2001): Tourism and the development of handicraft production in the Maltese islands, *Tourism Geographies*, 3:1, 29-51
- [19]. Mbaiwa, J. E. (2004). Prospects of Basket Production in Promoting Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6, 221-235.
- [20]. Miller, G.A. (2003) Consumerism in sustainable tourism: A survey of UK consumers. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11 (1), 17-39
- [21]. Miller, G. and Twining-Ward, L. (2005) *Monitoring for a Sustainable Tourism Transition: The Challenge of Developing and Using Indicators* (1st edn). Wallingford: CABI
- [22]. Richards G. 2001. *The development of cultural tourism in Europe*. In *Cultural Attractions and European Tourism*, Richards G (ed.). CABI Publishing: New York; 3–29.
- [23]. Shenhav-Keller, S. (1993). The Israeli Souvenir: Its Text and Context. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 20, 182-196.
- [24]. Traveler's Notes. (1995), 'Consumer Reports Travel Letter', October: 234

IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) is UGC approved Journal with SI. No. 4481, Journal no. 46879.

Manjeet Singh Community Perspective on Role of Souvenirs in Tourism Promotion– A Case Study of Basholi, Jammu, J&K.” IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM), vol. 19, no. 11, 2017, pp. 28-33.