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Spatial Analysis of Rural Tourism Sites in Punjab

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ABSTRACT

Punjab is an agricultural state situated in the north western India. It has various relief features like hills, alluvial plains and semi- arid sandy plains. It can be divided into three major cultural regions namely Malwa, Majha and Doaba. It is well connected to various parts of the country by road, rail and air transport. There is lot of scope to develop rural tourism in the state. In this regard, some sites have already been developed and approved by Punjab Tourism Department. There are some other properties which offer rural tourism experience to the tourists. Present paper highlights various rural tourism sites approved by Punjab Heritage Tourism Promotion Board and other rural tourism projects in Punjab. It studies the regional distribution and depicts the spatial analysis of rural tourism sites in the state.

Keywords: Punjab, rural tourism sites, spatial analysis, tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Punjab is a small state total area of 50362 sq. kilometers. It is situated in north western part of India. Its geo-coordinates on the globe are 29⁰.30'N to 32⁰.32'N latitude and 73⁰.55' E to 76⁰.50'Elongitudes. Its boundary touches Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Chandigarh in the east. Rajasthan and Haryana in the south, Jammu and Kashmir on the north and on its west is international boundary touching Pakistan. There are twenty-two districts and its capital is Chandigarh (Manku, 2009 and Mavi & Tiwana, 2008). Relief of Punjab is divided into various physiographic divisions like Shivalik hills, Kandi region, flood plains and plains with sand dunes. Shivaliks are low hills and are part of outer Himalayas. These lie on the north and east side of the state and form boundary with Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Kandi is high upland plain on the foot hills of Shivaliks. Flood plains are aggradational plain and are formed by deposition of sediments brought down by the rivers. These are very fertile plains and are good

for agriculture. Plain with sand dunes semi-arid region and is situated in south western part of the state (Mavi and Tiwana, 2008).

Climate of Punjab is tropical monsoon type. For most part of the year it has warm climate. It has summers from April to June and temperature is very high in this season. Hot and dry winds called Loo blow during summers. Generally, it is dry season. From July to mid-September is Rainy season called as monsoon season. Thereafter monsoon winds start retreating. November onwards there is cold season which goes up to February. It also receives rainfall in this season by western disturbance from Mediterranean region (Manku, 2009 and Aggarwal, 2012).

Transportation network is well developed in the state. It has good network of railway with total rail length of more than four thousand kilometers (Manku, 2009). Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Pathankot, Bathinda, Ferozepur are the major railway junctions. Road network is also quite good with total road length of more than sixty thousand kilometers including all roads. It is also connected by Air with domestic and international flights. Sri Guru Ram Das Jee International Airport is at Amritsar with domestic and international air services. Besides this Mohali and Ludhiana also have airports.

Population of Punjab as per 2011 census is 27.7 million. There was increase of 13.89% of population over the previous census population which was 24.4 million in 2001. It formed 2.29 percent of total population of India. The density of population was 551 persons per square kilometer. Ludhiana district had the maximum population with 34.98 lakh people. There are two metropolitan cities of Ludhiana and Amritsar as per the census of 2011 (Govt. of India, 2011).

Regions of Punjab can be regionalized into three geographical regions. Majha region lies between Ravi and Beas and is called as Bari Doab. Its area is 8660 square kilometers which is about 17.20 percent of the total area of the state. Doaba region lies between river Beas and Satluj is also called as Bist Doab. It has total area of 8896 square kilometers comprising 17.66 percent area of the state. Malwa region is the largest of all that lies south of river Satluj and its southern boundary is formed by river Ghagghar along Haryana-Punjab border. Its area is 32806 square kilometers covering 65.14 percent area of the state. There is another region called Powadh. Geographically it covers some parts of Patiala, Mohali, Rupnagar and some parts of Panchkula and Ambala district of Haryana adjoining Chandigarh. But it is considered as part of Malwa and not a separate region (Govt. of Punjab, 1964).

Table 1
Region wise Districts in Punjab

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>District</i>
1	Majha	Amritsar
2		Gurdaspur
3		Pathankot
4		Tarn Taran
5	Doaba	Hoshiarpur
6		Jalandhar
7		Kapurthala
8		Nawanshahar (SBS Nagar)

(Contd...)

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<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>District</i>
9	Malwa	Barnala
10		Bathinda
11		Faridkot
12.		Fatehgarh Sahib
13.		Fazilka
14.		Ferozepur
15.		Ludhiana
16.		Mansa
17.		Moga
18.		Mohali, (SAS Nagar-Ajitgarh)
19.		Muktsar
20.		Patiala
21.		Rupnagar
22.		Sangrur

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Rural Tourism

World Tourism Organization (WTO) used rural tourism concept for defining that tourism product “that gives to visitors a personalized contact, a taste of physical and human environment of countryside and as far as possible, allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people.” According to the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), rural tourism is defined as tourism taking place in the countryside (OECD, 1994). Thus rural tourism is primarily that tourism which develops in rural areas. In this tourists enjoy vacations in natural environment and participate in cultural and outdoor recreational activities (Darau et. al., 2010).

Table 2
Tourist Arrival in Punjab (In Lacs)

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Foreign</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.	2009	53.69	1.1	54.80
2.	2010	105.83	1.37	107.20
3.	2011	164.16	1.50	165.67
4.	2012	190.56	1.43	191.19
5.	2013	213.40	2.04	215.44
6	2014	177.57 (Jan-sep.)	2.55	180.12 (Domestic tourists Jan-Sep.)
7.	2015	257	2.42	259.42

Source: (i) India Tourism Statistics, (ii) Express News Service and (iii) Hindustan Times.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of rural tourism has been studied from various perspectives. Researchers and scholars from different fields have done research on the theme depending upon the discipline to which they belong.

The themes of rural tourism on which research has taken place range from scope, potential, challenges, community involvement, marketing, planning, sustainability, human resource in rural tourism, impact of rural tourism and sustainable rural tourism development etc.

Besides these research on spatial analysis of rural tourism has also taken place. Moostafaii et. al., (2012), have studied the features of rural tourism in Iran. The spatial analysis of rural tourism was done in Isfahan region. It analyzed various facilities like banking, water facility, sports facility available there and also the variables like distance were also studied. These are considered very important as they help in developing rural tourism. Gholami and Nakhi (2010) studied tourism geography of Balade Kojour village of Noushahr city in Iran. The main objective of this study was to explore and recognize various tourist sites in the study area. It was found that traditional form of development was desired and tourism had high effects on rural economy. Natural attractions were found to have better effects in attracting tourists as compared to socio-cultural and historical attractions.

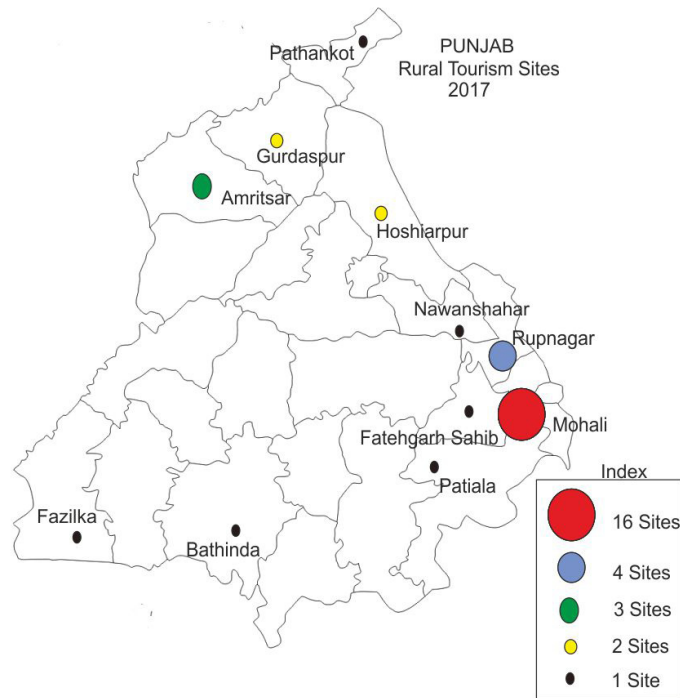
Nikolova (2012) has examined the possibility of rural tourism zoning in Bulgaria. The researcher tries to attempt spatial structure of the rural tourism sites through the illustration of folklore region. The study concludes with the recommendation that the zoning is necessary for image building and creating identity of the rural region. It helps in preserving culture and history of the rural area. Spatial planning of rural tourism has been done in Iran by Sabokbar et. al., (2014). The study finds out that there is lack of systematic ranking process which help in location of rural tourism sites. The study is based on the two counties in Iran namely Khur and Biabanak in Iran. The study also explores the tourism potential of the study region and also identifies the tourism spots. The ranking of the places in the study region was done using MAPPAC technique. It was found that older villages have higher ranking. Spatial evolution of rural tourism areas was studied in China by Xi, Kong and Wang(2015). Field surveys and GIS spatial analysis method were used to study the evolution of villages Jiaojiekou and Gougezhuang. It was found that there is difference in the impacts of tourism on villages meaning thereby that benefits of tourism percolates only to certain villages. Effective rural tourism management and different land use policies for different villages were recommended. It also suggested and emphasized on the role of government regulations and community participation in the promotion of rural tourism.

Rural Tourism in Punjab

In Punjab, some efforts have been made to develop rural tourism. Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board with a view to promote it introduced the scheme of farm tourism in the year 2008. Some farm house properties were registered under the scheme for a certain period and have been divided in three categories namely Diamond, Gold and Silver. These were supposed to provide home cooked food along with accommodation. Tourists can participate in various rural and farm based activities also. Table 3 enlists the approved and registered farm tourism sites by Punjab Heritage Tourism Promotion Board.

Regional Distribution of Rural Tourism Sites

All events and activities happen at some place and tourism is no exception. Therefore, all tourism related events can have space and time coordinates attached to them. (Dietvorst,1995). Punjab is broadly divided into three cultural/geographical regions namely Malwa, Majha and Doaba. Regional distribution of the rural tourism sites approved by Punjab Heritage Tourism Promotion Board is depicted through Map 1.



Map 1: Rural Tourism Sites

Source: Department of Tourism, Punjab

Table 3
Approved Rural/Farm Tourism Sites in Punjab

<i>Region</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Farm Property</i>
Doaba (3)	Hoshiarpur (2)	Citrus county Kailash Farm
	Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr) (1)	Prakriti Farm Stay
Majha (6)	Amritsar (3)	Green Acres Haveli Farmers Villa Ranjit Vilas Farm Stay
	Gurdaspur (2)	The Kothi Punjabiyat
	Pathankot (1)	Kartar Farms
Malwa (24)	Bathinda (1)	Mann Makhhi Farm
	Fatehgarh Sahib (1)	Chandigarh Sardar Farm
	Fazilka (1)	Jyani Natural Farm
	Mohali	Casba Farm
	(SAS Nagar-Ajitgarh) (16)	Baans Bagh Virsa-The Heritage Farm Master Farms Westonel Farm House Mystic Meadows

(Contd...)

<i>Region</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Farm Property</i>
		Sidhu Farm Stay
		The Village
		Whistling Hills
		Hindurgarh Fort
		Mejie Farm's Stay
		Tree house Farm Stay
		Kudrat Farm Stay
		Baag e Fursat
		Ground Zero Farm Stay
		Gul e Punjab
	Patiala (1)	Gary Farm
	Rupnagar (4)	Bharatgarh Fort
		Deeproot Retreat
		Sukh Amrit Farm Stay
		Satluj Farm stay

Source: Computed from Govt. of Punjab, Tourism data.

Malwa Region

There are twenty-four approved rural tourism sites in Malwa region. Mohali with sixteen approved sites is leading in Punjab. It is because of the proximity to the capital city of Chandigarh. These are Casba Farm Retreat (Swara), Baans Bagh (Siswan), Virsa – The Heritage Farm (Bakarpur), Master Farms (Rampur Kalan), Westonel Farm House (Barri- Bakarpur Road), Mystic Meadows (Chahar Majra), Sidhu Farm Stay (Majra), The Village (Pabat), Whistling Hills, Hindurgarh Fort, Mejie Farm Stay, Tree House Farm Stay, Kudrat Farm Stay, Baagh e Fursat, Ground Zero Farm Stay, Gul e Punjab. Chandigarh is well connected by rail, road and air transport, so these are easily accessible. It has flights to Delhi, Jaipur, Mumbai, Srinagar, Jammu, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Dubai. Mohali also has good rail and road connectivity. So, these sites are easily accessible by multiple modes of transport. These farm properties offer accommodation with food. Most of these provide amenities like AC, Wifi, TV etc. These also offer some activities to tourists in which they can participate. These include farming activities, visit to fields, fruit plucking, tractor ride, animal ride, jaggery making, milking, folk dances & music, kite flying etc. etc. besides these activities tourists can also enjoy and participate in traditional games like Gulli Danda. Many of these practice organic farming so these are also important from education point as they exhibit and educate about eco-friendly methods of farming and sustainable agricultural practices like organic farming, agro forestry, pest management etc. These sites are near to Chandigarh and offer many attractions to the tourists like Rock garden, Sukhna Lake, Rose Garden, Downtown of sector -17 etc. Pinjore Garden, Kasauli, Chhatbir Zoological Park are other important attractions nearby.

District of Rupnagar has four approved farm properties namely Bharatgarh Fort, Deep Root Retreat, Sukh Amrit Farm Stay and Satluj Farm Stay. Bharatgarh Fort is situated on the hill top in Shivalik range in village Bharatgarh. The property is in fort itself which was constructed in 1783. So, it gives an opportunity to stay in Heritage Homestay. It is located on the main Ropar- Anandpur Sahib road near Punjab-Himachal

Pradesh border. Sukh Amrit and Satluj farm properties are also in the vicinity of Anandpur sahib. So, tourist can reach these sites by road easily. Nearest Airport is Chandigarh and railway station is Rupnagar. Adventure activity is organized here like forest trek along the river Satluj. Fishing and take your catch home is another unique activity. Tourist can also enjoy picnic at island in river Satluj with rare and migratory birds watching. Tourists can have a tour of Sikh shrines like Anandpur Sahib, the birth place of Khalsa Panth, Kiratpur Sahib and Virasat-E-Khalsa museum. Tourist attractions of Chandigarh can be wonderful experience for the tourist.

Deep Roots retreat is the other property in Rupnagar district located on Kurali-Morinda road, so it is easily accessible by road. Tourist can enjoy tractor ride, picnic in orchard, vegetable picking, milking. There is arrangement of indoor games like chess with outdoor game like Badminton. Visit to village is also arranged so that tourists can meet villagers and have a feel of rural Punjab.

Jyani Natural Farm, Kathera (Fazilka), Chandigarh Sardar farm, Pohlo Majra (Fatehgarh Sahib), Mann Makhi Farm (Bathinda), Gary Farm, Nanoki (Patiala) are other approved properties in Malwa region.

Jyani Natural Farm (Fazilka) is Eco-Farm Tourism Resort known for organic farming. The farm can be easily reached by road as it is three kilometers inside Abohar-Fazilka road. Fazilka is connected by road and rail. National Highway connects it with New Delhi. Visit to dairy farm and organic farm is arranged for the guests. Besides these, tourists can enjoy tractor ride, milking. They can also participate in wheat grinding to prepare flour, outdoor sports, cooking activity etc. Cultural programme is organized which showcase the local culture. Visit to Indo-Pak International Border is an important attraction for the tourists.

Chandigarh Sardar Farm is in village Pohlo Majra in Fatehgarh Sahib district and is on main Chandigarh Ludhiana highway. It can be easily reached by road. It is a budget accommodation with modern facilities. Gary Farm in Patiala district is in village Nanoki which is on state highway 12A between Nabha and Mandi Gobindgarh. Tourists can enjoy village games like Gulli-Danda. Kite flying and wrestling is also arranged. Tourists can also have an exciting experience by having bath on tube wells and jumping on the hay. They can participate in community life by sitting with local people and attending the Panchayat meeting.

Mann Makkhi Farm is in village Tungwali. It offers rural experience to tourists. It organizes educational training programme in apiculture. Besides various rural activities there are some places of tourist interest nearby like Takht Damdama Sahib in Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda Fort- Qila Mubarak, Zoological Park, Maiser Khana Mandir, thermal plant etc.

Majha Region

This region lies between rivers Ravi and Beas is also called as 'Bari Doab'. This region has six farm tourism approved properties. Green acres Haveli is located near Amritsar airport on the main Amritsar-Ajnala Road. It offers cultural evenings with folk dance Bhangra, Giddha and music performances by local artists. City trip is arranged that includes visit to Golden Temple, Border retreat ceremony at Wagha, Amritsar heritage walk, Jallianwala Bagh etc. Other trips to places of tourist interest around Amritsar are also arranged covering Sikh shrines, Harike Bird sanctuary and wetland around fifty-five kilometers from here. Amritsar is known for its local eateries and Dhabas, the traditional eating places. Ranjit Vilas Palace is also on airport road in village Heir. Farmers Villa is another property on Fatehgarh Churian road and is about twenty kilometers from the city. So, there are three such properties in Amritsar which is well connected by rail,

road and air with major cities of the country. Visitors can enjoy tractor ride, ayurvedic massage, village safari etc.

The Kothi and Punjabiyat are two farm properties in Gurdaspur district. The Kothi is in village Nawalpind Sardaran which is about 12 kilometers from Gurdaspur railway station on Khanuwan road. Gurdaspur is on main rail and road route between Amritsar and Pathankot. Nearest airport is Amritsar. Visitors can also participate in kite flying and can enjoy nature walk in the village. Punjabiyat farm property is set in green fields in village Saidowal Khurd. This has been constructed in traditional way using locally available material like bricks, mud, wooden beams called shehtir. There are four cottages built in traditional Punjabi style. But all modern facilities have been provided to make a comfortable living for the guests. Tractor and tonga rides can be enjoyed by tourists. They are taken to dairy farm on cycle where they can learn how to milk the cow.

Kartar Farms is the only registered farm property in Pathankot. It is in Dunera which is a small town on Pathankot-Dalhousie road. Pathankot is the nearest station from where it is easily accessible by road. Nearest airports are Amritsar and Jammu. It provides homely accommodation and kitchen facility is also available.

Doaba Region

This region is also called Bist doab as it lies between rivers Beas and Satluj. It has four districts but only three approved farm tourism properties. Hoshiarpur district has two approved farm properties. Citrus County is in village Chhauni Kalan near Hoshiarpur, a town situated at the foothills of Shivalik hills. Hoshiarpur is well connected by road with cities Jalandhar, Pathankot, Jammu, Chandigarh and Delhi etc. The city is also connected by railway routes connecting Jalandhar, New Delhi etc. Chandigarh and Amritsar are nearest airports. An airport will be functional at Adampur soon. Village safari and exploration of village life, visit to dairy farm gives authentic rural experience to the tourists. They can also enjoy fruit plucking. Culinary tours can be a learning experience where they can learn cooking traditional Punjabi food. The city is also famous for wooden handicraft. Besides this there are many religious places nearby in Himachal Pradesh like Chintpurni, Jwala Ji, Naina Devi and others.

Kailash Farms is another site located at the foot hills of Shivalik range in village Chohal in Hoshiarpur. It is a big farm of mango and Kinnow. It can be easily reached as it is on main Hoshiarpur-Chintpurni road. Tourists can participate in indoor games like table tennis, carom, chess etc. Outdoor games like tennis, basketball, badminton and cricket are also available. Tourists can participate in plucking flowers, picking fruits and vegetables.

Prakriti is the only approved farm property offering farm tourism in Rail Majra village of Nawanshahar (Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar) district. It is a farm with organic practices and based on the principles of conservation of biodiversity. It offers tent and cottage accommodation with modern facilities. Situated on the foot hills Shivaliks, it is just seven kilometers from Ropar wetland which is rich in biodiversity and a good attraction with mammals and birds. This farm provides opportunity for learning environmental practices like soil conservation, use of manure instead of chemical fertilizers and preparation of organic pesticides.

Under Rural tourism scheme of Government of India five projects were started in Punjab. Out of these five projects, three are in Malwa namely Chhat and Jainti Majri (Mohali), Chamkaur Sahib(Rupnagar).

One each in Doaba and Majha region namely Boothgarh (Hoshiarpur in Doaba region) and Raja Sansi (Amritsar in Majha region). Besides these, four villages were selected for the Rural Tourism Cluster scheme in Rupnagar district. These are Katli, Bahadurpur, Tibba Taaparian and Ranjitpura Bas.

Table 4
Geographical area and Rural Tourism Sites in Punjab

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Geographical area in Percentage of the State</i>	<i>Percentage of Rural Tourism Sites in State</i>
1	Malwa	65.14	73.81
2	Majha	17.20	16.67
3	Doaba	17.66	9.52

Source: Computed from Govt. of Punjab data.

Thus in all there are forty two sites related to rural tourism. Region wise Malwa has thirty-one sites which is 73.81 percent of the total sites. Majha region has total seven sites constituting 16.67 percent and Doaba region has only four sites in all having only 9.52 percent of the state's rural tourism sites. When compared with the geographical area of the region, percentage of rural tourism sites are more in case of Malwa region only, where as in Majha and Doaba region percentage of sites are less than the geographical area.

Other Rural Tourism Sites

Besides these thirty three farm tourism properties, five projects and four villages under Rural Tourism Cluster Scheme, there are other rural tourism sites/properties which are not registered with Punjab Heritage and Tourism promotion Board (PHTPB), but they are offering farm stay in their farm house. They are equally important and contributing in rural tourism in the state. Tourists can have opportunity to experience rural life there. Some of them are Aura Vaseela (Mohali), Virasat Haveli (Amritsar), Sran Farm House (Gurdaspur), Mohindra Fruit Farm (Fazilka), Mand Farm House (Rupnagar), Green Valley Farm (Nawanshahar) and Deep Root Heritage (Ludhiana) etc. Most of these properties were once registered and approved by Punjab Heritage Tourism Promotion Board.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

District wise analysis of the rural tourism sites reveals that there is imbalance in the distribution of these sites. Mohali district is leading with total eighteen spots with sixteen approved sites and two rural tourism projects at Jainti Majri and Chhat. Mohali is followed by Rupnagar having nine sites in all with four approved properties. There is one Rural Tourism Project at Chamkaur Sahib and four villages selected for the Rural Tourism Cluster scheme also lie in Rupnagar District. Amritsar has four sites in all in which three are approved farm properties and one is project at Raja Sansi. Hoshiarpur has three sites that includes two farm properties and one project at Boothgarh. Gurdaspur has two approved farm properties. Fazilka, Bathinda, Fatehgarh Sahib, Nawanshahar, Pathankot and Patiala have one site each.

Spatial analysis of the distribution pattern of rural tourism sites in Punjab is found to be highly uneven as maximum number of such sites are in the periphery of Chandigarh. There are twenty nine sites out of forty two in the neighbouring districts of Mohali, Rupnagar, Patiala and Fatehgarh Sahib. On the other

hand there are eleven districts which do not have even a single rural tourism site. Eight such districts are in Malwa region namely Ferozepur, Faridkot, Moga, Muktsar, Mansa, Ludhiana, Sangrur and Barnala. In Doaba region Jalandhar & Kapurthala and in Majha region Tarn Taran do not have any rural tourism site.

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