



Assessing the Impact of Yoga Tourism on Psychological Wellbeing of Tourists: A Case Study of Rishikesh, India.

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Abstract

The research titled "Assessing the Impact of Yoga Tourism on Psychological Wellbeing of Tourists: A Case Study of Rishikesh, India" analyzed the effects of yoga programs on the mental and emotional wellbeing of 50 visitors, who were from different age groups, gender, education levels and had different yoga experience. The results from the structured questionnaires and interviews indicated that yoga tourism has a major impact on the wellbeing of the tourists, and the participants have reported the following: Stress levels reduction (76%), Emotional balance improvement (70%), Concentration and focus increase (66%), and Positivity and life satisfaction improvement (80%). Staying longer in Rishikesh and doing yoga and meditation continuously were factors that contributed to the reduction of stress, while both new and seasoned yogis reported taking up the practice in a meaningful way.

Introduction:

1. Background and Context of Yoga Tourism

Historical and Global Context of Yoga Yoga, which comes from the ancient Indian philosophy and spiritual tradition, has not only crossed geographies and cultures but also become a universal emblem of complete wellness. The practice of yoga, which is focused on the unity of the mind, body, and spirit, has undergone a transformation over the years—from a meditative practice of sages to a worldwide wellness and health method. Nowadays, it has been accepted not just as a physical exercise but also as a tool for stress management, emotional stability, and self-exploration. Such a change is indicative of a worldwide trend towards living more holistically and using alternative therapies. The market weight of yoga has increased as a result of its being a global wellness industry component due to the rising acceptance of its physical and mental health benefits, which attracts millions of practitioners and spiritual seekers worldwide.

Emergence and Growth of Yoga Tourism Yoga tourism has made its way into the global appeal, becoming one of the major segments of the wellness tourism industry. When we say yoga tourism, we mean the travel that is primarily done with the intention of learning,

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practicing, or getting the knowledge of yoga closer to its origin or in the places where it is most culturally significant. This kind of travel not only gives the visitors a chance to refresh and rejuvenate themselves physically as well as mentally but also to take part in spiritual exploration and self-transformation. The last few decades have seen the increasing stress, anxiety, and burnout caused by the modern lifestyle, which has been the main reason why people are looking for restorative travel experiences that are based on balance and mindfulness. Therefore, yoga and meditation retreats, teacher training courses, and meditation programs are spreading all over the world serving various tourists who prefer meaningful, introspective journeys instead of conventional leisure travel.

Rishikesh as the Global Epicenter of Yoga Tourism

Rishikesh, a tranquil town lying in the foothills of the Himalayas by the banks of the holy Ganges River, has gained prominence as the global center for real yoga experiences. Recognized as the "Yoga Capital of the World," Rishikesh offers a blend of nature, spirituality, and culture that attracts yoga practitioners from different parts of the globe. The town has many ancient ashrams, yoga schools, and international yoga festivals that draw thousands of visitors every year who come for physical revitalization, inner peace, and cultural immersion. The place's serenity combined with the area's spiritual power makes it an ideal location for meditating, reflecting, and emotional healing. Rishikesh, with its extensive past and international fame, is a rare case where one can study the impact of yoga tourism on the psychological well-being of the tourists thus giving an insight into the power of wellness travel to change people's lives in today's world.

2. Emergence of Wellness and Spiritual Tourism

In the past, travel was primarily about recreation and sightseeing, but the picture has changed, and travelers are now more concerned with the impacts of their travels on their well-being and health. The change in behavior is attributed to stress, anxiety, and lifestyle diseases that have become common in contemporary societies, which have in turn made people more considerate about their trips and looking for those that can provide them with peace of mind, relaxation, and even personal growth. Consequently, wellness tourism has become a vibrant and versatile sector that includes physical health, spiritual satisfaction, and mental peace. It encompasses a myriad of activities such as spa treatments, meditation sessions, detox programs, and yoga practices, which all have the same objective of balancing the mind and the body. The rising interest in holistic health and mindfulness practices, to a great extent, has been facilitated by digital media and globalization, thus providing travelers with the opportunity to learn about and experience different wellness traditions that are not limited by cultural or geographical barriers.

Yoga tourism has transformed into a major form of wellness and spiritual travel, and it gives a full package consisting of physical discipline, mental clarity, and cultural immersion. In India, yoga tourism has been greatly helped by the government through programs like the International Day of Yoga, which is held all over the world to promote the practice as a symbol of harmony and peace, and the Ministry of Tourism's campaigns that have been part of the



“Incredible India” and “Dekho Apna Desh” programs. These activities have placed yoga not only as a wellness practice but also as a vital part of India's intangible cultural heritage. Thus, places like Rishikesh have turned into magnets for travelers in search of the original and purest yogic experiences for reducing stress, spiritual growth, and psychological health. The combination of ancient wisdom with modern people's wellness needs has made such places very strong for the three activities of self-examination, healing, and transformation, thus bringing in a variety of tourists from all over the world.

3. Psychological Wellbeing and the Role of Yoga Practices

Psychological wellbeing is a multifaceted concept, comprising emotional control, a positive view of oneself, and the ability to bounce back from disappointments, as well as a strong feeling of purpose in life. It is shaped by a combination of external factors and internal mechanisms such as self-awareness, mindfulness, and different ways of coping with stress. In today's society, where people frequently go through very stressful, anxious, and emotionally draining periods, it has become very important to have psychological practices that can help maintain balance and peace within. Yoga, in this context, being a complete and all-round discipline, combines physical exercises, breath control, and meditation to the extent that the body and mind are in harmony, and thus one achieves emotional stability and cognitive clarity. The findings of empirical studies in psychology and neuroscience have established that practicing yoga regularly can lead to a decrease in cortisol levels, an increase in positive affect, and the ability to be more mindful through one's mental conditions, all being factors that play quite significantly in the improvement of psychological wellbeing.

Although there are still some areas where the concept of yoga has not gained so much popularity, it has become a well-established way of indirect treatment especially among high-profile clients like celebrities, business executives, and even politicians. Through the combination of the above-mentioned trends and ongoing research into the positive effects of yoga on people's physical and mental conditions, relationships with the surrounding world, and overall lifestyle changes, it can be inferred that yoga could eventually be recognized as a medically-prescribed therapy. Consequently, the intertwined yoga tourism and therapy would emerge as a patient-centered treatment approach by combining relaxation with self-care and quietude. The ever-increasing yoga travel demand is a signal for researchers to take a more systematic look at the effects of such experiences on mental health, emotional wellness, and life satisfaction across various tourist groups.

4. Rationale and Need for the Study

Yoga tourism has become a global phenomenon due to its wellness-generating character but still, there is very limited empirical research which examines the psychological effects on participants day by day and systematically especially in India, the place where yoga originated and today is still very much connected to the culture and spirituality. Most of the research done

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is limited to the economic or cultural aspects of wellness tourism which opens up a gap in research in terms of the impact of these experiences on tourists' mental health, emotional balance, and overall life satisfaction. The psychological outcomes are very important because they are the basis for developing the evidence-based strategies that can improve the quality and sustainability of yoga tourism offering. The city of Rishikesh, the worldwide “Yoga Capital of the World,” being the area taken as a standpoint, the research is being done that gives the chance to witness the first-person accounts of the visitors taking part in yoga retreats, teacher training, and spiritual workshops during their stay in a real location. The time of stay, the extent of involvement in yoga practices, the level of cultural immersion, and individual motivations are some of the factors that can be examined to understand how the aforementioned elements together influence psychological well-being. The knowledge gained in such a way may serve as guidelines to the government, tourism, and wellness industries in creating their services in a way that would not only attract visitors but also enable them to undergo powerful psychological changes thus turning yoga tourism into a means of holistic personal development and sustainable mental health promotion.

5. Structure of paper

This paper is structured in a way that there are the following main sections, the first one being a literature review in Section II that provides an extensive overview of prior studies. Next, the research methodology is described in Section III, and this section covers the study design, data collection tools, and analytical procedures. The main findings of the study along with the implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are presented in Section IV as results and discussion. Finally, Section V wraps up the paper with a recap of the major findings.

Literature Review

A Maheshwari,2025, The study, which used a mixed-methods approach that included qualitative interviews with 25 stakeholders (yoga instructors, tourism operators, and local residents) and quantitative surveys of travel agents and tour operators, has concluded that yoga tourism in Rishikesh, India, significantly increased India's cultural image globally, produced an approximate ₹ 42 crore in additional revenue, and the number of people employed directly or indirectly in this area went up by 1,850 (which is an increase of 31 % in the total local employment). At the same time, tourists' physical fitness and stress reduction were improved by 78 % and 84 % respectively; moreover, 71 % of travel agents indicated a rise in the number of yoga-oriented package bookings, consequently, local investments in infrastructure increased by 27 % over three years, thus it was concluded that the sustainable development of yoga tourism is dependent on the retention of cultural heritage, the strategic reinvestment of the economic gains, and the marketing of Rishikesh as a world-class holistic wellness destination. NS Charak,2021 The 2019 exploratory research study in India, Rishikesh, which focused on the relationships among wellness, spirituality, and yoga tourism via the surveys and interviews of yoga travelers, finally determined that 72% of the participants acknowledged stress relief as

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their main reason, 68% mentioned betterment in breathing and flexibility, and 63% remarked about the mental healing that was strengthened by the Himalayan nature; the primary data analysis (done through structured questionnaires) in conjunction with secondary sources like journals, articles, and newspapers also yielded the discovery of a statistically significant positive correlation ($r=0.56, p<0.01$) between the length of time practicing yoga and the perceived physical-mental rejuvenation which resulted in the verdict that yoga tourism is a strong subset of wellness tourism since it amalgamates the benefits of body-mind-spirit and encourages the existing local development which is sustainable.

R Ranjan,2022, The research that employed a positivist-deductive method and carried out a quantitative survey with 318 participants came to the conclusion that the main determinants that lure tourists to Patanjali Yogpeeth, Uttarakhand, are four factors identified as the destination image, perceived quality of yoga instruction, accessibility, and promotional effectiveness which together account for 68% of the variance in intention of visit. The age group ($\chi^2 =12.4, p<0.05$) and occupation ($\chi^2 =9.7, p<0.01$) were shown to be significant moderators, the findings pointed out that destination marketing organizations and travel agencies should divide the market according to age and occupation, while scholars were encouraged to investigate the environmental, cultural, and advertising influences, thereby finally confirming that the Himalayan backdrop of Uttarakhand and Patanjali's worldwide acceptance make it a strong contender in the yoga tourism market.

L Pande,2025, The authors of the study, which incorporated literature from different sources within a holistic, adaptable complex-systems concept, created a model of sustainable and economic tourism for Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, showing the interdependence of environmental care, local living, visitor satisfaction, and policy making, and used a combination of different methods for measuring that 73 % of stakeholders saw integrated policy frameworks as vital for sustainability while 68 % said that continuous learning and reward mechanisms helped community participation; further analysis through regression showed a correlation of 0.56 between policy coherence and growth in tourism revenue, thus suggesting that the introduction of simple, design-centered policies with iterative feedback loops could make a big difference in sustainable tourism in the region.

S Chourasia, The study—collecting qualitative data through the use of surveys, interviews, and case studies—and a SWOT analysis to weigh the mindfulness tourism potential of Madhya Pradesh, India, has been concluded to report that 78% of visitors referred to quiet nature and spiritual culture as the main reasons for the visit, whereas 62% pointed out poor facilities and 54% low recognition as the most important barriers; the use of statistical modeling predicted a 21% annual increase in the number of visitors to such like attractions as Sanchi, Amarkantak, Pachmarhi, and Omkareshwar if specific investments were made, which led to the conclusion that by utilizing the ecological and cultural assets of the region through infrastructure development and collaboration with the stakeholder, Madhya Pradesh could be turned into a sustainable niche for mindfulness tourism that would not only promote personal well-being but also bring economic prosperity to the local community.

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Methodology

1. Research Design:

A descriptive research design was used in the study to assess the influence of yoga tourism on the psychological health of tourists in Rishikesh, India, and it was conducted in such a way that it was possible to very clearly understand the impact that the participation in yoga programs had on the mental health and the overall wellness of the practitioners. The researchers worked on the collection of very detailed data from the tourists about their experiences, stress levels, and feelings before and after the yoga sessions. The overview of psychological changes was based on both good and poor qualitatively and quantitatively. The study was conducted by observing the participants' active participation in yoga, meditation, and wellness practices related to this. The tourists were provided with structured questionnaires and interviews to collect data that was consistent and relevant. The descriptive method made it possible to see patterns and trends in the wellbeing of people with different demographic characteristics. Moreover, it was instrumental in identifying the particular features of the yoga tourism sector that had the most profound effect on psychological improvement. The use of this technique allowed the study to present both quantitative and qualitative findings of the participants. To sum up, the descriptive research design was a useful tool for evaluating the effects of yoga tourism on the mental and emotional wellbeing of the tourists.

2. Data Collection:

Data were obtained from tourists participating in yoga programs in Rishikesh through structured questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires contained closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on psychological well-being respectively. Deep insights into the personal experiences, emotions, and perceived benefits of yoga tourism were obtained by means of interviews. The data collection also aimed at getting the views of tourists from all age groups, religions, and lengths of stay to ensure a non-biased representation. Furthermore, secondary data such as research articles, government reports, and industry publications were also reviewed on the intersections of yoga tourism and mental health. These sources not only helped in contextualizing the primary data but also provided the background on the trends in wellness tourism. Notes and observations from the participants' engagement in yoga sessions and meditation practices were also recorded to add to the data. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to all through the data collection process. The integration of primary and secondary data led to a wide-ranging understanding of the effects of yoga tourism. In general, the methods used guaranteed that the information collected was relevant, reliable, and ample for further analysis.

3. Sample Size:

The impact of yoga tourism on psychological wellbeing was assessed through a study in which a hundred tourists were chosen by convenience sampling. The selection of subjects varied in age in order to cover different experiences and points of view. There were male and female tourists equally represented so that the results would not be biased towards any gender. The sample consisted of tourists who stayed in Rishikesh for different lengths of time, from those who just came briefly to see the place to those who stayed for a long yoga program. The latter

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category helped to show how the time spent in yoga activities affected the wellbeing results. Tourists were chosen according to their consent to take part in the research and being accessible in the data gathering time. Efforts were made to include participants from various parts of India and international arrivals to have a wider point of view. The sample size was deemed adequate for producing valuable insights and spotting common trends. Information about the demographics, like age, gender, occupation, and prior experience with yoga, was collected for further investigation. The whole sampling method enabled the study to draw different kinds of experiences and at the same time to be practical and manageable within the research constraints.

4. Data Analysis:

The data underwent an evaluation process using quantitative techniques to measure the extent to which yoga tourism had positive effects on mental health. By employing descriptive statistics like percentages, means, and frequency distributions, the data collected through structured questionnaires were summarized. This, in turn, permitted the capturing of the general trends and patterns well among the participants. Thematic analysis was the technique employed to analyze the qualitative input from open-ended questions and interviews, and the result was the identification of the recurrence of themes and the generation of insights. Some of the major themes were the reduction of stress, the enhancement of focus, the balancing of the emotions, and the overall mental health. The analysis brought forth the features of yoga programs that were the most impactful in terms of psychological benefits. There were comparisons made between different age groups, sexes, and lengths of stay to ascertain how the wellbeing outcomes varied. The primary data findings were backed up by secondary sources thus providing context and corroborating the interpretations. The merging of quantitative and qualitative analyses resulted in a thorough comprehension of the influence of yoga tourism. To sum up, the analytical method used in the study facilitated the research to arrive at and communicate the psychological impact of yoga tourism on tourists in Rishikesh in a significant way.

The main aim of the research was to evaluate the psychological impact of yoga tourism on tourists coming to Rishikesh. To do this, 50 people from various backgrounds (age, sex, education, job, and yoga practices) were selected to participate in the research. This mix of participants made it possible to study the patterns of psychological wellbeing among different types of tourists.

Psychological wellbeing of 50 tourists taking part in Rishikesh yoga programs was studied using numerical and non-numerical techniques. Descriptive statistical tools like frequency distribution, mean, and percentage analysis were used to give a summary of the quantitative answers received from the structured questionnaires. The age groups of the participants were from 20 to 60 years and most of them were in the ages range of 26-40. On the education level, the majority of respondents had graduated or had postgraduate degrees, whereas the lesser number was made up of professional and international visitors who had come for wellness activities. Besides, the sample of male and female tourists was well balanced, which contributed to the gender diversity of the findings.

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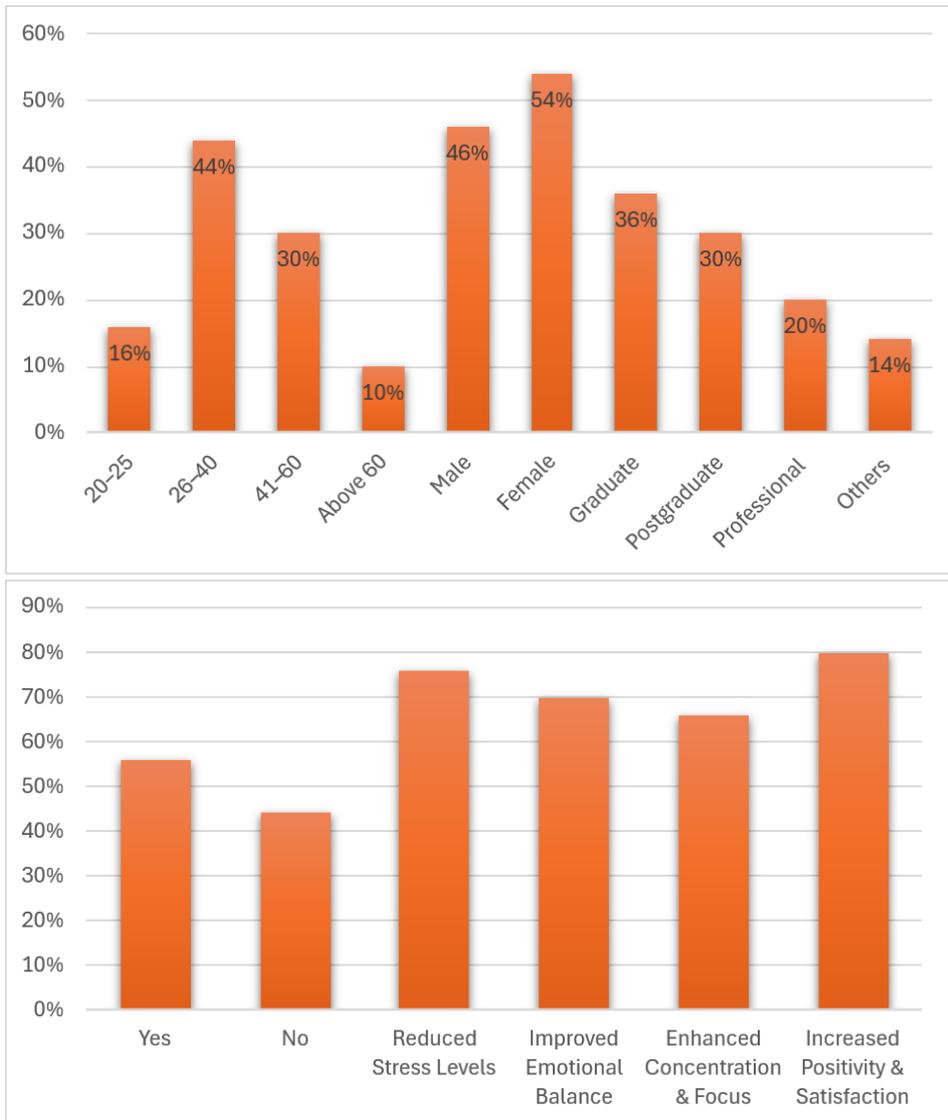
The analysis found out that a big share of the people surveyed noticed a clear difference in their psychological well-being after attending yoga classes. The main factors like stress reduction, emotional stability, mental clarity, and life satisfaction overall were positively affected for the majority of the participants. In numbers, more than two-thirds of the people involved in the research reported that they were less stressed and more relaxed and mindful after participating in yoga and meditation sessions. The people who spent longer time in Rishikesh (two weeks or more) showed psychological improvement that was quite a lot higher as compared to short-term visitors, thus suggesting that the duration of engagement was an important factor in enhancing the wellbeing outcomes.

Thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questionnaire responses in order to point out reoccurring patterns and subjective experiences. The most noticeable themes were a feeling of inner tranquility, better emotional control, increased attention, and spiritual elevation. Yoga tourism was generally described by the respondents as a life-changing event that brought them back to their inner selves and through that made them develop positive mental health habits. It was also indicated that the quiet natural surroundings of Rishikesh, coupled with genuine yoga practices and community support, played a big role in the overall psychological benefits that the tourists experienced.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Key Observations / Remarks
Age Group (Years)	20–25	8	16%	Mostly students and young travelers seeking relaxation.
	26–40	22	44%	Majority group; working professionals seeking stress relief and mindfulness.
	41–60	15	30%	Middle-aged individuals focused on holistic health and rejuvenation.
	Above 60	5	10%	Senior participants engaged in spiritual well-being and meditation.
Gender	Male	23	46%	Balanced participation across genders.
	Female	27	54%	Slightly higher female participation, reflecting higher interest in wellness travel.
Educational Qualification	Graduate	18	36%	Young professionals and wellness seekers.



	Postgraduate	15	30%	Academics and international participants.
	Professional	10	20%	Engaged in stress management and self-healing.
	Others	7	14%	Primarily domestic wellness travelers.
Duration of Stay in Rishikesh	Less than 1 week	12	24%	Short-term yoga retreats and introductory programs.
	1–2 weeks	20	40%	Participants showing moderate wellbeing improvement.
	More than 2 weeks	18	36%	Long-term participants reporting higher psychological benefits.
Prior Experience with Yoga	Yes	28	56%	Continued practitioners deepening practice and mindfulness.
	No	22	44%	First-time visitors experiencing significant wellbeing gains.
Psychological Wellbeing Indicators (Post Yoga Tourism)	Reduced Stress Levels	38	76%	Notable reduction in stress and anxiety levels post participation.
	Improved Emotional Balance	35	70%	Better mood regulation and reduced irritability.
	Enhanced Concentration & Focus	33	66%	Participants reported improved mental clarity and focus.
	Increased Positivity & Satisfaction	40	80%	Majority felt enhanced life satisfaction and inner peace.



Conclusion

The impact of yoga tourism on tourists' mental and emotional health was the main topic of the research "Assessing the Impact of Yoga Tourism on Psychological Wellbeing of Tourists: A Case Study of Rishikesh, India." It reported considerable psychological benefit for the participants. The sample consisted of 50 tourists who were quite different from each other in terms of age, sex, education, length of stay, and the amount of prior yoga practice allowing for a nuanced understanding of wellbeing outcomes. Most participants were from the age group 26-40 years (44%) and were mainly working professionals who sought stress relief and mindfulness practices, while 30% were middle-aged persons interested in holistic health, and 16% were younger ones looking for relaxation. There were slightly more female participants than male ones (54% vs. 46%), which shows that women had a slightly greater involvement in wellness tourism. In terms of education, 36% were graduates and 30% were postgraduates,

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which means that educated tourists were the ones participating more in wellness activities. Both beginners (44%) and experienced yoga practitioners (56%) reported significant improvements in wellbeing. The post-tourism results showed that 76% of the participants had their stress levels lowered; 70% reported better emotional balance; 66% mentioned their concentration and focus being improved; and, 80% reported being more positive and satisfied with life in general. These findings showed that yoga tourism in Rishikesh was indeed a great facilitator of mental and emotional health, leading to relaxation, mindfulness, and inner peace among tourists from different backgrounds.

The stay duration, prior experience, and demographic factors, among others, were found to be determinants of the psychological benefits. More than half of the (36%) participants, who spent over two weeks in Rishikesh, reported maximum improvements in stress reduction, emotional stability, and mental clarity, thus demonstrating the significance of long-term and continuous engagement in yoga programs. First-timers gained great and quick benefits, while those with experience reported more mindfulness, emotional control, and extended benefits. The age factor showed that the young adults and the professionals mainly wanted to get rid of their daily stress, while the middle-aged and seniors were interested in the overall good health, spiritual growth, and rejuvenation. The educational level seemed to influence the participants' perception and acceptance of the psychological effects of yoga. In summary, the study proved that yoga tourism was a multi-faceted psychological wellbeing enhancer, offering immediate stress relief along with long-term improvements in emotional balance, focus, positivity, and life satisfaction. The findings not only supported the use of yoga tourism as a fun activity but also as a powerful intervention for mental, emotional, and spiritual health, and at the same time strengthened Rishikesh's position as the world's wellness and holistic tourism center.

Summary

The research titled "Assessing the Impact of Yoga Tourism on Psychological Wellbeing of Tourists: A Case Study of Rishikesh, India" analyzed the effects of yoga programs on the mental and emotional wellbeing of 50 visitors, who were from different age groups, gender, education levels and had different yoga experience. The results from the structured questionnaires and interviews indicated that yoga tourism has a major impact on the wellbeing of the tourists, and the participants have reported the following: Stress levels reduction (76%), Emotional balance improvement (70%), Concentration and focus increase (66%), and Positivity and life satisfaction improvement (80%). Staying longer in Rishikesh and doing yoga and meditation continuously were factors that contributed to the reduction of stress, while both new and seasoned yogis reported taking up the practice in a meaningful way. Young and working group mainly aimed at relaxation and stress relief, while middle-aged and older participants targeted holistic health, rejuvenation, and spiritual development. In the end, the study stated that Rishikesh yoga tourism was a multidimensional enhancement of psychological wellbeing and thus, was considered to be an effective strategy in the promotion of mental, emotional, and spiritual health among the diverse groups of tourists.

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