

Abstract:-

Once, District Poonch was consisting four Tehsils viz Haveli, Mendhar, Sadhnuti and Bagh. The partition of 1947 bifurcates, this district into two, Tehsil Sadnuti and bulk of the portion of the Tehsil Bagh goes into the Pak administered Kashmir. This side left with Tehsil Mendher and Hevali. Now, District Poonch has three Tehsils (Sub District Headquarters) viz Surankote, Mendher and Heavli. This hilly region has still many sites of tourist's interest, which can be explored for the development of region and people living aside. Therefore, this study is an extension of another study, and it is purposely undertaken to know the awareness, past experience and preference of tourists regarding tourist's sites of the District Poonch.

Keywords:

Poonch, Tourists, Sites, Awareness and Development .

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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TOURISTS AWARENESS, EXPERIENCE AND PREFERENCES ABOUT VARIOUS SITES OF DISTRICT POONCH

INTRODUCTION

Like other Himalayan destination twin border Districts Rajouri and Poonch being a part of this region also offers some unique and potential tourism product in all forms like pilgrimage, leisure and adventure travel. Unfortunately, yet this region couldn't bring in the tourism map of the Himalayan destination. But in the recent years with the changing political scenario of region, rise in the education and recommendation of working group on Kashmir highlighted the tourism potential of the region. Moreover, revival of historical Mughal road also brings areas into lime light from tourism development prospective. Its tourism potential includes heritage, pilgrimage, leisure and nature based tourism. Prominent destinations include Shahadra Shrief Shrine, Buddha Amarnath Shrine, Nangali Sahib Gurdawara, Pir Ki Gali, Noori Chamb, Dera Ki Gali, Miran Sahib Shrine, and Groups of Lakes in upper Pir Panjal, Mughal Road adventure travel, Mandi and Border areas destinations.

OBJECTIVES

1. This study will find out the level of awareness among visitors about tourists sites of Poonch
2. Past experience of the visitors (if any) and their preference would remains the focus of this study.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Tourists are not much aware about all the potential tourists' sites of District Poonch.
2. Visitors do not preferred to visits to these sites due to many reasons.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

Study is useful for those entire stake holder who are directly or indirectly associated with development of tourism in Poonch, Rajouri and State Jammu and Kashmir. This study is confined to Poonch District only, this article is exploratory in nature therefore concrete disruption cannot be drawn from this as its assumption reveals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary information was collected from 734 visitors who visited to Shahdra Shrief Shrine Rajouri, during the year 2012, 2013 and 2014. Simple statistics techniques like percentage, average, and frequency have been used with the help of SPSS and excel. Secondary information was collected through internet and journals.

Review of Literature

A very limited literature is available about tourism in District Poonch, although some allied literature is available which is cited here. Gupta and Singh (2003) voluminous and encyclopedic book offers a researched survey of various historical shrines, culture, heritage and art, language literature and folklore. Further this book also discusses geography, geology, minerals, flora and fauna and political scenario. Importance of Hindu and Muslims shrines of Jammu region and their historical importance to the contemporary world have been conferred in detail. This book also explains historical aspects of Rajouri and Poonch. Kaumadi (2005) book is devoted to literary heritage of Kashmir which includes royal lyricists, singer, music and melody, divine heritage places and holy streams. This book presents scenic beauty of Kashmir in an artistic manner. Ahmed (2007) put in plain words about the famous heritage sites of Jammu and Kashmir with Poonch such as Jamia Masjid, Poonch Fort and Pir Panjal. The famous Mughal road is also become the part of this book but this book did not include District Rajouri.

Singh (2009) book entitled Faith and Philosophy of Sikhism elaborate details of pilgrimage places of Sikh in India and outside the India but this study did not include one of the famous Gurdawara Nangali Shaib, of State Jammu and Kashmir which is in District Poonch. Jeelani (1976) in his research project entitled "Problems and Prospects of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir" submitted to Agra University has made an attempt to trace the historical development of trade in the State and has made an identification of some problems faced by industry. This research lacks the relevant information regarding the impact of tourism industry on the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. Arora (1989) provides lots of factual information regarding important ancient routes like Gilgit, Baltistan and Pir Panjal. Moreover book also describes importance of Mughal Gardens in Kashmir and various outreach places of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. Bates (2005) book is about thorough description of Jammu, Kashmir, Poonch, Kishin Ganaga areas and its historical importance in an informative manner. Bezmai (2007) piece of work explains socio economic

aspect of State Jammu and Kashmir. Rajouri and Poonch socio economic status has also been demonstrated along with development of ancient trade routes including Mughal road. Dawan, P. (2005) had included Rajouri and Poonch in his book which includes detail description of various Hindu, Muslims and Sikh Shrines. Moreover the potential tourist destination of Rajouri and Poonch also had been presented in Dewan's book. Mani (2009) in this book portrays historical perspective of Poonch along with District Rajouri, since 1452 to 2009. Development, peace, proxy war, recent Indo-Pak dialogue, cross border trade and travel are the main focal point of this book.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to know the awareness among the tourist and visitors, effectiveness of government schemes and future prospects of facility development and promotion and branding of all other tourist interest based places / destinations including almost all sites of District Poonch. A series of questions were also asked that how many times they visited these spots, if not, whether they are interested to go to these places or not. The frequency distribution tables show responses of all 734 visitors.

Number of visits to Noori Chamb - Out of total 44% people visited to this charming water fall which is situated in neighborhood district Poonch. Table 1 shows that 56% never visited this tourist destination. 27%, 6%, 2% and 8% respondents responded that they had visited one time, two times, three times and more than three times to this tourist place.

Table 1: Number of visits to Noori Chamb

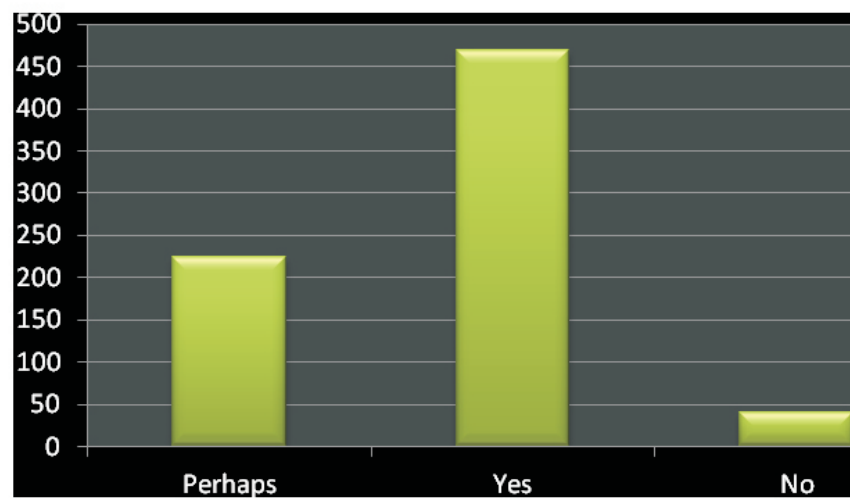
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	415	56.5	56.5	56.5
Once	200	27.2	27.2	83.8
Twice	42	5.7	5.7	89.5
Thrice	16	2.2	2.2	91.7
>3 times	61	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Never visited				

Planning visit to Noori Chamb – Table 2 shows that 64% respondents were planning to visit this place 30% were in yes or no situation (dilemma) and 8% denied.

Table 2: Planning visit to Noori Chamb

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	224	30.5	30.5	30.5
Yes	469	63.9	63.9	94.4
No	41	5.6	5.6	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Yes				

Figure 2a: Planning visit to Noori Chamb



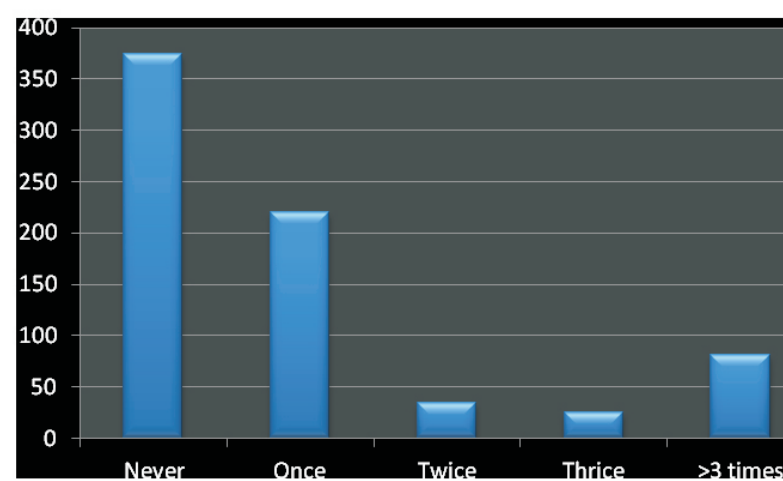
Number of visits to Dera Ki Gali (DKG) - Out of total, 51% respondent did not visited this tourist spot, only 30%, 5%, 3% and 11% visited once, twice, thrice and more than three times to this spot. In an average 49% respondent visited this place and rest did not.

Table 3: Number of visits to Dera Ki Gali (DKG)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	374	51.0	51.0	51.0
Once	220	30.0	30.0	80.9
Twice	34	4.6	4.6	85.6
Thrice	25	3.4	3.4	89.0
>3 times	81	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average = Once

Figure 3a: Number of visits to Dera Ki Gali



Planning of visits to Dera Ki Gali (DKG) - Frequency distribution Table 4 shows that 66% respondent

are planning to visit DKG and 28% said that they may visit but they were not sure. 5% does not want to visit this place. In an average most of the respondent wanted to visit this place.

Table 4: Planning of visits to Dera Ki Gali (DKG)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	208	28.3	28.3	28.3
Yes	486	66.2	66.2	94.6
No	40	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Yes				

Number of visits to Dargah Baba Sain Merian Sahib (RA), Poonch - Frequency distribution, Table 5 shows that 65% respondent never visited this place remaining 26%, 2%, 1% and 6% stated that they had been visited one time, two times, three times and more than three times to this place. Therefore, in an average only 35% respondent visited this place.

Table 5: Number of visits to Dargah Baba Sain Mera Sahib (RA), Poonch

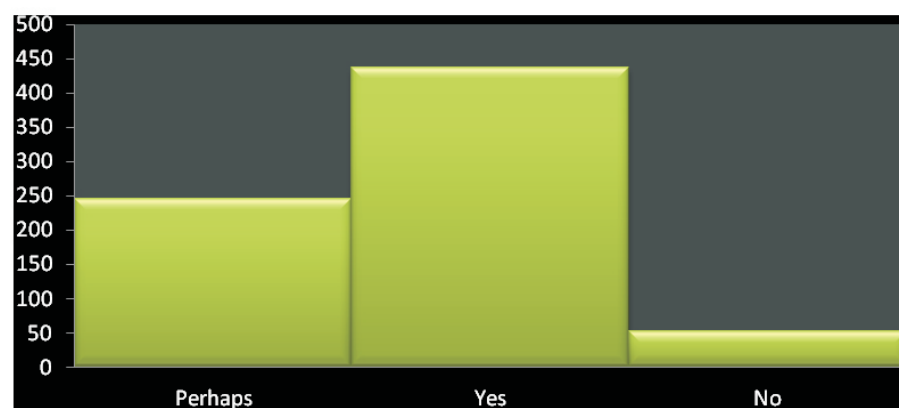
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	475	64.7	64.7	64.7
Once	192	26.2	26.2	90.9
Twice	18	2.5	2.5	93.3
Thrice	7	1.0	1.0	94.3
>3 times	42	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Once				

Planning of visit to Dargah Baba Sain Mera Sahib (RA), Poonch - In case of planning of visits to Baba Sain Mera (RA) Shrine, 59% respondent wanted to visit there and 33% are not sure about this. Only 7% mark their refuse for visit to this place.

Table 6: Planning of visit to Dargah Baba Sain Mera Sahib (RA), Poonch

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	245	33.4	33.4	33.4
Yes	437	59.5	59.5	92.9
No	52	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Yes				

Figure 6a: Planning of visit to Dargah Baba Sain Mera Sahib (RA), Poonch



Number of visits to Nanggali Sahib Gurawara Poonch - There are 81% respondent who did not visited this religious place, only 14%, visited one time 2% and 2% each category visited three and more than three times. In an average as shown in Table 5.42 Only 20% visited this Gurudawara.

Table 7: Number of visits to Nanggali Sahib Gurawara Poonch

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	601	81.9	81.9	81.9
Once	101	13.8	13.8	95.6
Twice	16	2.2	2.2	97.8
>3 times	16	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average = Never

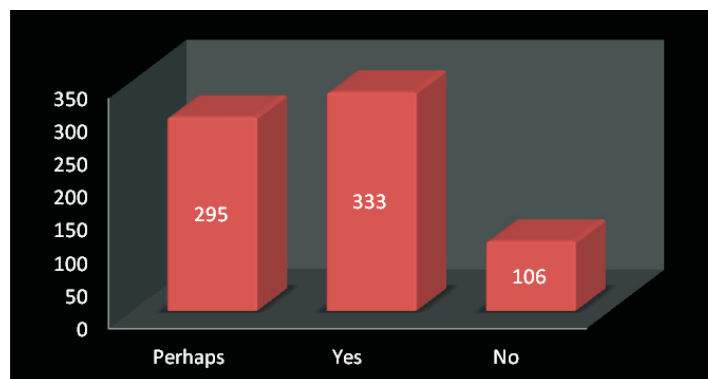
Planning of visits to Nanggali Sahib Gurawara Poonch - Frequency distribution Table shows that 45% respondents are planning to visit there, 14% denied and 40% asserted that they have yet to decide.

Table 8: Planning of visits to Nanggali Sahib Gurawara Poonch

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	295	40.2	40.2	40.2
Yes	333	45.4	45.4	85.6
No	106	14.4	14.4	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average = Yes

Figure 8a: Planning of visits to Nanggali Sahib Gurawara Poonch



Number of Visits to Buddha Amar Nath Shrine - Budha Amar Nath is an oldest Shrine situated near Mandi in district Poonch, visitors were asked how many times did they visited this Shrine. Distribution Table 5.46 shows that 83% never visited this Shrine and 11%, 3%, 1% and 2% had visited one, two, three and more than three times to this place. This also established this fact that only 17% respondent had visited to this place.

Table 9: Number of Visits to Buddha Amar Nath Shrine

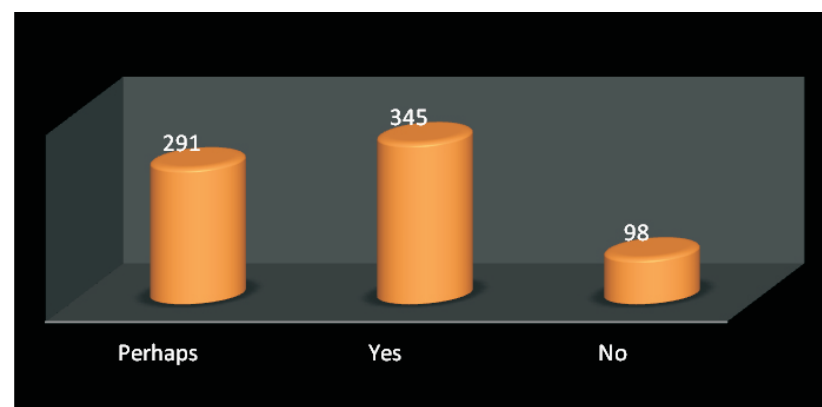
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	607	82.7	82.7	82.7
	Once	81	11.0	11.0	93.7
	Twice	24	3.3	3.3	97.0
	Thrice	9	1.2	1.2	98.2
	>3 times	13	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Never					

Planning of Visit to Buddha Amar Nath Shrine - Among all visitors 40% responded asserted that they are not sure about their future visit to this place rest 47% were planning to visit this Shrine and 13% denied to go to there.

Table 10: Planning of Visit to Buddha Amar Nath Shrine

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	291	39.6	39.6	39.6
Yes	345	47.0	47.0	86.6
No	98	13.4	13.4	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Yes				

Figure 10a: Planning of Visit to Buddha Amar Nath Shrine

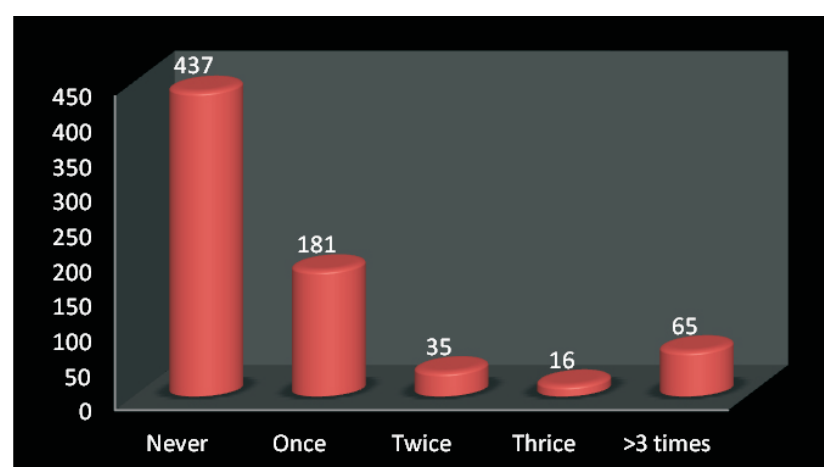


Number of visits to Peer Ki Gali (PKG) - Peer Ki Gali is a fabulous, thrilling and a tremendous virgin tourist spot in the mid May of Mugal Road to Kashmir. Respondent were also asked about their previous visit to that place. Almost 41% stated that they had visited there but 59% said that they never visited to Peer Ki Gali.

Table 11: Number of visits to Peer Ki Gali (PKG)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	437	59.5	59.5	59.5
Once	181	24.7	24.7	84.2
Twice	35	4.8	4.8	89.0
Thrice	16	2.2	2.2	91.1
>3 times	65	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = 1				

Figure 11a: Number of visits to Peer Ki Gali

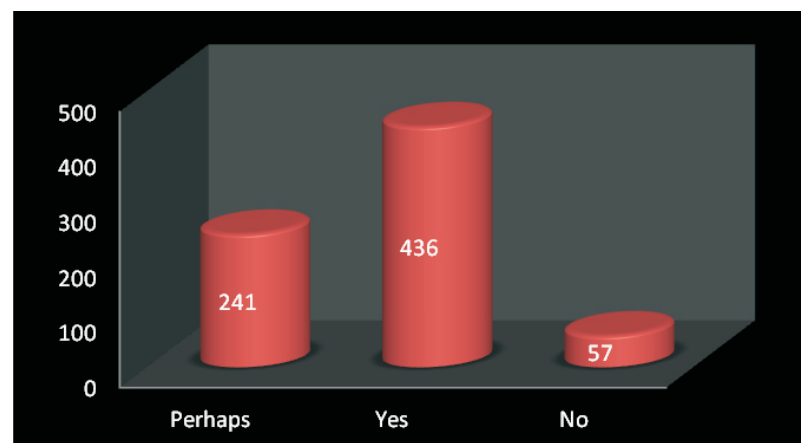


Planning of visits to Peer Ki Gali (PKG) - Thirty three percent (33%) visitors stated that they may visit to PKG. 59% said that they are planning for visit to Peer Ki Gali rest of these (8%) denied for visit.

Table 12: Planning to Visit to Peer Ki Gali (PKG)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Perhaps	241	32.8	32.8	32.8
	Yes	436	59.4	59.4	92.2
	No	57	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Yes					

Figure 12a: Planning to Visit to Peer Ki Gali



Number of Visit to Bimber Gali - Bimber Gali is a Place in between Rajouri and Poonch. Respondent were also asked about their past visits and it was found that 70% respondents never visited this place. It was also found that only 22%, 3% and 4% visited one, two and more than three times.

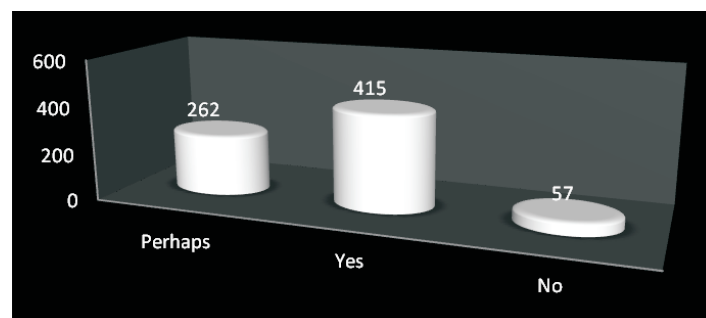
Table 13: Number of Visit to Bimber Gali

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	518	70.6	70.6	70.6
Once	163	22.2	22.2	92.8
Twice	22	3.0	3.0	95.8
>3 times	31	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Never				

Planning of Visit to Bimber Gali - It can be observed in the frequency Table 14 that 36% respondent answered perhaps that they may visit but are not sure and 56% are planning to visit there. Remaining 8% refuse to visit there.

Table 14: Planning of Visit to Bimber Gali

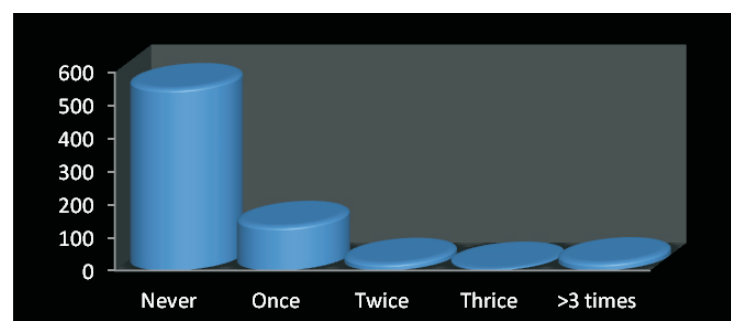
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	262	35.7	35.7	35.7
Yes	415	56.5	56.5	92.2
No	57	7.8	7.8	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average= No				

Figure 15: Planning of Visit to Bimber Gali

Number of Visits to Mandi, Loran and Sabazian - Mandi, Loran and Sabazian are the beautiful tourist spots found in Tehsil Mandi in the interior Poonch, Near LoC. These are the beautiful place having tremendous tourism potential. Visitors were asked about their visits to Mandi, in this regard 80% stated that they never visited Mandi, 18%,2%,1% and 2% said that they had visited one, two, three, and more than three times to these places.

Table 16: Number of Visits to Mandi, Loran and Sabazian

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	550	74.9	74.9	74.9
Once	133	18.1	18.1	93.1
Twice	21	2.9	2.9	95.9
Thrice	7	1.0	1.0	96.9
>3 times	23	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Never				

Figure 16a: Number of Visits to Mandi, Loran and Sabazian

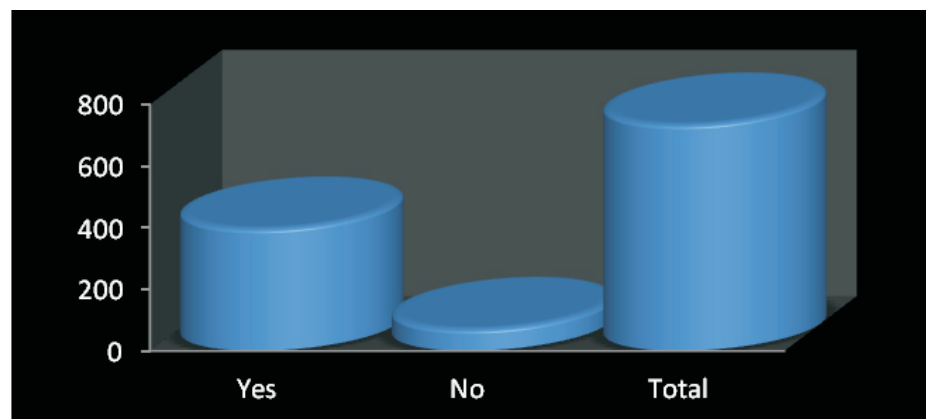
As for as, planning of respondents to Mandi is concerned 54% are planning to visit to these tourist

places. 36% said that they have to decide yet and 9% denied state forwardly to visit Mandi, Loran or Sabazian.

Table 17: Planning of Visit to Mandi, Loran and Sabazian

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Perhaps	268	36.5	36.5	36.5
Yes	396	54.0	54.0	90.5
No	70	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	
Average = Yes				

Figure 17a: Planning of Visit to Mandi, Loran and Sabazian



BRIEF SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

It has been found that in average these tourists never visited to these tourist sites. About their preference almost 94% visitor would like to go to these places. Therefore, this survey reveals that there are lots many prospects of development of tourism in District Poonch. Only need is to undertake some rigorous and sustainable steps for the development of these sites for tourism. Poonch Tourism Development Authority should shun their false and corrupt hobbies and local leaders and the community members should bring these things into their consideration.

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