

# Ecological Setting and Tourism Development at Tal Chhappar Sanctuary, Churu, Rajasthan, India

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## Abstract

Tourism is an important tool for development of any country or region. Mainly in India as an economic powerhouse is having a great potential in tourism sector to boost up its economy. Rajasthan and our area of research are also having great potential for growth of tourism. Tal Chhappar has a wealth of natural, cultural, historical and recreational features which gives the area significant tourism potential. In order to assess potential and possibilities of tourism in this area we analyse the natural resources and attractive sites of Tal Chhappar sanctuary. The natural setting of the sanctuary includes diverse fauna and flora which if managed properly can give impetus to tourism growth in the region. By analyzing the tourist inflow we aim to determine the future tourism development at Tal Chhappar.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Tal Chhappar, tourism potential, tourist inflow

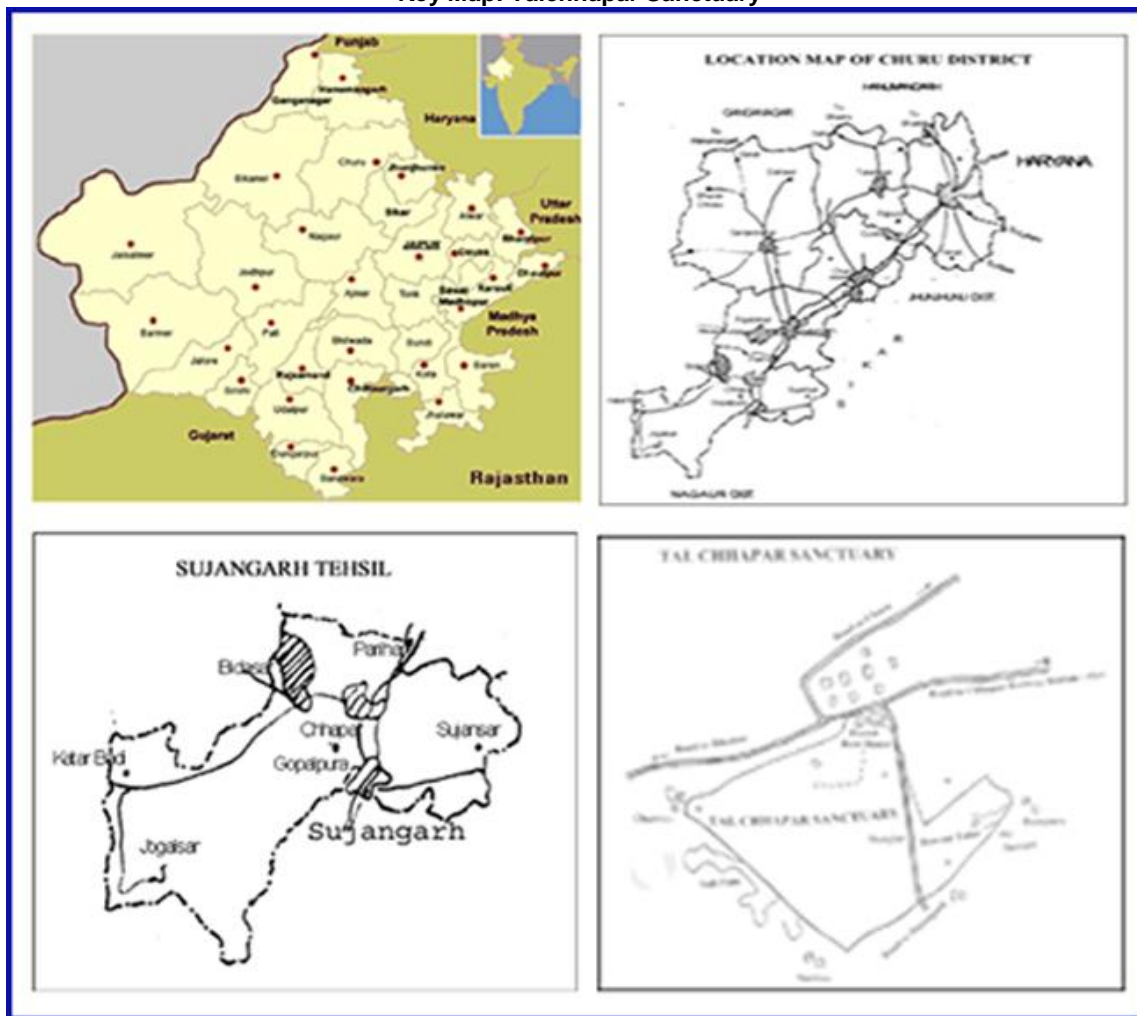
## Introduction

Tal Chhappar Sanctuary lies in the Sujangarh tehsil of Churu district in the north-east of Rajasthan. The sanctuary lies on Nokha-Sujangarh state highway at a distance of 85 KM from Churu and 120 KM from Bikaner. Chhappar is the nearest railway station on Degana-Churu-Delhi broad gauge line of north-western railways. The nearest airport is Sanganeer (Jaipur) is 230 KM away from the sanctuary. This sanctuary is known for its black buck population and also famous for its fauna and flora.

The Tal Chhappar sanctuary was declared a 'reserved area' for the protection of wild animals and birds in 1962. This area was finally notified as reserved forest in 1966 under section 20 of Rajasthan forest act 1953 and published in Rajasthan gazette on sept 8, 1966. It was declared a sanctuary in 1998 under wildlife protection act 1972. Tal Chhappar sanctuary is almost plane with interspersed shallow depressions. There is gentle slope of land from west to east. It has open grassland with scattered Acacia and Prosopis trees which looks like Savanna grassland.

The Tal Chhappar is a protected area and was declared "reserve area" in 1962 by initial notification issued on 19-9-1962. Then after final notification on May 11, 1966, The District Collector, Churu declared it as wild life sanctuary by final notification No. 832 issued on 22/24-8-1998 under section 18 wild life protection act 1972. The area of Tal Chhappar sanctuary is spread in 7.19 sq. km and it is the home land for Black bucks which are endangered species. Besides this many other animal and plant species are found in Tal Chhappar sanctuary. These are very useful in medicinal point of view and in maintain food chain of nature. Geographically the sanctuary is situated in a very small part of Thar Desert. So the fauna and flora of the region are decided by Geographical and climatic conditions of Thar Desert.

Key Map: Talchhapar Sanctuary



This region is characterized by distinct winter (Oct. to Feb.), Summer (March to June) and Monsoon (July to Sept.). The zone has a dry climate with large variation in temperature wind blows South – West during summer. In May and June winds become very hot and that is called “Loo” Maximum temperature reaches up to 48°C in June & minimum temperature falls up to 10°C in month of December – January. The Tal Chhapar Zone comes under the principal arid zone of the country. Rainfall in this region is highly erratic. There is large variation in mean annual rainfall in this region. Normal rainfall in this region is about 300 mm.

#### Aim of the Study

To express the importance of ecological settings of Talchhapar sanctuary as tourist attraction.

1. To analyse the tourist inflow to Talchhapar sanctuary.
2. To provide suggestions for tourism development at Talchhapar sanctuary.

#### Flora and Fauna

Tal Chhapar is drought prone region and often faces problem of irregular rain. Growth of vegetation is therefore severely limited by aridity. Moreover,

increasing heavy demand of wood with increasing human population and overgrazing by livestock has drastically reduced regenerative capacity to such an extent that now a day large trees in major part of arid zone are scare. So far as this study is concerned, plant species which occur randomly are described. The important flora occurring in this arid zone is classified into herbs, shrubs and trees which are being used as nesting sites or nesting materials.

The sanctuary has almost flat area with grasses interspersed with few small trees. This area is famous for a special kind of grass called ‘Mothiya’. This is the most liked food of Black bucks.

Wild life is a part of our ecosystem. Since they keep the energy budget control through various food webs, biological controls and ultimately keep the homeostasis in environment. Along with their aesthetic, game and other economic importance they keep the rich heritage of our nature. The Tal Chhapar sanctuary is a unique ecosystem. It was declared ‘Reserved Area’ for the protection of wild animal and birds in 1962. Over 2400 Black bucks are found in almost tree less saline flat land of Tal Chhapar sanctuary. This a natural home of Black bucks. There

is indication that Black bucks population is on the increase at Tal Chhappar. Here once can enjoy the stick grace and beauty of Black bucks at every close quarters, sometimes for a distance of merely 100 feet. Wild life consumes Dab, Lana, Ghora dub, Moth, Lung and many ground floras. Food becomes a limiting factor during summer and sometimes even in a late winter. The sanctuary has four water sports at different location in and around its periphery. The livestock and Black buck make use of these water sources. Here animals get sufficient salt by eating various grasses rich in salt contents and it is also necessary for their health.

There are many birds seen in the sanctuary which make it a very suitable bird site seeing place. The common birds found here are sparrow, harriers, eagles, black ibis and Demoiselle cranes. These cranes stay here till march. brown dove, Ring Dove, skylark, crested lark and blue jay are seen throughout the year. Foxes and cats are also spotted in the sanctuary. Harriers pass through this area in autumn months in groups, of which, Montague's and marsh harrier are more common. Besides this imperial eagle, tawny eagle, short-toed eagle and sparrow hawk are common here. These winter visitors can be seen sitting on the sand, mud or a bush looking for gerbil and large insects. Hundreds of birds pass through this place for a short stop over, to feed themselves with fresh food in the form of insects. Kashmir rollers pass through during September and October, whereas skylark, crested lark, ring dove, brown dove and blue jay can be found throughout the year. Blue cheeked bee-eaters and green bee-eaters are commonly found, for this is their breeding place. The black ibis is frequently seen here. The most typical phenomenon is that of the demoiselle cranes which arrive in the first week of the September and stay till March.

The Black buck population is stocked but food, water and shelter facilities for these animals are needed to be improved, so that the area can sustain a large number and varieties of wild species in healthy

conditions. Tal Chhappar Sanctuary is famous for black-bucks. Talchhappar wildlife sanctuary is a unique sanctuary having a good population of Black buck in a small area of 719 ha. The sanctuary houses nearly 2500 Black Bucks in a small area. This is a natural home of Blackbucks and one can easily encounter 500-700 animals in a single herd. It is the only sanctuary in India in which houses a good population of blackbucks in an almost tree-less, saline and flat-land.

The Black bucks of this area represents Antelope family. The beautiful horns gave them elegance and make them very attractive. The attractive physique including black fur on rump, white fur on chest belly, white rings around eyes, long ringed spiral horns make it most beautiful of all the animals.

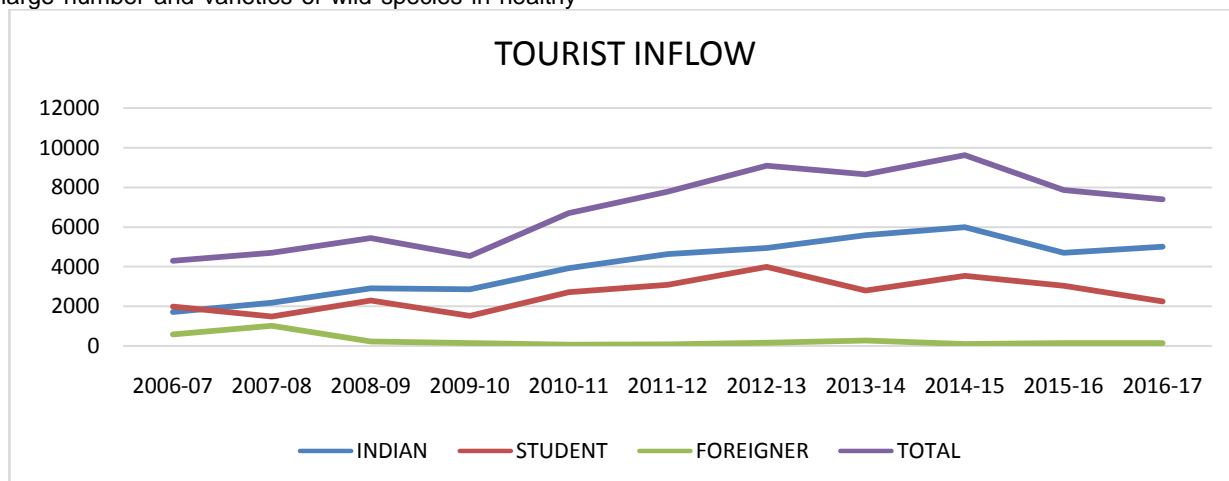
**Tourism Development**

Talchhappar sanctuary has a great potential for tourism development because of its natural beauty and diverse fauna and flora. The presence of black bucks makes it a unique place for tourists attraction. Many tourists visit this place every year which is given in table no. 1.

**Table 1: Tourist inflow at Talchhappar sanctuary (2006-07 to 2016-17)**

Year	Indian	Student	Foregei ner	Total
2006-07	1717	1996	585	4298
2007-08	2190	1489	1027	4706
2008-09	2919	2295	230	5444
2009-10	2868	1528	141	4537
2010-11	3934	2713	66	6713
2011-12	4642	3084	82	7788
2012-13	4942	3989	170	9101
2013-14	5593	2789	282	8664
2014-15	5993	3536	100	9629
2015-16	4697	3034	144	7875
2016-17	5007	2244	153	7404

Source: Forest Range Office, Tal Chhappar, Churu



The analysis of the above table tells about the continuous increase in the inflow of tourists. The development of infrastructure i.e transport, accommodation, tourist information Centre, leisure activities etc. can have a positive impact on the development of tourism in the sanctuary.

**Problems and Suggestions**

There are many problems found in Tal Chhappar sanctuary. Since the start of Tal Chhappar sanctuary, inadequate attention to solve the problems

has not been paid. The main problems of the sanctuary includes grazing, lack of permanent water source, lack of proper fodder, poaching, lack of dense forest and lack of security staff.

There is need of revamping infrastructural facilities in the sanctuary for enhancing tourism growth and developing it as tourism site. Improvement in road transport, accommodation facilities, entertainment facilities etc is required. New management plan is to be prepared for the sanctuary. New sites especially for bird watching need to be developed. Other suggestions include

1. Permanent water source should be developed
2. Desalination of existing water ponds
3. Development of catchment's area
4. Boundary wall should be construction around the sanctuary
5. Chhapar - Sujangarh road should be removed from sanctuary
6. Habitats should be developed
7. Extra fodder should be arranged
8. Animal hunting should be strictly prohibited
9. Public awareness
10. Harmful plants like P.juliflora should be destroyed
11. Security management

#### **Conclusion**

The above piece of research provides the ecological importance of Talchhapar sanctuary and also expresses its importance as tourist attraction. The sanctuary has many natural sites and is famous for its diverse fauna and flora to make it a great ecotourism site. It is famous for its blackbucks, the only site in the whole country as a natural habitat for

them. Due to its natural beauty many domestic and foreign tourists visit this place. The analysis of tourist data gives increasing trends for tourist arrival at this place. But the number of tourist visiting this place is not big. Many infrastructural constraints are hindrance in making this site a great tourist attraction. The positive attitude of government and infrastructural developments can be of great help in its tourism development. There are few local problems which needs to be addressed. The suggestions are also given for the tourism development at Talchhapar sanctuary.

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