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Geoheritage and Potential Geotourism Sites in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, India

Krishnanand Krishnanand

University of Delhi, Geography, New Delhi, India (krishna.geography@gmail.com)

Geoheritage are those components of geodiversity that are specifically identified as having conservation significance; that have some specific value to human society and therefore ought to be conserved, particularly if they are threatened by human activities and could therefore be lost or damaged. The Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh, India is unique due to the presence of Tethyan sediments that are exposed and have abundance of fossils that makes it a rich and valuable geoheritage site. The research focuses upon the study of various existing tourist hot spots and potential geoheritage sites. The main objective of the study is to assess the human response (geotourism) to the diversity of existing and potential geoheritage sites in the area. The study is largely based on the field work conducted in the study area between 2014-19 in which data has been collected through structured questionnaire survey, observation and in-depth interviews through field work and SWOT analysis has been done accordingly. The locations of geoheritage sites have been marked using Global positioning System (GPS) and an overlay map has been prepared using Arc Map 10 (GIS software). Overall, the major issue is the lack of geoconservation policy and inaccessibility which needs to be addressed with better management efforts such as Fossil Park or geo-park establishment.

Key words: Geoheritage, Geotourism, Spiti Valley, Potential Geoheritage Sites, Fossil Park