

**SHAKTI PEETHS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JAWALA PEETH AND  
CHINMASTIKA PEETH (CHINTPURNI)**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in

**History**

By

**Mukta Mani**

**Registration Number: 41900640**

**Supervised By**

**Dr Mohd Ashraf Dar (27025)**

**Faculty of Distance & Online Education (Assistant Professor, History)**

**Lovely Professional University,  
Jalandhar - Delhi, Grand Trunk Rd,  
Phagwara, Punjab 144001**



**LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB  
2025**

## **DECLARATION**

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled “Shakti Peeths in Himachal Pradesh: A comparative study of Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni)” in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr Mohd Ashraf Dar, working as Assistant Professor (History), in the Faculty of Distance & Online Education of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.



**(Signature of Scholar)**

Name of the scholar: Mukta Mani

Registration No.: 41900640

Department/school: History

Lovely Professional University,

Punjab, India

## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled “Shakti Peeths in Himachal Pradesh: A comparative study of Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni)” submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the History is a research work carried out by Mukta Mani, 41900640, is bonafide record of her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.



**(Signature of Supervisor)**

Dr Mohd Ashraf Dar (27025)

Assistant Professor (History)

Faculty of Distance & Online Education

Lovely Professional University,

Jalandhar - Delhi, Grand Trunk Rd,

Phagwara, Punjab 144001

## **ABSTRACT**

We Indians are blessed with diversity. From cultural heritage to geographical terrains and from religious identities to social classes, each and every aspect of Indian culture is unique and tells a story of its own. It is this diversity that makes India one of the most unique countries in the world. In terms of its geographical location, India is situated in the continent of Asia and is enclosed by the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea. The neighboring countries of India include Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The country consists of 28 states and 8 union territories and boasts a population of around 1.47 billion. The distinguishing aspects of India are its rich cultural heritage and diversity. The country is home to several communities and ethnic groups all of which live in perfect harmony with each other to make this nation great. The scenic beauty of the country is also amazing and consists of mountainous regions, delta plains, deserts, and sand dunes among others. There are a number of historical monuments located in the country which add to its vibrant cultural heritage and freedom struggle. The architectural heritage of the country is also very strong and some of the most amazing creations include caves of ancient India to skyscrapers of the contemporary time. The country has a rich Nagara and Dravidian architectural perspectives with the former being prominent in the northern part while the latter showing its dominance in the southern parts of the country. Among the famous pilgrimage destinations in India, Himachal Pradesh enjoys a special status among all its states and UTs. It is known as the Abode of God and the rich spiritual and its cultural diversity can be ascertained from the fact that each and every village in the state has got its own deity (Shinde 2007). Most of the pilgrims who visit Himachal Pradesh are from the Northern and Southern regions and along with fulfilling their spiritual journeys, these visitors also enjoy the beauty of hills during their visits. The prominent pilgrimage sites in the state include five Devi Peeths which are related to Goddess Sati (Rountree 2002). According to Hindu tradition, the dead body of Sati was cut into 51 pieces by Lord Vishnu that ultimately led to the establishment of 51 Shakti Peeths in the country. Out of this total numbers, one Shakti Peeth is in Himachal Jawala Ji while rest four other places of great Devi Reverence is also part of the state's religious heritage. The names of these five Peeths are as follows: Chintpurni Temple, Jawalamukhi Temple, Bajreshwari Temple, Chamunda Devi Temple, and Naina Devi

Temple. Every year lakhs of devotees visit these Devi Peeths and contribute to the overall economy of the state. These pilgrims have an important contribution to the generation of employment opportunities and the overall economy of the state as well. A large number of sectors including hospitality, entertainment, transport, and local economy receive their income from the visitors and hence, it's important that these places must have the proper infrastructure facilities so that pilgrims keep on visiting these sites and bring growth and well-being for the local communities (Sharma et al. 2000). Government and policymakers are also aware of the importance these Devi Peeths commands for their historical, cultural, and economic well-being for the state and hence, the state machineries are also quite cognizant of developing these places and converting them into places of religious tourism. In the context of the study, we propose to answer the following specific **research questions**:

- Is there any correlation between the Shakti Peeths in Himachal Pradesh and the larger perspective of Shakti tradition found across India?
- Has there been any transformation/transition in the Shakti Peeths in context to the reformatory understanding of the religious themes as seen in the case of the various reformation movements within Hinduism as well as due to colonization?
- Whether there is any space to compare Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni)? If yes, what are the domains in which the comparison can be made
- Is there any relevance of these Shakti Peeths in the contemporary socio-religious and economic domain of Himachal Pradesh? Is there any possibility making the places a limelight in the canvas of historical, cultural and spiritual tourism?
- What may be the possibilities to develop a more sustainable heritage preservation roadmap?

From the literature review, it has been found that the concept of Shakti is traced back to the Vedic period when the first time the word was used in tenth Mandal of the Rig Veda. The daughter of the sage Ambhrun, Vaak first mentioned the Shakti Concept by glorifying her appearance in the following verse:

*“Aham Rudre Bhirbasuvischaramyham”*

In order to understand the theme from an evolutionary perspective and to trace its historical background, the study went ahead with the review of the literature related to

mythological, spiritual, and historical aspects of the Shakti concept, Jawala Ji, and Chinmastika Peeths. From going through extant studies, many research gaps have been found which ultimately became bases for conducting our study. Only a few studies had been conducted in the past that looked into detail the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Shakti Concept and its relationship with Jawala Ji and Chinmastika as mentioned in Vedas, Puranas, scholarly writings, and manuscripts. Most of the studies on Shakti tradition are Generic in nature and least attention has been paid to these places of pilgrimage at a local level. The comparative study of different peeths in Himachal Pradesh has not been done - especially when it comes to the comparison between Jawala Ji and Chinmastika peeths (Chintpurni). The exploration ranges from little to none when it comes to describing how these two local deities are comparable in terms of their traditional history, place of belongingness, socio-cultural aspects, enrichment of local culture, and their influence on societies. Against this background, the study has finalized the following objectives:

- To study, explore, and analyze the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth
- To compare the two Peeths in terms of tradition, culture and their influence
- To explore the possibilities in the transformation of these Peeths into religious tourism and contribution to the local economy thereof.

In terms of research methodology, the study uses both primary and secondary data to trace the evolution of Shakti tradition from the time of Vedas and then study it in the context of Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths in Himachal Pradesh. The research explored the evolutionary linkages from religious texts, scholarly work, historical manuscripts work while the latter in the form of collecting data from visitors to analyzing their perspective for transforming these Peeths as prominent sites for pilgrims. Being multidisciplinary in nature, the information about origin of Shakti Concept, Jawala Peeth, and Chinmastika is collected from an extensive study of the secondary sources including books, journals, manuscripts, newspapers, reports etc. For understanding the perspective of visitors and Vendors, the survey method is used wherein a questionnaire is distributed among pilgrims and vendors to know their satisfaction levels and recommend improvements to transform these places into

prominent religious centers. The results of the study establish the convoluted nature of Shakti Concept with its linkages deeply rooted into multiple domains of mythology, spirituality, religions, and historical domains. The Jawala Ji and Chinmastika mentions have also been found in multiple perspectives and has been documented in detail by the study. The comparison of these two peeths, the second objective, is done by the study on different dimensions of tradition, culture, and their influence. To accomplish this second objective, these two Shakti peeths are compared on their mythological origin, relationship with the Shakti Concept, Shaktipeeth Status, Worshipping Ideology, and Recognition and Popularity. In addition, the aspects related to these Shakti Peeths in terms of their Clan Deity Status, Nine Flames and Ten Mahavidayas, and Aartis have also been compared in the study. Regarding the third objective of converting these pilgrimage sites into sustainable tourism centres, analyses of the visitors' perceptions and Vendor satisfaction have also been conducted with the help of a survey tool. Two different survey questionnaires were administered, and the results were evaluated to offer crucial recommendations and implications for the stakeholders.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am very grateful to my research supervisor, Dr Mohammad Ashraf Dar, for guiding me throughout the journey. Without his constant support, I couldn't complete my study and submit it for the final evaluation process. The support, inspiration, and motivation offered him are truly encouraging which not only helped me complete the study but also in publishing the papers and presenting the research at the various conference forums and events.

I am also thankful to Dr Manu Sharma, head of the department (HOD), History Department, LPU for her support in carrying out and completing the study. She is a leading name in the discipline of history and her vast knowledge and insightful inputs helped me a lot in giving the final form to the study. She also offered fresh takes and smart perspectives which moulded my study in a comprehensive manner.

I also owe a sense of gratitude to all faculty members and research advisory committee (RAC) members who remain instrumental in completing the research. The suggestions offered by RAC members were very helpful and by integrating their recommendations, my study has become more evolved and dynamic. The advice and tips offered by faculty members of the department were also very useful in making the study more encompassing and holistic in its turn out.

I also extend my heartfelt regards to all visitors and vendors who agreed to participate in the survey and gave their variable inputs to help me complete my study. A big thank is also due to my family who stood by me all the time and helped me to complete my research. Last, but not least, I am indebted to Almighty for giving me the strength to complete the study and submit it for the attainment of the PhD degree.



<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	
	<b>Page Number</b>
Chapter 1	
1.1 Introduction	<b>1</b>
1.2 Shakti Concept and Its Origin	<b>5</b>
1.3 Shakti: Multidimensional Perspective	<b>9</b>
1.4 Himachal Pradesh: Historical and Religious Perspective	<b>12</b>
1.5 Religious Tourism and Its Challenges	<b>15</b>
1.6 Research Gaps	<b>17</b>
1.7 Theoretical Framework	<b>19</b>
1.8 Objectives	<b>21</b>
1.9 Proposed Methodology	<b>21</b>
1.10 Organisation of Thesis	<b>21</b>
Chapter 2: Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth: Historical Background and Evolutionary Linkages	
2.1 Shakti Concept: Introduction and Relevance	<b>24</b>
2.2 Literature Review: Categorical Classification	<b>27</b>
2.3 Shakti Concept: Mention in Ancient Hindu Texts	<b>32</b>
2.4 Shakti Cult Across Disciplines	<b>35</b>
2.5 Shaktism Cult: Epicentre of Shakti Philosophy	<b>38</b>
Chapter 3: Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth: A Comparative Analysis	
3.1 Jawala Ji Peeth: A Brief Overview	<b>42</b>
3.2 History of Jawala Ji Temple	<b>43</b>
3.3 Shiv-Sati Marriage	<b>44</b>
3.4 Destruction of Daksha Yajna	<b>45</b>
3.5 Cowherd Tale	<b>49</b>
3.6 Jawala Ji Construction Chronology	<b>50</b>
3.7 Jawala Ji: Association with Akbar	<b>51</b>
3.8 Jawala Ji: Surrounding Temples	<b>56</b>
3.9 Jawala Ji Invasion: Feroz Shah Tuglak	<b>57</b>
3.10 Chinmastika Peeth	<b>63</b>
3.11 Chintpurni Temple: Establishment Chronology	<b>65</b>
3.12 Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths: Comparative Analysis	<b>71</b>
Chapter 4: Transforming Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths into Religious Tourism Places	
4.1 Visitors' Perception and Vendors' Status: An Analyses	<b>100</b>

4.2 Religious Tourism: Potential and Possibilities	<b>101</b>
4.3 Survey Methodology	<b>102</b>
4.4 Questionnaire Development	<b>103</b>
4.5 Sampling Plan and Data Collection	<b>105</b>
4.6 Demographic Details: Jawala Ji & Chinmastika	<b>106</b>
4.7 Data Analyses and Results	<b>106</b>
4.8 Comparative Analyses: Image and Satisfaction Dimensions	<b>109</b>
4.9 Vendors Survey: Analysing Economic Conditions	<b>111</b>
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Discussion	
5.1 Results, Summary, & Conclusion	<b>135</b>
5.2 Achievement of Objective 1	<b>136</b>
5.3 Achievement of Objective 2	<b>142</b>
5.4 Achievement of Objective 3	<b>154</b>
5.5 Implications	<b>157</b>
5.6 Limitations and Future Work	<b>161</b>
Bibliography	<b>163</b>
List of Appendices	<b>174</b>
Appendix A: Questionnaire for Image and Satisfaction Survey	<b>174</b>
Appendix B: Demographics (Jawala Ji)	<b>176</b>
Appendix C: Demographics (Chintpurni Ji)	<b>177</b>
List of Publications	<b>178</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Table Number</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
2.1	Literature Review Classification	27
4.1	Demographic Details: Jawala Ji Vendors	112
4.2	Gender Distribution	113
4.3	Education Levels	113
4.4	Ownership Status	114
4.5	House Type	115
4.6	Shop Category	116
4.7	Income Distribution	117
4.8	Monthly Expenditure	118
4.9	Years in Business	119
4.10	Total Investment	119
4.11	High Sales Season	120
4.12	Business Satisfaction	121
4.13	Business Continuation	122
4.14	Demographic Details: Chinmastika Vendors	123

4.15	Gender Distribution	<b>124</b>
4.16	Education Levels	<b>125</b>
4.17	Ownership Status	<b>126</b>
4.18	House Type	<b>126</b>
4.19	Shop Category	<b>127</b>
4.20	Income Distribution	<b>128</b>
4.21	Monthly Expenditure	<b>129</b>
4.22	Years in Business	<b>130</b>
4.23	Total Investment	<b>131</b>
4.24	High Sales Season	<b>132</b>
4.25	Business Satisfaction	<b>133</b>
4.26	Business Continuation	<b>134</b>

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Figure Number</b>	<b>Caption</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
1.1	Theoretical Framework	20
3.1	Jawala Ji Location Map	49
3.2	Jawala Ji Construction Chronology	50
3.3	Jawala Ji Temple View	51
3.4	Jawala Ji Temple Sanctorum and Flames	52
3.5	Jawala Ji Dhyanu Bhagat Tale	53
3.6	Jawala Ji Inner Sanctum	54
3.7	Jawala Ji Temple	56
3.8	Teda Mandir	58
3.9	Gorakh Dibbi Place	59
3.10	Radha Krishan Temple	60
3.11	Sidh Nagarjuna Place	61
3.12	Ashtadashbhujji Devi Temple	61
3.13	Bhairav Nath Temple	62
3.14	Jawala Ji Temple Mussoorie	63

3.15	Chintpurni Temple Google Maps	<b>64</b>
3.16	Chintpurni Temple	<b>66</b>
3.17	Chintpurni Temple Premises	<b>67</b>
3.18	Chintpurni Temple Inner Varanda	<b>68</b>
3.19	Chintpurni Temple Facilities	<b>69</b>
3.20	Chintpurni Temple Hotel Facilities	<b>70</b>
3.21	Chintpurni Temple Staying Facilities for Visitors	<b>71</b>
3.22	Shayan Room for Deity	<b>72</b>
3.23	Golden Parasol at Jawala Ji	<b>74</b>
3.24	Chinmastika Temple Jharkhand	<b>75</b>
3.25	Chinmastika Headless Deity	<b>76</b>
3.26	Chintpurni Temple Entry Gate	<b>78</b>
3.27	Kurma Purana	<b>79</b>
3.28	Hindu Names, Maneka Gandhi	<b>80</b>
3.29	Tarikh-I Firoz Shahi	<b>81</b>
3.30	Akbarnama by Abu-l-fazl	<b>83</b>
3.31	Nava Durga	<b>84</b>
3.32	Temples and Legends of Himachal Pradesh	<b>86</b>

3.33	Nine Flames of Jawala Ji	<b>87</b>
3.34	Company of Sages	<b>88</b>
3.35	Ten Mahavidyas	<b>89</b>
3.36	Das Mahavidayas	<b>90</b>
3.37	Tantra in Practice	<b>91</b>
3.38	Goddess Invention and Reinvention	<b>92</b>
3.39	RTI Reply	<b>93</b>
3.40	Chintpurni Aarti	<b>94</b>
3.41	Jawala Ji Bahi-Khata	<b>95</b>
3.42	Shiv Shakti	<b>97</b>
3.43	Contemporary Hinduism	<b>98</b>
4.1	Perception Survey Jawala Ji Peeth	<b>107</b>
4.2	Perception Survey Chinmastika Peeth	<b>107</b>
4.3	Satisfaction Survey Jawala Ji Peeth	<b>108</b>
4.4	Satisfaction Survey Chinmastika Peeth	<b>109</b>
4.5	Age Classification	<b>112</b>
4.6	Gender Distribution	<b>113</b>
4.7	Education Levels	<b>114</b>

4.8	Ownership Status	114
4.9	House Type	115
4.10	Shop Category	116
4.11	Income Distribution	117
4.12	Monthly Expenditure	118
4.13	Years in Business	119
4.14	Total Investment	120
4.15	High Sales Season	121
4.16	Business Satisfaction	122
4.17	Business Continuation	123
4.18	Age Classification	124
4.19	Gender Distribution	124
4.20	Education Levels	125
4.21	Ownership Status	126
4.22	House Type	127
4.23	Shop Category	128
4.24	Income Distribution	129
4.25	Monthly Expenditure	130



4.26	Years in Business	<b>131</b>
4.27	Total Investment	<b>132</b>
4.28	High Sales Season	<b>133</b>
4.29	Business Satisfaction	<b>134</b>

# CHAPTER – 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1) Introduction

We Indians are blessed with diversity. From cultural heritage to geographical terrains and religious identities to social classes, every aspect of Indian culture is unique and tells a story of its own. It is this diversity that makes India one of the most unique countries in the world. In terms of its geographical location, India is situated in the continent of Asia and is enclosed by the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea. The neighbouring countries of India include Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The country consists of 28 states and 8 union territories and boasts a population of around 1.4 billion. The distinguishing aspects of India are its rich cultural heritage and diversity. The country is home to several communities and ethnic groups all of which live in perfect harmony with each other to make this nation great.<sup>1</sup> The scenic beauty of the country is also amazing and consists of mountainous regions, delta plains, deserts, and dunes among others. There are several historical monuments available in the country which adds to its cultural heritage. The architectural heritage of the country is also very strong and some of the most amazing inclusions that are part of our rich culture include caves of ancient India to skyscrapers of the contemporary time. The country can also be divided based on Nagara and Dravidian architectural perspective with the former being prominent in the northern part while the latter showing its dominance in the southern parts of the country.<sup>2</sup> The majority of the traditional attire and dresses are also part of the ancient Indian culture and even today people are amazed by the extraordinary craftsmanship that has existed in the country for a long time. Some of the ethnic wear that is indigenous to the land consists of Dhoti, Kurta, Turban, and Sherwani among others. The diversity in the culinary is also one of the significant aspects of diversified India

---

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Llewellyn Basham, *The Wonder that was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954)

<sup>2</sup> Meera Baindur, *Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions*, (New Delhi: Springer 2015)

that we are very proud of. The taste of the dishes in Northern and Southern India is entirely different and this heterogeneity is another dynamic and vibrant facet of our rich cultural heritage. However, one of the most important aspects of diversity is our religious practices, beliefs, and values. India follows the secularist approach which means there is equality of all religions in the eyes of law and the state.<sup>3</sup> Some of the prominent religions that people of the country follow include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. All these religions foster a strong sense of diversity in the Indian culture and as mentioned in the constitution of India, freedom of religion is counted among the basic rights of the citizens. There is a striking difference when it comes to the customs, rituals, and beliefs prevalent in the country. The way festivals are celebrated, various forms of art are created, and even the dressing style differ significantly as we move from the Northern part of the country to the Southern part. The same applies to the Western and Eastern regions of India and this significant difference is another testimony of the vibrant culture the country boasts of. This difference is not only apparent in the case of different states but also within the states, there are noticeable differences in the way culture, festivals, and dressing sense of people keep on changing. No less diverse is the language spectrum of the country with each state having its distinctive language that is used for communication purposes.<sup>4</sup> Hindi is the language that is mostly used by countrymen through the use of other languages such as Malayalam Kannada is also significant among the residents. There is a deep connection between religion, spirituality, and history as these dimensions are closely intertwined with each other.<sup>5</sup> Many authors have gone into great detail in exploring the relationship between these important dimensions and their studies have important implications for people around the world. Not only for the masses it is but it is also important for us to understand that the interlinkages between these facets of social behaviour and religious patterns wield important influences on larger sections of society. These relationships are also very important from the perspectives of policymakers, governments and regulators to chalk out different

---

<sup>3</sup> Nirmal Sengupta, *Traditional Knowledge in Modern India*, (New Delhi: Springer 2018)

<sup>4</sup> Dhvani Gambhir, Ahmad Mohd Khalid, & Seema Sharma, *Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Hill States in India*, (Cham: Springer 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Valene V. Smith, "The Quest in Guest", *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19 (1992): 1-17.

Strategies for creating social harmony and awakening the spiritual spirit of the nation. Another important fact that mandates the exploration of interlinkages between religion, spirituality, and history is their impact on the upcoming generations. This will act as a guiding force for the new age groups and cohorts and help them to understand their relationship with history while providing them with specific guidelines for behaviour and religious practices. Worldwide scholars have come together to further investigate the deep relationship between these dimensions in their attempt to create a more holistic society where the currently prevailing prejudices and biases will no longer remain part of the social structure and class.<sup>6</sup> In the Indian context, the relationship is deeper and more important as well. India is one of the significant countries that has adopted secular philosophy when it comes to the religion of the state as India is a sanctuary of religions with Hinduism being a major religion. Hinduism may be found in its four prominent denominations, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Smartaism. According to Swami Vivekananda, a great spiritual leader and social reformer, spirituality and religion are the backbones of Indian culture. Every country in the world has specific characteristics in terms of its inheritance and identity. While for some countries it comes in the form of politics, others are known for their social culture and intellectual capabilities. But as said by Swami Vivekananda when it comes to India, our religion and spiritual Heritage remain one of the most important constituents of our country's personality. Both of these factors run through the personality of our nation accounting for its very own existence throughout the centuries. It won't be an exaggeration to say that these are the bedrocks on which the very existence of our country has been formed. The prominent religions observed and practised in the country include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism along with other traditions and cults. All these religions share a very rich and vibrant cultural history and are equipped with a strong spiritual base to entice visitors from all across the globe.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, the philosophy of Hinduism is enriched with knowledge, enlightenment, and spirituality that have the potential to answer even the most complex questions related to the self that one won't

---

<sup>6</sup> Shyam Saran, *Cultural and Civilisational Links between India and Southeast Asia: Historical and Contemporary Dimensions*, (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan 2018)

<sup>7</sup> Sagar Singh, "Religion, Heritage and Travel: Case References from the Indian Himalayas." *Current Issues in Tourism*, 7, (2004): 44.

find anywhere else in the universe.<sup>8</sup> More than 80% of India's population follows the religion of Hinduism. Among the spiritual and religious beliefs of the Hindu community, the Four Dhaams, Seven Sacred Cities, Shakti Peeths, Kumbh Mela, sacred rivers, and mountains are prominent places. On many religious occasions, people in different parts of the country gather to celebrate their faiths and beliefs. Take, for instance, the Kumbh Mela in which millions of people gather at the banks to take a holy dip in the confluence of three sacred rivers, i.e., Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati<sup>9</sup> (Singh 2006). In India too, just like what we are seeing in the global context, pilgrimage is increasingly becoming an important activity with the number of pilgrims visiting religious places rising every year. Tirupati Balaji and Mata Vaishno Devi are the best examples of shrines that lakhs of devotees visit every year. Exploring the culture of India, we can easily find that from time immemorial, Indians have remained interested in exploring the divine and spiritual aspects of the human race. Rigveda which can be easily considered as oldest scripture has a detailed account of this quest of going deep into certain aspects of religion and spirituality. This particular journey gets more power and impetus in the Upanishads where the focus of the whole exploration process shifted to the inward search for fulfilment and contentment. More specifically the focus is on the transcendental dimension which goes beyond Awareness of body and mind and tries to realise the things outside these two dimensions which have been originally identified as the primary aspect of consciousness. Getting deep into this journey of self-realisation, explorers of unrealised them beyond the body and mind and considered the true immortal nature of the self. More specifically coming out of the opposition is the timeless message of the Bhagavad Gita which offers a complete philosophy of life in almost every aspect of the human dimensions. The philosophy which started with the Vedas has been further strengthened by the vicious and culminated by the Bhagavad Gita is very liberating and marks the rich spiritual heritage of the country. The timeless message put out by these scriptures is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago. In terms of Hindu cosmology, there are two primary aspects through which the

---

<sup>8</sup> Arvind Sharma, *A Hindu Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990)

<sup>9</sup> Shalini Singh, "Tourism in the Sacred Indian Himalayas: An Incipient Theology of Tourism?" *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 11, no. (4): 375–389.

whole universe is created. These concepts are called Brahman and Pradhana. While Brahman is the essence of the creation the Pradhana is the primary concept associated with Shakti. In Vedas, Shakti is the concept that leads to the materialization of the Brahman, i.e., it is the way through which Brahman manifest and hence, it is considered as the superior power to Brahman. Shakti is widely recognised as the female energy of the Shiva and identified as the Parvati or Mahadevi. Shakta, the staunch follower of the Shakti concept, are fully devoted to the female aspect of the divinity and their adoration is so strong that the worshipping of Shiva, the male aspect of the divinity, is often relegated to the secondary role<sup>10</sup>. Against the backdrop of rich cultural history and powerful spiritual traditions, our research investigates the idea of Shakti as it existed in the Vedas and Puranas before making its way to the perception of the general masses in the country. The origin of this word Shakti is from the Sanskrit Shak which simply means productive potential or power. Shakti pertains to the idea of primeval energy of consciousness which is responsible for the creation of Cosmos and its ongoing existence. Not only about the idea of creation, the concept of Shakti itself means that we are talking about an agent of change that can help turn the energies and fortunes of this universe from good to bad and vice versa. It is equally interesting to note that the concept of Shakti is also present in men although the concept is not manifested in the case of this gender<sup>11</sup>.

## **1.2) Shakti Concept and Its Origin**

The concept of Shakti may be traced back to the Vedic period when it arrived in the tenth Mandal of the Rig Veda (Rigveda 10.125.1). The daughter of the sage Ambhrun, Vaak first mentioned the concept of Shakti by glorifying her appearance in the following verse:

“Aham Rudre Bhirbasuvischaramyham”

Further, the Shakti concept has been mentioned in various Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas with all these religious texts emphasising Shakti as the basis of the world and

---

<sup>10</sup> Kulbir Kaur, “India's Religions (Perspectives from Sociology and History)”, *Indian Historical Review*, 34, no. 2 (2007): 260-263.

<sup>11</sup> David.A. Leeming. Shakti. In: Leeming, D.A., Madden, K., Marlan, S. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* (Springer: Boston 2010)

its consciousness. The scriptures state that it is only because of Shakti, that the consciousness in the world prevails and thus, Shakti becomes an operating basis for the universe. The importance of the Shakti concept has also been emphasized by the Shankaracharya (one of the sacred and Cult titles used by the head of monasteries) in the Soundarya Lahari where it has been said that only when the lord Shiva gets the company of the Shakti, this world attains the state of consciousness<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, In Durga Saptashati in the Markandeya Puran, it has been emphasized that there is only one vibration that is making the whole world conscious of the concept of Shakti. The devotees who embraced the concept of Shakti need not do anything to achieve salvation. Similarly in the Lalitha Sahasranamam, it has been mentioned that devotees who take Lord Shiva's name get more fortune than those who take the name of Lord Vishnu 1000 times. Even more, greater is the divinity of the Devi Lalita name recitals of whose recital for only can accrue you more fortune than the name of Lord Vishnu and Shiva. According to Vedas, Sati was born in the house of Prajapati Daksh who was the son of Brahma and married to Lord Shiva. The father of Sati was not happy with the marriage and organised great Yajna. In the event, all sages and gods were invited but Daksh consciously insulted the Shiva by not inviting him. Sati went to her father's house to confront him and ask for the reason for not inviting Lord Shiva. When she entered the place of the Yajna, Daksh further insulted Shiva by calling him names, thereby prompting Sati to throw herself in the sacred fire of Yajna. <sup>13</sup>. Angry Shiva then created Virbhadr from the lock of his hair and along with destroying the Yajna, Virbhadr killed Daksh. Shiva then took the dead body of Sati in his arms and started Dance of Destruction (Tandav). To save the earth, Lord Vishnu then cut the body of Sati into 51 pieces and all places where these pieces fell are today known as Shakti Peeths. (12 Shaktipeeths outside India: 2 in Pakistan, 7 in Bangladesh, 2 in Nepal, 1 in China) The exploration of religious shrines has been done in the past by several authors who have contributed to the extant literature and the evolution of history as a discipline. Various authors have explored the relationship between history and shrines with a

---

<sup>12</sup> Madhu Khanna, *Studies on Tantra in Bengal and Eastern India* (Springer: Singapore 2022)

<sup>13</sup> Stephanie Lou Jackson, *From Stigma to Shakti: The Politics of Indo-Guyanese Women's Trance and the Transformative Potentials of Ecstatic Goddess Worship in New York City*. In: Hosein, G.J., Outar, L. (eds) *Indo-Caribbean Feminist Thought*. New Caribbean Studies (Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2016)

majority of them agreeing on the fact that there's a deep connection between people visiting religious places.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the spiritual quest, visiting religious places may be considered one of the oldest traditions of exploration which can be understood from the travelogues of some famous pilgrims like Hieun Tsang.<sup>15</sup> The account of travel diaries of various travellers is primarily dedicated to religious-spiritual zeal but it holds a primary place in historical studies as they instantly prove to be primary sources also.<sup>16</sup> Important and equally interesting to note that many Scholars have described the concept of Shakti from the perspective of eventual compromise between matriarchy and the patriarchal concepts prevalent in ancient societies. In fact, during the Indus Valley civilization, the concept of the mother goddess continued to remain the dominating theme of worship among the followers. People back then never gave way to the male-dominated avenues of worship and the shining example of this dominance was the reverence and sacred status attached to Mother Earth. This high regard and acclaim stemmed from the fact strong belief among the people that Mother Earth is nurturing them through food and life. It is only by the power of Mother Nature a tiny Seed takes the form of a crop and satiates the hunger of people, thereby ensuring their survival. Having said that, it is also a noteworthy observation that between the time frame of the Harappa Civilization (2500-1500 BC) and the Gupta period (300-600 CE), the cult of Shakti or obeisance offered to Goddesses was never considered an influential area of study. There has not been much work done during this particular time frame and most of the time goddesses had got only passing or cursory remarks from the learner scholars and keen historians. The situation however dramatically changed during the Middle Ages when the concept of family divinity came out of the shadow and started exerting its influence significantly. During the period of the Gupta Empire, the feminine Goddesses who were earlier worshipped in conjunction with their Gods, finally got an exclusive place in temples specifically made for their development and religious followers.<sup>17</sup> In the basic essence, the meaning of it is energy or power and the concept

---

<sup>14</sup> Arnab Karar, "Impact of Pilgrim Tourism at Haridwar", *The Anthropologist*, 12, no. 2 (2010): 99–105.

<sup>15</sup> Marina Metreveli and Dallen J. Timothy, "Religious Heritage and Emerging Tourism in the Republic of Georgia.", *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 5 no. 3 (2010): 237

<sup>16</sup> Lori G. Beaman & Sonia Sikka, *"Constructions of Self and Other in Yoga, Travel, and Tourism"*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Cham 2016)

<sup>17</sup> Sanjukta Gupta, *The Cosmic Play of Power: Goddess, Tantra and Women*, (Motilal Banarsidass Publishing House: Delhi 2013)



can be easily described as the primordial cosmic energy that is prevalent in the universe from time immemorial. It is also considered a primaeval aspect of consciousness that is quintessentially associated with the feminine principle and has been personified by the different forms of Goddesses. The concept is celebrated all across the country and the gaiety and fervour with which devotees celebrate the nine days of Navratri festival are simply unprecedented in nature. The concept of Shakti has many forms and in terms of its manifestation in the varied incarnations of Goddesses, the concept is multidimensional and has to be approached from a diversifying perspective. In its form of harmony, the Shakti takes the form of Parvati while Durga is considered the embodiment of courage and strength. Kaali, on the other hand, is the Goddess of destruction and degeneration while Saraswati represents qualities of knowledge and art. All these forms are considered divine mothers who undertake the creation Preservation and destruction of the universe in their different forms and are no less than in terms of their divinity and importance to other Godheads and cults. The importance of the Shakti concept can be easily estimated from the fact that it is only when the lord Shiva Unites with the Shakti, that she can manifest her all-encompassing powerful nature. When only left to himself without the power of Shakti, Shiva becomes lustreless and even is incapable of lifting his hand or fingers, as mentioned in Devi Upanishad. In the specific context of Hindu theology, the concept of it has been identified from the perspective of power. It has been described as the essence behind Godhead can the entire divinity behind the essence of the godhead quality has been attributed to this concept of Shakti. This all-encompassing and powerful concept is capable of creating the world in its entirety and the whole display of the actions and reactions is also due to the grace that has been endowed by the divine goddess on the world. The various aspects of Shakti have already been described in Vedas and prominent among these highlights the divine tendency and consciousness that is reverberating through this universe is a manifestation of the pure Shakti dimension. It is also a very common description to define it in the form of a goddess so that the other pole of divinity can be described in terms of her male counterpart. Vedas and Upanishads have emphasized on status of equality for both poles of the divine power and both of these poles of divinity play an

equal and important role in the economics of divinity that has been prevailing in the country for a long time now.<sup>18</sup> Another important point to consider here is the fact that without any kind of business or prejudice, both these poles of divinity have been given equal importance by ancient sages and scholars. While the Godhead has been described as the reason behind the creation, the actual divinity of consciousness that is emanating in this world has been attributed to the Shakti concept. In a way, both these poles are complementary to each other and only in conjunction, these become a reason for the holistic consciousness and reasoning in the universe. It is also easy for people and their perception to attach the concept of Shakti to a female being while considering the other pole as a male to get the complete picture of divinity.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.3) Shakti: Multidimensional Perspective**

There is no doubt about the fact that the concept of Shakti itself relates to multidimensional perspectives. In its simplest and purest form, Shakti can be described as power and taking this definition a notch higher, Vedas and Upanishads have described the concept of Shakti behind the creation, maintenance, and destruction of this entire universe. Looking at these three primary aspects, one can easily consider the Shakti concept behind the consciousness of this universe.<sup>20</sup> On the path of creation, safety is defined as female energy simply because mothers are responsible for creating lives on the earth. Just like a mother brings a child into the world, the same power of creation has been attributed to Shakti and it has been specifically attributed in Vedas that without Shakti there would be no creation in the universe.<sup>21</sup> In ancient scriptures and Hindu theology, Shakti has been described as the primary motivation behind Lord Shiva with the creation of the universe. The best example of this motivation is manifested in the form of the Ardhanarishvara deity who is considered half-male and

---

<sup>18</sup> David R. Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, (Motilal Banarsidass Publishers: Delhi 1986)

<sup>19</sup> Sally Kempton, *Awakening Shakti The Transformative Power of the Goddesses of Yoga*, (Jaico Publishing: Delhi 2013)

<sup>20</sup> Vanamali, *Shakti: Realm of the Divine Mother* (Inner Traditions: US 2008)

<sup>21</sup> Anway Mukhopadhyay, *The Goddess in Hindu-Tantric Traditions: Devi as Corpse*, (Taylor & Francis: UK 2018)

half-female. The deity exemplifies the importance of both males and females for the creation of this universe and attributes equal importance to both forms for infusing consciousness into the universe. It also signifies that both males and females are necessary for the successful functioning of the world and the entire universe is equally dependent on both these forces. One of the powerful spiritual contexts of Shakti's essence is to make the person free from all ignorance and awaken the state of all-encompassing and holistic perspective within. In the awakened state, the person is free from all kinds of unconsciousness and incomprehension and begins to see the world in its current state of form. Shakti concept is also quite popular among the branch of Tantrism which is specifically uniting two different aspects of energy relating to both Shiv and Shakti. The followers of this specific discipline firmly believe that to achieve absolute mastery over the various aspects of this particular form, they have to go ahead with uniting these two different forms of consciousness and then only their divinity can be manifested.<sup>22</sup> This union is also manifested through the concept of Ardhanarishvara and in some of the perspectives of this Tantra discipline, the unification of the half-male and half-female is done with the help of the various rituals. According to the wisdom prevailing from ancient times in India, Shakti has been designated a very high place and the concept of manifest in the form of reckoning force that strives for self-fulfilment in the case of both men and women. The idea behind the concept is to make sure that the followers of the Shakti cult have a love for the whole universe and they take into consideration the entirety of the concept. Another important perspective related to the concept of Shakti relates to the manifestation of different forms of Goddesses that people have been revering to for a long time now. Different forms of different Goddesses exemplify the different concepts and nature of their powers.<sup>23</sup> For example, in the avatar of Kali, the concept of Shakti embodies the destructive aspect of nature as the Goddess is related to death, destruction, and degeneration among others. However, in the form of Saraswati, the same concept of Shakti is manifested in the form of creativity, music, art and other constructive elements of life. In the form of the kind

---

<sup>22</sup> Harishankar V. Bharathi and Harish Ranjana, *Shakti: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Women Empowerment in India*, (Rawat Publications: Jaipur 2003)

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Ashley-Farran, *Shakti Mantras: Tapping into the Great Goddess Energy Within*, (Random House Publishing Group: UK 2009)

Uma, it is considered a consort of Shiva and is very benevolent, auspicious and kind-hearted. However, when manifested in the form of Kali, the same Shakti concept persona the death and destruction, nearby comes across as a destructive form of nature. In another manifestation of Durga, the same concept of Shakti is incarnated in the form of the fiercest warrior who slays the demons threatening the stability of the universe.<sup>24</sup> The devout worshippers of these Goddesses considered them as the Supreme Power in the universe second to none even to their male counterparts. Especially in the cultures that are prevalent in the villages and the small towns, it has been a popular idea to pray to the Goddesses rather than the male God for any kind of boon or need. Specifically pointing out the highest regard that worshippers of Mahadevi attribute to the Goddess, noticed that while glorifying the Mahadevi, her followers usually consider her as the uniform system of the universe. According to these devotees, Mahadevi is the only essence behind this creation unlike the bipolar system of the universe as considered by many ancient scriptures, Vedas, and scholars, the concept of Shakti in the form of Mahadevi is the supreme one which does not require the second form of divinity for its existence. Another important observation in the Hindu tradition is the fact that women's gender has been considered vessels of Shakti. This means women have both constructive and destructive powers and despite the criticism attached to this theory which classifies women into two separate categories of good or bad, the philosophy continues to remain prevalent even in modern times with some societies clinging on to those traditions. Theoretically, it is not a good idea as this leaves no space in between for women to occupy and brings extra pressure on them to belong to the category of good by exhibiting qualities such as empathy, compassion, conformity, forgiveness, and tolerance among others.<sup>25</sup> This means in case they do not comply with these qualities, they will be quintessentially attributed to the bad category to which they might not very well belong. That said, many scholars also argue that the concept of Shakti must be propagated in modern times too as it will help women to resist the idea of patriarchy that continues to prevail with its full strength in modern times. Both these arguments seem to be right in their own respective space, however; it is important to take specific context in mind before jumping to a conclusion about which one of these

---

<sup>24</sup> Anuja Chandramouli, *Shakti: The Divine Feminine*, (Rupa: India 2015)

<sup>25</sup> Alka Pande, *Shakti: 51 Sacred Peethas of the Goddess*, (Rupa: India 2021)

philosophies is the right one. In the context of modern times, information related to religious shrines can effectively give us an account of things that happened in the past and dramatically changed with its attributes expanding their coverage beyond religious purposes.<sup>26</sup> This exploration activity can be approached from a multidimensional perspective in the context of tradition, religion, spirituality and economy.<sup>27</sup> The exploration helps us to have a peek into various aspects that led to the establishment, growth, and maturity of religious shrines. The study of religious shrines also provides historians with a glance of things for their interests in religious gatherings, congregations, and spiritual activities. This inclusion of multiple activities has not only broadened the scope of exchange between religion and history but also made it important for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to carefully study, identify, choose, and preserve the unique characteristics of religious shrines.<sup>28</sup> The exploration of religious shrines in India has been done on both global and national levels. Many authors from Europe had in the past gone into great detail to describe the religious shrines in India. They travelled the length and breadth of the country and left a detailed interpretation of the various aspects related to temples and holy places. The significance of pilgrimage activities is quite crucial in the case of India as the country is endowed with a rich heritage, cultural ethos, and religious fervour.<sup>29</sup> There is no dearth of religious temples, activities, and festivals and in fact, it won't be an exaggeration to say that India is among the most vibrant hubs when it comes to pilgrim centres, festivities, religious movements, and other allied activities.

#### **1.4) Himachal Pradesh: Historical and Religious Perspective**

Among the famous destinations of pilgrims, Himachal Pradesh in India enjoys a special status. It is known as the Abode of God and the rich spiritual and cultural diversity of the place can be ascertained from the fact that every village in the state has its deity.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Parasuraman, A., Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry. "A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research." *Journal of Marketing* 49, no. 4 (1985): 41–50.

<sup>27</sup> Gambhir, Dhvani, Ahmad Mohd Khalid, and Seema Sharma, "Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Hill States in India." *World Sustainability Series* (2021): 273–87.

<sup>28</sup> Emilia Alaverdov & Muhammad Waseem Bari. *Global Development of Religious Tourism*, (IGI Global: NY 2020)

<sup>29</sup> Dallen Timothy & Daniel Olsen. *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*. (UK: Routledge 2006)

<sup>30</sup> Manoj Jreat, *Tourism in Himachal Pradesh*, (India: Indus Publishing Company 2004)

Most of the pilgrims who visit Himachal Pradesh are from the plains and along with their spiritual journey, these visitors also enjoy the beauty of the hills during their visits. The prominent pilgrimage sites in the state include five Shakti Peeths which are related to Goddess Sati.<sup>31</sup> According to Hindu tradition, the dead body of Sati was cut into pieces by Lord Vishnu which ultimately led to the establishment of fifty-one Shakti Peeths in the country. Out of these total numbers, five Peeths are situated in Himachal Pradesh. The names of these five Peeths are as follows: Chintpurni Temple, Jawalamukhi Temple, Bajreshwari Temple, Chamunda Devi Temple, and Naina Devi Temple. Every year lakhs of devotees visit these Peeths and contribute to the state's overall economy. These pilgrims have an important contribution to the generation of employment opportunities and the overall running of the economy of the state. A large number of sectors including hospitality, entertainment, transport, and local markets receive their income from the visitors and hence, it's important that these places must have the proper infrastructure facilities so that pilgrims keep on visiting these sites and bring growth and well-being for the local communities.<sup>32</sup> Government and policymakers are also aware of the importance these Shakti Peeths commands for the historical, cultural, and economic well-being of the state. This is why the state government has become serious in terms of developing these places and renewing its bid to push for better infrastructure facilities. The first important aspect of the study is to find the significance of Shakti Peeths in Puranas as mentioned by ancient sages (Rishis) and scholars. Specifically, we will focus on the historical evolution of Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika peeths which will help us to identify their roots, development chronology, and historical background.<sup>33</sup> Further, its impact on local communities, religious and spiritual standing, and contribution to the political, economic, and social structure of the past times will also be analysed. We also aim to compare Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths by identifying some relevant common dimensions so that comparison contributes positively to the body of knowledge and helps future

---

<sup>31</sup> Soumendra Nath Biswas and Pradip Kumar, *Mountain Tourism and Ecological Impacts: Himalayan Region and Beyond*, (US: IGI Global 2024)

<sup>32</sup> Mohan Singh Kohli, *Mountains of India: Tourism, Adventure and Pilgrimage*, (Delhi: Indus Publishing: 2002)

<sup>33</sup> Burra Gautam Sidharth. *The Celestial Key to the Vedas*, (Rochester: Inner Traditions / Bear & Co 1999)

researchers in their academic pursuits. Moreover, our research will also take into account the description of Jawala Peeth as appeared in the writings of European travellers and medieval time historians. In addition, we will take into account the work done on various Goddesses by Surinder Mohan Bhardwaj (Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography) and other scholars. Their records are available in manuscripts preserved in the library of Sadhu Ashram (Hoshiarpur). In addition, the historical importance and significance of Gorakh Dibbi, the temple just behind the Jawala Peeth also comes under the scope of our research. In context to the above discussion, the present study aims at understanding the Shakti tradition emanating from Vedas, its transformation and transition, and its relevance to society. As the tradition of Shakti is cardinal to Hinduism especially when it comes to Saivism, it is necessary to understand the historical background of the tradition which is manifested by these peeths in Himachal Pradesh, Further, the study will take into account the description of Jawala Peeth as mentioned in the annals (Bahiyaaan) of Hindu priests (Pandas/Pujaris). In addition, to unveil the local perception of the Shakti peeths, the study will also address the economic perspective related to the peeths as, in the long course of history, pilgrim sites have boosted economic activities in their catchment region. The mention of Jwala Shakti Peeth in Vedas, scriptures and ancient literature will act as a primary resource. In addition, the annals and ancestral records of priests will act as primary data sources for the study. These records will provide a detailed description of Pujaris and their generations who have remained an integral part of Jawala Peeth, the number of pilgrims visiting the place, the time of their visit, the total number of family members when they visited Shakti Peeth, and how many donation Shakti peeth collected over a specific period.<sup>34</sup> Specifically, how the donations from pilgrims are distributed, what share of government, how much percentage goes to local pujaris, how the period of a specific pujari is fixed and for how many months, and what are the criteria of selection for Head Pujari and his subordinates, what are other commercial activities in shaktipeeth under the direct or indirect influence of local Pujaris. In the context of Jawala Peeth, the study proposes to answer the following specific research questions:

---

<sup>34</sup> Rana P.B. Singh and David R Kinsley, *Sacred Geography of Goddesses in South Asia: Essays in Memory of David Kinsley*, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2010)

Is there any correlation between the Shakti Peeths in Himachal Pradesh and the larger perspective of Shakti tradition found across India?

- Has there been any transformation/transition in the HP Shakti Peeths in context to the reformatory understanding of the religious themes as seen in the case of the various reformation movements within Hinduism as well as due to colonization?
- Whether there is any space to compare Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni)? If yes, what are the domains in which the comparison can be made?
- Is there any relevance of these peeths in the contemporary socio-religious and economic domain of Himachal Pradesh? Is there any possibility of making the places limelight in the canvas of historical, cultural and spiritual tourism?
- What may be the possibilities to develop a more sustainable heritage preservation roadmap?

### **1.5) Religious Tourism and its Challenges**

Religious tourism in India is deeply woven into the country's spiritual and cultural life, but it also faces many practical challenges that often go unnoticed. One of the most visible issues is the lack of proper infrastructure at many pilgrimage sites. While millions of devotees travel to these sacred places every year, many of them struggle with overcrowded transport, limited accommodation, and poor sanitation facilities. During major festivals or pilgrimage seasons, the situation can become overwhelming — roads jammed with traffic, long queues for basic amenities, and limited medical or emergency support. These challenges not only make the journey uncomfortable but can also put people's safety at risk. The environmental impact of religious tourism is another growing concern. Many holy towns and natural sites are suffering from pollution, unregulated construction, and improper waste disposal. The pollution of sacred rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna, and the fragile ecosystems around Himalayan shrines such as Kedarnath or Amarnath, show how excessive human activity can harm the very places that people come to worship. The increasing number of visitors, without proper management, threatens to disturb the balance between faith and nature. At the same time, the commercialization of spirituality has changed the character of many pilgrimage centers. In some places, devotion has become intertwined with business,



where the focus shifts from prayer and inner peace to money and convenience. Temples and shrines often turn into crowded marketplaces filled with shops, advertisements, and commercial services. While this brings economic benefits, it can also take away from the sacred atmosphere that draws pilgrims in the first place. There is also concern about cultural erosion. As religious destinations become popular tourist hubs, traditional practices, rituals, and local ways of life can begin to fade. The uniqueness of these sacred places — their songs, languages, and rituals — sometimes gets replaced by standardized experiences designed for mass tourism. This can weaken the cultural and spiritual diversity that makes Indian religious life so rich and meaningful. For instance, at revered Shakti Peeths such as Jawala Ji, where the eternal flame symbolizes the Goddess's divine energy, and Chinmastika (Chintpurni), where devotees seek relief from worldly worries, the growing influx of visitors has brought visible changes in local customs and temple practices. The deep spiritual essence of these sites is often overshadowed by the need to cater to increasing tourist expectations. Safety and crowd management continue to be major issues as well. India has witnessed several tragic incidents at religious gatherings due to stampedes, fires, or inadequate crowd control. Many sacred events attract massive crowds, but safety measures often lag behind. There is a need for better planning, emergency services, and clear communication to prevent avoidable disasters. Even at temples like Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeth, managing the large number of pilgrims during Navratri and other festive periods poses significant logistical challenges. Limited access routes, narrow temple surroundings, and insufficient crowd management systems heighten the risk of accidents and discomfort for visitors. Finally, poor coordination among authorities often complicates matters. Religious trusts, tourism departments, and local governments sometimes work in isolation, leading to overlapping responsibilities and unclear accountability. Without a unified management plan, it becomes difficult to maintain cleanliness, infrastructure, and visitor facilities. Moreover, many pilgrimage towns depend heavily on short seasonal inflows of tourists, leaving them economically stagnant for much of the year. Local communities, who should benefit most, often receive only a small share of the revenue, as large operators or outside businesses dominate the sector. This imbalance is also seen around Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeth, where local vendors rely heavily on short festival seasons for their livelihood, yet the long-term benefits of tourism often

flow elsewhere. In short, religious tourism in India stands at a crossroads. It continues to inspire millions of people with faith and devotion, but its sustainability depends on how well the country can balance spiritual purpose with practical management. Protecting the environment, ensuring safety, preserving cultural traditions, and involving local communities — as seen through the experiences of sacred sites like Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeth — will be essential to keeping India's sacred journeys meaningful and sustainable for generations to come.

### **1.6) Research Gaps**

The concept of Shakti peeth is not a new one to be explored in the academic world. In fact, it has been associated with the literature for quite a long time now. By going through extant literature, we found that most authors are unanimous on the fact that the primary motivation behind visiting shaktipeeth is a religious or spiritual dimension.<sup>35</sup> While extant studies found the strong impact of self-awareness and pious activities on the intention of a person to undertake the pilgrimage to shaktipeeth, the studies conducted recently have divided the whole process into a continuum with other motivations too such as religious tourism, leisure activity, and rejuvenating experience occupying spaces between two extreme ends. The one end of this continuum belongs to people with strong religious emotions while another end pertains to people who are in a secular state of mind and want to visit shaktipeeths only to make themselves more aware of their surroundings and well-being. People during ancient times visited these spiritual centres as they felt strongly about values such as asceticism, austerity, self-discipline, and denying themselves any kind of pleasure for religious purposes.<sup>36</sup> These people naturally had a strong pull toward religious and spiritual practices and therefore, visiting shaktipeeths became one of their favourite activities that they used to take at regular intervals. In stark contrast, today, the meaning of pilgrimage to these shaktipeeths is dramatically different from what used to be in the past. Comfort and convenience have overtaken the spiritual dimension and have become as important as the spiritual and religious motives behind it.<sup>37</sup> In other words, pilgrims today prefer to

---

<sup>35</sup> Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism for Our Times*. (India: Oxford University Press, 1996)

<sup>36</sup> Meher Baba, *God Speaks: The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose* (United States: Dodd, Mead, 1973)

<sup>37</sup> Sanjay Agarwal, *Daan and Other Giving Traditions in India: The Forgotten Pot of Gold* (India: AccountAid India, 2010)

visit places where they get better infrastructure, comfort, convenience, and facilities. This makes the role of stakeholders including local communities and businesses as important as the government, and policymakers. The need to create a win-win situation for all the stakeholders involved in the ecosystem of pilgrimage activities has been emphasized by many authors in past studies. This is specifically true in the case of Shakti Peeths as a large number of pilgrims visit Jawala Peeth in Himachal Pradesh in large numbers. By specifically exploring the historical relevance and importance of the Jawala shaktipeeth, a host of benefits to local communities can be realized.<sup>38</sup> The important perspective of our research is to study the historical background and evolutionary linkages associated with Jawala Peeth. The Peeth has been mentioned in Vedas and Puranas and many scholars have mentioned Jawala peeth in ancient literature. The specific mention of the Jawala Peeth has been in the Devipurana Mahabhagvat which explains in detail the magnanimity of the Bhagvati Devi Goddess and her various forms.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, a great deal of literature related to the Jawala Peeth has been preserved in the library located in Hoshiarpur city in Punjab. Many manuscripts in the library have a detailed description of the historical background, religious importance, and cultural significance of Jawala Peeth. In addition to this, the manuscript in the library also mentions the important aspects related to the Shaktipeeths right from the time of evolution and their associated significance during the different periods. Take, for instance, the scholarly work of Surinder Mohan Bhardwaj. The author has done a great deal of work on Hindu pilgrimage places in India and his work reveals a comprehensive knowledge of diverse Shakti traditions, forms, and forces in the pilgrimage system in the country. His research has insightful information about the various systems and subsystems in the ecosystem of Shaktipeeths in India. Specifically, the work of the author on how Shaktipeeths came into prominence from the beginning is worth mentioning. Similarly, a detailed description of the various European travellers and historians from the mediaeval times will also act as a source of information for the study. Early visitors like Domingo Paes, Niccolò de' Conti, and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier wrote about the grand festivals of Durga and Kali with a mix of awe and

---

<sup>38</sup> Vinayak Bharne & Krupail Krusche. *Rediscovering the Hindu Temple: The Sacred Architecture and Urbanism of India* (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2014)

<sup>39</sup> Shrikant Prasoon. *The Creator of Universe Ma Shakti*. (India: Pustak Mahal, 2009)

grandeur. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and later Max Müller began studying Sanskrit texts and translating works like the *Devi Mahatmya* and the *Upanishads*. Through these, they started to see that Shakti was not just a deity but the creative force behind the entire universe. Monier-Williams, Annie Besant and Madame Blavatsky are other prominent European travellers who showed a great deal of interest in Shakti concept. In the backdrop of the above-mentioned observations, the study has identified the following research gaps:

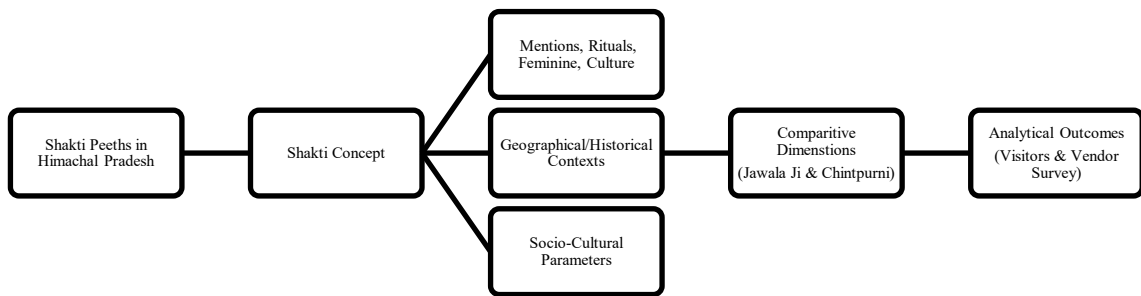
- After going through the extant literature, we found that no detailed and comprehensive study had been conducted in the past that looked into detail the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Jawala Peeth as mentioned in Puranas, travel records, scholarly writings, and manuscripts by historians, travellers, and writers. Most of the studies on Shakti tradition are general and the least attention has been paid to the Shakti peeths at a local level.
- A comparative study of different peeths in Himachal Pradesh has not been done especially between Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni). The exploration ranges from little to none when it comes to describing how these two local deities are comparable in terms of their traditional history, place of belongingness, socio-cultural aspects, enrichment of local culture, and their influence on societies
- Collective research envisaging religious, cultural, social and economic perspectives of these peeths has not been done to date.

### **1.7) Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework proposed by the study is based on the evolution of the Shakti concept, with specific references related to its origin from the Vedas and Puranas. This involves tracing the subsequent mentions and variations of the concept across different eras and times. The mention of Shakti as a Cult, in rituals, and cultural and symbolic representations in both Jawala Ji and Chinmastika forms leads to the fixation of comparison dimensions on which these two forms of Shakti are evaluated. The analytical phase of the study involves surveys of both visitors and vendors, with the findings informing recommendations for converting Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths

into centres of Sustainable Religious Tourism. The figure 1.1 below gives the diagrammatic representation of the theoretical framework used by the study:

**Figure 1.1: Theoretical Framework**



*Source: Author's conceptualisation*

In the context of Shakti Peeths, the study proposes to answer the following specific **research questions**:

- Is there any correlation between the Shakti Peeths in Himachal Pradesh and the larger perspective of Shakti tradition found across India? Has there been any transformation/transition in the HP Shakti Peeths in context to the reformatory understanding of the religious themes as seen in the case of the various reformation movements within Hinduism as well as due to colonization?
- Whether there is any space to compare Jawala Ji Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni)? If yes, what are the domains in which the comparison can be made
- Is there any relevance of these peeths in the contemporary socio-religious and economic domain of Himachal Pradesh? Is there any possibility of making the places limelight in the canvas of historical, cultural and spiritual tourism? What may be the possibilities to develop a more sustainable heritage preservation roadmap?

### **1.8) Objectives**

- To study, explore, and analyse the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth.
- To compare the two Peeths in terms of tradition, culture and their influence
- To explore the possibilities in the transformation of these Peeths into religious tourism and contribution to the local economy thereof.

### **1.9) Proposed Methodology**

The study will employ the Qualitative nature with historical method initially to trace the Shakti tradition from a broader perspective to the local perspective, Himachal Pradesh. The interview method will be incorporated into the collection of folk traditions. The research will have both exploratory and descriptive sections with the former focusing on exploring the historical background and evolutionary linkages from Puranas, manuscripts, travel records and scholarly work while the latter in the form of collecting data from Pandas, Priests, policymakers, and regulators to analyse their perspective for recommendation part. Being multidisciplinary, initially, the information about Origin will be collected from an extensive study of the Primary sources and the secondary sources. For local understanding, the interview method will be used to understand the theme from the perspective of the people engaged in the preservation of the shrines.

### **1.10) Organization of Thesis**

Chapter 1 of the introduction gives an overall perspective of the research while defining its scope and application areas. The important dimensions of the studies such as identification of the research gap from the previous studies, conceptualising the result questions, and then finally reducing the research objectives are among the striking characteristics of the chapter. The chapter also talks about the element methodology that will be adopted by the study to achieve its research objectives while concluding and discussing the important implications of the research for a variety of stakeholders including academicians, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers among others.

Chapter 2 is about the detailed literature review which encompasses the investigation of the concept of Shakti and its origin as traced by the research from its evolutionary linkages. The origin and the history of the Shakti concept as mentioned in the Vedas

Puranas and other Hindu scriptures are studied in detail and the complete detail of the etymology of the Shakti Cult has been given comprehensively by the researcher. The mention of the concept in the ancient Hindu texts is also discussed with special reference to the Rig Vedas, Puranas, and Lalita Sahasranamam along with other sources. In addition, the account of the exploration of the Shakti cult across different disciplines of the Hindu religion is discussed in the chapter.

The focus of Chapter 3 is specifically on the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths as it comprehensively studies, explores, and analyses their historical background and evolutionary linkages. Both these Peeths are comprehensively investigated by the research with the help of a variety of secondary data sources. The evolutionary linkages of both these pilgrimage sites are investigated with the help of ancient literature and accounts offered by writers along with the specific mentions of these deities as in the ancient sculptures. Various aspects have been identified by the study in the previous chapters that help the research to come up with a detailed comparison of both these places of religious importance. Chapter 3 also has a detailed description of visitors' perception of the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths.

The chapter also conducts the vendor satisfaction survey to assess their economic status and how the temple economy is contributing to the economic status of the vendors in this area. The research methodology adopted by the study to together the responses from the visitors along with the details of the demographics is given in the chapter. The results of analysis conducted by the study on the image and satisfaction survey of the visitors also become part of Chapter 3.

The findings and results of the study are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 as it allows readers to quickly go through the section for an overview of the findings of the study. All the results related to all three objectives are given in the chapter and accordingly, a detailed discussion of the results is offered by the chapter. The results of the analyses are summarised in the form of various graphs and bar charts given in the chapter.

Chapter 5 is the last chapter of the thesis and it summarises the research work besides concluding the study. It also contains important implications for all the stakeholders related to the study. All these implications are discussed in detail while offering

recommendations for every stakeholder to bring more satisfaction to the visitors and vendors. The chapter also talks about the limitations of the study and the future scope of research towards the end.



## CHAPTER 2

### **Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth: Historical Background and Evolutionary Linkages**

#### **2.1) Shakti Concept: Introduction and Relevance**

In Hindu traditions, the concept of Shakti is Central to the religious sentiments and feelings associated with Vedas, scriptures, and other religious texts. The Hindu religion defines the concept of Shakti from the perspective of the feminine principle and in its essence, Shakti refers to energy, force, or power. In other words, Shakti can be described from the concept of the mother goddess which embodies the virtues such as prosperity, prowess, and creative abilities. There are various thoughts associated with the concept of Shakti in Hindu literature and it is safe to describe this concept from the perspective of multidimensional capabilities. Different sects and religious thoughts of ancient Hindu Civilization have described the concept of Shakti from various perspectives. While some have defined this concept as the female aspect of the god or consort others have gone on to glorify the Shakti concept as the Supreme Power in the world capable of creating and giving birth to the entire universe. Many schools of thought also define Shakti as the supreme Power which has created this phenomenal world and without its consciousness, vibration, and capability, nothing in this universe can happen. It can be also described from the perspective of the active dimension that is behind the godhead and equips the supreme personality with the power to create this entire Universe and display its manifestation in its current form. The concept holds great prominence importance and significance for ancient Hindu civilisation and the people cutting across the religious lines and sects revered the concept of Shakti with great admiration, veneration, and adulation. It is important to recognise Shakti also holds great prominence in the Tantric philosophy where the female aspect the revered with great intensity. The word Shakti comes from the Sanskrit language and can be translated into "Power" or "Energy". The Sanskrit root behind the word Shakti is "shak" which corresponds to the ability to do something, to act, or to be able.<sup>40</sup> Taking this

---

<sup>40</sup> Kavitha M. Chinnaiyan, *Shakti Rising: Embracing Shadow and Light on the Goddess Path to Wholeness*, (United Kingdom: New Harbinger Publications, 2017)

concept into everyday life, one can easily correlate the concept of Shakti with every phenomenon happening in the world around us from the growth of the flora and fauna, vegetation, biodiversity, and ecological cycle. In other words, the force is responsible for the creation and sustenance of all human beings and living forms of the universe. It is also the force which can be considered responsible for the consciousness and the movement of living beings and by equipping them with the power of realisation of both being and others, Shakti is considered one of the most revered concepts in both ancient and modern forms of Hindu philosophy. Further, the concept of Shakti is responsible for the revolution of the planets around the sun and it is only because of Shakti that these revolutions are being made possible in the universe. The concept of Shakti is also responsible for the growth of the veins and churning of the oceans which means it is a primary force which is responsible for the life of the universe. It is the ability behind the all-natural forces and Vedas and Upanishads describe it as the very source of heat that is contained by the Fire. Shakti is also the cause of brilliance in the Sun and it is only because of the primordial nature of the ability that fusion and generation of energy take place in the sun. It can be easily considered one of the primary and binding forces in the universe which is capable of sustaining life through its all-encompassing and all-pervasive powers. Without the concept of Shakti, this world will not be able to sustain itself even for a moment and this explains the importance and process and significance of Shakti's concept not only for the universe but for the entire humanity to sustain on this earth.<sup>41</sup>

Emphasising the importance of Shakti's Concept for living beings, Vedas describe the concept of Shakti as the Trinity of Intelligence, love, and compassion. It is only through the power of Shakti that men attain virility, and intelligence, or reach higher consciousness of self-awareness and divinity. In the absence of the Shakti, all creatures and the entire creation will become impotent; thereby leading to a complete ceasing of life on the earth. It is therefore concluded that it is the very force of the Shakti that is responsible for birth and reproduction on the planet and without its power out, the life cycle of the living beings in this universe will cease to exist. It is important to know

---

<sup>41</sup> Sheila Briggs & Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology* (United Kingdom: OUP Oxford, 2012)

that the concept of Shakti is considered an exclusively feminine concept. It is the concept which is synonymous with the great Goddesses who have been mentioned in Hinduism and Hindu society and is all-pervasive, omniscient, and omnipresent in her variety of forms. She is one of the centres of attraction when it comes to performing Spiritual conventions and rituals in every segment of Hindu society. Especially in the context of women, she is considered as one of their own and very dear forms which can be called upon in case her devotees come across any problem or issue in any aspect of their lives. She is the one who is propitiated by one and all and in the different contexts of joy and happiness as well as sorrow, the Goddess is implored by her devotees to take care of them and air save them from challenges and troubles of life. According to the famous scholar of Hinduism, Klaus Klostermaier the reverence and devotion to the Shakti hold a special reference to childless women who are unable to conceive and implore the Shakti in different forms to give them blessings of a child. In times of pandemics and epidemics, the Goddess in form of Shakti is begged by her devotees to give them health, vitality and vigour by taking away their illnesses and making them virile. It can be therefore easily concluded that throughout the history of Hinduism and ancient culture related to Hindus, the Shakti concept has found a reference on several different occasions and is believed to be a fountainhead of life, vitality, consciousness, and awareness of human beings and living creatures. There is a variety of sects and schools of thought that are associated with the Hindu religion. In the ancient traditional history of India, the aspect of God and Goddesses has been present throughout the literary work and literature.<sup>42</sup> The most ancient scholarly literature that is related to the religion in India is Vedas and the primary among Vedas is Rig Veda.<sup>43</sup> This highly auspicious and revered religious text has mentioned a total of 40 Goddesses and primary among these is the goddess of wisdom called Saraswati, the goddess of dawn called Usha, and the goddess who is considered birthless called Aiti. In the Rig Veda itself, the word Shakti has been mentioned around 12 times. It is also important to know that two different derivatives have been related to the word Shakti.<sup>44</sup> These are Shakman

---

<sup>42</sup> John George Woodroffe, *Shakti and Maya: A Study in the Shakta Tantra*. (India: Oxford University Press, 1917)

<sup>43</sup> Nirmala Devi, *The Book of Adi Shakti* (Italy: Nirmala Vidya LLC, 2013)

<sup>44</sup> Anuja Chandramouli, *Shakti: The Divine Feminine* (India: Rupa, 2015)

and Shaktivat and these also appeared five times and two times in Rig Veda. Devi Sukdam in the Rig Veda is specifically dedicated to the Shakti concept and here profuse praises are heaped on Devi as she is revered as the ultimate and Supreme Power of the universe. The ancient Indian literature related to the effects of India also known as Itihaas has also found mention of the chapter concept. Shakthi found mentioned in the Ramayana where she is referred to as Devi who commands the most respect and reverence from one and all. The Mahabharata also mentions the Shakti concept although it is not as detailed as found in Rigveda and Ramayana (Sharma, 1974). Puranas, another important pillar of ancient Hindu literature, have a ubiquitous mention of the Shakti Concept. In fact, the Devi Bhagavata Purana is the Purana that is entirely dedicated to Shakti and her glorification in terms of enormous power, might, and capabilities. In sum, very equal to very difficult to find any asset in literature or scholarly work which hasn't mentioned the concept of Shakti, Devi, or the feminine aspect of power. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the Shakti concept is essential to Hindu mythology, literature, and scholarly work and its importance in contemporary times in helping women to achieve the status of equal participation in society couldn't be overemphasized.

## 2.2) Literature Review: Categorical Classification

The literature review related to the Shakti concept, Jawala Ji, and Chinmastika are primarily classified into four different contexts: a) Primary Sources, b) Secondary Sources, c) Thematic classification, and d) Chronological Categorisation. The table 2.1 given below, has the details of the literature review classification:

**Table 2.1: Literature Review Classification**

Category	Sub-Category	Description	Representative Sources / Examples
Primary Sources	Scriptural/ Mythological Texts	Sati's dismemberment, identification of Shaktipeeths, and origins of Jawala Ji & Chinmastika.	Devi Bhagavata Purana, Markandeya Purana, Kalika Purana, Tantra Chudamani.
Primary Sources	Archaeological Evidence	Inscriptions, temple architecture, iconography, and archaeological reports.	Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) reports, temple inscriptions, and local heritage records.

Primary Sources	Fieldwork & Ethnographic Data	Direct observations, rituals, interviews with priests and devotees, and documentation of festivals.	Field notes, interviews, ethnographic reports.
Primary Sources	Government & Institutional Reports	Official records of temple management, pilgrim statistics, and heritage conservation.	Himachal Pradesh Tourism Department reports, cultural heritage surveys.
Secondary Sources	Scholarly Books & Monographs	Interpretations of Shaktism, goddess worship, and regional religious developments.	Works by David Kinsley, June McDaniel, regional history texts.
Secondary Sources	Research Papers & Journals	Analytical and comparative studies on Shaktipeeths and Devi traditions.	Indian Historical Review, Journal of South Asian Studies.
Secondary Sources	Dissertations & Theses	Previous academic works on Devi worship and temple studies in Himachal Pradesh.	University archives, PhD theses on regional religious practices.
Secondary Sources	Cultural Narratives & Documentaries	Travelogues and media representations of Shaktipeeths and their rituals.	Documentaries, cultural travel accounts, and oral histories.
Thematic Categorisation	Historical Context	Origins and development of Jawala Ji & Chinmastika Peeths.	Gazetteers, regional histories, and Archives.
Thematic Categorisation	Mythological Foundations	Scriptural myths and local legends associated with the two Peeths.	Devi Bhagavata Purana, folk narratives.
Thematic Categorisation	Rituals & Worship Practices	Major festivals, rituals, priestly roles, and devotional customs.	Ethnographic studies, field data.
Thematic Categorisation	Iconography & Symbolism	Representation of the Goddess—flame (Jawala Ji) vs. self-decapitation (Chinmastika).	Art history texts, iconographic analyses.
Thematic Categorisation	Pilgrimage & Devotional Geography	Networks of Shaktipeeths, pilgrimage routes, and sacred geography.	Religious geography literature, pilgrimage studies.
Thematic Categorisation	Comparative Cultural Analysis	Contrasts in mythology, ritual practice, and sociocultural meaning.	Comparative religious and anthropological works.
Thematic Categorisation	Socio-Economic Dimensions	Impact on local economy, gender roles, and tourism.	Socio-cultural and tourism studies.
Chronological Categorisation	Ancient & Classical (Pre–12th Century)	Early textual references defining Shaktipeeths.	Puranas, Tantras.
Chronological Categorisation	Medieval (13th–18th Century)	Growth of regional devotional literature and temple patronage.	Bhakti literature, temple chronicles.

Chronological Categorisation	Colonial (19th–Early 20th Century)	Gazetteers and travel writings documenting temples and rituals.	Cunningham’s Archaeological Survey Reports, British records.
Chronological Categorisation	Post-Independence (1947–1990s)	Academic and government documentation of Himachal’s cultural heritage.	Cultural studies, regional ethnographies.
Chronological Categorisation	Contemporary (2000–Present)	Modern comparative, feminist, and interdisciplinary analyses.	Recent journal articles, digital archives, cultural tourism studies.

### Shakti Etymology, Origin, and Evolution

Shakti word originated from the Sanskrit language and originates in the root Shak. Literary, the root means the power, potential, ability or capability which in its noun form takes the meaning of ability or power. In the literal sense also one can easily find the meaning of Shakti with the feminine aspect of creation as this whole world is the driver by the power of creation associated with feminine prowess.<sup>45</sup> In the highest form, the female divinity embodies the power of creation and its potentiality has been described in terms of the entire creation of this universe. Right from ancient literature, the concept of Shakti in Hinduism has been defined from the perspective of the mother goddess. There are two different sounds associated with the word Shakti. The first sound "SA" is related to the concept of prosperity while the second act "KTI" describes prowess.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, when these two sounds are combined and the entire word Shakti is referred to, it is described from the perspective of the mother goddess who has the infinite potential to store progress and prosperity for her devotees. Ancient Hindu literature has described the concept of Shakti primarily from the perspective of power. Veda has devoted long and effusive praises to Shakti and described her as the Supreme Power single-handedly responsible for infusing consciousness, vibration, awareness, and mindfulness in the world. It is important to note that collectively the word Shakti can be referred to address different categories of divine goddesses which in their different forms manifest different virtues and qualities. In one form Shakti can be regarded as a compassionate deity while in others she comes across as a fierce,

<sup>45</sup> Jagdish Lal Shastri, *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology: The Nārada-Purāṇa*; 1 (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995)

<sup>46</sup> Lila Kumari, *Rig Veda for Modern Seekers Sacred Verses for Daily Living*, (Pencil, 2024)

destructive force capable of destroying the entire Universe with her anger and outburst. The concept of Shakti has also been referred to as Bhagwati in the Vedas and Puranas and chanting this name fills the devotees with affluence, knowledge, and power. Shakti is also referred to as a female form of Shiva which manifests herself primarily in two forms - one is benign and kind while the other is angry, destructive, and fearsome.<sup>47</sup> It is worth mentioning that right from Prehistoric Times, the religion Hinduism has been centred on the Goddess. Several Archaeological studies and statues excavated from the Indus Valley civilizations resemble the feminine shape, thereby indicating that the primary deity of worship then was goddesses. These archaeological proofs were obtained in all the civilizations such as Mohenjo Daro, Harappa, and even Lothal, broadly indicating that the religious reverence towards the Shakti as a primary deity has been the prominent aspect of paying homage, regard, and reverence to the almighty. This also points towards the fact that the religion of Shakta has existed in India dating back to 4000 years as emphasised by McDaniel in his study in 2004. In the southern part of the country, the Dravidian religion is dominated by a particular cult which has an uncanny resemblance to Shakti and over the years, this has been identified as the part of the three Goddesses Durga, Kali, and Parvati.<sup>48</sup>(Bhattacharyya 1974). Therefore it comes as No Surprise that the origin of the concept of Shakti can be easily traced back to Prehistoric Times and its Association with the culture all across India can be easily associated and identified by different sects and religious movements that emerged in the country over time to time. It is worth mentioning that the respect for the shifting concept in the Hindu religion is not only limited to ritual prescriptions religious texts and theological principles. It is much more than scriptural practices, spirituality, and divinity. There are a variety of other schools of thought as well as sects which emphasise the concept of Shakti. Take, for instance, Shad Darshan which can be described as six systems of Hindu philosophy. According to this philosophy, people can be classified into two main streams: theist and atheist. While the former is classified as orthodox, the latter is segmented into the category of heterodox. Orthodox are the people who accept the philosophy of the Vedas while heterodox belong to the segment

---

<sup>47</sup> Bharathi V. Harishankar & Ranjana Harish, *Shakti: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Women Empowerment in India*, (India: Rawat Publications, 2003)

<sup>48</sup> David Frawley, *Shiva: The Lord of Yoga* (United States: Lotus Press, 2015)

that doesn't believe in the principles laid out by the Vedas. The category of heterodox can be further classified into three segments: Jainism, Buddhism, and Charvak. The six principles mentioned in detail in Shad Darshan are Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Out of these schools of thought, Mimamsa has gone into the details of the Shakti concept and carried out a detailed investigation of the power relevance and the importance of the feminine aspect of divinity. This school of thought emphasised that it is the root cause of all things and without the aspect of safety, there won't be any inherent power in living beings. Naiyayika, on the other hand, tries to explain the concept of Shakti in terms of the function of all the things happening in the universe.<sup>49</sup> Vedanta reverses the concept of Shakti as the root cause of which various effects are taking place in this world. However, it is important to know that out of all the schools of thought, the most influential and significant philosophy that helps us understand the concept of Shakti is the Samkhya Principle.<sup>50</sup> The entire philosophy of the Samkhya school is based on the dualistic perspective. According to the school of thought, there are primarily two forces in nature: Prakriti and Purusha. The entire Universe and Cosmos are the results of these two forces. While Prakriti is related to the aspect of the matter, Purusha is related to the spiritual side of nature. It says that Prakriti can be considered the primordial matter devolution which resulted in the evolution of this entire Cosmos.<sup>51</sup> The diversity in the universe that we witness today is the result of devolution through which various forms of the Gods and Goddesses are ultimately borne out. The aspect of Prakriti was initially considered completely mobile and potential in itself and it is only through contact with the kinetic energy of Purusha, that Shakti started materializing into enormous forms of energy capable of materializing in different forms as we see today in the world. According to the traditions in the Shakta Sect, the Divine power can be considered as the universal power which remains equated in the divinity with the absolute power of volition. She remains poised in equanimity and only under the trees and power of the divine mother, the prowess of her divinity started helping in the ocean of the world. It is important to note that this denomination

---

<sup>49</sup> Adi Sankara, *Nirguna Manasa Puja: Worship of the Attributeless One in the Mind* (California: Society of Abidance in Truth, 2024)

<sup>50</sup> David Frawley, *Vedic Yoga: The Path of the Rishi* (United States: Lotus Press, 2014)

<sup>51</sup> John George, Woodroffe, *Shakti and Maya: A Study in the Shakta Tantra*, (India: Oxford University Press, 1917)



believes that Shakti,i.e., our universal mother is not solute in its existence and no mutation, alteration, or change can be accomplished in its Divinity thanks to its absolute identity. The manifestation of the concept of Shakti is also mirrored in the way every wind God had in Hindu mythology is accompanied by his female consort. According to the principles and teachings of the Hindu religion, the concept of Shakti or energy can't remain in existence solely in a vacuum. If there is some form of energy it must exist in one or another form and cannot oscillate in isolation. All the deities that have been mentioned in the Hindu philosophy and pantheon are accompanied by their female consorts. The creator of the universe, Brahma has found a consort in Devi Saraswati while the sustainer of this universe Lord Vishnu has got the company of Devi Lakshmi.<sup>52</sup> The role of the destroyer is played by Lord Shiva to whom Devi Parvati is playing the role of a consort. All these female consorts of these Lords are nothing but the personification of the female aspect of energy called Shakti and has been glorified in the Vedas, Puranas, and the imported literature of Hindu mythology. The combinations of the lord with their female consorts have typically characterized the principles of union where spirit and matter come together in order to produce this entire universe.<sup>53</sup>

### **2.3) Shakti Concept: Mention in Ancient Hindu Texts**

The concept of Shakti is primary and central to the religion of Hinduism and has found mention in several religious texts including Rig Veda. In the tenth Mandal of the Rig Veda, the concept of Shakti has been glorified in several different manners in Devi Sukdam. For the very first time, the concept of Shakti has been bestowed with honour, admiration, and praise by the daughter of the sage Ambhrina named Vak Ambhrini (aka Vagambhrini). Going further into the details, the Devi Sukdam consists of 125 1-8 quotes from the 10th Mandal of the Rigveda. The Devi Sukdam is a self-declaration wherein Vagambhrini declares herself as a supreme Power who is providing in all living and non-living beings in the universe akin to the way Shakti flows and makes people conscious. In a total of 8 stanzas, it is a description of the Adhiparasakthi consisting of

---

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth U. Harding, *Kali: The Black Goddess of Dakshineswar* (India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1998)

<sup>53</sup> Jackie Menzies & Chaya Chandrasekhar, *Goddess: Divine Energy* (United Kingdom: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2006)

all three forms of Goddesses that are Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Kali. It can be easily considered as the celebration of the splendour, divinity, grandeur, and magnificence of Shakti.<sup>54</sup> It is a metaphysical concept where it is considered metaphorically a woman and Supreme godhead. Here are the complete details of the devi Suktam as given in the Rig Veda:

**Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.1**

“ॐ अहं रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिश्चराम्यहमादित्यैरुत विश्वदेवैः ।”

In this stanza, Vak Ambhrni declares herself as the omniscient and omnipresent who exists at every level of consciousness, materialism and divinity. She is the one who is pervading all the levels of energy, the earth, the water, the fire, the space, the air, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Further, she declares that she is also the root cause behind both the day and the night, water and fire, negative and positive science, and all aspects related to divinities. It is important to note that there are a total of 11 Rudras who are considered manifestations of Lord Shiva. Adityas, on the other hand, are sons of Kashyapa and Aditi while Vasus (8 in number) are gods associated with wealth.<sup>55</sup> Vishwadevas mentioned in this particular stanza are referred to a total of 10 Vedic gods who are considered Vishwaa sons.<sup>56</sup> Shakti here in this paragraph declares that she is the very root cause behind the energy and might of all these cosmic deities, godheads, supreme beings, and others.

**Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.2**

“अहं सोममाह्वनसं बिभर्म्यहं त्वष्टारमुत पूषणं भगम् ।

In this stanza of Devi Suktam, Vak Ambhrni says that she is the only one who upholds and cherishes the Soma plant which is touted to have miraculous characteristics of

---

<sup>54</sup> Choudur Satyanarayana Moorthy, *Gleanings from Rig Veda: When science was religion* (India: Notion Press, 2016)

<sup>55</sup> Shantha N Nair, *Echoes of Ancient Indian Wisdom: The Universal Hindu Vision and Its Edifice* (India: Pustak Mahal Publishers, 2008)

<sup>56</sup> Durgadas Lingham (Rodney), *Traditional Yoga: Insights Into the Original Yoga Tradition, Book 2: The Vedic Yoga of Indra* (United Kingdom: Lulu.com, 2013)

bestowing age, health, and vitality to devas. I am the sole power behind craftsmen and divine sculptors, Bhaga, Pushan and Tvastar. I am the only one who gives the fruits of the sacrifices made by the devotees and I am a giver of the oblation wealth.

**Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.3**

**“अहं राष्ट्रीसंगमनी वसूनां चिकितुषीप्रथमा यज्ञियानाम् ।**

I am the supreme ruling queen, amasser and authority of the infinite treasures, I am full of this, and first in the line of code who is worthy of being worshipped through the conventions and rituals of Yajna, i.e., fire and sacrifice. Devas have installed several homes in many different directions from me only to enter and reside in those dwellings.

**Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.4**

**“मया सोऽअन्नमत्ति यो विपश्यति यः प्राणिति य ईशृणोत्युक्तम् ।**

Vak Ambhrni describes that it is only through her power, that one can recognise words, eat food, hear sound, see things, and breathe air to ensure survival and sustenance. People are not aware of the Shakti dwelling inside them but once they start listening with sincerity and earnestness, they feel the power and might of mine. So hear all with Honesty, candour, and openness and you will realise the truth.

**Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.5**

**“अहमेव स्वयमिदं वंदामि जुष्टं देवेभिरुत मानुषेभिः ।**

I am extremely knowledgeable and announce what is pleasing to deities, gods, and men. The man whom I bestow my grace will become mighty powerful, sage, scholar, learner, and above all a wise man. I have immense power of knowledge and it's only through the announcements made by me, both divine powers and men experience joy, divinity and pleasure. If somebody offers prayer to me with devotion, sincerity, appreciation, and admiration then I make that person Ugra (strong in power), Brahman (self-realized), Rishi (scholar) and Sumedha (the person with high intelligence).

### **Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.6**

**“अहं जनाय सुमदं कृणोम्यहं द्यावापृथिवी आविवेश”**

I am responsible for bending the bow of Shiva so that he can shoot the arrow to slay sinners, wicked, and haters who obstruct the yajnas and bring a bad name to the world of sacrifice. I am also responsible for making people rise, strive for something, and start doing the work to achieve success in this world. It is only through the all-encompassing and holistic characteristics that I have entered both heaven and Earth and have been able to fill each and everything related to it. Therefore, I am all-pervasive, all-knowing, and all-seeing and capable of filling all the worlds. It is only because of my power that the god of the sky (Dyaus Pitr) has been generated. I am also responsible for having a great source in deep oceans and waters. From the depths of the oceans, I enter into all living creatures and infuse a sense of consciousness, life, and vitality in them. I am also solely responsible for generating life and along the vertex; I rise and touch the heights of the sky.

### **Rigveda, Devi Suktam Quote 10.125.8**

**“अहमेव वातऽइव प्रवाम्यारभमाणः भुवनानि विश्वा ।”**

From my strong breathing resembling a wind storm, all the creatures in living beings get a life on the earth. I am the only one responsible for commencing life in living beings that are present in the entire universe. It is only I who is capable of holding together their consciousness and existence not only upon this earth but also beyond the heavens. I am so much more powerful, omniscient, and capable in my grandeur that no one is capable of facing my force.

## **2.4) Shakti Cult across Disciplines**

It should be noted that the relationship between the different Gods and deities in the Hindu religion with their female consort is so important that one cannot pay homage or obeisances without both Prakriti and Purusha coming together. In the context of Shiv

and Shakti, it is noteworthy to mention without his consort Shakti, Shiva becomes Shava, i.e., a lifeless and dead corpse.<sup>57</sup> Therefore it is only by the power of Shakti that Shiva gets animated and has the infusion of life to do and perform things. The combination of this feminine and masculine aspect of nature is also very well manifested through the concept of Ardhanarishvara where the god is represented as half man and half woman. Any devotee who venerates God has to offer obeisance to Goddess as well so that their devotion is accepted by the designated God and Goddess.<sup>58</sup> In other words, both are two different aspects of the same being and as such cannot be divided and segmented into parts. It is only through the combination of both male and female aspects of divinity, that the devotee can be able to go ahead with their admiration of the almighty. The creation of the Shakti concept can also be traced to the Devi Bhagavata Purana where Lord Krishna or Vishnu is seated as the supreme God and the root cause behind the creation of this universe. Krishna desired to create the world and divided himself into two parts - the right being male and the left part being female.<sup>59</sup> As a result of their marriage, a golden egg was formed from which the creation of the entire Universe happened. Therefore in the Devi Bhagavata Purana, the creation is said to have happened through the lord Krishna with the help of Radha and hence, the contribution of the feminine aspect of creation is well elaborated in the Devi Bhagavata Purana. The entire relationship between the god and Goddess in ancient Hindu philosophy can be attributed to the balancing of the power between these two aspects of creation. While God belongs to the masculine aspect of nature and is considered Shaktiman, the goddess belongs to the feminine aspect of the creation and is Shakti itself. Each aspect of creation is meaningless without the consort of the other and hence, equal importance has been given to both aspects of divinity. The God who possesses all the power and Guides the power in the desired direction, it is the Shakti itself who culminates in the form of power and helps God to achieve things through the various acts of the creation. In the context of modern technology, work can use the energy of a computer system and electricity to understand the concept of god and goddess. While former can be considered as a computer system which is capable of performing a

---

<sup>57</sup> Gautam Chatterjee & Sanjoy Chatterjee. *Sacred Hindu Symbols* (India: Abhinav Publications, 2001)

<sup>58</sup> Sitansu S. Chakravarti, *Hinduism, a Way of Life*, (India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991)

<sup>59</sup> Chiranjiva Bharadwaja, *Light of Truth*, (India: Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1915)

number of the tasks, the latter is the electricity that is required to run its operations. Therefore, although the computer system has all the ability to carry out the necessary functions it is only after getting the electricity or energy it can complete its desired task with efficiency and effectiveness. In other words, the masculine aspect of nature is related to being able while the Shakti or feminine dimension is associated with ability. It is to be noted that the concept of Shakti which has been discussed at length at the microcosmic level is equally applicable in the day to day life. Human beings are also considered to be part of this constant interplay between the masculine and feminine aspects of nature. In the philosophy of Hinduism, each woman is considered to be an incarnation of Shakti with our mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives believed to have the feminine aspect of Shakti. A study conducted a detailed study on the feminine aspect of Shakti and opined that the creation of the feminine aspect of nature is one of the mysteries of our times and represents the very dynamic, energetic and spiritual respect of our lives.<sup>60</sup> Shakti is manifested in a variety of forms in females the very form of this feminine in the aspect of nature is present in every human being in this universe. The primary manifestation of the Shakti has been material lies in the form of women; however, it is equally true that all men also have the influence of the Shakti that keeps on material arising from time to time in different forms. Therefore it will be wrong to see that only women influence Shakti as men have also got subtle sway of Shakti. It is worth mentioning that various aspects of spiritual infoldment also emphasize the concept of Shakti in our religious texts. Primary among these is the liberation of human beings which can be achieved through the proper utilisation of the concept of Shakti or the feminine aspect of nature. Kundalini yoga is a shining example where the authors and experts have emphasized the significance and importance of the Shakti Concept for rejuvenating The Spiritual aspects of personality irrespective of gender who is inclined to make advancements in the Spiritual process. According to the principles and concepts related to Kundalini yoga, it is considered that the entire Shakti or ability to do something exceptionally well resides at the base of the spine of human beings.<sup>61</sup> Using the technique of Kundalini yoga, people can realise the path of how to raise the energy throughout the different energy centres, also known as, chakras in their bodies

---

<sup>60</sup> Nilima Chitgopekar, *Shakti*, (United Kingdom: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2022)

<sup>61</sup> Saiswaroopa Iyer, *Avishi: Warrior Queen from the Rig Veda* (India: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021)

and use this energy for the betterment of their progress on the path of spirituality and divinity. Once this energy starts rising in the body through the various energy centres, yogis start achieving and realising higher levels of a spiritual and old man in their progress. Once the Energy reaches the topmost Chakra which is located at the Crown of our head, the petitioner attains the highest level of self-realisation and Liberation in this world. In this process when the energy reaches the highest Chakra in the body, yogis are said to have attained the union between Shakti and Shiva.<sup>62</sup> Therefore easily see the connection between the female aspect of energy called it and The Spiritual empowerment and divine advancement that has been a matter of great reverence for the people right from the beginning of this universe. This affinity towards a spiritual dimension is also one of the major characteristics that differentiate the culture of India and the philosophy of Hinduism from the individualistic and materialistic aspect of western philosophy. This can also be considered as the differentiating factor for the core competence of Hinduism and its philosophy that we can provide to the world as compared to the more individualistic philosophy of the Western countries which are more oriented towards personal dreams and comfort and convenience rather than caring for the entire world in its entirety. The concept of Vasudev Kutumbakam is nothing but the manifestation of the great Desire of the Indian yogis and saints who made it a point to think about the well-being and benefit of a larger section of society rather than only desiring their comforts and conveniences.<sup>63</sup>

## **2.5) Shaktism Cult: Epicentre of Shakti Philosophy**

One of the most prominent and influential denominations of the Hindu religion the concept of Shakti is revered as the highest possible aspect of respect and divinity is Shaktism. The traditions principles and concepts related to the Shaktism sect are particularly famous in Assam and West Bengal of India. Both these North Eastern states in India have the largest number of devotees when it comes to the generation of the shakti concept although it is equally true that this set has spread its wings far and wide across the length and breadth he south Asia where we can find several devotees offering

---

<sup>62</sup> John George Woodroffe, *Shakti and Maya: A Study in the Shakta Tantra* (India: Oxford University Press, 1917)

<sup>63</sup> Paul Deussen, *Sixty Upanishads of the Veda* (India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers 1997)

their obeisance to the Shakti concept. The roots of the concept of Shaktism have been mentioned in ancient Indian literature and Hindu mythology. Several religious texts have been dedicated to the entire concept of Shaktism; however, it is interesting to note that Shaktism has found mention in the Vedic ancient literature, the philosophy of Tantras is considered the most authoritative work when it comes to explaining the various facts and aspects related to the Shaktism. It is a point worth mentioning here that the entire philosophy of Shaktism takes the middle path between the philosophy suggested as part of the dualistic perspective given by the Samkhya philosophy and the completely monistic approach adopted by the Vedanta principles propagated by the Shankara. By striking a middle pass between these two extreme ends of the religious spectrum, Shaktism offers a genuine path that balance out the two different ends through which the entire scope of the Hindu religion can be described. Delving into the details of the Shaktism philosophy, the devotees and followers of this particular sect devon considered this world as an illusion.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the followers of the Shankara who consider this at our universe as a fallacy and delusion, the propagators of the Shakta philosophy consider this entire world as a real phenomenon. According to the tenets of the underlying philosophy of Shakta, the feminine facet of the divinity that is Shakti herself evolved into a total of 36 different tattvas which can be considered as the constituting facets of this particular reality. It is only through the combination of these 36 tattvas this entire universe came into being and hence the world is the creation of the Goddess Shakti or Prakriti. The ardent followers of the suppository consider this human form as an instrument to achieve the salvation and highest grade of self-realisation.<sup>65</sup> They feel that this particular human form is endowed for realising the higher aspects of manifestation and hence, one must do everything to reach the higher effects of evolution rather than remaining busy with worldly aspects of achieving material comforts and conveniences. It is equally important to stress that the philosophy of Shaktism attaches great importance to the human body because of its ability to achieve the higher effects of being and self-realisation. These people consider the human form as an opportunity to attend the higher levels of spiritual unfoldment and use it wisely to achieve the

---

<sup>64</sup> Nanditha Krishna, *The Book of Demons* (India: Penguin Books Limited, 2007)

<sup>65</sup> Burra Gautam Sidharth, *The Celestial Key to the Vedas: Discovering the Origins of the World's Oldest Civilization* (United States: Inner Traditions, 1999)



highest form of Salvation. They also consider this bodily form sacred because it can be used to perform the sacraments and explore, attain, and experience higher aspects of divinity. This also explains why the admirers of this particular religious philosophy attach great importance to the respect and dignity of women because they see the female aspect as the personification of the Shakti concept.<sup>66</sup> The supporters of Shaktism or Shakta feel that females are the direct manifestation of Shakti and must be revered to the greatest possible extent of respect, esteem, and dignity. The manifestation of this particular regard and respect for women is also evident in Hindu society where women are offered respect dignity and regard from time immemorial. There is a common understanding that all males and females have different physiological and psychological characteristics, the differentiating factor is the respected regard that is being offered to women in Hindu society. Specifically, their capability to reproduce and take the species of human being a head from one generation to another is offered with utmost respect and dignity in Hindu society. While men are considered more physiologically active, cerebral, and masculine in their overall characteristics, women are considered more caring, involving, and emotionally active to offer more support to their families and society as a whole. This kind-hearted attentive and affectionate nature of the women has made them occupy a higher position in the spectrum of society and gender hierarchy which has been widely approved and acknowledged in Hindu Society for years now.<sup>67</sup> In fact, it is very interesting to know that these feminine and loving qualities of women have also found mention in the spiritual life of the countrymen where members of the society strive to inculcate these qualities for attaining higher dimensions of spiritual unfoldment and divine principles. Like many other religions and sects, we have also witnessed that some bad recruits and conventions made their way into the Hindu traditions which has tarnished the image of the entire community although in comparison to others, the status of the women and their empowerment in the Hindu society is far better and auspicious. The overall treatment of women in Hindu society is much better than what we have seen in other religious identities and

---

<sup>66</sup> Heinrich Robert Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*. (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990)

<sup>67</sup> Donna Marie Wulff & John Stratton Hawley, *Devī: Goddesses of India* (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998)

denominations. Various authors studied extensively about Hindu society and noted that the traditional practice in the Hindu religion always observed the strongest support for women and it's only the feminine gender in the society that keeps on passing the traditional rituals and conventions to the next generation by telling their children stories and religious importance and spiritual significance.<sup>68</sup> Women also form the major portion of the temple goes in India and celebrate all the religious festivals with fervour and gaiety, they are responsible for keeping all the traditions alive and kicking. Worth mentioning here is the fact that not only women in Hindu society are considered the repository the power, but the ancient Hindu literature is also full of heroic Tales of the women who actually wielded power and demonstrated their worth from time to time. There are many accounts of strong brave and heroic women in Hindu literature and one such shining example is the account of Draupadi from the Mahabharata. Draupadi is depicted as one of the strongest and bravest ladies who demonstrated an iron will despite of being her life riddled with problems and challenges and successfully preserved her faith and honour. In another historical account of Ramayana, we have the mention of Sita, the consort of Lord Rama who is considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In the time of Ramayana, although the tradition of arranged marriages was very much in vogue, Sita chose her husband (Lord Rama) through the ceremony of Svayamvara. When Rama was given exile for 14 years, Sita out of her own will decided to accompany her husband and demonstrated her free will by asking Ram-Lakshman to chase the golden deer in the forest.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Georg Feuerstein, *The Encyclopedia of Yoga and Tantra* (United Kingdom: Shambhala, 2022)

<sup>69</sup> Shanti Swarup Gupta, *A Study of Deities of Rig Veda (with the Help of Science)*. India: Abhinav Publications, 2006.

## CHAPTER 3

### Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth: A Comparative Analysis

#### 3.1) Jawala Ji Peeth: A Brief Overview

Counted among the 51 Shakti Peeths, Jawala ji is located in the beautiful hill state of Himachal Pradesh in India. The state is blessed with picturesque, vivid sceneries and among many other things, the religious places are one of the prime attractions of the state. Not only these places are worshipped by pilgrims coming from all across the country and the world but these are also some of the cornerstones of the state's economy and employment generation. The state government also benefited from the influx of pilgrims who visit these places for various reasons with spiritual reasons being the most prominent among the causes behind their visits. Jawala ji is one of the prominent religious sites in Himachal Pradesh and its popularity among visiting pilgrims couldn't be overemphasized. The site is located in the Kangra district of the state and it is essential to know that the temple of Jawala ji can be easily considered to be situated in the lap of the Shivalik Range which is known by the name of Kalidhar in Himachal Pradesh.<sup>70</sup> There are several historical facts and religious testimonies associated with the Jwalaji Shaktipeeth. One of the Ancient beliefs is that the Jawala ji Temple is the very first Temple built by the Pandavas during their exile and it has been mentioned in the ancient text of Mahabharata. According to the legend, the tongue of the Devi Sati fell on this place where the Jawala ji Temple is located. This tongue of the Devi Sati is represented by the Jwala or flames that have been burning from time immemorial.<sup>71</sup> The temple is revered and venerated by scores of Hindus from across the globe and has emerged as a global centre of Faith, devotion, expectation and hope for lakhs of devotees who every year come and pay their regards to the Shakti which resides at Jawala ji in the form of holy flames. It can be easily set that the level of hope, expectations, and optimism among the pilgrims who visit the Jawala Ji is unprecedented, unparalleled, and matchless. No wonder, the site of Jawala ji Temple in Himachal Pradesh is one of the most important sites of religious tourism and spiritual

---

<sup>70</sup> Alka Pande, *Shakti: 51 Sacred Peethas of the Goddess* (India: Rupa, 2021)

<sup>71</sup> Dineschandra Sircar, *The Śākta Pīṭhas* (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973)

places that the state has witnessed in history. One of the interesting facts to consider is that, unlike many other religious sites, there is no Idol worshipping happening in the Jawala ji Temple.<sup>72</sup> There is no deity or god that is worshipped there instead only the holy flames breaking through the ancient rock is a matter of reveration and veneration. This particular aspect makes this Shaktipeeth unique in its sense and the sacred flames coming out of the rock are considered as one of the forms of goddess Shakti symbolising the divinity and supreme being behind the entire concept of this Temple. This Shakti Peeth is considered one of the most essential and ancient Heritage centres not only for the people of Himachal Pradesh and India but also for Hindu pilgrims who come to pay their respect to this particular place from across the globe. Especially during the Navratri festivals which are celebrated two times a year in March-April and September-October, the celebrations happen across the state with Jawala Ji and other Shaktipeeths emerging as prominent centres of these festivities among the pilgrims and local people.<sup>73</sup>

### **3.2) History of Jawala Ji Temple**

There are several legends associated with the Jawala ji Shaktipeeth. It is among the first ever temples built by the Pandavas and in the ancient Hindu literature, the shaktipeeth has found mention in both Vedas and Puranas. According to the ancient tale, there was a time when the demons became very powerful and started harassing the Gods. As a result of the atrocities inflicted on them, gods started mulling over the alternative that would help them to destroy the Demons and get their Kingdom back. In the company of Lord Vishnu, all gods concentrated their powers and from that Holi flame, the birth of a young girl took place.<sup>74</sup> Ancient Hindu literature has regarded this young girl as the Adi Shakti, which can be translated into the very first Avatar of the Shakti. Aadishakti, also known by the name of Parvati or Sati, was brought up by the Daksha Prajapati. Later Sati married Lord Shiva and became his consort. It is important to understand the story behind the marriage of Shiva and Sati. After the marriage with Sati, Daksha Prajapati, the son of Lord Brahma, performed the Satra Yajna to which all

---

<sup>72</sup> Shrikant Prasoon, *The Creator of Universe Ma Shakti* (India: Pustak Mahal, 2009)

<sup>73</sup> Amish Tripathi, *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, (United Kingdom: Quercus Publishing, 2014)

<sup>74</sup> Sukumari Bhattacharji, *Legends of Devi* (India: Disha Books, 1998)

gods, demigods, sages, and prominent personalities were invited.<sup>75</sup> Shiva was also there in the yajna sitting alongside the Lord Brahma. When Daksha entered the place he paid his obeisance to Lord Brahma although he got furious as Lord Shiva didn't pay any respect and regard to Daksha. In his anger and fury, Daksha started insulting Shiva by calling him names. He further insulted Shiva by saying that he didn't deserve Sati and that his eye resembled that of a monkey. He went on insulting the Shiva and said that he wandered with his bhoot ganas, showered with the ash of the dead, and wherever he went inauspicious things happened. All these curses made Shiva angry but he chose not to respond to the vicious curses of the Daksha. The event got over but Daksha continued to bear the grudge against Shiva. After some time in order to settle the score with Lord Shiva, Daksha organised a huge Yajana and this event is popularly known in The Spiritual books of the Hindu religion with the name Destruction of Daksha Yajna. This incident has been mentioned in detail in Vayu Purana although the entire chronology of the event and the subsequent destruction of the Yajana has also been mentioned in the Skand Purana, Padma Purana, Shiv Puran, and Matsya Purans. This entire story can also be considered a prelude to Parvati's legend which can be easily considered the reincarnation of Sati. Historians and experts also attribute the entire tale of Daksha Yajana as the liturgical basis of the Shakti concept as the tale ends up with the establishment of 51 ShaktiPeeths in the Hindu religion. Later different Puranas adopted the legend of the Daksh Yajana with each text focusing on the deity associated with the text and presenting them in a superior manner to others.<sup>76</sup>

### **3.3) Shiv-Sati Marriage**

As mentioned above, Daksha was Brahma's son and can be counted as one of the Prajapati who helped the creator of the universe in creating this entire universe. Daksha was married to Prasuti who was the daughter of Manu and the name of his second wife was Asikni. Sati was the youngest daughter of the Daksha and she was the favourite of the Daksha among all the siblings.<sup>77</sup> Right from the start, Sati wanted to marry Lord Shiva and to that effect, she started worshipping Shiva with utmost devotion and

---

<sup>75</sup> Devdutt Pattanaik, *7 Secrets Of The Goddess* (India: Westland, 2023)

<sup>76</sup> Devdutt Pattanaik. *Pilgrim Nation: The Making of Bharatvarsh* (India: Aleph Book Company, 2020)

<sup>77</sup> Pratha Sharma, *The Forgotten Shivlinga of the Sati Shaktipeeths* (India: Zorba Books, 2018)

reverence. She continued to pray to Lord Shiva and consistently asked him to marry her through her prayers, worship and vespers. However, it is important to know that Daksha was against this alliance and he didn't like Sati's longing for Shiva. There were many reasons behind the toward Lord Shiva with a superiority complex in Daksha being the primary one. Being the son of Lord Brahma, Daksha thought of himself as the higher ranking and worthier than Lord Shiva. Further, Sati was a princess and the kind of lifestyle she was brought up with was completely different from the ways of Shiva. Also, the urge for Daksha to expand and spread his influence by forging marriage alliances with other kingdoms and sages was coming in the way of his consent. It was quite evident that Lord Shiva had a very modest lifestyle deprived of any creature's comfort and materialistic possessions. His abode was in the mountains and he was devoting most of his time to meditation and Sadhana. He was very kind and embraced all living beings without any kind of distinction. His followers include all kinds of demons, ganas, goblins, and ghosts. He often used to wander in the graveyards and various gardens and devoted his time and energy to the well-being of the universe. All these qualities did not go down well with the Prajapati Daksha although, despite his aversion, Sati firmly believed that Lord Shiva is the ultimate power and Supreme among all the deities. She had the vision and revelation that among all the lord and Godheads, Shiva is the supreme Power and hence, she went under extreme austerities to please the Lord Shiva and finally married her by winning him over through her worship, devotion, reverence, and homage.<sup>78</sup>

### **3.4) Destruction of Daksha Yajna**

To take revenge on Lord Shiva, Daksha organised a very large Yajna and invited all gods, sages, and prominent personalities of the universe. According to the Bhagwat Purana, the name of the yajna was Brihaspatistava and to conduct it, the Bhrigu sage was invited. All prominent personalities including the kings of Prajapati and deities were called upon by Daksha but he intentionally avoided inviting Lord Shiva and Sati to the event. When this news of Yajana reached Devi Sati she asked Lord Shiva to

---

<sup>78</sup> Smt. T. N. Saraswati, *Parvathi*, (India: Bharatha Samskruthi Prakashana, 2019)

accompany her to the Yajana.<sup>79</sup> Lord Shiva tried to explain to Sati that they should not go to the Yojana because they were not invited by the Daksha. He illustrated to her that in case of no invitation, it was not prudent on their part to go and become part of the Yajana. By making different examples and illustrations he laid emphasis and shed light on the manners that one has to follow to participate in these kinds of auspicious events and yajnas. However, all these things did not go down well with Sati who continued to emphasize to lord Shiva that they must go and participate in the event as it was organised by her father. At the last, lord Shiva refused to go to the Yajana and allowed Sati to become part of the ceremony. It was mentioned in the Skanda Purana that lord Brahma and Vishnu refused to attend the ceremony when they came to know that Lord Shiva was not invited to the Yajna.<sup>80</sup> According to the entire tale discussed in Kurma Purana, there was a fierce argument between Daksh and Dadhichi sage. Dadhichi noticed that proper rules and procedures were not followed in the Yajna as after offering hymns chants, and adorations to all other deities, no adulations were offered to Lord Shiva and Sati. The sage was also upset about the fact that no sacrifice was given to Lord Shiva and his wife and he took this matter with Daksha. He specifically warned Daksha that he must not make any changes to the Vedic scriptures and professors that are adopted in conducting the Yajna owing to his animosity with Lord Shiva. Even after having an earful from Dadhichi, Daksha did not make any course corrections and rather he replied very sternly to the Sage that he was going to stay put with his procedure of not offering any hymns and sacrifice to Lord Shiva. Other sages, pandits, maharishis, Mahatmas, and prominent personalities who were present at the event unanimously supported the argument of Dadhichi although it did not make any difference to the planning of Daksha. Finally, Dadhichi left the place in annoyance.<sup>81</sup> Sati, on the other hand, finally decided to go alone to the Yajna and Shiva asked Nandi and his other followers to accompany Sati to the event. Lord Shiva himself decided not to go to the event as he was not invited by the Daksha. Upon Arrival at the event, Sati wanted to meet her family and the father but Daksha in his arrogance continued to neglect Sati.

---

<sup>79</sup> Devdutt Pattanaik, *Shiva to Shankara: Decoding the Phallic Symbol*, (India: Indus Source Books, 2006)

<sup>80</sup> Bodhasarananda Swami, *Stories from the Bhagavatam*, (India: Advaita Ashrama, 2016)

<sup>81</sup> Sivananda, *Lord Siva and His Worship*, (India: Yoga-Vedanta forest academy, Divine life Society, 1962)

However, the persistence of Sati to talk to her family finally culminated in an argument between Sati and Daksha as the latter started abusing Shiva in front of everyone who was part of the yajna. He cursed Lord Shiva and spewed venom against him, calling him an atheist, a wanderer, and a dweller of the cremation ground. Daksha went on to call Lord Shiva names and shouted many repugnant things against Lord Shiva. Hearing all these nasty things about her husband, Sati felt remorse and realised her mistake of not listening to her husband and disobeying him. She also got very angry with her father and cursed the Daksha that his Yajna would never be able to attain its goal. She felt humiliated in front of all the guests and the entire torture became too much for her. She reminded her father about the arrogant and haughty behaviour and warned that Lord Shiva would destroy all his arrogance and deceit in a second. After that, she jumped into the sacrificial Fire and gave up her life. Other versions of the story also state that after listening to such abusive words about her husband, Sati finally took the shape of fire, Adi Shakti and self-immolated herself to protest against the humiliation meted out to her husband by her father. She cursed and said rude words to Daksha before self-immolating her in front of all the guests present at the event. Many people present in the Yajna tried to save her but by that time Sati had immolated herself. Nandi and other followers of Lord Shiva went back to Kailasha and narrated the whole incident to Lord Shiva. The lord Shiva was deeply pained by hearing the incident and the news of the death of his wife and when he came to know about the reason behind the self-immolation of Sati, his pain turned into anguish. He became angry knowing that it was only because of the Daksh his wife Devi Shetty had to take such an extreme step. He became Furious and took out the lock of his hair and smashed it on the ground. The hair lock got divided into two with his leg and from that two fearsome creatures took birth. They were named Virabhadra and Rudrakali. Lord Shiva ordered them to go and close the Daksh and destroyed the entire event of Yajna. Both creatures along with the other followers of Lord Shiva reach the Yajna site and start destroying the event.<sup>82</sup> They beat up attendees of the event and in the process, every person who was involved in the Yajan was wounded and even killed by the army of Lord Shiva. According to the tale mentioned in the Vayu Purana, the army of Lord Shiva did not spare even the Gods, Prajapati, and

---

<sup>82</sup> David Kinsley, *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas*, (Germany: University of California Press, 2023)

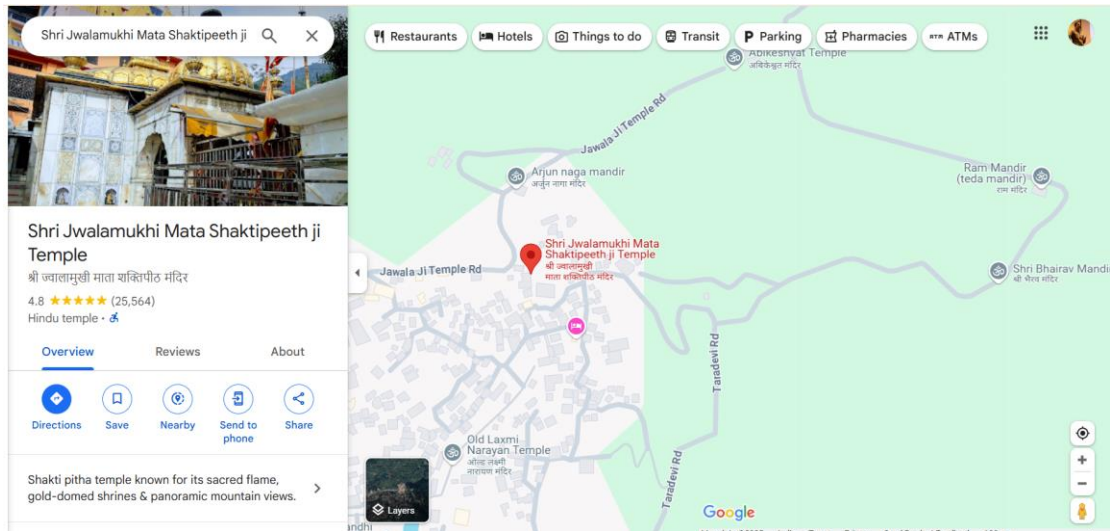


other sages who were present in the event. According to the tale that was mentioned in Bhagavata Puran and Linga Purana, Daksha was the capitated and this entire attack was manifested at the time when followers of Lord Shiva started celebrating the victory. However, a different story was mentioned in the Vayu Purana where the personification of the Yajna was decapitated by the Virbhadra. After this, the rise of Parabhraman took place from the fire of the Yajna from whom the Daksha started to beg mercy for his deeds. Parabhraman which can be considered the ultimate concept in the Hindu scriptures then told Daksha that he the form of Lord Shiva and on hearing this Dkasha had a change of heart and became a great devotee of Lord Shiva. According to the tale mentioned in various Puranas, lord Brahma and Vishnu went to Lord Shiva and requested him to forgive the Daksha and let the Yajna complete. Lod Shiva assented although when he reached the site of the yajna, he took the body of the Sati in the arm and started wandering in the universe. He became grief-stricken by the entire incident and was not able to overcome the pain and parting with his wife. To reduce the grief of Lord Shiva, lord Vishnu cut the body of Devi Sati into pieces and the places where these pieces of Sati's body fell are today commemorated as the Shakti peeths. Lord Shiva continued to wander around the earth and went into isolation until the time Devi Sati reincarnated in the form of Devi Parvati.<sup>83</sup> She took birth as the daughter of the Himalaya and just like the Devi Sati, she went under severe austerities, relinquished her royal privileges, and finally wedded Lord Shiva. It can be easily considered that the entire tale of Daksh Yajna is related to the origin of Shakti peeths. There are 51 ShaktiPeeths located in South Asia with the majority being in Bangladesh and India while some of the Shakti Peeth also found locations in Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. There are a total of 51 Shakti Peeth which are similar to the 51 alphabets in the Sanskrit language. In the Jwala Shakti Peeth, the tongue of the Devi Sati fell and the goddess here has many manifested in the form of blue films that continue to burn flawlessly through the fissures of the rock.

---

<sup>83</sup> Nilima Chitgopekar. Rudra, the Idea of Shiva, (India: Penguin Books India, 2007)

**Figure 3.1: Jawala Ji Location Google Maps**



Source: Google Maps

### **3.5) Cowherd Tale**

Another tale associated with Jawala ji Temple is related to a cowherd. Centuries ago it was believed that a cowherd led to the discovery of Jawala ji Temple. A cowherd usually sent his cows to the forest for grazing purposes and often found that one of his cows was always without milk. He was surprised at the particular phenomenon and decided to change the cow to find out what was the real reason behind it. Cowherd chased the cow and found that a girl came out from the forest and drank the milk of the cow. That girl then disappeared in a sudden blaze of light which surprised that cowherd beyond his limits. He went to the king and narrated the entire incident. The king was already aware of the legend that the tongue of the Devi Sati had fallen in that particular area. He ordered his men to search that holy site to locate the Shakti Peeth but despite all his efforts, he wasn't able to find the venue. Again after some years the same cowherd went to the king and told him that he had spotted an auspicious flame burning in the mountains. After listening to the narrative of the Cowherd, the King went there and had a complete darshan of the Holy Flame. He ordered the construction of a very large and grand temple there and made arrangements for priests to perform the holy

Puja and worship there.<sup>84</sup> In this way, the temple of Jawala Ji was discovered by the king and taken care of by different people at different points in time. It is also believed that Jawala ji Temple was renovated by the Pandavas who came here and again made the desired changes in the Temple. Raja Bhumi Chand was credited with the construction of the temple. He started with full-fledged attempts to make the temple and later on, its construction was completed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the year 1835.

### 3.6) Jawala Ji Construction Chronology

There are different estimates about the construction of the Jawala Ji Temple by various legends and studies. However, there is no doubt about the original construction of the temple which was done by Raja Bhumi Chand in the 9th Century.<sup>85</sup>

**Figure 3.2: Jawala Ji Chronology**

<b>Temple Foundation</b>	The temple is believed to have been established in the 9th century during the reign of the Rajput ruler Raja Bhumi Chand. However, some legends also state that the Pandavas, the Hindu epic
<b>Invaders and attacks</b>	Mahmud of Ghazni attacked the Jwalamukhi temple in 1020 AD, or around the turn of the millennium. The temple is located in Jwalamukhi, a town in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh,
<b>Attack by Firoz Shah</b>	Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the Muslim ruler of Delhi from 1351 to 1388, destroyed the Jwalamukhi temple in Kangra during an expedition to Nagarkot.
<b>Akbar Association</b>	It will be only between 1542 and 1605, when Akbar was the king of Delhi. The devotee of meditation was a great devotee of Mata Jawali Ji. Once he went to Jawalaji with his villagers to see the goddess.
<b>Reconstruction of Temple</b>	King Sansar Chand who was ruling the Chamba. He reconstructed the temple and later around 1835, the construction was said to be completed with a significant contribution coming from Maharaja

Source: Author's conceptualisation

<sup>84</sup> Chaitanya S. Agarwal, *Enigmas Revealed: Decoding The Secrets Of Mystery, Myths And Superstitions* (India: BFC Publications, 2023).

<sup>85</sup> S. Prakash, *Unlock Pending Karma and Its Correction: Law of Karma through Astrology and Transformation through Mythology*. India: Notion Press, 2021.

The exact years of the construction in the 9th century are not available. It is also part of the popular belief that Pandavas constructed the temple during their stay in exile, testified by the folk song "Panjan Panjan Pandavan Tera Bhawan Banaya". After the initial erection of the temple by Raja Bhumi Chand, it was subsequently destroyed by many invaders prominent among who were the Akbar and Feroz Shah Tuglak. After the destruction, the responsibility to reconstruct the temple was assumed by King Sansar Chand) who was ruling the Chamba. He reconstructed the temple and later around 1835, the construction was said to be completed with a significant contribution coming from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh got the Gold Parasol installed at the temple site and later his son, Sher Singh donated silver doors to the temple. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the initial construction of the temple was done by King Bhumi Chand following which Pandavas, King Sansar Chand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and Sher Singh made significant contributions to the construction of the temple.

**Figure 3.3: Jawala Ji Temple View**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

### **3.7) Jawala Ji: Association with Akbar**

The other tale associated with the Jawala ji Temple is related to Dhyanu Bhagat. This was related to the time when India was ruled by the Mughal emperor Akbar. Dhyanu Bhagat was a resident of the village Nadoun and he was leading a group of a large number of devotees to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth. Seeing such a large number of

devotees, the soldiers of Emperor Akbar detained them and took the Dhyanu Bhakt to the Akbar. The king enquired from the Dhyanu Bhakt where he was going and why there was such a large number of devotees with him. Dhyanu Bhakt was Fearless and told the Akbar that he was going to visit the Jawalaji Shaktipeeth and they were going on a pilgrimage to offer their respect and devotion to Maa Jawala Ji. Akbar curiously asked who the Jawala Maa was and what was sceptical about this pilgrimage.<sup>86</sup> Dhyanu replied with devotion that Jawalaji is the creator and preserver of the entire universe and he fulfils all the Desires of her devotee who goes to her Darbar with a pure heart and true feelings.

**Figure 3.4: Jawala Ji Temple Sanctorum and Flames**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

Dhyanu Bhagat also explained the relevance of the Holy Flames coming out of the rock there and told the team that these Flames kept on burning from time immemorial without any kind of oil external inputs. He also told Emperor Akbar that they visit Jawala ji Shaktipeeth every year. Emperor Akbar became even more curious about the mind of Jawala ji Shaktipeeth and enquired from Dhyanu Bhakt about the power and

---

<sup>86</sup> Therampath Narayanan Kutty, *Footprints of Evolution*, (India: Clever Fox Publishing, 2022)



might of the Jawala Maa. He said that he would also accept the relevance of Jawala ji Shakti Peeth if Dhyanu Bhakt shows in the miracle and power of the Jawala maa. To test the might and powers of Jawala Ji, Akbar cut the neck of the horse and asked Dhyanu Bhagat to pray to the Jwala ji Shakti Peeth for reinstating the head of the Horse. Dhyanu Bhakt asked the emperor to preserve the head and the body of the horse for one month and headed to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth.<sup>87</sup> After reaching the temple, he and other devotees bathed and started thinking in the praise of Jawala Maa. Dhyanu Bhakt then requested Jwala Maa to reinstate the head of the horse as Emperor Akbar was testing his devotion and reverence for her.

**Figure 3.5: Jawala Ji Dhyanu Bhagat Tale**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

He continued to pray to the Jawala Maa and after finding no answer from the Shakti Peeth, he finally severed his head and offered it to Jawala Maa Goddess. Finally, the Goddess appeared and she fixed the head of Dhyanu Bhakt and assured him that the head of the horse had also been fixed in Delhi. She also gave a boon to Dhyanu that from today onwards any devotee who will offer coconut to her with pure heart/wishes will be fulfilled by the Shakti Peeth. After this incident, the head of the horse in Delhi

<sup>87</sup> Rakesh Kumar Mishra, *MAA SHAKTI & SHIVA Anthology of Source of Power*, (India: Blue Rose Publishers, 2021)

was reinstated and it became alive again. Seeing this miracle, Emperor Akbar was the price beyond limits and in his Quest to know the relevance of Jawala Ji, he sent his group of soldiers to the shrine.

**Figure 3.6: Jawala Ji Inner Sanctum**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

Soldiers went there and came back with the news that Holy Flames were aminating from the rock and this might be due to the province of those flames that this particular miracle had happened. Many ministers of Emperor Akbar advised him to extinguish the holy flame so that no such miracle could happen again in the future. Acting on the advice, Emperor Akbar went ahead and tried to extinguish the flame in the Shrine of Jawala Ji. Some historians have also mentioned that without the permission of Emperor Akbar, soldiers tried to put out flames by employing various measures in their capacity. They tried to douse the fire by placing hard-core iron discs on them but much to their surprise, these fires continued to burn by breaking out of these discs. Attempts were also made to stamp out the flame by channelling water on these planes but nothing was able to extinguish the flames. Ultimately Emperor Akbar came to Jawala Ji himself to witness the miracle and a golden chatter (parasol) was made to offer to the Shrine. After reaching the Jawala Ji shrine, Akbar offered that golden Parasol to Jawala Ji sensing the boastful intentions of the emperor, the golden parasol was immediately converted into an unknown metal. In other words, the divine mother rejected the offering of Emperor Akbar. Again seeing this miracle Akbar's real life is a mistake and asks for

forgiveness from the divine mother. He prayed to the Shakti in many different ways to return to Delhi and asked his soldiers to respect the devotees of the divine mother and offer them all kinds of convenience to make sure they completed the pilgrimage without any issue. The samadhi of Dhyanu Bhagat is located at the bank of river Beas in Nadaun and according to the ancient tales, the great devotee of the Goddess Jawala took the samadhi here around 430 years back. The place of the Samadhi is the place of Dhyanu Bhagat's Guru and the place is believed to have originated in the year 1200. Dhyanu Bhagat, as mentioned above in the chapter, was one of the greatest devotees of Goddess Jawala Ji. He played an instrumental role in furthering the popularity of the Jawala Ji shrine and in remembrance of this great saint, people established the samadhi of Dhyanu Bhagat in Naduan. Located at the banks of river Beas, the place belonged to the Guru of the Dhayanu Bhagat and according to the estimates, the origin of the place can be traced back to 1200. In his last 20 years, Dhayanu Bhagat resided in this place and remained involved in spiritual discourse or the company of truth with other scholars. During this time, Dhyanu Bhagat compiled the Story of Goddess Tara Rani who is eulogised during the Jagaran (pernoctation) even today. It's also said that the act of pernoctation can't be considered complete without the mention of the Goddess Tara Rani.<sup>88</sup> The place is in the District Hamirpur and has been under the trust named Dhyanu Bhagat Trust. When it comes to the personal life of Dhyanu Bhagat, especially his descendants, the lack of concrete evidence is apparent. There are no confirmed historical records or genealogical documents that trace a living family line back to Dhyanu Bhagat. Most of what people know about him today comes from oral traditions and local legends passed down through generations. In Naduan, his samadhi is marked as his resting place. Some families in the area claim ancestral ties to him, but these claims are rooted in faith and community memory rather than in written history. In reality, Dhyanu Bhagat's legacy is not carried through descendants, but through the worshippers who continue to remember his name in their prayers at Jwala Ji. His story reminds devotees that faith, when pure and selfless, can transcend the limits of the

---

<sup>88</sup> Nilamani, Upadhyaya. *Temples of Himachal Pradesh: Architectural, Sculptural, Religious, and Cultural Significance*, (India: Indus Publishing Company, 2008)

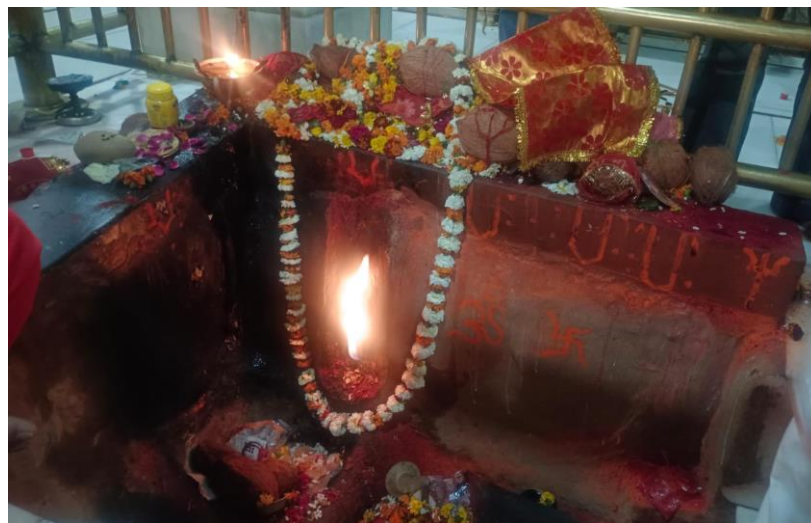


ordinary. Dhyanu Bhagat's spiritual lineage lives on in every believer who bows before the eternal flame of the goddess he so deeply loved.

### **3.8) Jawala Ji: Surrounding Temples**

There are different estimates about the construction of the Jawala Ji Temple by various legends and studies. However, there is no doubt about the original construction of the temple which was done by Raja Bhumi Chand in the Sata Yuga. It is also part of the popular belief that Pandavas constructed the temple during their stay in exile, testified by the folk song "Panjan Panjan Pandavan Tera Bhawan Banaya". After the initial erection of the temple by Raja Bhumi Chand, it was subsequently destroyed by many invaders prominent among who were the Akbar and Feroz Shah Tuglak. After the destruction, the responsibility to reconstruct the temple was assumed by King Sansar Chand who was ruling the Chamba. He reconstructed the temple and later around 1835, the construction was said to be completed with a significant contribution coming from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh got the Gold Parasol installed at the temple site and later his son, Sher Singh donated silver doors to the temple. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the initial construction of the temple was done by King Bhumi Chand following which Pandavas, King Sansar Chand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and Sher Singh made significant contributions to the construction of the temple.

**Figure 3.7: Jawala Ji Temple**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

Talking about the architectural features of the Jawala Ji Shrine, it is essential to understand that the entire temple is built in a style which is a mixture of Indo and Sikh designs. The architecture of the temple was proposed by Kharak Singh, the eldest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The entire structure is proposed on a wooden platform and can be divided into four different parts: a) the main shrine, b) the inner courtyard, c) the outer courtyard, and d) the quarters of priests.<sup>89</sup> The main shrine of the temple houses the flames which are considered as the symbol of goddess here as no idol or picture of deity is there in the temple. Next is the inner courtyard of the temple and here the centre point of the attraction is the huge brass bell and it is believed that it was gifted to the temple by the king of Nepal. The outer courtyard is huge and allows the devotees to congregate in huge numbers, especially during auspicious occasions such as the Navratri festival which comes twice a year, i.e. March-April and September-October.

### **3.9) Jawala Ji Invasion: Feroz Shah Tuglak**

Jawala Ji temple is supposed to be invaded first by Muhammad of Ghazni in around 1020 AD. Along with the Jawala Ji, he also invaded and looted the temples of Chhinnmastika and Brijeshwari Devi, However, the real havoc on the Jawala Ji was inflicted by the Firoz Shah Tughlaq who ruled Delhi between 1351 and 1388 and during his tenure, he came and destroyed the Jawala Ji temple. Firoz Shah Tughlaq attacked Rup Chand, the King of Kangra as he was involved in carrying out many attacks against Delhi's ruler and caused comprehensive damage to Delhi. Infuriated by these acts of the Kangra King, Firoz Shah Tughlaq attacked the Kangra and after an intense battle, he besieged the fort of Kangra in 1365 AD. After an intense battle, he besieged the fort of Kangra in 1365 AD. The reference to the incident is found in the Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi which mentioned the agreement between Rup Chand and Firoz Shah Tughlaq wherein the former accepted the authority of the latter.<sup>90</sup> Firoz Shah Tughlaq later looted the Jawala Ji Temple and took away 1300 Sanskrit manuscripts from the library of the temple. He got them translated into Persian by Arizuddin Khan and all these texts were then put under the title of Dalail-i- Firoz-Shahi. Dalail-i-Firoz-Shahi is

---

<sup>89</sup> Ravi Kumar Kanda & Varun Mahajan, *A Study of Ancient Monuments & Historic Heritage Sites of Himachal Pradesh* (India: Rudra Publications, 2021)

<sup>90</sup> Siddhartha Das, *The History of Medieval India*, (India: Notion Press, 2024)

a Persian translation of the Ancient Hindu texts dealing with astronomy, spirituality, and divination and talks in detail about a range of ancient practices adopted by the Hindus from the start of their civilization.<sup>91</sup>

### **Teda Mandir**

Also known by the popular name Raghunatheshwar Temple, the Teda Mandir is one of the key attractions of the Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth. It is situated at a distance of around 2 km from the main temple of Jawala Ji and devotees can trek to the place on foot. Alternatively, there is a route to the temple that can be used by vehicles so that people who are unable to go on foot can reach the temple. According to the legend, this temple was built by the Pandavas during their exile and they worshipped Lord Ram, Goddess Sita, and Lord Hanuman here.

**Figure 3.8: Teda Mandir**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

---

<sup>91</sup> Ziyā' al-Dīn Baranī. *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, (Pakistan: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006)

In 1905, an earthquake hit the temple and although the temple didn't get demolished in the quake, it got bent towards one side, thereby attracting the name Teda Mandir in local parlance. The main temple has the idols of Lord Rama, Lord Lakshman, Goddess Sita, and Lord Hanuman. At the entrance of the main temple, devotees can pay respect to Shivling and a statue of Nandi which are located outside the main premises. Another important aspect of the temple is that it has an Ancient Sita Cave where Goddess Sita went for meditation. When Akbar tried to put out the flames of the Jawala Ji temple, he brought a rivulet from the Teda Mandir and flooded the place. Still, he didn't succeed and finally had to bow down to the greatness and grandeur of Goddess Jawala Ji.

**Gorakh Dibbi** is counted among the most significant places in the Jawala Ji premises and the temple is located on the right side of the main temple. According to the folklore, the entire tradition of making and eating Khichdi (a mix of rice and lentils) on Makar Sankranti was started by Guru Gorakhnath at this place. This is the place famous for the boiling pond of water which when touched, feels cold.

**Figure 3.9: Gorakh Dibbi Place**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

This is a place known by the name of Rudra-Kund in ancient scriptures and when incense is burnt in the Kund, a big flashlight appears in the water. It's also said that the Nagarjuna visited the place with Gorakhnath here.

**Radha-Krishan and Shiv Shakti Temple:** Near the famous place of Gorakh Dibbi, the small temple of Radha-Krishan is located. This temple is very ancient and its history dates back to the Katoch empire. Around 15 stairs from Gorakh Dibbi, there is also a Shiv-Shakti temple. Here devotees get the view of flame with Shivling and hence, this place is called Shiv-Shakti temple. The Lal Shivalaya is also a famous place in the Jawala Ji shrine and it's around 500 years old temple. It has Lal Shivling and according to the faith, here the wish for a son for couples is granted.

**Figure 3.10: Radha-Krishan Temple**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

**Sidh Nagarjuna:** Around 200 meters above the temple of Shiv Shakti, there is another place which is famous by the name of Sid Nagarjuna. Here a black colour statue of Nagarjuna is situated and according to oral history, Nagarjuna went to search for Guru Gorakh Nath and climbed this hill to look out for his Guru. He didn't find the Gorakh Nath but got so much enamoured by the beauty of the place that he went into deep meditation at the place which is now known by the name of Sid Nagarjuna.



**Figure 3.11: Sidh Nagarjuna Place**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

**Ashtadashbhuj Devi:** About 1.6 km west of Jawala Ji, there is the temple of Ashtadashbhuj Devi. The central attraction of this place is the idol of the Ashtadashbhuj devi along with a Shivling in the temple compound. There is also a pond here and it's believed that all patients suffering from leprosy can get the disease by beating in the pond. It is equally important to note that there is also a crematorium in this place.

**Figure 3.12: Ashtadashbhuj Devi Temple**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

**Bhairav Nath Mandir:** The famous temple of Bhairav Nath is located at a distance of 1 km from the main temple of Jawala Ji. It is located on a hill and can be reached through vehicles as well. The temple is famous for granting the wishes of the devotees and has assumed a significant place in the hearts and minds of the devotees.

**Figure 3.13: Bhairav Nath Temple**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

**Jawala Ji Mussoorie:** There is also another temple with the name of Jawala Ji situated at Mussoorie town of Uttarakhand State. Just like Jawala Ji temple in Kangra, this temple also attracts a large number of pilgrims and has been among the primary tourist attractions in the state. In terms of its precise location, the temple is situated on Binog Hill at an altitude of around 6900 feet among the picturesque and beautiful trees of Deodar and Oaks. The temple is devoted to the Goddess Durga and an old stone idol of the goddess is the centre of the devotion of pilgrims who come here to worship the goddess. In addition to attracting devotees, the temple is also a centre of attraction for nature lovers as it offers a unique and overarching view of nature on both its compound and around the premises. On the one side, there is a pristine view of the Shivalik Range and on the other hand, a view of the Yamuna river can be witnessed.

**Figure 3.14: Jawala Ji Temple Mussoorie**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

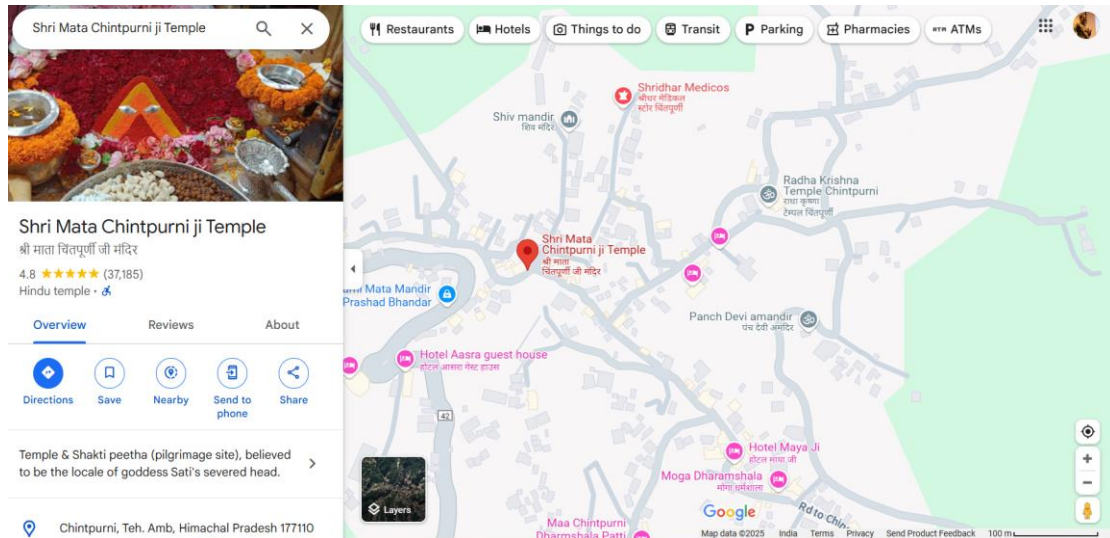
The place also oversees the Mussoorie and Doon valley. In terms of location, the temple is situated at around 8 km distance in the west of Mussoorie City and requires 2 km of trekking to reach the place. In terms of similarity, both temples of Jawala Ji worship the Goddess although while in the temple of Jawala Ji Himachal a flame symbolising the Devi Sati is worshipped, the temple of Jawala Ji at Mussoorie, the idol of Goddess Durga is revered. Another important difference is the worship of the personal form of the Goddess at the temple of Jwala Ji at Mussoorie while at Jawala Ji Temple at Kangra, the Devi Sati is venerated in impersonal form in terms of the flame.

### **3.10) Chinmastika Peeth (Chintpurni Temple)**

Counted among one of the prominent religious places in Himachal Pradesh, Chinmastika Peeth is widely considered one of the Sidh peeths in the state. There are conflicting views about whether this can be considered as Shakti peeth or not. While many historians considered it as a Shakti peeth, others have a contrary viewpoint. As mentioned in detail in the legend associated with the Devi Sati, the head of the Adi Shakti fell at this place which led to the name Chinmastika of this place. According to Markandey Purana, when lord Vishnu severed the body of Devi Sati into 51 pieces, the head of the Sati's body fell at this place.



**Figure 3.15: Chintpurni Temple**



Source: Google Maps

The meaning of the term Chinmastika is headless which is aligned with the tale of the legend. Giving the face of meaning to this religious place, the depiction of a headless goddess also gives the message that each one of us should separate our mind from the body which figuratively means that devotees should detail themselves from the lures of materialistic impulses and attachments.<sup>92</sup> The Goddess Chintpurni also gives the message that one should not confine the dimensions of the soul within the body and must liberate their mind and soul to expand the consciousness beyond the Horizons. Shakti Peeth also makes a strong case for the selfless devotion in which one must get oneself to offer service to others. It is important to note that from all four directions, the Chinmastika Peeth is surrounded by Lord Shiva's temples. All these four temples of Lord Shiva are equidistant from the Chintpurni Temple and it's believed that anyone who comes to the temple with a pure heart and clean mind will be able to fulfil his/her wishes by the grace of Devi Chinmastika. It is also widely believed among the devotees that goddess Chintpurni never disappoints any of her devotees and always fulfils their wishes.<sup>93</sup> There is another story associated with the Chinamastika peeth. According to the Markandey Puran, Maa Bhagwati entered into a fierce battle with Demons and this

<sup>92</sup> Shrikant Prasoon, *The Creator of the Universe Ma Shakti*, (India: Pustak Mahal, 2009)

<sup>93</sup> Sunita Pant Bansal, *Hindu Pilgrimage*, (India: V&S Publishers, 2012).

continued for years. Finally, Adishakti killed all the Demons along with her two emanations names Jaya and Vijaya. It was mentioned that even after the war was over, the thirst for the blood of both Jaya and Vijaya was not quenched. To satiate them, AdiShakti cut off her head and let her associates drink the blood. In the portrayal, it can be seen that three streams of blood sprouted from the severed body of Maa Shakti with one stream going into the mouth of Adi Shakti herself while the other was taken by her associates on either side.<sup>94</sup> This avatar of Adi Shakti makes her famous by the name of Chinmastika. It is also worth mentioning that in all the four directions of Chinmastika Shaktipeeth, there are four temples of Lord Shiva. In the East direction, the temple of Lord Shiva is famous by the name of Kaleshwar while in the west, Lord Shiva is situated in the form of Narayana Mahadev. On the northern side, Mukund Mahadev is the name of the Lord Shiva temple while Shiv is situated in the form of Shiv Bari on the southern side. Therefore, it comes as an added boon for pilgrims of Chinmastika Shaktipeeth that they additionally get the blessings of Lord Shiva by visiting the place.

### **3.11) Chintpurni Temple: Establishment Chronology**

There is an interesting tale that is associated with the establishment of Chinmastika in the village Chhaproh of the Tehsil Amb of Una district in Himachal Pradesh. The temple is situated 3 km west of Bharwain and is located in the lower Shivalik range of the mountains. According to the hearsay, the temple was established by Pandit Mai Das who belonged to the category of Saraswat Brahmin, one of the topmost segments in the Brahmin category. This Shrine was established by Mai Das and according to the estimate, it was established more than twelve generations ago by the Saraswat Brahmin.<sup>95</sup> Over the period, the name of the place and the village became Chintpurni with descendants of the Pandit Mai Das still living at the place and performing all the rituals associated with the Chinmastika temple.

---

<sup>94</sup> Richard M. Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765*, (United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited, 2019)

<sup>95</sup> Koko Singh, Annu Sharma, & Ipsita Barua, *Himachal* (India: Rupa & Company, 2007)

**Figure 3.16: Chintpurni Temple**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

According to the folklore, the father of the Mai Das was a resident of the Athoor village in Patiala and he was an ardent follower of the Goddess Durga. He used to perform rituals, worshipped the Goddess, and had the highest levels of adoration for the Devi. He was blessed with three sons with Mai Das being the youngest while Devi Das was the eldest. The name of the middle son was Durga Das. The entire situation in the state back then was mired in instability, and this forced the family to move out of Punjab and settle in the Chhaproh village, which was located around 20 km east of the Amb town. The village is now in the Una district of Himachal Pradesh. Just like the devotional characteristics of his father, Mai Das was also one of the most devotional persons of that particular time. He used to spend all his time worshipping Goddess Durga and despite resistance from his brothers, he continued to spend most of his time worshipping and performing rituals. He had little interest in worldly affairs which made his brother quite annoyed and angry towards him. However, his father was very happy when he saw his son walking on the same path of devotion and veneration and he made sure that all the requirements of his son were met without any complaint or difficulty. Mai Das

got married when his father was alive but soon after his father passed away, he and his wife started facing difficulties and opposition from his brothers.<sup>96</sup>

**Figure 3.17: Chintpurni Temple Premises**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

They told him that he had to work to feed his family and that they were not going to support him any longer. He was told by his brothers to look after himself and do the work to earn bread for his family. After the separation from the family, Mai Das came under enormous pressure and faced many difficulties. He found it extremely hard to earn a living and with his mind and deeply devoted to Goddess Durga, he firmly believed that despite all these problems he would be able to survive by the grace of the divine mother. Faced with the struggle of life, Mai Das was once going to his in-laws' place. He walked for a long time and to take some rest, he took shelter under a banyan tree in a dense forest. Soon, he surrendered to sleep and in his dream, a young and beautiful girl appeared and asked him to stay in the place and serve her. Mai Das woke up immediately and started contemplating the dream. He looked around but couldn't find anyone. He felt confused about the entire incident. He continued his journey to his in-laws' place and reached there but wasn't able to spend much time as his mind was unsettled. On his way back home, when he reached the same spot he again sat under

---

<sup>96</sup> Sunil Kumar, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 1192-1286*, (India: Permanent Black, 2007)



The Banyan tree and started praying to Maa Durga. He requested the divine mother to guide her about his last dream and asked how he could serve her with his deeds. He went into deep meditation and continued to pray until his divine mother manifested herself in her divine chaturbhuj form.<sup>97</sup>

**Figure 3.18: Chintpurni Temple Inner Varanda**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

He was mesmerized by the sight of the Devi and prayed to her to guide him about the establishment of the temple. Divine mother said to her that she has been living under the street for many years but in this particular Kaliyug, people have forgotten the importance of this place and neglected this spot. I will manifest now under the tree in the form of a round Stone (Pindi) and I give you the responsibility that prayers are regularly offered here every day. Hearing this Mai Das obeyed the order of the Divine mother but he expressed his doubts about the location and the place. He apprehended that there were wild animals in the forest and being the Hilltop, there was no supply of water near the place. Then Maa Durga specifically pointed to a spot on the Northern side of the hill and asked Mai Das to dig under the stone and he would find fresh water supply there. She told Mai Das that in the past she had been known by the name of Chinmastika from now onwards this place will become famous by the name of

---

<sup>97</sup> William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal (Hindi)*, (India: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017)

Chintpurni as she has already cleared all his doubts and worries about the place, devotion, and other aspects of worshipping.<sup>98</sup>

**Figure 3.19: Chintpurni Temple Facilities**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

She also blesses the devotee that in the coming years her devotees will arrange for building a temple here and the offerings will be sufficient for sustaining his life and well-being. After saying this, the divine mother disappeared and Mai Das decided to go to the spot pointed out by Mark Durga to find out the water. Much to his surprise, a fresh stream of water gushed forth as he removed the stone and later, a water tank was built there as a part of the overall premises. Mai Das also built a small hut near the water tank and started worshipping Devi's pindi at the top of the hill. Slowly and steadily, the glory of Devi started reaching far and wide places with devotees started coming to worship Pindi at the hilltop. Subsequently, the temple became famous and devotees even from far-flung areas started visiting the place. As of today, around twelve generations of Mai Das have passed and his descendants continue to inhabit the area. In the land records of the government, the place is known by the name of Chhaproh

<sup>98</sup> Benton Catherine, *God of Desire: Tales of Kāmadeva in Sanskrit Story Literature*, (United States: State University of New York Press, 2006)

although, in the common language, the place is known by the name of Chintpurni, need after the eponymous deity.

**Figure 3.20: Chintpurni Temple Hotel Facilities**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

It is important to know that the shrine of the Bahi Mai Das is located near the water tank in the east direction. It is also noteworthy to point out that once a small hamlet has now been converted into a bustling town. In terms of the facilities available for pilgrims, Mata Chintpurni Temple offers a range of comfort and conveniences that can help to make the entire journey a pleasurable experience for devotees. For all the devotees who are visiting the Chintpurni Temple, there is free food distribution by the Temple Trust for offering food at all three times, i.e., breakfast, lunch, and dinner. In terms of accommodations, the Himachal Pradesh Public Welfare Department (HPPWD) has its rest houses which can be booked by the visitors in advance. These rest houses are located at Bharwain, Amb, and Gagret.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the facilities, there is a hotel for HP tourism that is available for the visitors in the Chintpurni Shrine and from the side of the temple, where the addition of the facility of one that can be availed by the devotees coming to visit the place.<sup>100</sup> There is a decent arrangement for all the facilities

---

<sup>99</sup> Swati Mitra. *The Temples of Himachal*, (India: Eicher Goodearth Limited, 2007)

<sup>100</sup> Ramesh Gangashetty, *Thirtha Yatra: A Guide to Holy Temples and Thirtha Kshetras In India*. (Notion Press, 2019)

including rain Shelters, drinking water, toilets, and other sanitation conveniences that are required by the visiting duties.

**Figure 3.21: Chintpurni Temple Staying Facilities for Visitors**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

A completely new bus stand has been built by Himachal Roadways Transport Corporation that also houses a multi-story parking facility for devotees in the water ATM has been also installed at the old bus stand of the Chintpurni. To take care of the health and well-being of the visitors, there is a separate Hospital constructed within striking distance of Chintpurni Temple.

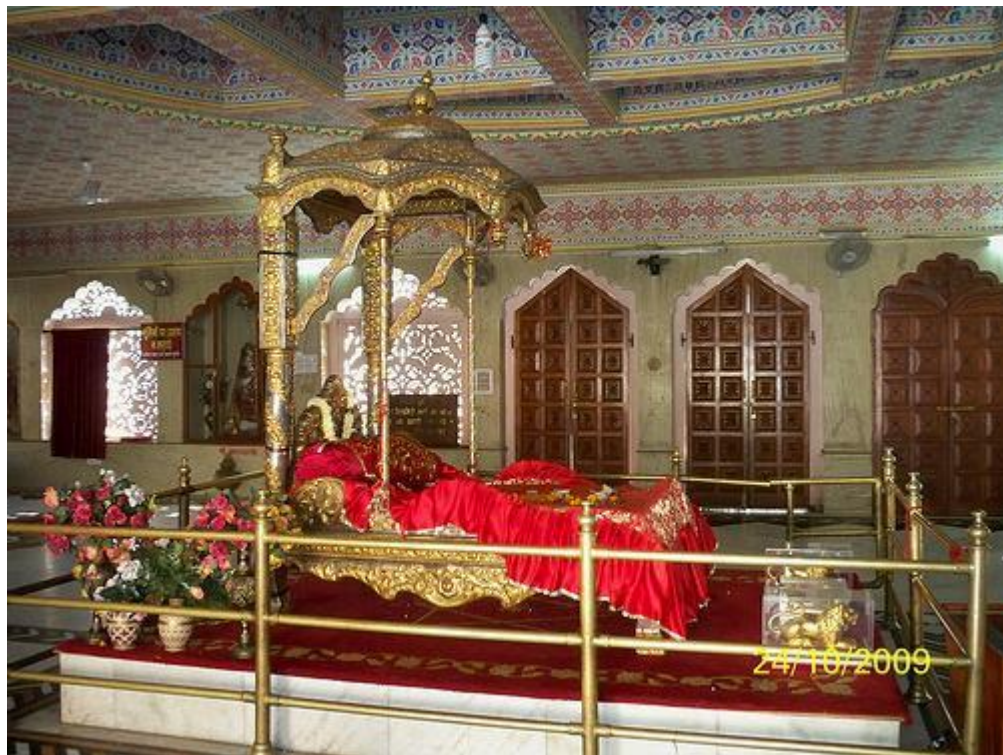
### **3.12) Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths: Comparative Analysis**

There are a lot of similarities when it comes to the comparison between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Shakti Peeth. The original Shakti cult and the Sati immolation event are the same for both Shakti Peeths. Both are located not very far from each other and in terms of visitors, both Shaktipeeths attract devotees from all over the world. There are many other things which are common in both these shaktipeeths and in terms of the facilities available for the visitors, these are almost similar to each other. The original of the Sati story is shared by both Shakti Peeth all the minute comes to the parts of Sati that fell at these places, there is a difference. While in Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth, the tongue of the Sati fell while according to the legend, the



head of Devi Sati fell at Chinmastika.<sup>101</sup> This is one of the most significant differences when it comes to comparative analysis between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Shakti Peeth. It is also very important to understand that in the Jwalaji Shaktipeeth, there is no deity is worshipped as such. Rather devotees come here to offer their respect and obeisance to flames that are burning out from the fissures of a rock. These holy flames are the point of devotion for the devotees and this particular characteristic makes the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth one of the rarest Shaktipeeth without any deity or Pindi.

**Figure 3.22: Shayan Room for Deity**



Source: Jawala Ji Temple Official Website

This also adds to the significance of this Shaktipeeth as the philosophy of formless God also comes into the picture. It is a place where the devotion of also like who do not believe in the personal form of the god. For those devotees also, this Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth can be considered an important place to offer their prayers worship and obeisance among other. This also means that the scope, relevance and acceptance of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth are considerably wider than the Chinmastika Shaktipeeth as the

---

<sup>101</sup> Manoj Jreat, *Tourism in Himachal Pradesh*, (India: Indus Publishing Company, 2004)

former attracts devotees from both formless and personal forms of Gods. These particular distinctions with Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth attracting devotees from both faiths are significant from many perspectives. It is important to widen the scope of religious activities in the country and involve people from other sides of the spectrum who do not believe in the personal form of God can spread the important message and meaning behind worshipping the Divine Mother.

**Cultural Aspects:** Culture can be defined in terms of shared values, beliefs, customs, behaviours, and practices shared by society. Although both Jawala Ji and Chintpurni Peeths share common devotion, enthusiasm, and gaiety from the devotees, some significant cultural differences differentiate between the two. Here are the prominent cultural differences that we discovered during the study and have been listed for reference.

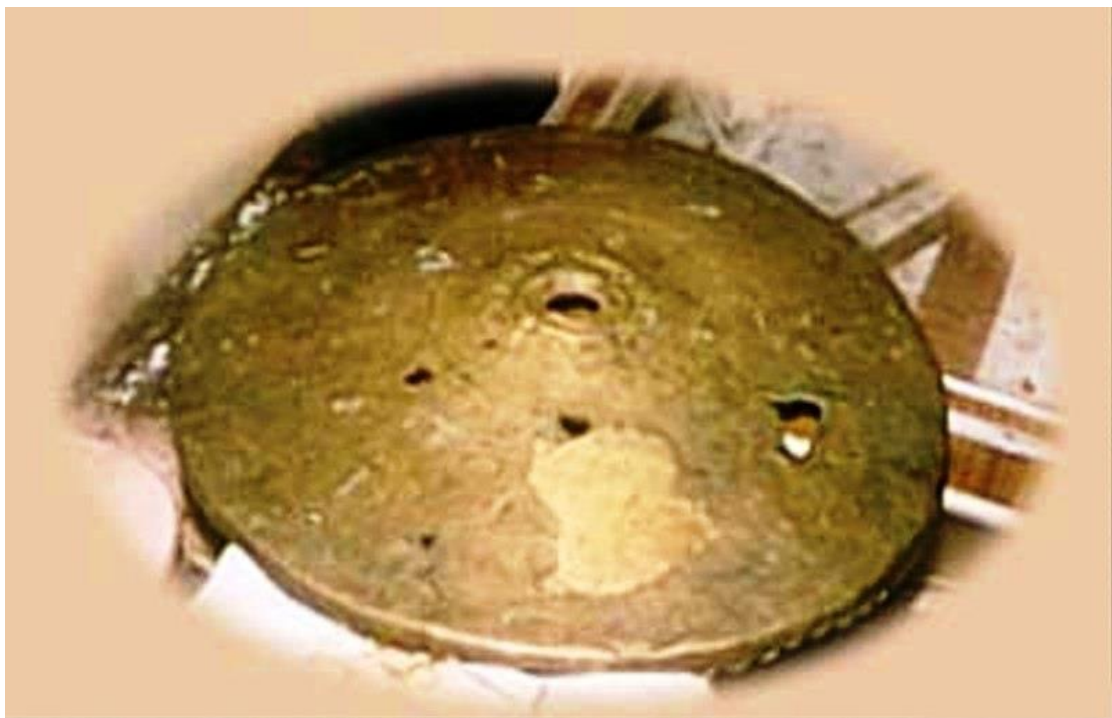
**Belief, Ideology, & Mythological Origin:** As mentioned before, there are a lot of commonalities when it comes to evolutionary linkages between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Shakti Peeth. Both Shaktipeeths have the same origin in Hindu mythology as these are different forms of divine mother relates to the Devi Sati. While at one place the tongue of Devi Sati fell, at another place the Head of Divine mother had fallen. This means that the first crucial difference arises in the form of the ideology behind the worshipping of these two Shakti Peeths.<sup>102</sup> While one is focused on formless devotion with the Holy Flames being the centre of the attraction, the other is related to deity being worshipped in the form of a pindi. There is no deity/pindi that is being worshipped in the Jawala Ji which means that the overall appeal of this particular Shaktipeeth to attract devotees from across the globe is comparatively wider. Not only do devotees who believe in the personal forms of God pay their respect and obeisance to Jawala Ji but this particular Shaktipeeth is also a centre of attraction for many devotees who believe in the formless philosophy of praying to God or nature. Also known by the name of the goddess of light, the relevance and importance of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth can be easily understood in the context of the outwardly-oriented nature of the society we live in. Chinmastika Shakti Peeth, on the other hand, is a place of

---

<sup>102</sup> Prem P. Bhalla, *Maa: The Universal Mother*, (India: Educreation Publishing, 2017)

devotion where a proper Pindi is located for worshipping purposes and this is not the same as Formless Devotion that happens to be prominent in the case of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth.<sup>103</sup> This difference between the formless and personal form of the Goddess Shakti is one of the striking characteristics between Jawala Ji and Chinmastika. Worth mentioning here is the point that the evolutionary linkages related to Mata Chintpurni Peeth is different and unlike Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth, Chintpurni is a Devi Peeth. As Shaktipeeths are places where parts of Sati's body fell, the Chintpurni temple is not among the Shakti Peeths. According to Markandeya Purana, the comrades of Devi Durga, Jaya and Vijaya were thirsty for blood even after conquering the demons on the battlefield. In order to satiate their thirst for the blood, Devi Durga severed her head and let her companions drink the blood to fulfil her thirst.

**Figure 3.23: Golden Parasol at Jawala Ji**



Source: : Jawala Ji Temple Official Website

The original Chinmastika temple is situated in Jharkhand with most of the devotees are two different accounts which mean that the historical records and mythological tales

---

<sup>103</sup> Lise McKean, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement*, (United States: University of Chicago Press, 1996)

are not one in the case of Devi Chintpurni. That said, both shaktipeeths are very much relevant for devotees all across the globe and by offering spiritual abodes to pilgrims, these continue to serve as the prominent places for spiritual tourism in the Himachal Pradesh. As mentioned before, there are a lot of commonalities when it comes to evolutionary linkages between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Devi Peeth. Both Peeths have the same origin and in Hindu mythology, while Jawala Ji has relation to Devi Sati, the Chinmastika is related to the Devi Parvati (reincarnation of Devi Sati). While at one place the tongue of Devi Sati fell, at another place the Divine mother is present in the form of a headless deity, hence deriving the name of Chinmastika. This means that the first crucial difference arises in the form of the way the Devine mother has manifested herself at these two places.

**Figure 3.24: Chhinnmastika Temple, Jharkhand**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

The origin of the story of Devi Sati and her subsequent death by mortification was found a prominent place in the Srimad Devi Bhagavatam. In the 7<sup>th</sup> book of the Devi Bhagavatam, the 30<sup>th</sup> chapter is dedicated to the Sati and specifically in the 26 to 37 shlokas, the Vyas Muni tells the story of the Janamejaya about the Sati and subsequent dismemberment of the Sati's body by Lord Vishnu. Similarly, the mention of the Chinmastika who is counted as one of the ten mahavidyas of Devi Parvati, is there in Devi Bhagavatam although it has also found a place in the Shiva Purana, Skanda



Purana, and other related Tantric Texts. The commonality in the Jawala Ji and Chintpurni peeth is that the latter is the reincarnation of the Devi Sati which is related to the former Shakti peeth.<sup>104</sup> In that particular sense, Jawala Ji can be easily considered as the source from which the Chintpurni peeth originated. Further, the connotation of Elder Sister (Jawala Ji) and Younger Sister (Chintpurni) also point toward this same thing with Sati being the origin in that sense. As mentioned before, there are a lot of commonalities when it comes to evolutionary linkages between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Devi Peeth. Both Peeths have the same origin and in Hindu mythology, while Jawala Ji has relation to Devi Sati, the Chinmastika is related to the Devi Parvati (reincarnation of Devi Sati). While at one place the tongue of Devi Sati fell, at another place the Divine mother is present in the form of a headless deity, hence deriving the name of Chinmastika.

**Figure 3.25: Chhinnmastika Headless Deity**



Source: Chinmastika Official Website

---

<sup>104</sup> Ramesh Menon, *Devi: The Devi Bhagavatam Retold*, (India: Rupa & Company, 2006)

This means that the first crucial difference arises in the form of the way the Divine mother has manifested herself at these two places. The origin of the story of Devi Sati and her subsequent death by mortification was found a prominent place in the Srimad Devi Bhagavatam. In the 7<sup>th</sup> book of the Devi Bhagavatam, the 30th chapter is dedicated to the Sati and specifically in the 26 to 37 shlokas, the Vyas Muni tells the story of the Janamejaya about the Sati and subsequent dismemberment of the Sati's body by Lord Vishnu. Similarly, the mention of the Chinmastika who is counted as one of the ten mahavidyas of Devi Parvati, is there in Devi Bhagavatam although it has also found a place in the Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, and other related Tantric Texts. The commonality in the Jawala Ji and Chintpurni peeth is that the latter is the reincarnation of the Devi Sati which is related to the former Shakti peeth. In that particular sense, Jawala Ji can be easily considered as the source from which the Chintpurni peeth originated. Further, the connotation of Elder Sister (Jawala Ji) and Younger Sister (Chintpurni) also point toward this same thing with Sati being the origin in that sense.

**Primary Sources:** According to scholars William J. Winkins and David R. Kinsley, the Vedic scriptures do not directly mention Sati-Parvati but hint at two goddesses associated with Rudra — Rudrani and Ambika (David 1998). Both the archaeological and the textual sources indicate that the first major appearances of Sati-Parvati were during the Ramayana and the Mahabharata periods. The Mahabharata mentions the destruction of Daksha yajna, the birth of Kartikeya, the defeat the Asura Taraka as well as some plays between Shiva and Uma (Parvati). Scholars believe that by the time of the Puranas (c. 4th - 13th century), legends of Sati and Parvati rose to prominence and these were adapted by Kalidasa in his epic poem Kumarasambhavam (c. 5th - 6th century). The mention of Sati (associated with Jawala Ji) is found in the book "India in the World" edited by Cristina M. Gámez-Fernández and Antonia Navarro-Tejero". The book describes in green detail the multi-coloured nature of the Indian religion and how these complexities come together to offer a holistic, inclusive, and encompassing perspective to one and all. Specifically, delving into the details of the etymology of the word "Sati", the authors offer a comprehensive definition of how to describe the word Sati.

**Figure 3.26: Chintpurni Temple Entry Gate**



Source: Mani, M. (2024)

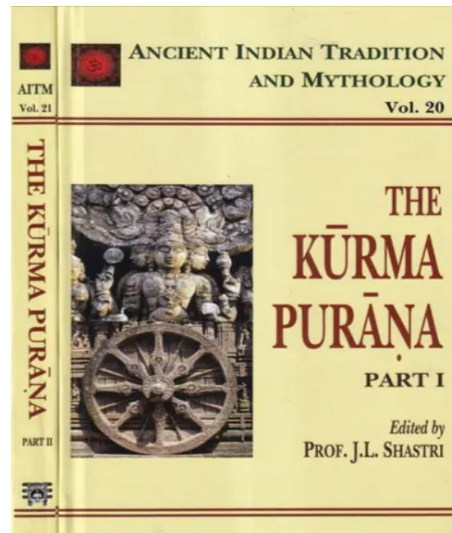
According to the authors, Sati word has been derived from the “Sat” which translates into the “Truth” or “Faithful”. Therefore, according to the definition of God by the authors, Sati is a virtue or facet of the character that evokes a very high sense of purity and loyalty. The book is excellently written in the manner that it creates linkages between ancient, medieval, and contemporary history of Indian traditions, religions, and cultures. The lingering desire to connect to our traditional roots is at the center of the book and while covering other important aspects of religion, authors have written in detail the idea that the Indian diaspora can immediately connect with.<sup>105</sup> The contributions of the authors from a variety of fields related to politics, literature, sports, culture, and history make this title a wonderful exposure to all Indians as well as others who want to expand their knowledge base related to India. In the book Hindu Mythology – Vedic and Puranic talked about in detail the origin and evolutionary linkages related to the Sati and Parvati. The specific mention related to the Uma is on page number 294 where the great detail related to the Uma (another name of Parvati) is given. The author also mentions the anterior related to the birth of Uma which relates to her incarnation as the daughter of Daksha. The story was narrated in the "Kurma

---

<sup>105</sup> George M. Williams, *Handbook of Hindu Mythology*, (United Kingdom: OUP USA, 2008)

Purana" and has been talked about in the context of Brahma getting angry and then punishing his sons for not obeying them and adopting an ascetic lifestyle.<sup>106</sup>

Figure 3.27: Kurma Purana



Source: Shastri, J.L. (2004)

The result of the curse manifested in the form of dividing them into half-male and half-female forms with the latter becoming daughter of Daksha then married to Shiva and then finally reincarnating her in the form of Parvati (Uma). The information related to the Sati has also been given in the title “Encountering Kali: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West” edited by Jeffrey and Rachel. Both these editors specifically focused on the Goddess Kali and how the different interpretations of the Goddess in Southeast Asian societies create confusion and complexities among the people. The focus is on solving the issues related to the interpretations that have risen as many scholars from inter-disciplinary faiths and religions offer their interpretation. By analysing the various scriptural history related to the Goddess Kali, the architecture of the various temples, the violence associated with the politics, the analytical prowess of Kali, and her feminist character, the book offers an insightful reflection of the facets associated with the Goddess and her associates. The book also explains how the parents of Sati were different in terms of their intellectual capital and overall responses towards the society. While Prasuti (the mother of Sati) was a very intelligent and considerate,

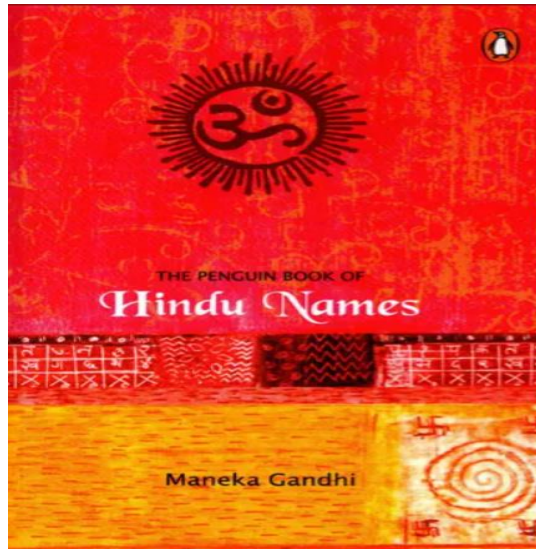
---

<sup>106</sup> Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare, *The Kūrma-purāṇa*, (India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982)



her father Daksha was confused, temperamental, and capricious. This fundamental difference was highlighted in the book. The contribution to the religious evolution of Sati's concept is also dealt with in detail by the Maneka Gandhi.

**Figure 3.28: Hindu Names**



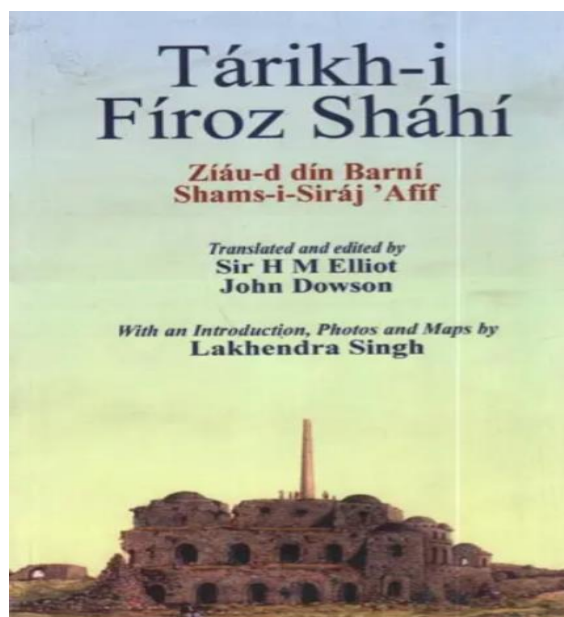
Source: Gandhi, M. (2000)

In her book “Penguin Book of Hindu Names”, the author elaborately describes the Sati name with special reference to her being the consort of Shiva. Sati was married to Siva and then during the destruction of the Yaksha Yajna, she self-immolated and later born as daughter to King Himalaya. She then penanced severely for years before finally Shiva accepted her as his consort. In the specific context of Hinduism evolution in Nepal, the Sati concept is related to the Shiva. From talking about the birth of Sati to describing her benign nature and highlighting the relevance of her being the consort of Shiva, the description given in the book is a great enhancement to the knowledge while also describing the building up of Hinduism in Nepal. Hindu traditions are greatly revered in Nepal and it is only logical that these people have a very good exposure to Hindu culture and related aspects.

**Historical Documentations:** In terms of the historical aspects, the mention of the Jawala Ji is found at numerous places with significant ones including Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi and Akbarnama. While the former was written by Ziauddin Barani, the latter is

the work of Abul Fazal. Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi offers a detailed description of the invasion and is considered one of the classical texts during the Sultanate period in India. What makes this description even more specific and relevant for history seekers is the fact that unlike other books written during the same period, the description offered by the Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi offers a holistic revelation of how were things beyond the wars, accessions, and conflicts. The book talked about the sociocultural characteristics of that time with elaborations related to the systems, functions, and related aspects of the societies. This proved helpful in offering a realistic portrait of the society that existed back then. With specific reference to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth, the Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi offered the account in terms of the destruction and plunder inflicted by Feroz Shah Tughlaq in the region. Specifically mentioned on pages 55 and 56 under the heading of Nagarkot destruction, the author talked about the loot, pillage, and mayhem caused by the army of Feroz Shah. As the Hindu King Rup Chand presided over the fort and shut himself up to defend against the Firoz Shah army with a strategy to drain them, the Feroz Shah vented his frustration on the Nagarkot including the holy shrine of Jawala Ji. He desecrated the idols there in addition to destroying the books and the vessels associated with the temple.

**Figure 3.29: Tarikh-I Firoz Shahi**



Source: Elliot and Dowson (2013)

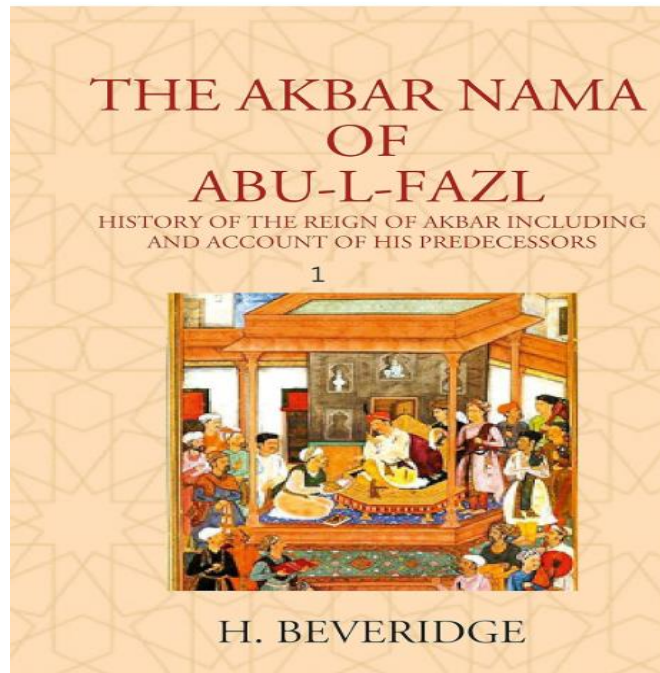
He took away almost 1300 books from the library situated in the temple and asked his administration to translate the Sanskrit manuscripts into the Persian language. It is also important to note that this was the very first time any Emperor from the Mughal lineage came and ordered such kind of translation of the Sanskrit manuscripts into their language.

**Akbarnama:** The mention of the Nagarkot is also found in the third volume of Akbarnama which is also known by the name of Ain-i Akbari. There are three volumes related to Akbarnama with Volume I describing the birth of the Akbar and his upbringing.<sup>107</sup> The volume II of the Akbarnama is more elaborate in the sense that it covers the important part of the history related to the Mughals. The volume also delves into detail the death of the father of the emperor in an untimely manner and ultimately the developments that led Akbar to succeeding throne and becoming emperor and administrator of the large empire. The third volume of the Akbarnama also referred to as Ā'in-i-Akbarī is the most interesting account of the reign of Akbar. The book has the details related to various administrative systems adopted by the Mughal Empire under Akbar and special reference has been given to the "Hindu Sciences". The geography of the Empire, the army possessed by Akbar, the taxing and revenue system adopted by the Mughal Empire, and the number of households in the Akbar time, are all crucial aspects that have been discussed in Volume 3. The book also shines a light on the culture and tradition of the people in the Mughal Era, cropping patterns, yields in different cropping seasons, prices, costs, revenues as well as the wages associated with the empire. The mention of the Nagarkot is also found in the Akbarnama on page 1222 in the context of Takhta Beg.

---

<sup>107</sup> Henry Sullivan Jarrett and Jadunath Sarkar, *The Akbar Nāmā of Abu-I-Fazl*, (India: Royal Asiatic Society, 1907).

**Figure 3.30: Akbarnama by Abu-l-fazl**

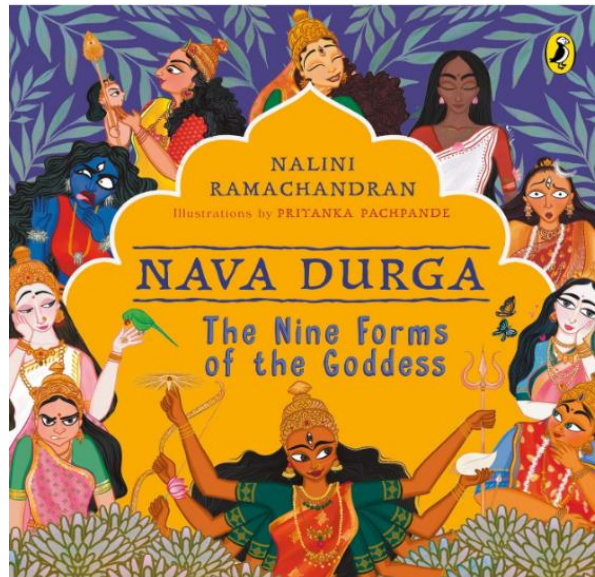


Source: Beveridge, H. (1907)

The Abul Fazl also writes about the Jawala Ji, referring to the Goddess as Maha Maiy in his writings. He specifically mention the place Nagarkot and Maha Maiy as a holy place related to divinity. He also describes the miracle of people offering their tongue to goddess and within days or hours regrowing that miraculously. He also referred to the cutting of Goddess's body into 51 pieces as a tale mentioned in Puranas and Upanishads. Worth mentioning here is the point that the historical evolution and linkages related to Chintpurni Peeth are not the same in ancient literature and Hindu mythology. There is a lack of unanimity associated with the ancient tales associated with Sati's self-immolation that finally led to the establishment of 51 different Shakti peeths in all over South Asia. While most Scholars agree that Devi Sati fell at this place, others are of the opinion that the feet of Devi Sati fell here. According to Markandey Puran, another origin of the tale associated with Mata Chintpurni Temple, the campaigns of Devi Durga Jaya and Vijaya were thirsty for blood even after conquering the demons on the battlefield. In order to satiate their thirst for the blood, Devi Chandi severed her head and let her companions drink the blood to fulfil her thirst. These are two different accounts which mean that the historical records and mythological tales

are not one in the case of Devi Chintpurni. That said, both peeths are very much relevant for devotees all across the globe and by offering spiritual abodes to pilgrims, these continue to serve as the prominent places for spiritual tourism in the Himachal Pradesh.

**Figure 3.31: Nava Durga**



Source: Ramachandran, N. (2020)

**Chinmastika Peeth:** According to Markandeya Purana, even after defeating the demon in a bloody battle, the Jaya and Vijaya, companions of Sati continue to remain thirsty for the blood. Finally, in order to quench their thirst, Sati severed her head and, in this way, the place of Chinmastika came into being. Bhai Mai Das was a keen devotee of Goddess Durga. Once upon a time, the Goddess came in his dream and asked him to build a temple at this place.<sup>108</sup> So, keeping the instruction of god in mind, he built the temple in Chhaproh village. Since then, his descendants started doing the worship of Shri Chintpurni. His descendants are now the official priests of this temple. Counted among the prominent Devi Peeth in Himachal Pradesh and India, Chinmastika Peeth or Chintpurni Peeth is one of the prominent pilgrimage sites located in the Una district of Himachal Pradesh. It is extremely popular among the devotees and it is believed that

---

<sup>108</sup> Nalini Ramachandran, *Nava Durga: The Nine Forms of the Goddess*, (India: Penguin Random House India Private Limited, 2020).

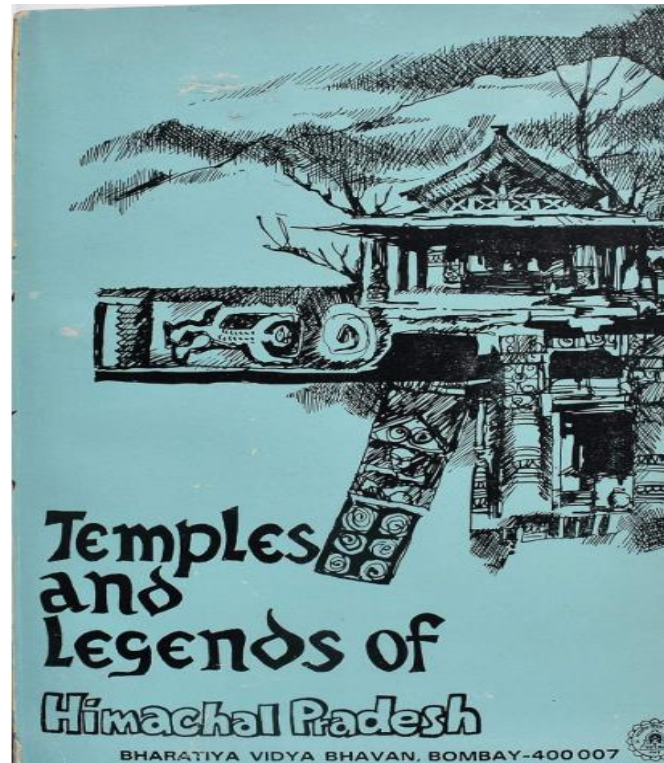
no devotee returns empty-handed from the shrine. According to the Vedas, the Chinmastika is one of the ten mahavidyas of Devi Parvati (Daughter of Himalaya) and derived its name as she severed her head to satiate the blood thirst of her companions – Jaya and Vijaya. The elaborate mention of the Chinmastika is there in the book titled “Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas” written by David Kinsley. The author describes in detail the Ten Mahavidyas who embody different aspects of nature which are eccentric, repulsive, and importantly socially forbidden in our societies. These are specifically meant for the Tantrik practices and by focusing upon these weird qualities that are usually out of sight for the masses. The idea is to present the Tantrik side of Devi and how these goddesses can take different forms depending upon the requirements of the time. These Mahavidyas are being referred to as Awakeners and by projecting them as a group; the author has taken a holistic approach to study these divine entities. Elizabeth Anne Benard wrote extensively about the Chhinnmastika in the book "Chinnamasta: The Aweful Buddhist and Hindu Tantric Goddess". The book is special in the sense that it offers the intersection of the Hindu and Buddhist practices enshrined in the Tantrik philosophy for offering glimpses related to the title. It offers insights into the tantric practices that are both common and exclusive as far as the Hindu and Buddhist traditions are concerned. In other words, the title is significant in the sense that it offers readers a peek view into how tantric practices can be exclusive as well as mutual at the same time.

**Traditional Aspects:** There is a significant difference when it comes to the spiritual Outlook behind the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika peeths. As mentioned before, the Jawala ji Shaktipeeth is without any kind of deity and represents primarily the formless aspect of God. According to mythology, the eternal flame here is considered a combination of nine different Flames representing nine different faces of the divine mother. The main flame that burns through the Silver passage is considered the representation of the Mahakali. This flame is the one which is revered by the devotees and is capable of offering both Bhakti and Mukti to the worshippers. The second flame is associated with



Mahamaya Annapurna, which is capable of offering enormous amounts of resources to her devotees.<sup>109</sup>

**Figure 3.32: Temples and Legends of Himachal Pradesh**



Source: Chandra and Choudhury (1981)

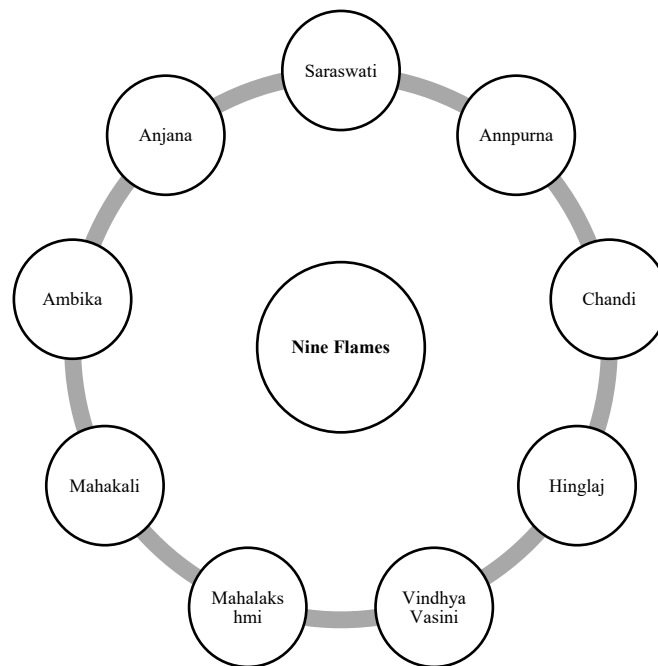
Whether it comes to material resources, food resources, and any other kind of supplies, the Mahamaya Annapurna is capable of full filling all the wishes of her devotee through her amazing powers. The third flame is associated with Goddess Chandi who is a symbol of annihilation and her worship is specifically significant in conquering enemies and winning over adversities. She is one of the fiercest forms of the divine mother and her invoking is specifically significant in the case of destructive powers and negative consequences. Hingalaja Bhavani is the fourth flame in Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth

---

<sup>109</sup> Roy Choudhury & Pranab Chandra, *Temples and Legends of Himachal Pradesh*, (India: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1981)

and it is the representation of the power that is capable of demolition the miseries of each and every person who prays to the goddess with pure and divine heart.

**Figure 3.33: Nine Flames of Jawala Ji**



*Source: Author's Conceptualisation*

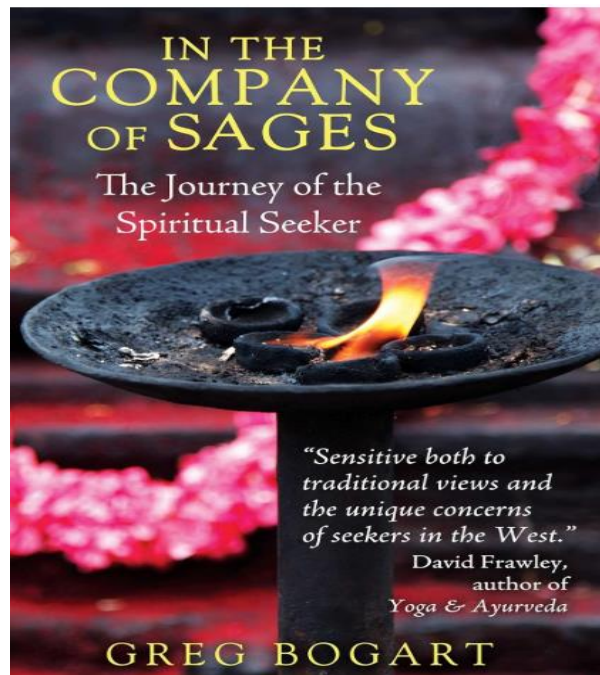
There is a separate Shaktipeeth associated with the name of Hingalaja Bhavani across the border in the province of Balochistan in Pakistan. It is located on the banks of the Hingol river and is one of the famous Shakti Peeths in Southeast Asia. Named after the mountain series Vindhyachal, Vindhyavasini is the fifth flame in Jawala Ji and its separate temple is located on the banks of the river Ganges in Uttar Pradesh. According to the Puranas and Hindu mythology, the goddess Durga incarnated herself in the form of Vindhyavasini in order to kill the Mahishasur demon.<sup>110</sup> Vindhyavasini is also known for her prowess to dispose of all the troubles, worries, and concerns of devotees and hence, her worshipping is associated with blessings of all kinds of health, wealth, and allied concerns. Mahalaxmi is the sixth flame in Jawalaji Temple and the promenade characteristic of this flame is its location in the Jyoti Kund. The name of Mahalaxmi in Hindu traditions is known to be associated with wealth and treasure and the particular

<sup>110</sup> Gregory C. Bogart, *In the Company of Sages The Journey of the Spiritual Seeker*, (Rochester: Inner Traditions International, Limited 2015)



flame depicts the qualities such as splendour, magnificence, wealth, richness, and luxury among others.

Figure 3.34: Company of Sages

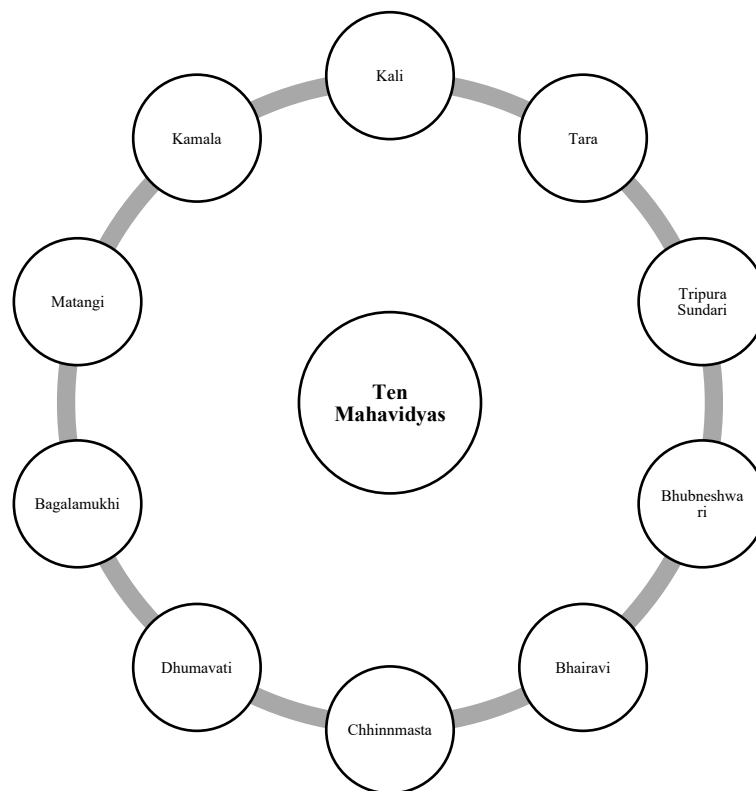


Source: Bogart, G. (2005)

Whoever worships Mahalaxmi with true heart and devotion gets blessed with all materialistic fortunes and deep luxury. Just next to the flame of Mahalaxmi is the seventh flame in the Jawalaji Shaktipeeth which signifies the importance of Goddess Saraswati. She is known to be associated with qualities such as intellectual knowledge, wisdom, cognitive ability, and reasoning all of which are specifically important for persons in the field of academics, exploration, science, technology, and so on. Bodies many desired characteristics such as strength power love devotion and creation and is also associated with the seasons of harvest and autumn Goddess Ambika is the eighth flame in the temple and the goddess is associated with the capability of bestowing the boon of children to couples. The last ninth flame in the temple of Jawala ji Shaktipeeth is associated with the Goddess Anjana. The divine Mother name Anjana has been associated with the qualities of offering long age, spirituality, divinity, and exhilaration to her devotees. She is significant in the sense that the divine mother has the capability of offering life to her devotees which is significant from the perspective of living a long

life. The temple of Chhinnmastika, on the other hand, is counted among one of the ten mahavidyas related to the Devi Parvati. These ten mahavidyas are Kali, Tara, Tripura Sundari, Bhuvaneshvari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamala.<sup>111</sup> The elaborate mention of the Chhinnmastika is there in the book titled “Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas” written by David Kinsley. The author describes in detail the Ten Mahavidyas who embody different aspects of nature which is eccentric, repulsive, and importantly socially forbidden in our societies.

**Figure 3.35: Ten Mahavidayas**



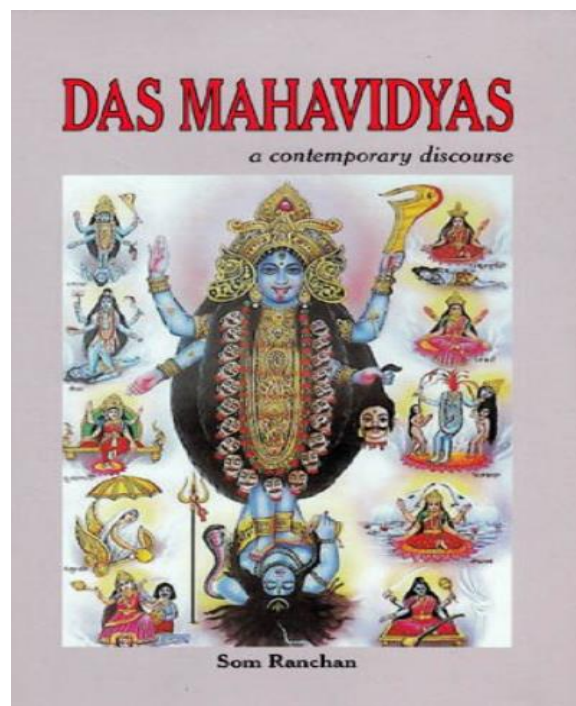
*Source: Author's Conceptualisation*

These are specifically meant for the Tantrik practices and by focusing upon these weird qualities that are usually out of sight for the masses. The idea is to present the Tantrik side of Devi and how these goddesses can take different forms depending upon the

<sup>111</sup> Som P.Ranchan, *Das Mahavidyas: A Contemporary Discourse*, (India: Abhinav Publications, 2012)

requirements of the time. These Mahavidayas are being referred to as Awakeners and by projecting them as a group; the author has taken a holistic approach to study these divine entities. Elizabeth Anne Benard wrote extensively about the Chinmastika in the book "Chinamasta: The Aweful Buddhist and Hindu Tantric Goddess". The book is special in the sense that it offers the intersection of the Hindu and Buddhist practices enshrined in the Tantrik philosophy for offering glimpses related to the title.<sup>112</sup> It offers insights into the tantric practices that are both common and exclusive as far as the Hindu and Buddhist traditions are concerned.

**Figure 3.36: Das Mahavidyas**



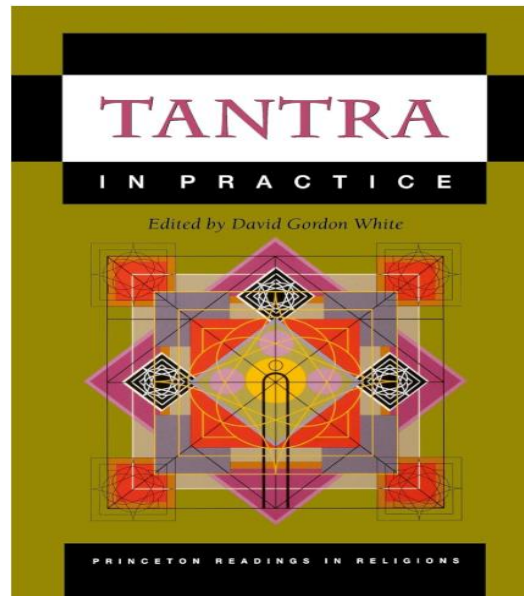
Source: Ranchan, S. P. (2012)

In other words, the title is significant in the sense that it offers readers a peek view into how tantric practices can be exclusive as well as mutual at the same time. Unlike Jawala Ji, there are no nine flame rituals available in the Chintpurni temple. Rather the significance of the temple is in its Deity form where Chinmasta is situated in the form of a Pindi. The personal form of Goddess is the centre of attraction and the name Chintpurni is famous among the locals. The name is derived from the fact that the deity

<sup>112</sup> David Gordon White, *Tantra in Practice*, (United States: Princeton University Press, 2018)

is supposed to take away all worries of the devotees and offer them boons to fulfil all their desires.

Figure 3.37: Tantra in Practice

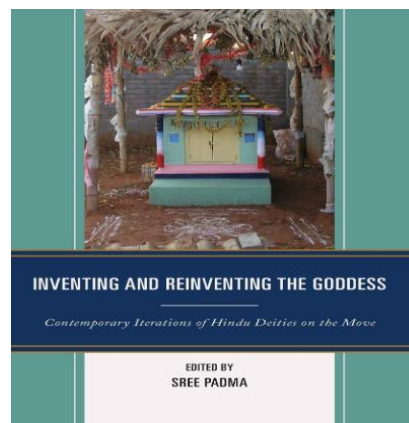


Source: White, D.G. (2000)

**Clan Deity:** It is important to note that, in terms of the recognition and popularity among devotees, Chinmastika temple is far ahead of that of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth. It is commonly believed among the visitors and devotees that goddess Chinmastika instantly fulfils the wishes of her devotees and this explains the huge popularity the temple enjoys among pilgrims and visitors. This special ability of the temple to offer health, well-being, and other wishes makes it one of the most popular Devi Sidh peeths in India. It has been found from the literature and local traditions that Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth is the clan deity of many visitors and devotees. This explains why a number of Hindu families make a pilgrimage to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth when any auspicious occasion such as marriage or the birth of a child in the family takes place. Many devotees and families make a pilgrimage to Jawala ji Shaktipeeth in yellow clothes and this signifies the status of family goddess that Shakti Peeth enjoy among many families and clans. Lakhanpal, Thakur, Gujral, and Bhatia are the clans that consider Jawala Ji as the Clan Goddess. There are elaborate rituals associated with the clan goddess and depending upon the various festivity and occasions, these clans come to the shrine and

pay their obeisance and respect to the Goddess. For every important occasion in the family right from birth to marriage, the clan deity is offered the homage with scores of people from particular clan coming together and visiting the temple barefooted. On other occasions like Navratri and associated events also Kul Devi (Clan Deity) is revered first followed by offering worships to other God and Goddesses later.<sup>113</sup> Chinmastika Temple, on the other hand, is not counted among the clan deity and rather worshipped by devotees as one of the ten Mahavidyas of Devi Parvati. The reason behind Chinmastika not being the Kul Devi is the root cause of Tantric aspect of the Deity. Although Chintpurni temple here in Himachal has more religious dimension, the focus remains on the destructive side of the being. The oldest temple of Chinmasta is in Jharkhand and is located at Rajrappa, the Ramgarh district of Jharkhand. The location of the temple is quite interesting as it stands at the Confluence of two rivers: Bhairavi and Damodar. It's quite interesting to note that the Chinmasta temple in Jharkhand is considered one of the 51 Shakti peeths while the Chintpurni temple in Himachal is Devi Peeth. That said, the deity at the Chintpurni temple is situated in the form of Pindi while at the Chinmasta temple in Jharkhand, the image of the headless deity is worshipped with a sharp weapon in her one hand and her own head in another. This evolutionary linkage with the Tantric practices is something that makes the Chinmastika deity more of a destructive force rather than a spiritual dimension.

**Figure 3.38: Goddess Invention and Reinvention**

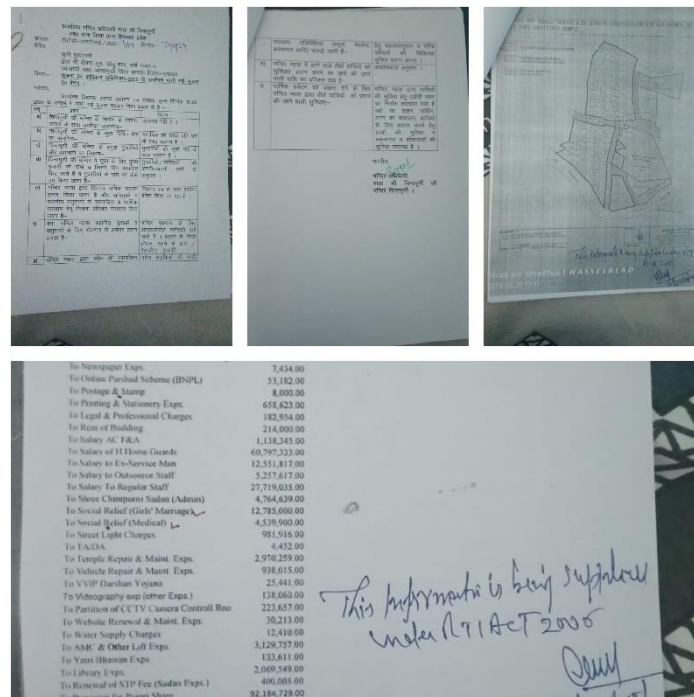


<sup>113</sup> Sree Padma, *Inventing and Reinventing the Goddess: Contemporary Iterations of Hindu Deities on the Move*, (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2014)

Source: Padma, S. (2014)

**Pujas and Aartis:** There is a ritual of three-time aartis at the Chintpurni Temple with each aarti and its content being incorporated in the chapter.<sup>114</sup> The morning aarti is done at 6:30 am while the Day aarti commences at 12:00 pm just before the Prashad is offered to the deity. The evening time of the aarti is between 6:30 pm and 8:00 pm and the deity goes to sleep at 10:00 pm. The priests offer the prayers at the Chintpurni temple according to their turn. These turns are decided by the Temple Administrative committee which rotate the duties of the priests. As per the information offered under the RTI Act, the total number of priests was 328. These get their turn to offer the prayers at the Chintpurni Temple as per their turn.

Figure 3.39: RTI Reply



Source: RTI Reply (2024)

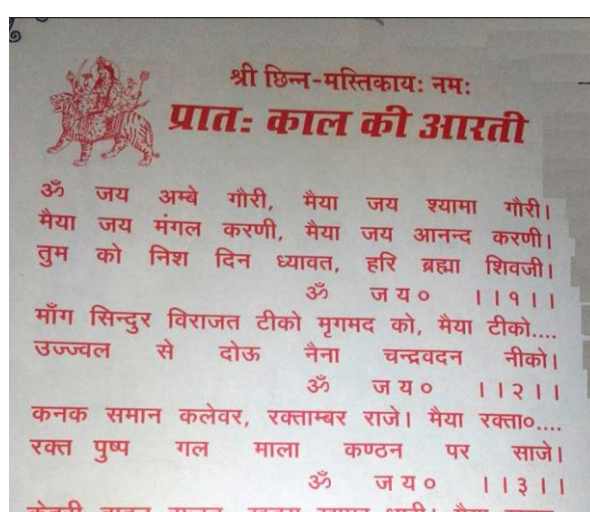
These priests are also associated with the regular events related to the temple and enable the running of many spiritual and ritual activities associated with the temple. Pilgrims

<sup>114</sup> Aarties | Jai Mata Shri Chintpurni. 2015. Matashrichintpurni.com. 2015. <https://www.matashrichintpurni.com/aarties.php>.



who want to participate in the Hawan and Yajna also have the facility to do so by paying the requisite amount to the temple trust. The sacred fire ritual (Hawan) is conducted at the Temple every morning at 6:00 a.m. and people willing to participate in this particular activity can do so by taking permission from the temple officer and paying Rs 500 to get the wood to be lit in the hawan. The temple also witnesses a large number of devotees who come to the premises for the Mundan ceremony - a sacred tradition in Hindu culture of shaving the head of the Child for the first time and then offering these hairs to the deity. Usually, this ritual is performed when the child is between one and three years of age. In contrast to three-time aartis offered in the Chintpurni temple, the Jawala Ji Shrine has ritual of performing aartis five times in a day. The first one is in the early morning followed by another at sunrise.<sup>115</sup> The Bhog aarti is performed between 11:30 and 12:30 pm while the evening aarti takes place between 7:00 and 8:00 pm. The last aarti is shayan aarti which is offered to the Goddess at the bedtime. The first one is in the early morning followed by another at sunrise. The Bhog aarti is performed between 11:30 and 12:30 pm while the evening aarti takes place between 7:00 and 8:00 pm. The last aarti is shayan aarti which is offered to the Goddess at the bedtime. In sum, there are a total of five aartis performed at Jawala Ji temple in comparison to the three that are offered at the Chintpurni Temple.

**Figure 3.40: Chintpurni Aarti**

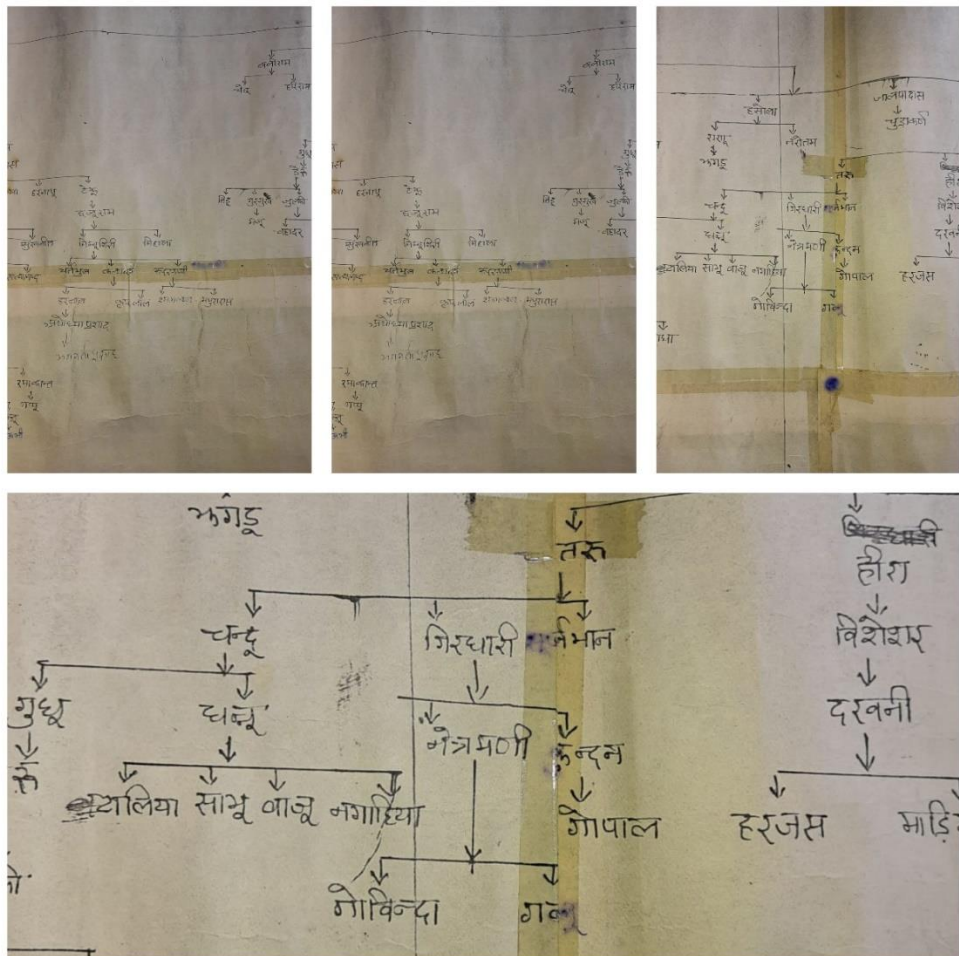


<sup>115</sup> Jwalaji Flames or Jyoti | *Holy Flames in Jawalaji* | Jawalaji.in." 2024. Jai Maa Jawala Ji. 2024. <https://jawalaji.in/holy-flames/>.

Source: Chintpurni Temple Website

The difference is the early morning aarti and Shayan aarti that is performed in the Jawala Ji but not being offered at the Chintpurni Temple. The most interesting aspect of the Shayan aarti is the way the entire sleeping room of the Deity is decked up with ornaments and dresses. This is being done as the offertory to the deity and the aarti is performed in two different parts. The first is being done on the main premises of the temple while the second part is recited in terms of the slokas from the Saundaryalahiri originally written by the Shankaracharya. Just like the Chintpurni temple, various religious and spiritual activities including letting the sacred fire (Hawans) and Mundans are performed on the premises of Jawala Ji temple.

Figure 3.41: Jawala Ji Bahi-Khata



Source: Temple Records



In fact, people from all across India including from Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Karnataka come to witness the glory of the Jawala Ji temple. The added significance of the temple comes in the form of Jawala Ji being the Kuldevi of many sects in the adjoining areas. To perform Yajna, Hawan, and other ceremonies like Mundan, the premises are open and one has to take permission from the temple officer and managing committee of the temple trust.

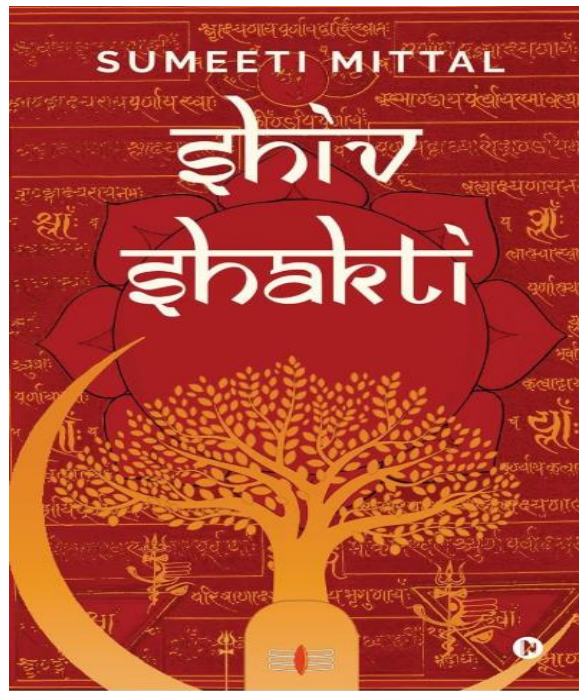
**Shaktipeeth Status:** It is very important to note that the different versions related to the status of the Shakti Peeth come to light when we went through extant literature and talked with priests, local people, and administrators. While there is unanimity about the status of the Shakti Peeth for the Jawala Ji, Chinmastika temple is counted as Devi Peeth and not as Shaktipeeth.<sup>116</sup> As no body part of the Devi Sati fell at Chinmastika temple, and rather the divine mother has manifested herself here in the form of an idol which is without a head, this is not counted as Shaktipeeth. The majority of opinions about the Chinmastika temple consider it as Devi Peeth rather than considering it as Shaktipeeth as no part of the Devi Sati's body fell here. There is another place with the same name Chinmastika Temple dedicated to the headless deity in the Jharkhand state of India. The temple is situated in the Ramgarh district and attracts devotees from all parts of the country, including Jharkhand. The Chinmastika is the name of the deity present in the temple and the idol of the deity can be seen here with her severed head on the left hand which is drinking the blood oozing from the neck. On the sides are statues of Jaya and Vijaya, here associates who are also satiating themselves from the bloodlines of the Chinmastika. However, both peeths are considered as popular religious places in the Himachal Pradesh with lakh of devotees thronging these year after year. Jawala Ji, on the other hand is one of the Shakti Peeths in the list of total 51 Peeths that are popular across the globe. According to the popular legend, the tongue of the Sati fell here following which this place is now considered as the Shakti Peeth. It's also important to note that Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth is the only Shakti Peeth in Himachal Pradesh. There are five Peeths in Himachal including Naina Devi, Brajeshwari Devi, Chamunda Devi, Chintpurni, and Jawala Ji. Out of these, all four other peeths except for Jawala Ji are Devi Peeths and not Shakti Peeth. Shakti Peeth is

---

<sup>116</sup> Sumeeti Mittal, *Shiv Shakti*, (India: Notion Press, 2024)

a concept associated with the places where the body parts of the Devi Sati fell which are a total of 51 in number. Jawala Ji is a place where the Tongue of Sati fell and hence it acquired the status of Shaktipeeth.

Figure 3.42: Shiv Shakti

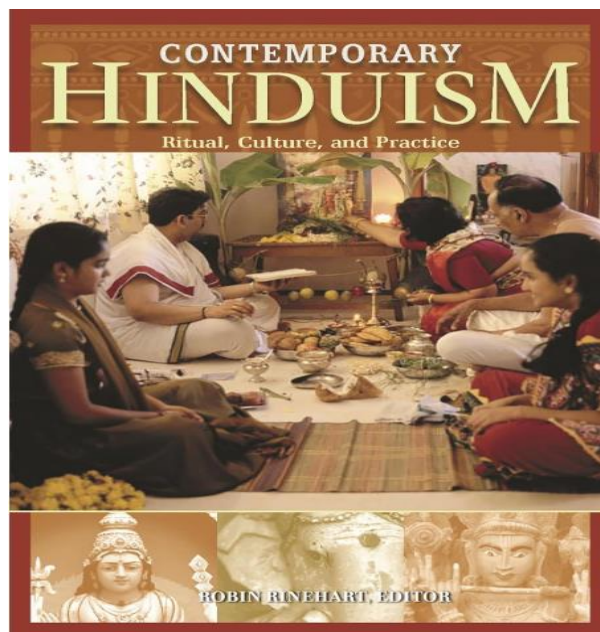


Source: Mittal, S. (2024)

**Sister Relationship:** The sisterhood between Jawala Ji and Chintpurni is widely acknowledged in the local traditions, rituals, observances, and ceremonies. The fact that Devi Parvati is the reincarnation of Devi Sati, the relationship of sisters exists between the two deities. It is observed among devotees that Jawala ji is the elder sister while Chinmastika is considered as the younger sister. It is therefore also recognised among the devotees that before visiting Chinmastika, one has to visit the Jawala Ji and take the blessings from there. If without visiting Jawala Ji somebody visits Chinmastika then it is not considered a good ritual. Also, it is recommended that Prasad from the Chintpurni should not be carried to the Jawala Ji although it's acceptable the other way around. Extending the same logic of Prasad, it is usually considered a convention to first go to the Jawala Ji Temple for the Darshan and then follow it up with visit to the Chintpurni. Going first to Chintpurni Temple and then going to Jawala Ji is not an option. If

devotees only plan to visit the Chintpurni then they can go to the temple, pay their homage and respect there, and then come back. However, if the plan is also to pay obeisance at Jawala Ji temple then it is almost like a tradition to first pay a visit to Jawala Ji and then while returning pay homage to the Chintpurni temple.<sup>117</sup> By the same convention, the temple of Vajreshwari is also considered as an Elder Sister to Chintpurni Shrine. This relationship of sisterhood is also associated with the fact that Jawala Ji Temple was constructed way before the temple of Chintpurni shrine came into being. This also means that the older the construction of the temple more prominence it gets in terms of rituals and traditional importance. In terms of the construction chronology, the Jawala Ji temple was believed to be founded by Ranjanka Bhumi Chand in the Satyug Era while the Chintpurni temple is around 700-750 years old and established by the Bhai Mai Das around 26 generations ago.

**Figure 3.43: Contemporary Hinduism**



**Source: Rinehart, R. (2004)**

As one generation is equal to around 25 years, the rough estimate suggests that the temple was built around the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century. While the Jawala Ji temple is known

---

<sup>117</sup> Robin Rinehart, *Contemporary Hinduism: Ritual, Culture, and Practice*, (Indonesia: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004)

to have been established by the Bhumi Chand in the time of Satyuga, the Chintpurni Temple was supposed to have been built around the 15th or 16<sup>th</sup> Century when Pandit Mai Das established the shrine and started offering prayers at this place.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Transforming Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths into Religious Tourism Places**

#### **4.1) Visitors' Perception and Vendors Status: An Analyses**

India is one of the most popular destinations for visitors from all across the globe who come here to seek the blessings of the divine mother. A majority of Shakti Peeths are in India and among the prominent States where these shrines are located, Himachal Pradesh occupies significant importance. It is one of the hill states in Northern India and has been famous for its culture, religious tourism, and devotion towards Hindu mythology and traditions. Hundreds of thousands of devotees not only from India but also from around the world come to Himachal to visit Shakti Peeths. In the study, we have particularly focused on the Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths. In the process of achieving our third objective, we have conducted a mix of Surveys, interviews, and observations to collect the primary data from the visitors who were visiting these Peeths. In the literature, there has been a mention of a wide variety related to the visitors who go and visit shrines for different purposes.<sup>118</sup> Prominent among these categories are pilgrimages, monastery visits, religious tourism, retreats, and travel of missionaries among others. Jawala Ji and Bharwain are two towns in Himachal Pradesh located in the districts of Kangra and Una which are famous for attracting lacs of devotees of the divine mother. These places are abode to Jwala Ji and Chinnmatika Shrines and over the period of time, both these shrines have been converted into a mix of religious and commercial places where devotees from all over the country and the world come not only to pay their regards to the divine mother but also see these places and enjoy the surroundings and hilly atmosphere. The large number of devotees coming here every year, especially during the Navratri festival make these places important for the both local economy and the state economy of Himachal Pradesh. Many efforts have been made by the local and the state administrations to enhance the prospects of attracting more devotees to these religions and as a part of the objective of our research, we have

---

<sup>118</sup> Lior Gideon, *Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences*, (Netherlands: Springer New York, 2012)

also put focused on the key parameters that can prove instrumental in helping the administrators, shopkeepers, business ventures, hotels and restaurants, and allied businesses to make a profit by offering credible services to visitors. It is also worth mentioning that in order to offer the best of the services to visitors, both local Administration and government are doing their best in terms of offering better food, lodging, staying and other convenience and amenities to the devotees. Even though they are getting help from the central government all the primary work is done by the state government in integration with the local and private Agencies involved in the businesses in these places.

#### **4.2) Religious Tourism: Potential and Possibilities**

As a part of the third objective of our research, we have explored the possibilities and potential related to the religious tourism associated with Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths. We have gone into great detail to figure out the opportunities possibilities and various avenues of growth that both state and local economies can avail as a result of lakhs of devotees coming into the state and visiting these religious places. In order to explore these opportunities, it was essential to find out what the experience of these devotees towards the convenience and amenities offered by the local administration on both these shrines.<sup>119</sup> The perception of devotees also helps us to get an understanding of the overall satisfaction which will ultimately help us in recommending measures of the improvement and possibilities that local administration can employ to achieve more growth in terms of the number of visitors paying regard to these Shakti Peeths. We have taken the help from the literature in order to design our questionnaire and according to the studies conducted by various authors in the past. The research of the HH Lin, M Romanelli, R Ohlan, D Gambhir, N Srivastava, V Gupta, and KA Shinde were thoroughly analysed. This led to the finalization of the dimensions to determine the possibilities and potentials of the Shakti Peeth by measuring the level of satisfaction visitors have towards these places. We have gone into the detail while establishing the linkages between pilgrimage activities and the visitor's intention to visit that place, especially from the religious perspective. We also took a look into the policy of the

---

<sup>119</sup> Lavkush Mishra, *Religious Tourism in India*, (India: Mohit Publications, 2000)

local administration and the state government towards these Shakti Peeth in order to find out whether there is a scope for making further improvements to offer a better and more convenient experience to the visitors.

### **4.3) Survey Methodology**

The methodology is one of the most important parameters of conducting the research. It is a blueprint depicting a larger scheme of the research including the methods that are used in the research for collection, analysis, and evaluation of the data. Research methodology clearly identifies the target population, instrument selection, development of the questionnaire, collection of data, and tools used by the research in order to analyse and evaluate the data to convert it into useful information. It is, therefore, vital for the researchers to take a comprehensive look into the research methodology for achieving the desired results for the study.<sup>120</sup> In terms of the research methodology, we have used the survey method to collect the primary data. Before conducting the survey, we spent time interacting with a range of stakeholders involved in the process in order to make sure that the development of the research instrument would follow the proper procedure and standards set by the previous researchers. These interactions are done in order to get real insights into the intentions, reasons, and relevance of the visitors who are visiting these religious places and their level of satisfaction with their visits. The primary reason behind the selection of the survey method is its ease and wider scope of applicability. It is also one of the most cost-efficient methods of collecting responses and is equally beneficial in terms of saving the time of the researchers in getting the reactions, feedback and replies associated with the study. The method of collecting the responses with the help of a service instrument also offers researchers with desired flexibility, a factor that is crucial to ensure that the study can be completed within the given timeframe. While questionnaires are the most suitable method voted comes to deserving the perception of the visitors, observation method and informal interactions are specifically relevant for suggesting the recommendation to the policymakers in order to make sure that the utility of the study can be enhanced further. As mentioned before, the study has also made use of observation and informal interactions before

---

<sup>120</sup> Philip S. Brenner, *Understanding Survey Methodology: Sociological Theory and Applications*, (Germany: Springer International Publishing, 2020)

going with a collection of the responses with the help of the survey questionnaire. The reason behind adopting these informal interactions with tourists, shopkeepers, hotel and restaurant owners, local officials, and communities at large is to explore various factors that have relevance in the eyes of these stakeholders. Also, communication with these stakeholders in a friendly manner also helped us to understand the basic essence that binds all these stakeholders in this rather large and diversified ecosystem of pilgrims and their pilgrimage.

#### **4.4) Questionnaire Development**

In order to complete the third objective of exploring possibilities in the transformation of these Peeths into religious tourism and contribution to the local economy, the study developed a questionnaire specifically focusing on the two aspects of the Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths. While the first part of the questionnaire is focused on the image of the Peeths among visitors, the second part of the questionnaire measures the satisfaction of pilgrims towards the various facilities available at these pilgrimage sites.<sup>121</sup> The focus of the study on both image and satisfaction helps to make the research comprehensive and holistic in nature. In order to measure the image of the Peeths and the satisfaction level of the pilgrims, a questionnaire was prepared by the study. Various dimensions of latitude become part of the final questionnaire identified with the help of a literature review. The past studies of the various researchers were reviewed specifically in the field of religious tourism, pilgrims' motivations, and satisfaction of tourists on their journeys and experiences related to the pilgrim sites. Going through the literature, it has been found that there is an involvement of multiple constructs that determine the image and satisfaction level of pilgrims towards the pilgrimage sites. This multiplicity of factors makes pilgrims' tourism quite a complex and holistic concept that needs a comprehensive focus on the entire ecosystem of pilgrims and pilgrimage sites. In order to capture the holistic viewpoint of pilgrims and their complete perspective towards the pilgrimage sites, the study decided to capture both the image of the Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths among the pilgrims and their satisfaction with the various kinds of facilities and convenience offered by the local

---

<sup>121</sup> Bill Gillham, *Developing a Questionnaire*, (United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008)



administration at both these pilgrimage sites. The concept of religious tourism is quite well-researched in the literature. There are a number of studies conducted by the authors in the past that looked into the image of religious tourism places in the minds of the visitors. Many of them have gone into detail relative to various parameters that impact the image of religious sites in the minds of visitors. While investigating past studies in order to find out the relevant attributes and dimensions to the image of religious places, we have specifically kept in mind the definition of religious tourism. The author has defined the concept of religious tourism from the perspective of the reasons which are either partly or totally inspired by the religious outlook of pilgrims. According to the author, the primary motive of the pilgrims who are visiting any religious site is to satisfy the religious or spiritual notions associated with their lives. Adding important dimensions to this definition, many authors went one step further and define the concept of religious tourism from the holistic perspective that not only includes the spiritual aspirations of visitors but also takes into consideration the additional aspects related to the history of the place, the art of the site, the culture of the region, and architectural advancements of the people belonging to that particular site. There are many authors who delve into the details of image dimensions of the pilgrimage site in the minds of pilgrims and helped the study in preparing the question related to the image of Peeths in the study. The primary contribution to the development of the items related to the image of Shakti Peeths comes from past literature have also made significant contributions in deciding the aspects of evaluating the image of the Shakti Peeths in the minds of the visitors.<sup>122</sup> In order to know about the satisfaction levels of the pilgrims, the study explores the literature on number on number of factors that relates to the availability of the various convenience related to the comfort of pilgrims visiting the religious shrines. The interaction between the pilgrims, local community members and administrators is one of the most critical factors that make the perception of pilgrims towards the religious site. The overall location of the religious site and the access to it in terms of the infrastructure, reaching convenience, availability of transport, and access to the quality yet affordable stay facilities. The importance of rest benches, clean toilets, drinking water facilities, and recreational activities are also highlighted by the

---

<sup>122</sup> David L. Gladstone, *From Pilgrimage to Package Tour: Travel and Tourism in the Third World*, (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2013)

researchers in the studies conducted to determine the satisfaction level of religious to at sites of religious tourism.<sup>123</sup> In addition, past research studies have also found that organisation of the religious activities inside the premises of the pilgrimage sites also had a profound impact on the satisfaction level of pilgrims.<sup>124</sup> In the development of the questionnaire for the study, we have taken all these parameters into consideration and developed our instrument on the 3-point Likert scale. The table in the appendix lists all the questions that are used by the study to know both the image of Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths in the minds of pilgrims and the level of satisfaction from their visits to these two sites.

#### **4.5) Sampling Plan and Data Collection**

In order to ensure the reliability of the service instrument before going for data collection, a pilot study was conducted with the help of a total of 40 respondents. After the collection of the responses, the reliability Coefficient Cronbach Alpha came out to be 0.83, above the accepted value of 0.7. It is very natural for us to adopt the sampling method in order to collect the data for our study as there are constraints related to time, budget, and human efforts required to take the census method of investigation. The study adopted the approach for the sampling design in accordance with the guidelines given by Malhotra and Dash (2015). The population for the study is constituted of all the pilgrims who visit the Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths. However, because of the obvious limitations related to the resources, we decided to go and with the sampling technique which is farm mode efficient and resource-effective in order to collect the data for the study and reach the conclusion. The Geographic domain of the study is the Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths from where we collected the data of pilgrims who are visiting these places for pilgrimage activities. The target population for our study are pilgrims push who are specifically visiting Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths for their pilgrimage. In terms of the sampling technique, the study makes use of a non-probability sampling technique (convenience sampling) to collect the data from the target audiences. At both Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths, a total of 200

---

<sup>123</sup> C. Aruljothi & S Ramaswamy, *Pilgrimage Tourism*, (India: MJP Publisher 2019).

<sup>124</sup> Surinder M. Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography*, University of California Press

questionnaires were distributed among the pilgrims. The tables given below offer the demographic details of the respondents from whom data were collected at Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths and accordingly, data was collected from them to proceed with the analysis procedure. The details have been given in the appendices.

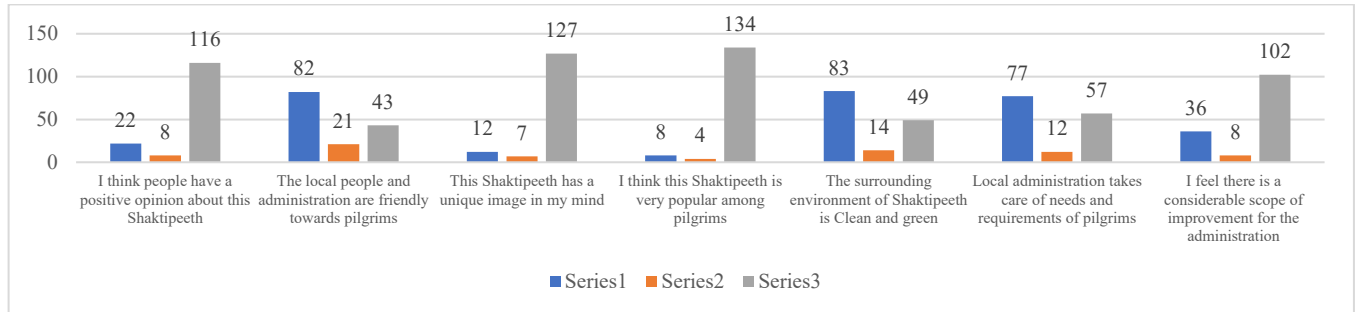
#### **4.6) Demographic Details: Jawala Ji & Chinmastika**

We distributed 200 survey forms among the visitors in the Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth and out of the total distributed questionnaires, 163 questionnaires were received back. On close scrutiny of the filled questionnaires, 146 fully filled responses were received by us. The annexure has the details of the demographics of the visitors who returned As with Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth, we distributed 200 survey forms among visitors who were visiting Chhinnmastika Shakti Peeth. We got a total of 169 surveys back and on scrutiny, 153 questionnaires were found to be useful for the analysis (details are given in the appendices).

#### **4.7) Data Analysis and Results**

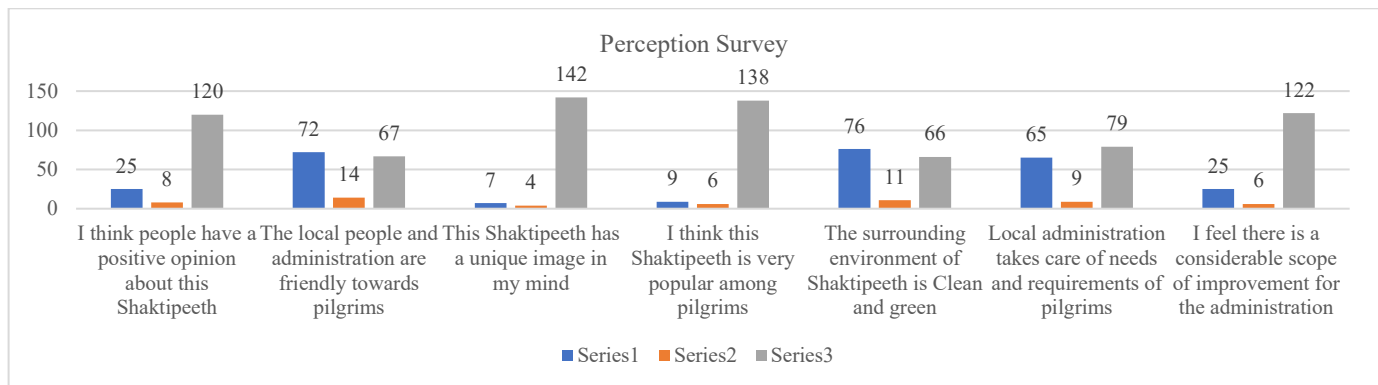
**Analysis of Image Survey:** 79% of the visitors who visited Jawala Ji think that others have positive opinions about the Shakti Peeth although only 29% feel that local people and administration are friendly towards the pilgrims. Overwhelmingly large 87% have a unique image of Shakti Peeth in their mind although there is considerable scope for improvement when it comes to the surrounding environment as more than half, i.e., 57% feel that it is not very clean and green. A total of 70% see that the improvement in the overall convenience and amenities offered by the Shakti Peeth can be improved (refer figure 5.2)

**Figure 4.1: Perception Survey Results of Jawala Ji Peeth**



In the case of Chinmastika Peeth, 78% of visitors out of the total responses received by us have a positive opinion of Peeth. When it comes to local people and administration, 47% of visitors were not satisfied with the friendliness of local people and administration. 90% believe that the temple is very popular among the pilgrims while 80% agree with the statement there is considerable scope for improvement for the administration to provide better facilities to the visitors (refer to figure 5.3).

**Figure 4.2: Perception Survey Results of Chinmastika Peeth**

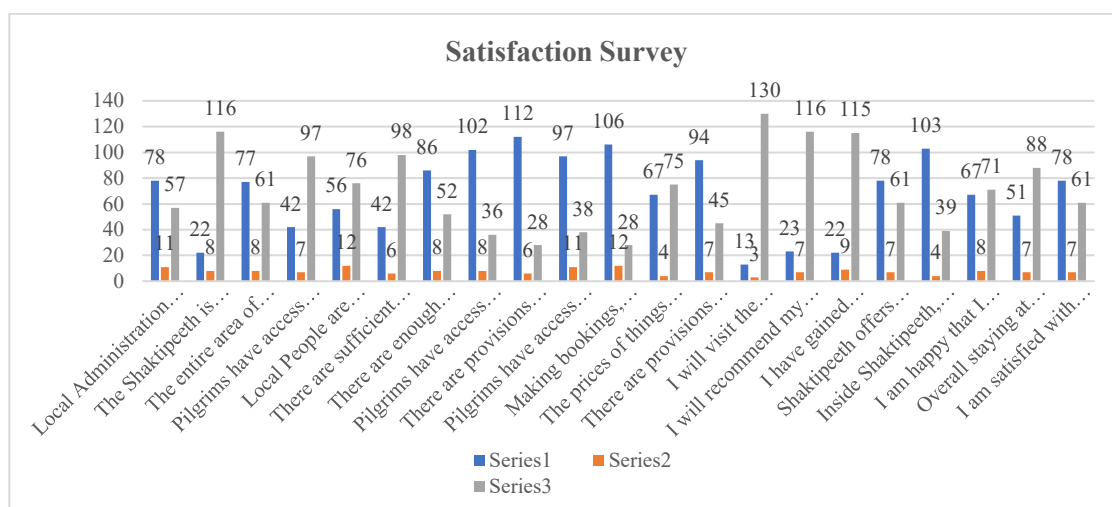


### Satisfaction Dimensions Survey

As clearly visible in the results of the satisfaction survey, a majority of respondents feel that local administration fails to offer a safe and secure environment to pilgrims. There is concern about the cleanliness of the surrounding environment as visitors are left wanting more when it comes to places of shopping and local cuisines around the Shakti Peeth. There is the issue associated with the availability of clean drinking water and the

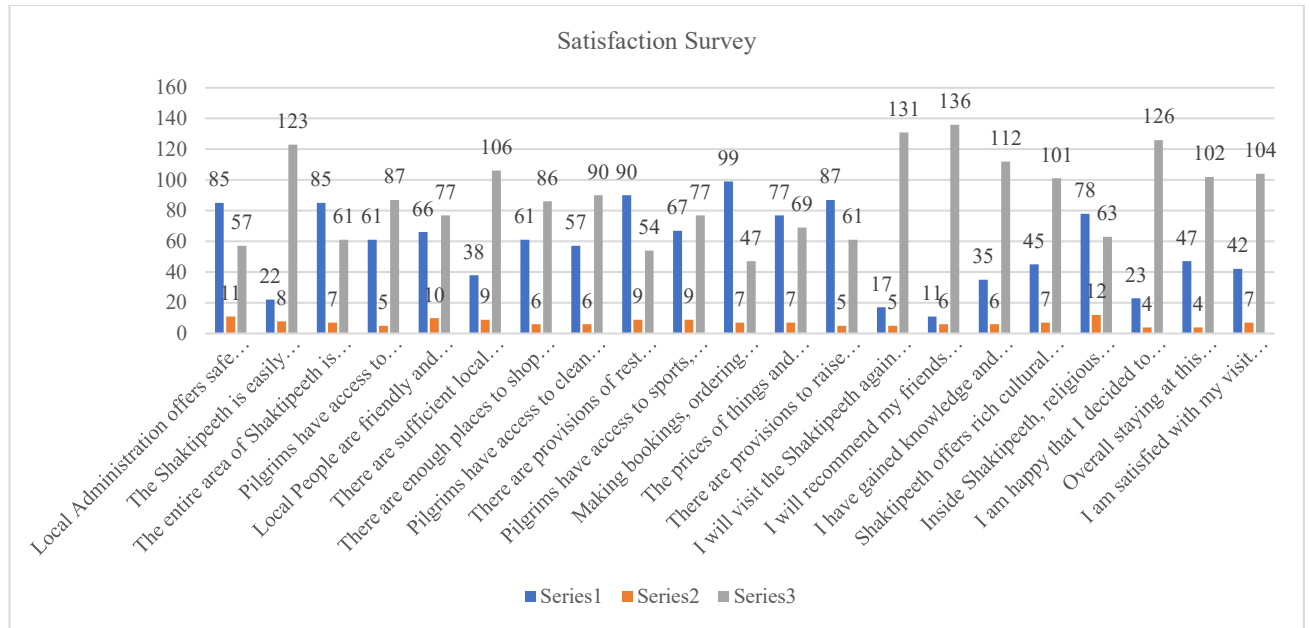
lack of rest benches has also been felt by visitors to the Jawala Ji ShaktiPeeth. There are not enough facilities to raise the complaint and inside the Shakti Peeth, the various religious activities that are performed are not very well organized. 53% of the total visitors have expressed their satisfaction with the experience while only 42% are fully satisfied with their experience with Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth.

**Figure 4.3: Satisfaction Survey Jawala Ji Peeth**



As revealed by the satisfaction survey of the Chinmastika Peeth, there is considerable scope for improvement for both the local Administration and the hygienic and clean surroundings in Chinmastika Peeth. Pilgrims expressed their satisfaction with the quality of hotels and staying facilities although the same is not true as far as the provision regarding making bookings, ordering food, and staying facilities and lack of provisions to raise complaints about the facilities and other amenities. 86% of the visitors have expressed their desire to revisit and recommend their friends and relatives to visit the destination. Again 73% gained knowledge from their visit while 82% were happy with the decision to visit Chinmastika Peeth. Overall, 68% expressed their satisfaction with their experience visiting the Peeth.

**Figure 4.4: Satisfaction Dimensions Survey Chinmastika Peeth**



#### 4.8) Comparative Analysis: Image and Satisfaction Dimensions

With the help of comparative data analysis related to the responses we received from the pilgrims visiting Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths, the study has retrieved very insightful information and knowledge about both these places of pilgrimage. It is interesting to observe that while both these places of religious importance are evaluated in the same manner by the pilgrims without having significant differences on the majority of parameters, there are some dimensions where the differences between the responses that we have received from the pilgrims are quite different. The first part of the survey is related to the image of the Peeths and here we have found that people are positively disposed towards the image of the pilgrim place and while they expressed a positive opinion about the local administration, they never shied away from highlighting the considerable scope of improvement that still exist in upgrading the facilities related to the village of pilgrims in these religious shrines. These observations are true in both the cases of Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths. While evaluating the response of pilgrims related to the image of Jawala Ji Peeth, it has been found that there is considerable scope for improvement when it comes to the friendliness of the local people and authority in dealing with the pilgrims. Out of the total responses, 56% expressed their satisfaction while only 29% were satisfied with the friendliness of the

behaviours that came their way. When it came to the cleanliness and greenery around the Jawala Ji Peeth, most respondents were not satisfied with 57% of respondents expressing their dissatisfaction with the surroundings around the temple premises. The results on the front of Chinmastika are no different. In fact, there is an uncanny similarity when it comes to the responses of pilgrims on the image dimension survey of Chinmastika peeth. Just like the results we have the seat in the case of Jawala Ji, the pilgrims visiting the Chinmastika expressed their dissatisfaction with the overall level of friendliness exhibited by the local people and authorities at the place. A total of 47% Expressed this satisfaction with the attitude of both local community and administrators which signifies that there is considerable scope for improvement when it comes to offering the facilities to the pilgrims in a more amicable and friendly manner. The level of this satisfaction with the cleanliness and greenery around the Chinmastika is also quite high pegging at 50%. It is important to know that in the case of Jawala Ji Peeth, this level of dissatisfaction is rated at higher at 57%. The good thing about both these places of pilgrimage is that visitors who come here for their offering their obeisance and respect here have a unique image and positive opinion about both these places. That said, given the higher level of agreement with the fact that there is considerable scope for improvement at both these places of religious importance, the holistic ecosystem related to travel and tourism in the state must make concerted efforts in collaboration with the local people and community to offer further friendly and pilgrims-oriented manner. The results of the satisfaction survey also offer profound learning for the entire ecosystem of the pilgrimage sites in Himachal Pradesh. Although the survey has been done keeping in mind the specific sites of Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths, the results can be easily utilised by other places of pilgrimage in the state and across the country. For the majority of parameters, pilgrims are dissatisfied with the current arrangement of the local community and administrators at both these pilgrimage places. There are concerns expressed about the safety and security environments that are being offered to the pilgrims and these doubts and issues are highlighted by pilgrims visiting both these religious shrines. The worry and disquiet about the safety and security of these places have been highlighted by the respondents (59% in Jawala Ji and 40% in Chinmastika while dissatisfaction about the access to the local cuisines has also been underscored by the pilgrims at both these places. The overall arrangement of the booking, staying,

flooding and lodging also figure prominently in the response offered by pilgrims at both places. 70% and 77% of pilgrims who were surveyed by the study on their visit to the Jawala Ji were found to be dissatisfied with the facilities with clean drinking water and toilets and provisions of the rest benches available at the site respectively. The percentage in the case of Chinmastika stands at a lower 37% and 59% respectively, indicating that the level of these facilities offered at Chinmastika is slightly better than what is offered to the pilgrims at the Jawala Ji Shaktippeth. 64% are dissatisfied with the complaints submission facility offered by the administration Jawala Ji while in the case of Chinmastika, 57% are found to be dissatisfied with the facility. Again we find that the overall performance of the administration located at the Chinmastika is better than that of Jawala Ji as rated by the respondents. Even when it comes to offering culture and Diversity to the pilgrims, the performance of the Chinmastika formed to be better than that of Jawala Ji. This might be because of the fact that Chinmastika is now far away from the border of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh and consequently, it records good numbers of pilgrims from Punjab as well. The Chinmastika is widely regarded as one of the most prominent spiritual places among the devotees in Punjab, giving the poor composition of the pilgrims who visit this place more dynamism and vibrance among others. In terms of the overall satisfaction of their visit experience to the pilgrimage place, 42% of the pilgrims are satisfied with their journey to the place while in the case of the Chinmastika, this number stands at 68%. Therefore, it is very much clear from the satisfaction survey that the overall scope of improvement is greater in Jawala Ji Peeth in comparison to the Chinmastika both these planes of religious importance have to continue with their efforts to upgrade the quality and overall experience to pilgrims even on the dimensions they are rated satisfactorily by pilgrims.

#### **4.9) Vendors Survey: Analysing Economic Conditions of Shakti Peeths**

Temple economy can be easily considered as one of the most striking aspects of the Indian Economy. According to the study conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the total size of the temple economy is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore. This roughly translates into 2.3% of the total size of the economy. The economic contribution of the temple economy is also very much evident in Himachal Pradesh. Especially when it comes to Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastika Peeths, the pilgrims are the



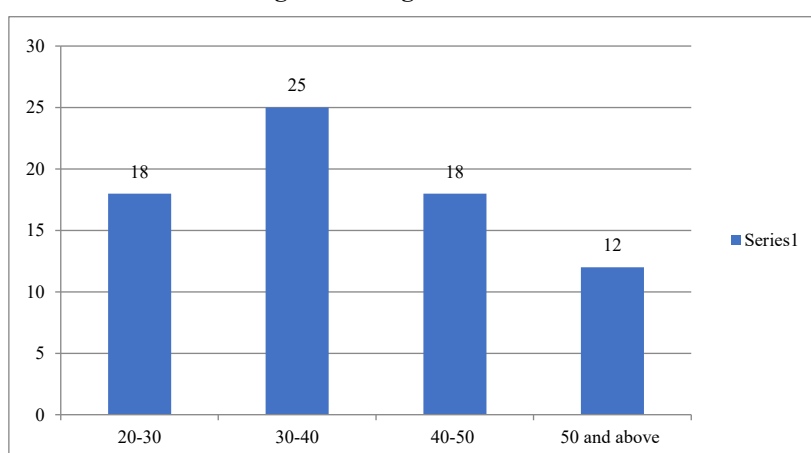
primary source of income for the local vendors. To analyse the economic aspect of the study and how the temple economy is impacting the economic well-being of the vendors in the place, we created a survey form and took data from the vendors belonging to both Jawala Ji and Chhinnmastiak Peeths. Specifically, we focused on the economic aspects of conducting the business and how the inflow of pilgrims leads to the economic prosperity of vendors. The questionnaire also asks about the overall satisfaction of the vendors in running the business and whether they would like to continue with the business in the future.

**Table 4.1 Demographic Details: Jawala Ji Vendors (n=73)**

Age	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
20-30	18	25
30-40	25	34
40-50	18	25
50 and above	12	16
Total	73	

It is clear from the table and the chart below that the majority of the vendors are in the age bracket of 30-40, representing 34% of the total 73 vendors surveyed in the Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth. The lowest number, i.e.12 belonged to the age bracket of 50 and above.

**Figure 4.5: Age Classification**



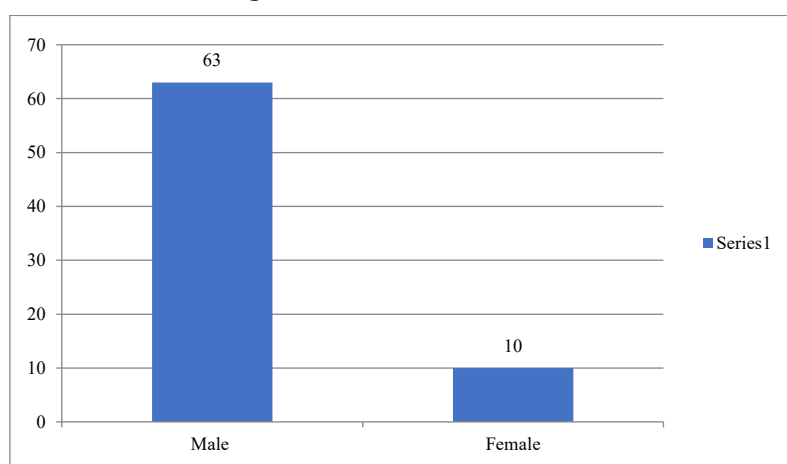
**Table 4.2: Gender Distribution**

Gender		
--------	--	--

Male	63	86%
Female	10	14%
Total	73	

An overwhelming majority of vendors were male (86%) out of the total vendors sampled by the study, with only 14% of businesses run by women.

**Figure 4.6: Gender Distribution**



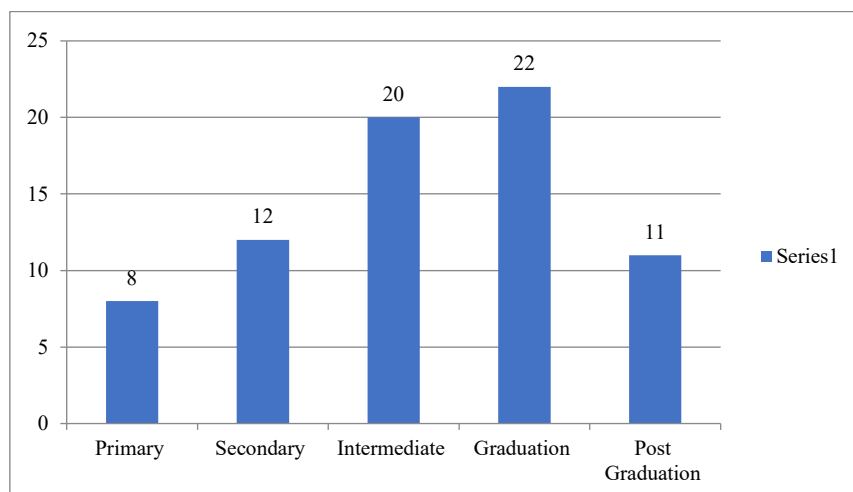
**Table 4.3: Education Levels**

Education		
Primary	8	11%
Secondary	12	16%
Intermediate	20	27%
Graduation	22	30%
Post Graduation	11	15%
Total	73	

Out of the total 73 vendors surveyed for the study, 30% of the total sample have completed the graduation, while 27% have completed the intermediate education.

Interestingly, 15% have done the post-graduation, after which they decided to have their businesses.

**Figure 4.7: Education Levels**



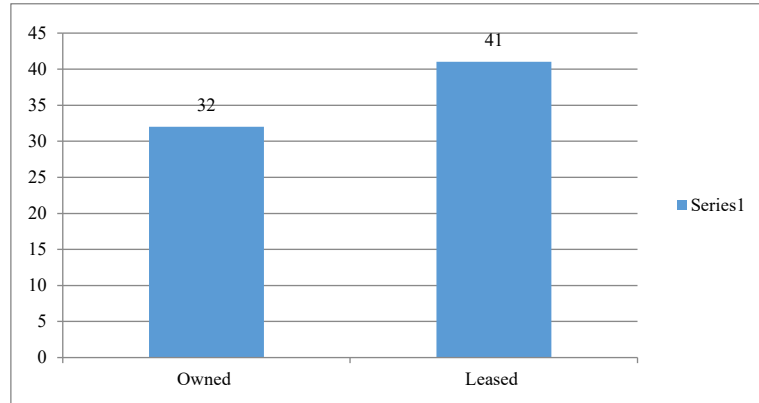
## Ownership Status

**Table 4.4: Ownership Status**

Ownership Status		
Owned	32	44%
Leased	41	56%
Total	73	

56% of vendors have their shops on lease while 44% are owners of the land from where they are running their businesses. This is an important factor of consideration as owning the shop can significantly bring down the cost associated with running businesses.

**Figure 4.8: Ownership Status**

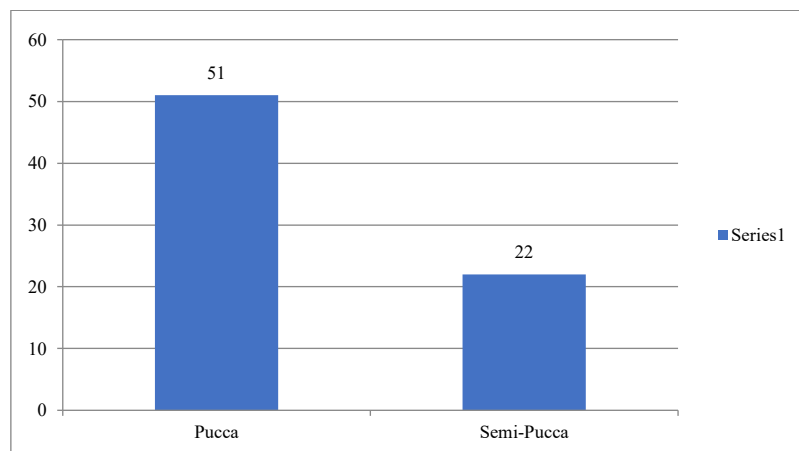


**Table 4.5: House Type**

House Type		
Pucca	51	70%
Semi-Pucca	22	30%
Total	73	

Reflecting upon the prosperity of the vendors, 70% own a pucca house while 30% live in the semi-pucca house. This indicates that vendors majority of vendors are economically well-off as they are earning a decent income to own a pucca house.

**Figure 4.9: House Type**



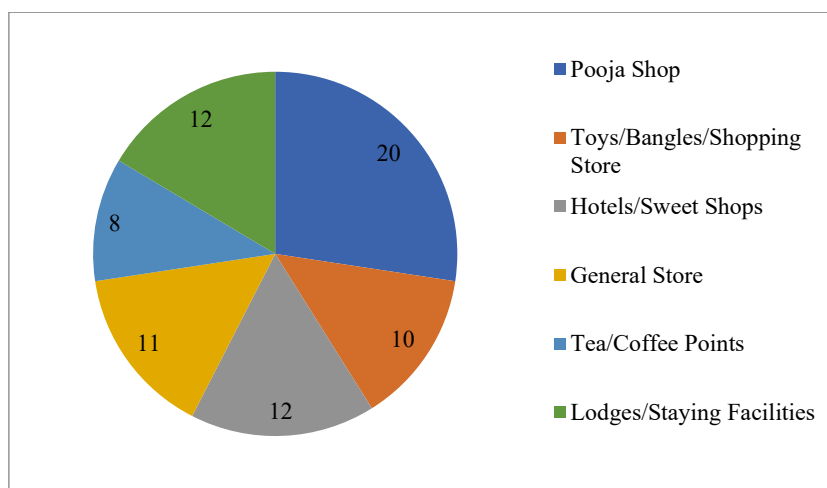
## 6. Shop Category

**Table 4.6: Shop Category**

Shop Category		
Pooja Shop	20	27%
Toys/Bangles/Shopping Store	10	14%
Hotels/Sweet Shops	12	16%
General Store	11	15%
Tea/Coffee Points	8	11%
Lodges/Staying Facilities	12	16%
	73	

Given the significance of the place, it comes as no surprise that 27% of the total shops belong to the pooja category. Hotels and lodging facilities follow with 16% each while tea and coffee points with 11% stack at the bottom.

**Figure 4.10: Shop Category**



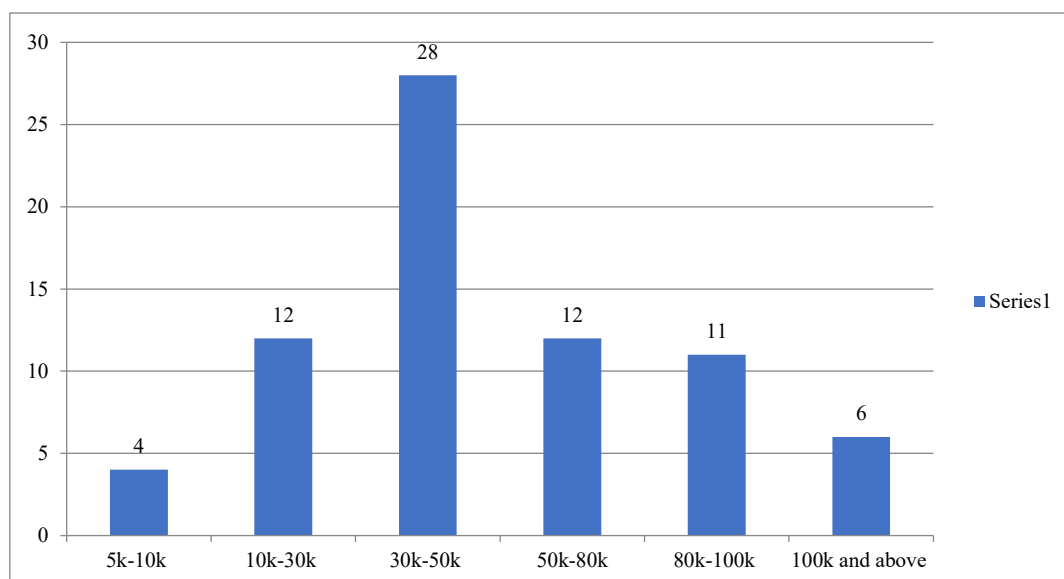
## Income Distribution

**Table 4.7: Income Distribution**

Monthly Income		
5k-10k	4	5%
10k-30k	12	16%
30k-50k	28	38%
50k-80k	12	16%
80k-100k	11	15%
100k and above	6	8%
	73	

The majority of vendors are earning between Rs 30-50k (38%), while 16% each are making between 50-80k and 10k-30k. 8% of the total vendors are also earning above 100k in a month, which signifies their financial prowess and prosperity. Only 5% reported having income in the range of 5-10k.

**Figure 4.11: Income Distribution**



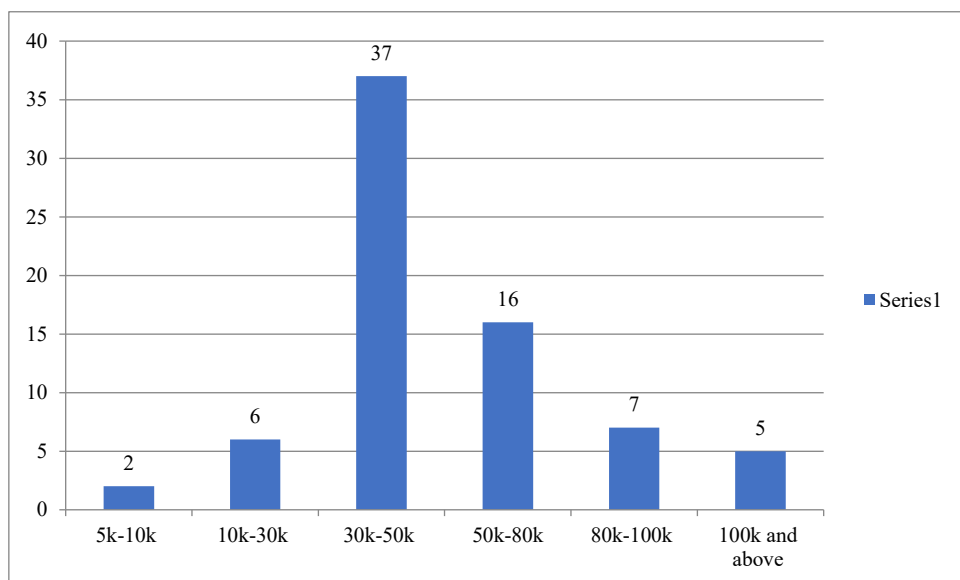
## Monthly Expenditure

**Table 4.8: Monthly Expenditure**

Monthly Family Expenditure		
5k-10k	2	3%
10k-30k	6	8%
30k-50k	37	51%
50k-80k	16	22%
80k-100k	7	10%
100k and above	5	7%
	73	

51% of vendors have reported the monthly expenditure between 30k and 50k while 7% have their monthly family expenditure exceeding 100k. 22% of the vendors are spending between 50k and 80k while 10% spend between 80k and 100k as their monthly family expenses.

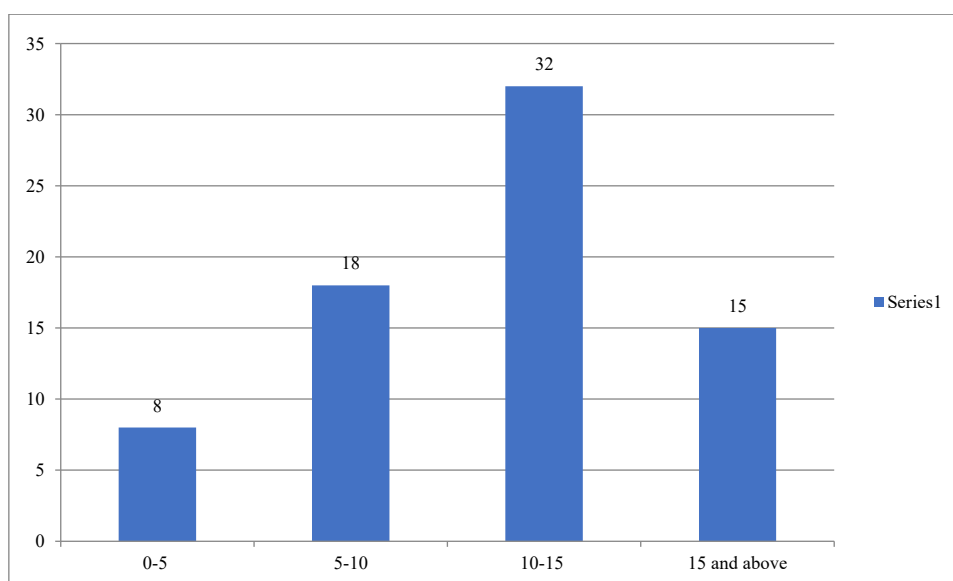
**Figure 4.12: Monthly Expenditure**



**Table 4.9: Years in Business**

No. of Years in Business		
0-5	8	11%
5-10	18	25%
10-15	32	44%
15 and above	15	21%
	73	

44% of the surveyed vendors have been doing business for 10-15 years while 21% have been running the shops for more than 15 years now. 25% are in the business between 5 and 10 years while 11% have been running the shops for less than 5 years.

**Figure 4.13: Years in Business**

## Total Investment

**Table 4.10: Total Investment**

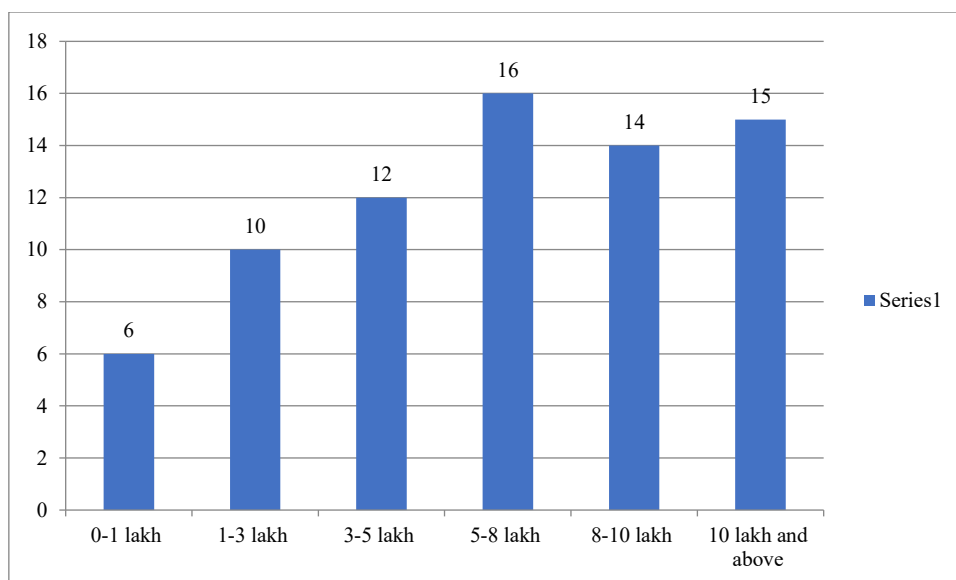
Investment in Business		
0-1 lakh	6	8%
1-3 lakh	10	14%
3-5 lakh	12	16%



5-8 lakh	16	22%
8-10 lakh	14	19%
10 lakh and above	15	21%
	73	

21% of the vendors have invested more than 10 lakh in starting their business while 22% have invested in the range of 5 lakh and 8 lakh. The small businesses belonging to the tea stalls and eateries have invested within the range of up to 1 lakh is just 8% while 16% have invested between 3 lakh and 5 lakh.

**Figure 4.14: Total Investment Incurred**



## High Sales Season

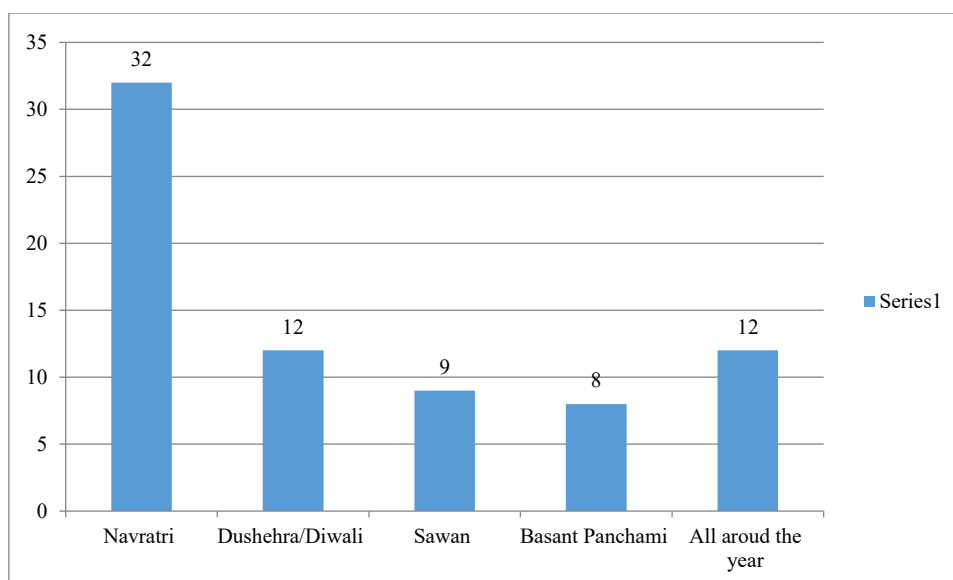
**Table 4.11: High Sales Season**

High Sales Occasions		
Navratri	32	44%
Dushehra/Diwali	12	16%
Sawan	9	12%
Basant Panchami	8	11%
All around the year	12	16%

	73	
--	----	--

As expected, 44% of the vendors described Navratri season as the highest sales occasion during the year followed by the Dussehra/Diwali and the all-year-around responses with each garnering 16% of the sales. Sawan and Basant Panchami stacked at the bottom with 12% and 11% of the total responses.

**Figure 4.15: High Sales Season**



## Satisfaction with Business

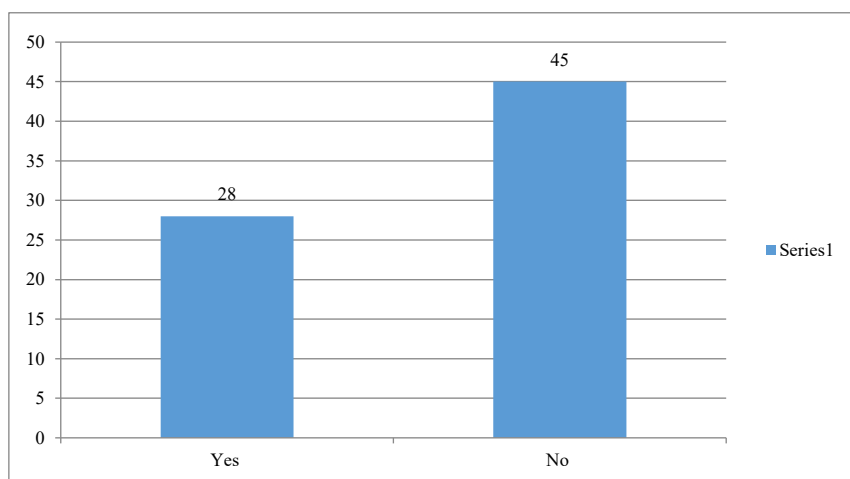
**Table 4.12: Business Satisfaction**

Satisfied with Business		
Yes	28	38%
No	45	62%
	73	

In terms of satisfaction from their business prospects, 62% business owners expressed concerns about the business and responded in a negative term. The rest of 38%

expressed satisfaction with their business which is less than the vendors who are not satisfied with prospects.

**Figure 4.16: Business Satisfaction**



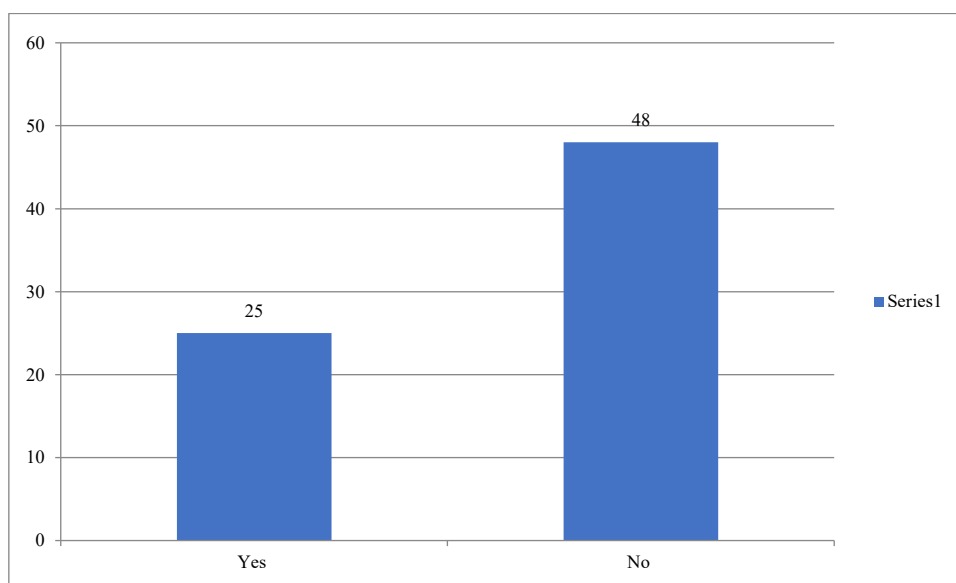
## Business Continuation

**Table 4.13: Business Continuation**

Want to Continue with Business		
Yes	25	34%
No	48	66%
	73	

An overwhelming majority of 66% expressed the wish of not to continue with the business while only 34% gave an affirmative reply about whether they want to take their venture forward. This number indicates the high level of satisfaction among the vendors about the current socio-economic scenario and points towards the larger level of economic issues that vendors in Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth are facing.

**Figure 4.17: Business Continuation**



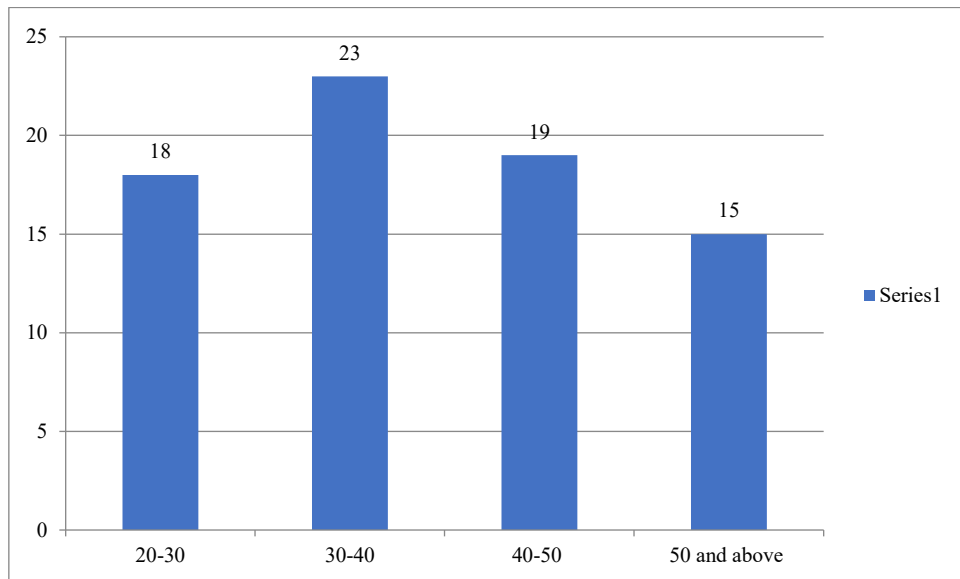
#### **Vendor Survey of Chinmastika Peeth (n=75)**

**Table 4.14: Age Distribution**

Age		
20-30	18	24%
30-40	23	31%
40-50	19	25%
50 and above	15	20%
Total	75	

It is clear from the table and the chart below that the majority of the vendors are in the age bracket of 30-40 representing 31% of the total 75 vendors surveyed in the Chhinmastika Peeth. The lowest number, i.e. 12 belonged to the age bracket of 50 and above.

**Figure 4.18: Age Distribution**

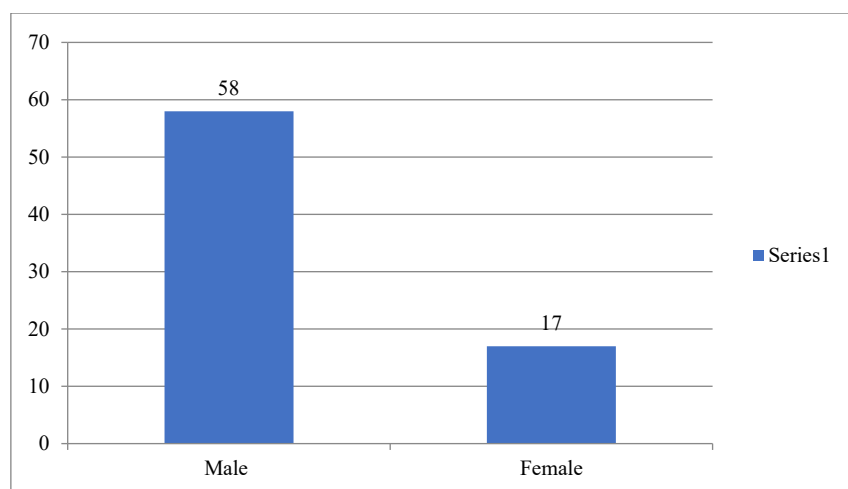


**Table 4.15: Gender Distribution**

Gender		
Male	58	77%
Female	17	23%
Total	75	

The majority of vendors were male (77%) out of the total vendors sampled by the study with rest of the 23% of businesses run by women.

**Figure 4.19: Age Distribution**

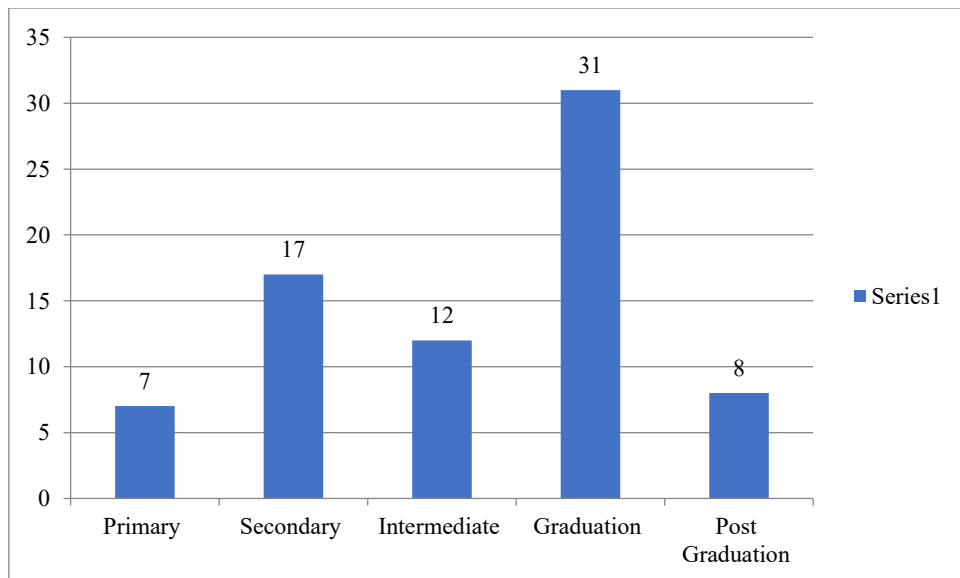


**Table 4.16: Education Levels**

Education		
Primary	7	9%
Secondary	17	23%
Intermediate	12	16%
Graduation	31	41%
Post-Graduation	8	11%
Total	75	

Out of the total 75 vendors surveyed for the study, 41% of the total sample has completed the graduation while 16% completed the intermediate education. In addition, 11% have done the post-graduation after which they decided to have their businesses in the Chhinnmastika Peeth.

**Figure 4.20: Education Levels**

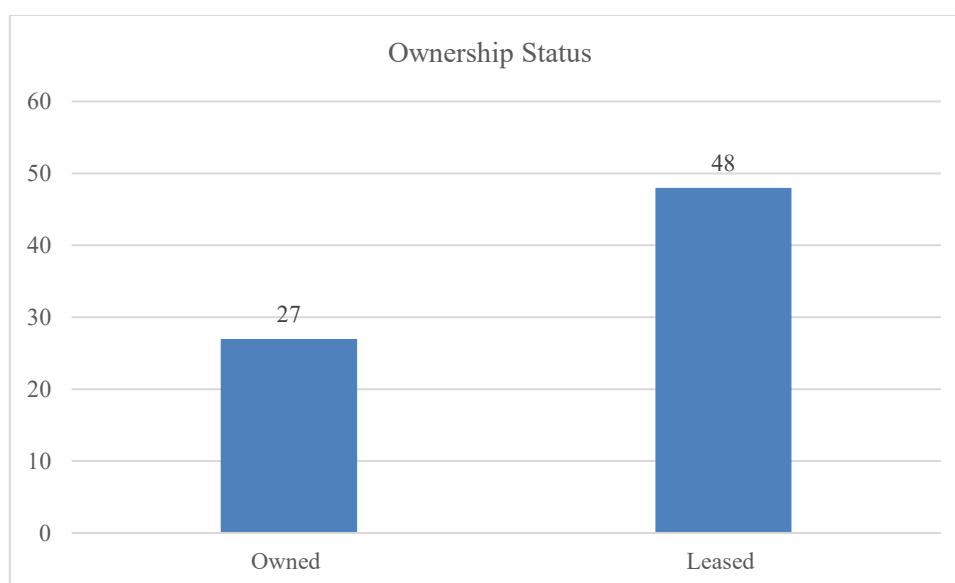


**Table 4.17: Ownership Status**

Ownership Status		
Owned	27	36%
Leased	48	64%
Total	75	

64% of vendors have their shops on lease while only 36% are owners of the land from where they are running their businesses. This is an important factor of consideration as owning the shop can significantly bring down the cost associated with running businesses and can lead to more savings.

**Figure 4.21: Ownership Status**



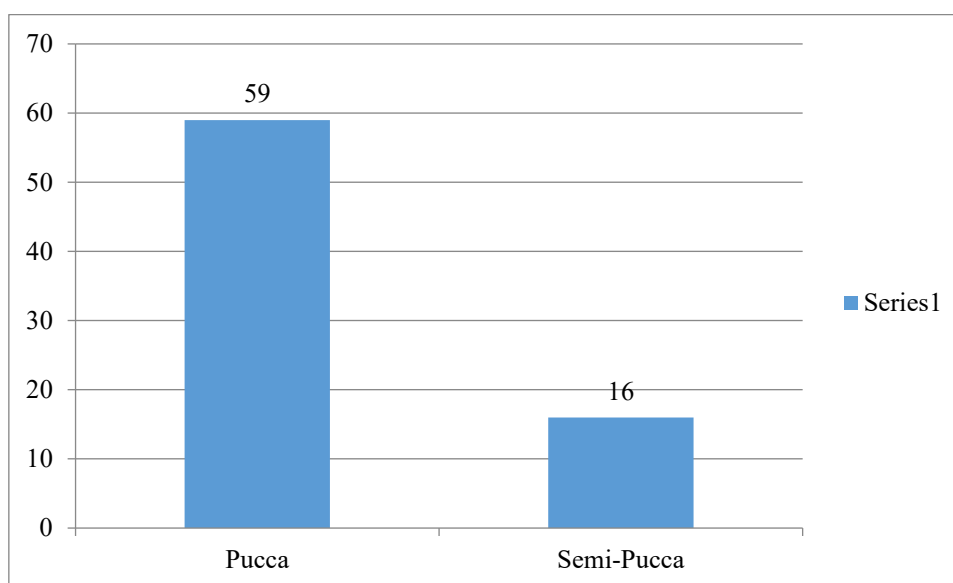
**Table 4.18: House Type**

House Type		
Pucca	59	79%
Semi-Pucca	16	21%

Total	75	
-------	----	--

79% of vendors in the sample size of 75 own a pucca house while 21% live in the semi-pucca house. This indicates that vendors majority of vendors are economically well-off as they are earning a decent income to own a pucca house.

**Figure 4.22: House Type**



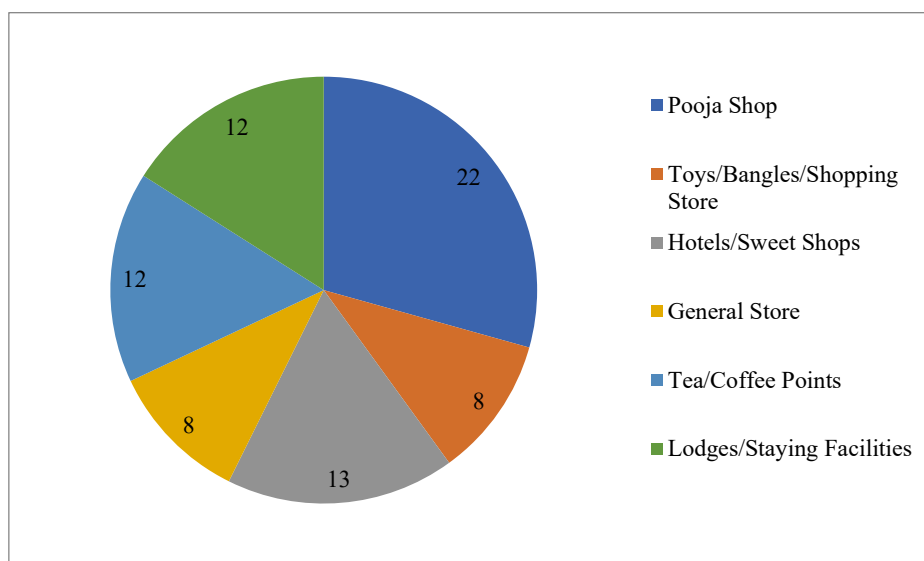
**Table 4.19: Shop Category**

Shop Category		
Pooja Shop	22	29%
Toys/Bangles/Shopping Store	8	11%
Hotels/Sweet Shops	13	17%
General Store	8	11%
Tea/Coffee Points	12	16%
Lodges/Staying Facilities	12	16%
	75	



As the survey belongs to the Chhinnmastika Peeth, it comes as no surprise that 29% of the total shops belong to the pooja category. Hotels numbers represent 17% of the total sample size while lodging facilities and tea/coffee joints follow with 16% each as a part of the total sample size.

**Figure 4.23: Shop Categories**

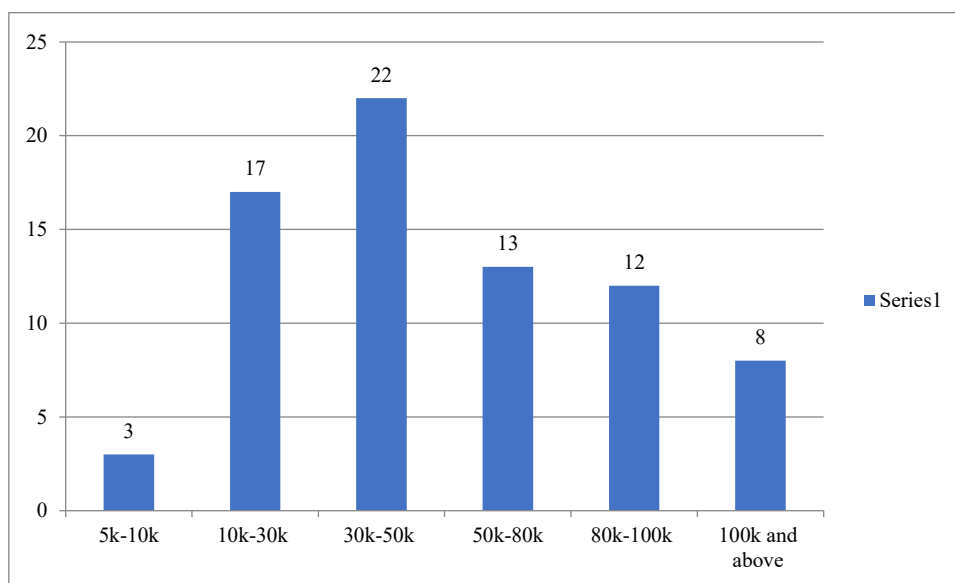


**Table 4.20: Income Distribution**

Monthly Income ( in Rs)		
5k-10k	3	4%
10k-30k	17	23%
30k-50k	22	29%
50k-80k	13	17%
80k-100k	12	16%
100k and above	8	11%
	75	

The majority of vendors are earning between Rs 30k and 50k (29%) while 17% each are making between 50k and 80k. The percentage of vendors earning between 10k and 30k is 23% while 11% makes above 100k in a month. Only 4% reported earning between 5k and 10k in a month.

**Figure 4.24: Income Distribution**



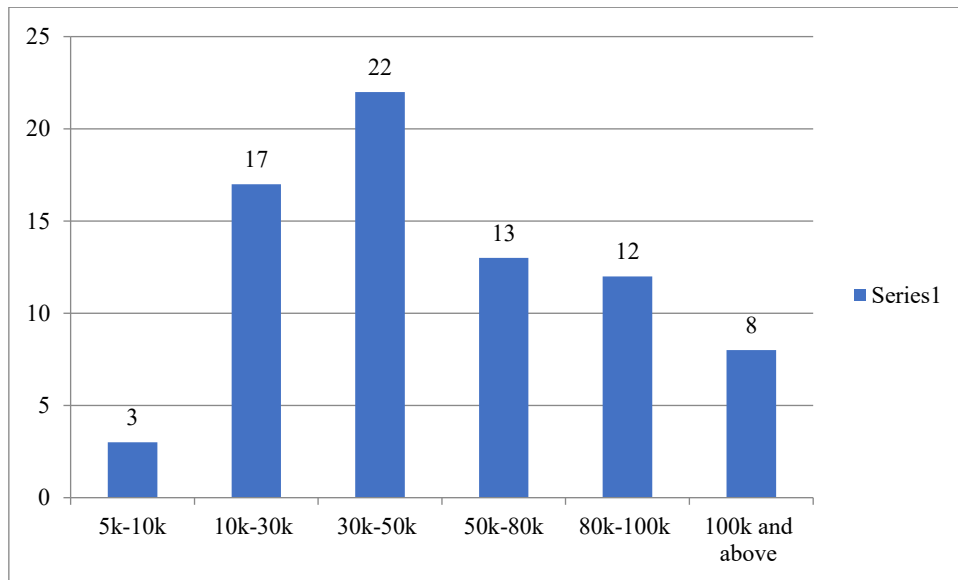
**Table 4.21: Monthly Expenditure**

Monthly Family Expenditure		
5k-10k	2	3%
10k-30k	12	16%
30k-50k	42	56%
50k-80k	12	16%
80k-100k	4	5%
100k and above	3	4%
	75	

56% of vendors have reported the monthly expenditure between 30k and 50k while 4% have their monthly family expenditure exceeding 100k. 16% of the vendors are

spending between 50k and 80k while 5% spend between 80k and 100k as their monthly family expenses.

**Figure 4.25: Monthly Expenditure**

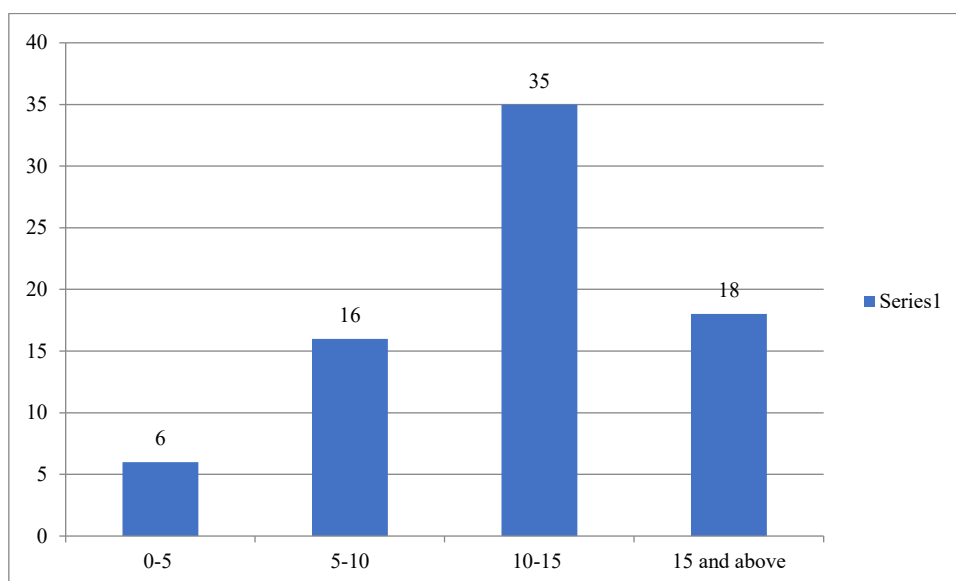


**Table 4.22: Years in Business**

No. of Years in Business		
0-5	6	8%
5-10	16	21%
10-15	35	47%
15 and above	18	24%
	75	

47% of the surveyed vendors have been doing business for 10-15 years while 24% have been running the shops for more than 15 years now. 21% are in the business between 5 and 10 years while 8% have been running the shops for less than 5 years.

**Figure 4.26: Years in Business**

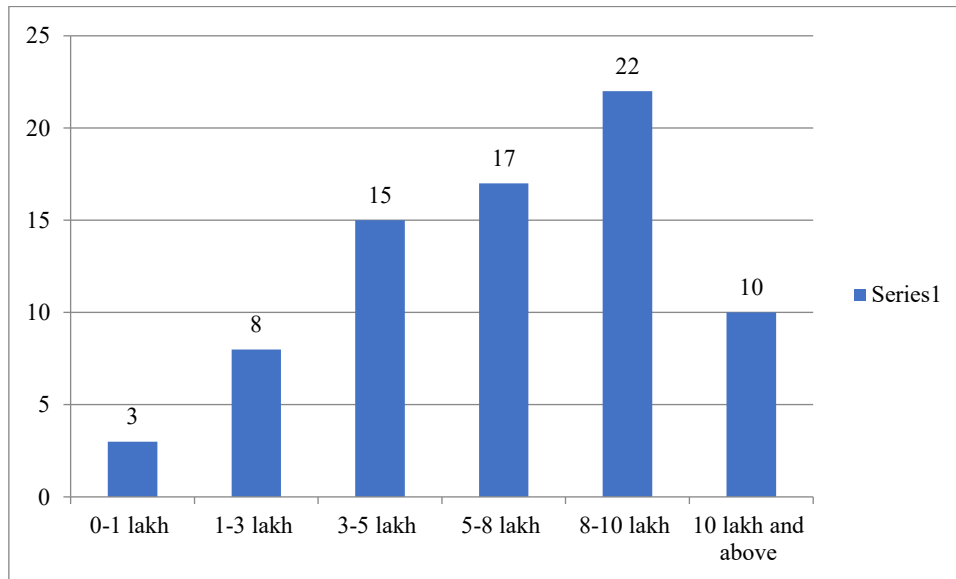


**Table 4.23: Total Investment**

Investment in Business		
0-1 lakh	3	4%
1-3 lakh	8	11%
3-5 lakh	15	20%
5-8 lakh	17	23%
8-10 lakh	22	29%
10 lakh and above	10	13%
	75	

13% of the vendors have invested more than 10 lakh in starting their business while 23% have invested in the range of 5 lakh and 8 lakh. The small businesses belonging to the tea stalls and eateries have invested within the range of up to 1 lakh is just 4% while 20% have invested between 3 lakh and 5 lakh.

**Figure 4.27: Total Investment Incurred**

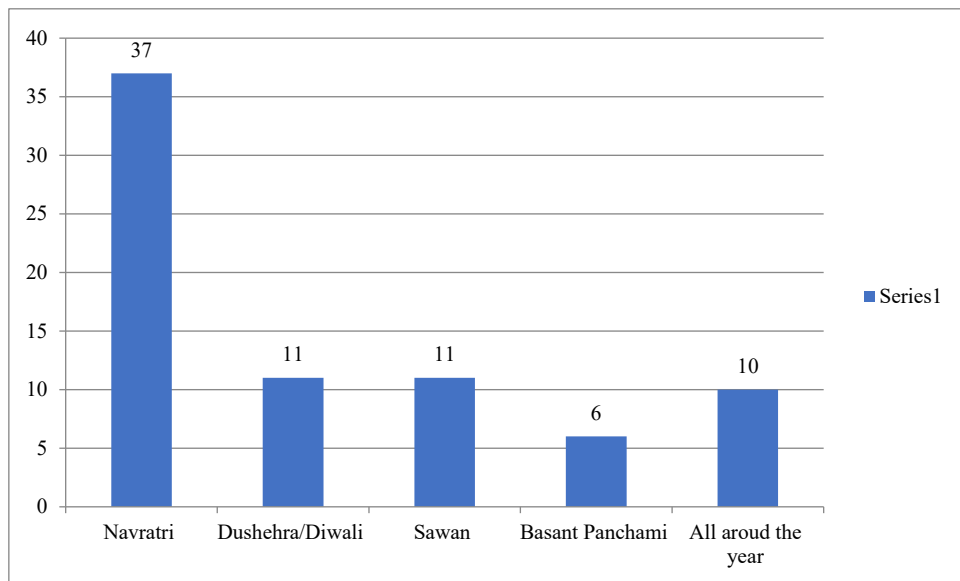


**Table 4.24: High Sales Season**

High Sales Occasions		
Navratri	37	49%
Dushehra/Diwali	11	15%
Sawan	11	15%
Basant Panchami	6	8%
All around the year	10	13%
	75	

As expected, 49% of the vendors described Navratri season as the highest sales occasion during the year followed by the Dussehra/Diwali and the Sawan responses with each garnering 15% of the total responses. all round the year and Basant Panchami stacked at the bottom with 13% and 8% of the total responses.

**Figure 4.28: High Sales Season**

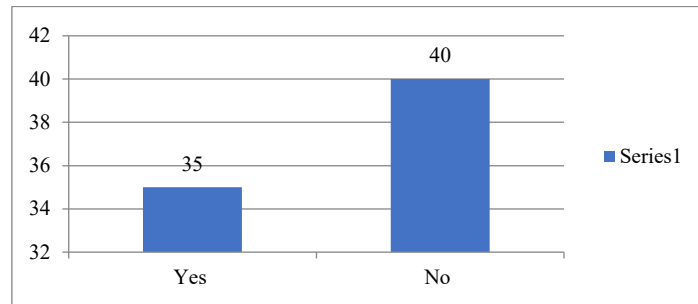


**Table 4.25: Satisfaction with Business**

Satisfied with Business		
Yes	35	47%
No	40	53%
	75	

In terms of satisfaction with their business prospects, 53% of business owners expressed concerns about the business and responded in a negative term. The rest 47% expressed satisfaction with their business which is less than the vendors who are not satisfied with prospects.

**Figure 4.29: Satisfaction with Business**

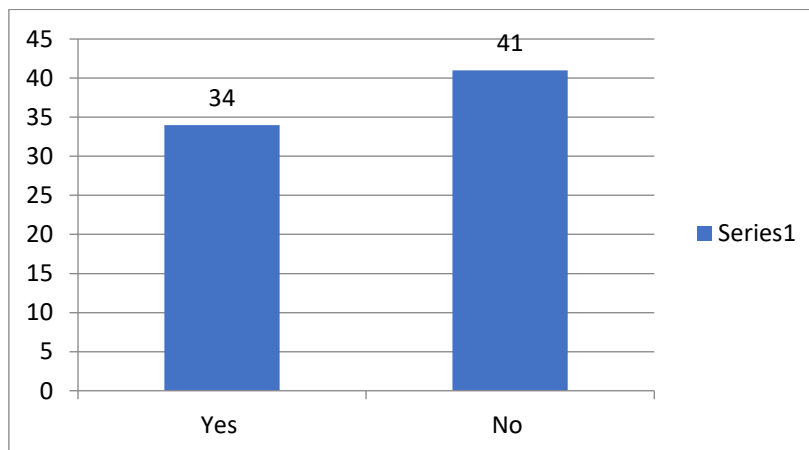


**Table 4.26: Business Continuation**

Want to Continue with Business		
Yes	34	45%
No	41	55%
	75	

A majority of 55% expressed the wish not to continue with the business while 45% gave an affirmative reply about whether they want to take their venture forward. This number indicates the high level of dissatisfaction among the vendors about the current socio-economic scenario and points towards the larger level of economic issues that vendors in Chinmastika Peeth are facing.

**Figure 4.30: Business Continuation**



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5.1) Results, Summary, & Conclusion**

India is blessed with a very rich heritage and the cultural significance of the place can be easily known from the variety of pilgrimage places that are located around the country. Spiritually too the country is the home to many religious places and there have been followers of different religions spread across the nation. There are a number of historical monuments located in the country which add to its vibrant cultural heritage and freedom struggle. The architectural heritage of the country is also very strong and some of the most amazing creations include caves of ancient India to skyscrapers of the contemporary time. The country has a rich culture and Dravidian architectural perspectives with the former being prominent in the northern part while the latter showing its dominance in the southern parts of the country. This particular study specifically looks into the Shakti tradition in India with specific reference to the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths in the northern state of Himachal Pradesh. These religious places are very famous among devotees throughout the country and it's very significant to know that both these shrines belong to the concept of Goddess Shakti. According to Hindu tradition, the dead body of Sati was cut into 51 pieces by Lord Vishnu that ultimately led to the establishment of 51 Shakti Peeths in the country. Out of this total numbers, one Shakti Peeth is in Himachal Jawala Ji while rest four other places of great Devi Reverence is also part of the state's religious heritage. The names of these five Peeths are as follows: Chintpurni Temple, Jawalamukhi Temple, Bajreshwari Temple, Chamunda Devi Temple, and Naina Devi Temple. Every year lakhs of devotees visit these Devi Peeths and contribute to the overall economy of the state. These pilgrims have an important contribution to the generation of employment opportunities and the overall economy of the state as well. A large number of sectors including hospitality, entertainment, transport, and local economy receive their income from the visitors and hence, it's important that these places must have the proper infrastructure facilities so that pilgrims keep on visiting these sites and bring growth and well-being for the local communities.

Only a few studies had been conducted in the past that looked into detail the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Shakti Concept and its relationship with



Jawala Ji and Chinmastika as mentioned in Vedas, Puranas, scholarly writings, and manuscripts. Most of the studies on Shakti tradition are Generic in nature and least attention has been paid to these places of pilgrimage at a local level. The comparative study of different peeths in Himachal Pradesh has not been done - especially when it comes to the comparison between Jawala Ji and Chinmastika peeths (Chintpurni). The exploration ranges from little to none when it comes to describing how these two local deities are comparable in terms of their traditional history, place of belongingness, socio-cultural aspects, enrichment of local culture, and their influence on societies. Collective research envisaging religious, cultural, social and economic perspectives of these peeths and the analysis of the visitors' perceptions have not been looked into the detail by the previous studies and researches. In terms of the objective, the study was conducted specifically to complete the following objectives:

- To study, explore, and analyse the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Jawala Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth.
- To compare the two Peeths in terms of tradition, culture and their influence
- To explore the possibilities in the transformation of these Peeths into religious tourism and contribution to the local economy thereof.

In order to complete these objectives, both secondary and primary data were used and by combining the insights from both these data types, the study was successfully able to complete its objectives. While the secondary data was collected from different kinds of literature reviews, historical records, and archives along with the books and other published material, the primary data was collected from the visitors who visited the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths during the specific period of time. The first objective was completed with the help of the literature review and secondary data sources while for completing the second and third objectives, a mix of secondary data sources and primary data sources were used.

**5.2) Achievement of Objective 1:** In reference to objective number 1 in the study, the references from the past literature along with the Vedas, Upanishads, and other sacred texts were taken. In order to know the evolutionary linkage of the Jawala Ji Shakti

peeth, it was essential for us to trace the evolution of the Shakti concept. For this, specific chronology of the concept from the ancient Hindu texts was referred and then the study came up with the following results. The tenth Mandal of Rigveda has the mention of the Shakti concept. Specifically, the daughter of the sage Ambhrun, Vaak first mentioned the concept of Shakti by glorifying her appearance in the following verse: Aham Rudre Bhirbasuvischaramyham. Shakti concept has been mentioned in various Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas with all these religious texts emphasizing Shakti as the basis of the world and its consciousness. The scriptures state that it is only because of the Shakti, that the consciousness in the world prevails and thus, Shakti becomes an operating basis for the universe. The objective 1 pertains to the study, exploration, and analyses of the historical background and evolutionary linkages of Jawala Ji Peeth and Chinmastika Peeth., following results have been obtained by the study:

### **Religious/Mythological Account of Shakti Evolution**

The tenth Mandal of Rigveda has the first mention of the Shakti concept. Specifically, the daughter of the sage Ambhrun, Vaak first mentioned the concept of Shakti by glorifying her appearance in the following verse:

“Aham Rudre Bhirbasuvischaramyham”

Shakti concept has been mentioned in various Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas with all these religious texts emphasizing Shakti as the basis of the world and its consciousness. The scriptures state that it is only because of the Shakti, the consciousness in the world prevails and thus, Shakti should be considered as “life force” for the universe that is infusing the consciousness in this entire cosmos. The importance of the Shakti concept is also emphasized by the Shankaracharya (one of the sacred, cult titles used by the head of monasteries) in the Soundarya Lahari where it has been said that only when the Lord Shiva get the company of the Shakti, this world attains the state of consciousness. This implies that the union of both Shiv and Shakti is necessary to make the world conscious and help it operates in a desired manner. In Durga Saptashati as mentioned in the Markandeya Purana, it has been emphasized that the only vibration that is making the whole world conscious is Shakti. The devotees who embrace the devotion of Shakti

Concept need not do anything else to achieve the salvation. This underscores the highest levels of power, might, and prowess that embracing of Shakti can offer to you. It has been mentioned in Lalitha Sahasranamam that devotees who take Lord Shiva's name get more fortune than those who take the name of Lord Vishnu one thousand times. Even more, greater is the divinity of the Devi Lalita name whose recital for only one time can accrue you more fortune than the combined name of Lord Vishnu and Shiva. The importance of the Shakti concept has also been emphasized by the Shankaracharya (one of the sacred and cult titles used by the head of monasteries) in the Soundarya Lahari where it has been said that only when the lord Shiva gets the company of the Shakti, this world attains the state of consciousness. In Durga Saptashati in the Markandeya Purana, it has been emphasized that there is only one vibration that is making the whole world conscious is the concept of Shakti. The devotees who embraced the concept of Shakti need not do anything to achieve salvation. Lalitha Sahasranamam, it has been mentioned that devotees who take Lord Shiva's name get more fortune than those who take the name of Lord Vishnu one thousand times. Even more, greater is the divinity of the Devi Lalita name whose recital for only one time can accrue you more fortune than the combined name of Lord Vishnu and Shiva. According to Vedas, Sati was born in the house of Prajapati Daksh who was the son of Brahma and married to Lord Shiva. The father of Sati was not happy with the marriage and organised great Yajna. In the event, all sages and gods were invited but Daksh consciously insulted Shiva by not inviting him. Sati went to her father's house to confront him and ask for the reason for not inviting Lord Shiva. When she entered the place of the Yajna, Daksh further insulted Shiva by calling him names, thereby prompting Sati to throw herself in the sacred fire of Yajna. Angry Shiva then created Virbhadr from the lock of his hair and along with destroying the Yajna, Virbhadr killed Daksh. Shiva then took the dead body of Sati in his arms and then started doing the dance of Destruction (Tandav). To save the earth, Lord Vishnu then cut the body of Sati into 51 pieces and all places where these pieces fell are today known as Shakti Peeths. (12 Shaktipeeths outside India: 2 in Pakistan, 7 in Bangladesh, 2 in Nepal, 1 in China). Counted among Ashtadasa Shaktipeethas, Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth is dedicated to the goddess Jwalamukhi. The peeth is situated in district Kangra and is 30 km south of the valley in Himachal Pradesh. The temple is aureate of Gold and has silver doorways

and the structure has a unique sense of architecture to it. The distinguishing aspect of Jawala Shakti Peeth is that there is no idol to worship and rather devotees pay their respect to the flame emerging from a rock side which is continuously burning without any external fuel or assistance. The flame is considered a manifestation of the power of nine Goddesses that include Saraswati, Mahalaxmi, Mahakali, Chandi, Hinglaj, Unpurna, Bindhy Basni, Anji Devi, and Ambika. According to Hindu mythology, Adishakti appeared from the Flames in order to help Lord Vishnu and other Gods to destroy the Demons residing in the Himalayan mountains. In order to destroy the Demons, Gods under the leadership of Lord Vishnu concentrated their energy which ultimately resulted in the emergence of a huge fire from the ground. From these flames emerged Adishakti who is considered the ultimate power of this universe.

### **Historical Account of Shakti Concept Evolution**

The Wonder that was India talks about the evolution of the Hindu religion across the time periods ranging from Indus Valley Civilization to invasion of Aryans. The various beliefs related to the Hindu Religion including the mention of the Shakti is discussed in the book. The book offers deep insights into the social cultural practices of ancient Hindu society and how the non-violent approach adopted by the Jains and Buddha impacted the civilizational renaissance. The book *Shakti: A Spiritual Experience* by deep dives into realms of undefined world and inspire authors to interpret in their own words the concept of Shakti. Associating Shakti with undefined consciousness, the book offers a variety of interpretation related to the Shakti and its forms. The concept is approached both from the perspective of personal form and impersonal form and leave it to readers how they want to pay their obeisance to the Shakti. The supremacy of the divine energy called Shakti is explored in the *Cult of Mother Goddess* by Visvaprakasa Gupta (1999) while the comparison of the different religious beliefs and their socio-cultural influence is discussed in the *Golden Bough* by James Frazer (1922). Similarly different aspects of the Shakti tradition are highlighted by the studies conducted and the supremacy of the divine energy called Shakti is explored in the *Cult of Mother Goddess* by Visvaprakasa Gupta (1999). the study is relevant in a number of different manners explaining comprehensively the different forms of Shakti and their prominence among the Hindu society. The book explains the origin of the Shakti

concept with tracing its early roots to the Vedic period followed by the different changes in the forms of the deity in accordance with the influence exercised by the different ethnic and religious groups in the due course of the time. The author has gone into the detail of the supremacy and the cult status enjoyed by the Shakti and how influential the concept went on to become in the successive periods. An exploration on the similar lines was conducted and although the focus of the exploration by the author is on the archaeological evidences obtained from the excavation of the different civilizations. Although the study is not directly related to the concept of Shakti as described in the Hindu religion, the investigation by the authors in the form of Archaeological evidence takes into the consideration a total of 17 cultures that were prevailing worldwide in the past. Some of the prominent female Goddesses that are covered by the author include Aphrodite, Demeter, Asherah, Kybele, and Rhea among others. Corroborating with the observations from the study conducted by Visvaparakasa Gupta, here James also emphasize on the dominance of the female Goddesses and their influence over there worshippers. Another seminal work in the religious literature is conducted by the James Frazer. The book written by the author *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* is a classical account of the modern anthropology and influence of the sociology on the major cultural and religious aspects related to the religion and mythology. The author has taken the route of telling tales to make the things interesting and the striking characteristic of his work is the modernist approach. Rather than associating the religion with the theological perspective, the author associated all religious processes and procedures to the cultural aspects of the society. The influence of the author's work is substantial in the Europe although the simplified approach adopted by the author also doesn't find favor with many of the prospective audience as well as critics. The books use a number of symbols to drive home its point and with the help of various social cultural dimensions such as fertility rate, sacrificial practices, religious symbols, and many such things among others. Another classical work related to the Hindu religion and deities. The book covers comprehensively the entire idea of the Hindu religion and by taking the analogy of a rope, the author describes the Hindu culture as made up of the different threads coming together at a different point in time. The contribution of each thread is unique and the fact that the into religion is not only limited to India but also spans across continents including

South-East Asia and some parts of Africa, the book extensively look into both personal and impersonal forms of the god in the Hindu religion. It also covers very succinctly the evolution of the different forms of the deities and gods and how this evolution has been marked by contrasting socio-cultural behaviors exhibited by people at different points in times. The role of the different festivals along with the influence that pilgrimage activities on the society in relation to the specific Gods has also been discussed in detail in the book. A very comprehensive account of the Hindu Goddesses in the book titled *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*. The exploration is exclusively devoted to the different forms of female Goddesses and by describing their role in the important socio-cultural characteristics and religious practices, the author has approach the very complex Hindu religion from the perspective of divine feminine. Starting from the goddess of wealth, Sri Lakshmi the book explores the original of the Parvati, Sarasvati, Sita, Radha, Durga, Kali, and Mahadevi. All these female goddesses play an important role in the Hindu religion and depending upon their specific areas of domains, the devotees take part in the religious activities related to these divine powers. The reference given to Tara, Chinmastika, and Mahavidya has a direct relationship with our research, making this book as a primary source for our exploration related to the topic. Giving a detailed explanation of 1000 names of the Goddess Lalita, the cult work of provides a comprehensive picture of the Divine Power while helping devotees understand the meaning of the Devi names. The study takes a comprehensive approach and underscores all the perspective including the spiritual and Tantrik in explaining the relevance of the Goddess Lalita in socio cultural and religious context of the society. The distinguishing aspect of the book is its ability to reconstruct the names in a manner that is easily understandable by the readers. The source offers rich insights into the Sakta Philosophy and is a great source of information for those who wants to understand the basic underpinnings of the Tantra perspective. The compilation is also advantages to us as it offers a great source of information related to the characteristics exhibit by the Chinnmastika as it relates to second peeth of our study. Exploring the concept of Goddess worshipping at community levels, the book titled *At the Feet of the Goddess* takes altogether different approach to exploring the divine power mentioned in the Hindu religion. In a Stark contrast to the metaphysics and philosophical viewpoints, the

study explodes the various characteristics of the Devi worshipping in the local communities with special emphasis on the rituals, iconography, symbols, and procedures. The author also explain that many times that is not possible for the local worshiper to fully grasp the idea behind the worshipping philosophies and hence, it's incumbent for the elders to help communities understand how these practices will ultimately lead to was shipping of the divine philosophy. The author has also made a commendable attempt to simplify the abstract dimensions of the divine philosophy and how it can lead to the even the personification of deities in the coming times.

**5.3) Achievement of Objective 2:** In relation to objective number 2 which was related to the comparison of Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths in terms of their tradition, culture, and influence, the study again took the help of secondary data. The study of the Vedas, Upanishads, and other ancient texts related to the Hindu Scriptures was done. In addition, the references to the Shakti concept from Lalitha Sahastranam and Markandya Puran, Vayu Puran, and Shiv Mahapuram were also taken.

**Belief, Ideology, & Mythological Origin:** As mentioned before, there are a lot of commonalities when it comes to evolutionary linkages between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Shakti Peeth. Both Shaktipeeths have the same origin in Hindu mythology as these are different forms of divine mother relates to the Devi Sati. While at one place the tongue of Devi Sati fell, at another place the Head of Divine mother had fallen. This means that the first crucial difference arises in the form of the ideology behind the worshipping of these two Shakti Peeths. While one is focused on formless devotion with the Holy Flames being the centre of the attraction, the other is related to deity being worshipped in the form of a pindi. There is no deity/pindi that is being worshipped in the Jawala Ji which means that the overall appeal of this particular Shaktipeeth to attract devotees from across the globe is comparatively wider. Not only do devotees who believe in the personal forms of God pay their respect and obeisance to Jawala Ji but this particular Shaktipeeth is also a centre of attraction for many devotees who believe in the formless philosophy of praying to God or nature. Also known by the name of the goddess of light, the relevance and importance of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth can be easily understood in the context of the outwardly-oriented nature of the society we live in. Chinmastika Shakti Peeth, on the other hand, is a place of

devotion where a proper Pindi is located for worshipping purposes and this is not the same as Formless Devotion that happens to be prominent in the case of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth. This difference between the formless and personal form of the Goddess Shakti is one of the striking characteristics between Jawala Ji and Chinmastika. Worth mentioning here is the point that the historical evolution and linkages related to Mata Chintpurni Shaktipeeth are not the same in ancient literature and Hindu mythology. There is a lack of unanimity associated with the ancient tales associated with Sati's self-immolation that finally led to the establishment of 51 different ShaktiPeeths in all over South Asia. While most Scholars agree that Devi Sati fell at this place, others are of the opinion that the feet of Devi Sati fell here. According to Markandey Puran, another origin of the tale associated with Mata Chintpurni Temple, the campaigns of Devi Durga Jaya and Vijaya were thirsty for blood even after conquering the demons on the battlefield. In order to satiate their thirst for the blood, Devi Chandi severed her head and let her companions drink the blood to fulfill her thirst. These are two different accounts which mean that the historical records and mythological tales are not one in the case of Devi Chintpurni. That said, both shaktipeeths are very much relevant for devotees all across the globe and by offering spiritual abodes to pilgrims, these continue to serve as the prominent places for spiritual tourism in the Himachal Pradesh. As mentioned before, there are a lot of commonalities when it comes to evolutionary linkages between Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and Chinmastika Devi Peeth. Both Peeths have the same origin and in Hindu mythology, while Jawala Ji has relation to Devi Sati, the Chinmastika is related to the Devi Parvati (reincarnation of Devi Sati). While at one place the tongue of Devi Sati fell, at another place the Divine mother is present in the form of a headless deity, hence deriving the name of Chinmastika. This means that the first crucial difference arises in the form of the way the Devine mother has manifested herself at these two places. The origin of the story of Devi Sati and her subsequent death by mortification was found a prominent place in the Srimad Devi Bhagavatam. In the 7<sup>th</sup> book of the Devi Bhagavatam, the 30<sup>th</sup> chapter is dedicated to the Sati and specifically in the 26 to 37 shlokas, the Vyas Muni tells the story of the Janamejaya about the Sati and subsequent dismemberment of the Sati's body by Lord Vishnu. Similarly, the mention of the Chinmastika who is counted as one of the ten mahavidyas of Devi Parvati, is there in Devi Bhagavatam although it has also found a place in the



Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, and other related Tantric Texts. The commonality in the Jawala Ji and Chintpurni peeth is that the latter is the reincarnation of the Devi Sati which is related to the former Shakti peeth. In that particular sense, Jawala Ji can be easily considered as the source from which the Chintpurni peeth originated. Further, the connotation of Elder Sister (Jawala Ji) and Younger Sister (Chintpurni) also point toward this same thing with Sati being the origin in that sense.

**Primary Sources:** According to scholars William J. Winkins and David R. Kinsley, the Vedic scriptures do not directly mention Sati-Parvati but hint to two goddesses associated with Rudra — Rudrani and Ambika. Both the archeological and the textual sources indicate that the first major appearances of Sati-Parvati were during the period of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata mentions the destruction of Daksha yajna, the birth of Kartikeya, defeat the Asura Taraka as well as some plays between Shiva and Uma (Parvati). Scholars believe that by the time of the Puranas (c. 4th - 13th century), legends of Sati and Parvati rose to prominence and these were adapted by Kalidasa in his epic poem Kumarasambhavam (c. 5th - 6th century). The mention of Sati (associated with Jawala Ji) is found in the book “India in the World” edited by Cristina M. Gámez-Fernández and Antonia Navarro-Tejero”. The book describes in green detail the multi-coloured nature of the Indian religion and how these complexities come together to offer a holistic, inclusive, and encompassing perspective to one and all. Specifically, delving into the details of the etymology of the word “Sati”, the authors offer a comprehensive definition of how to describe the word Sati. According to the authors, Sati word has been derived from the “Sat” which translates into the “Truth” or “Faithful”. Therefore, according to the definition of God by the authors, Sati is a virtue or facet of the character that evokes a very high sense of purity and loyalty. The book is excellently written in the manner that it creates linkages between ancient, medieval, and contemporary history of Indian traditions, religions, and cultures. The lingering desire to connect to our traditional roots is at the center of the book and while covering other important aspects of religion, authors have written in detail the idea that Indian diaspora can immediately connect with. The contribution of the authors from the variety of fields related to politics, literature, sports, culture, and history make this title a wonderful exposure to all Indians as well as others who want

to expand their knowledge base related to India. In the book *Hindu Mythology – Vedic and Puranic* talked about in detail the origin and evolutionary linkages related to the Sati and Parvati. The specific mention related to the Uma is on page number 294 where the great detail related to the Uma (another name of Parvati) is given. The author also mentions the anterior related to the birth of Uma which relates to her incarnation as the daughter of the Daksha. The story was narrated in the "Kurma Purana" and has been talked about in the context of Brahma getting angry and then punishing his sons for not obeying them and adopting an ascetic lifestyle. The result of the curse manifested in the form of dividing them into half-male and half-female forms with the latter becoming daughter of Daksha then married to Shiva and then finally reincarnating her in the form of Parvati (Uma). The information related to the Sati has also been given in the title "Encountering Kali: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West" edited by Jeffrey and Rachel. Both these editors specifically focused on the Goddess Kali and how the different interpretations of the Goddess in Southeast Asian societies create confusion and complexities among the people. The focus is on solving the issues related to the interpretations that have risen as many scholars from inter-disciplinary faiths and religions offer their interpretation. By analysing the various scriptural history related to the Goddess Kali, the architecture of the various temples, the violence associated with the politics, the analytical prowess of Kali, and her feminist character, the book offers an insightful reflection of the facets associated with the Goddess and her associates. The book also explains how the parents of Sati were different in terms of their intellectual capital and overall responses towards the society. While Prasuti (the mother of Sati) was a very intelligent and considerate, her father Daksha was confused, temperamental, and capricious. This fundamental difference was highlighted in the book. The contribution to the religious evolution of Sati's concept is also dealt with in detail by the Maneka Gandhi. In her book "Penguin Book of Hindu Names", the author elaborately describes the Sati name with special reference to her being the consort of Shiva. Sati was married to Siva and then during the destruction of the Yaksha Yajna, she self-immolated and later born as daughter to King Himalaya. She then penanced severely for years before finally Shiva accepted her as his consort. In the specific context of Hinduism evolution in Nepal, there are studies which talked about the Sati concept while describing the different facets of the personality related to Shiva and Sati.

From talking about the birth of Sati to describing her benign nature and highlighting the relevance of her being the consort of Shiva, the description given in the book is a great enhancement to the knowledge while also describing the building up of Hinduism in Nepal. Hindu traditions are greatly revered in Nepal and it is only logical that these people have a very good exposure to Hindu culture and related aspects.

**Historical Documentations:** In terms of the historical aspects, the mention of the Jawala Ji is found at numerous places with significant ones including Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi and Akbarnama. While the former was written by Ziauddin Barani, the latter is the work of Abul Fazal. Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi offers a detailed description of the invasion and is considered one of the classical texts during the Sultanate period in India. What makes this description even more specific and relevant for history seekers is the fact that unlike other books written during the same period, the description offered by the Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi offers a holistic revelation of how were things beyond the wars, accessions, and conflicts. The book talked about the sociocultural characteristics of that time with elaborations related to the systems, functions, and related aspects of the societies. This proved helpful in offering a realistic portrait of the society that existed back then. With specific reference to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth, the Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi offered the account in terms of the destruction and plunder inflicted by Feroz Shah Tughlaq in the region. Specifically mentioned on pages 55-56 under the heading of Nagarkot destruction, the author talked about the loot, pillage, and mayhem ordered by the army of Feroz Shah. As the Hindu King Rup Chand presided over the fort and shut himself up to defend against the Firoz Shah army with a strategy to drain them, the Feroz Shah vented his frustration on the Nagarkot including the holy shrine of Jawala Ji. He desecrated the idols there in addition to destroying the books and the vessels associated with the temple. He took away almost 1300 books from the library situated in the temple and asked his administration to translate the Sanskrit manuscripts into the Persian language. It is also important to note that this was the very first time any Emperor from the Mughal lineage came and ordered such kind of translation of the Sanskrit manuscripts into their language. The mention of the Nagarkot is also found in the third volume of Akbarnama which is also known by the name of Ain-i Akbari. There are three volumes related to Akbarnama with Volume 1 describing the birth of the

Akbar and his upbringing. The second volume of the Akbarnama is more elaborate in the sense that it covers the important part of the history related to the Mughals. The volume also delves into detail the death of the father of the emperor in an untimely manner and ultimately the developments that led Akbar to succeeding throne and becoming emperor and administrator of the large empire. The third volume of the Akbarnama also referred to as Ā'in-i-Akbarī is the most interesting account of the reign of Akbar. The book has the details related to various administrative systems adopted by the Mughal Empire under Akbar and special reference has been given to the "Hindu Sciences". The geography of the Empire, the army possessed by Akbar, the taxing and revenue system adopted by the Mughal Empire, and the number of households in the Akbar time, are all crucial aspects that have been discussed in Volume 3. The book also shines a light on the culture and tradition of the people in the Mughal Era, cropping patterns, yields in different cropping seasons, prices, costs, revenues as well as the wages associated with the empire. The mention of the Nagarkot is also found in the Akbarnama on page 1222 in the context of Takhta Beg. The Abul Fazl also writes about the Jawala Ji, referring to the Goddess as Maha Maiy in his writings. He specifically mentions the place Nagarkot and Maha Maiy as a holy place related to divinity. He also describes the miracle of people offering their tongue to goddess and within days or hours regrowing that miraculously. He also referred to the cutting of Goddess's body into 51 pieces as a tale mentioned in Puranas and Upanishads. Worth mentioning here is the point that the historical evolution and linkages related to Mata Chintpurni Shaktipeeth are not the same in ancient literature and Hindu mythology. There is a lack of unanimity associated with the ancient tales associated with Sati's self-immolation that finally led to the establishment of 51 different Shakti peeths in all over South Asia. While most Scholars agree that Devi Sati fell at this place, others are of the opinion that the feet of Devi Sati fell here. According to Markandey Puran, another origin of the tale associated with Mata Chintpurni Temple, the campaigns of Devi Durga Jaya and Vijaya were thirsty for blood even after conquering the demons on the battlefield. In order to satiate their thirst for the blood, Devi Chandi severed her head and let her companions drink the blood to fulfil her thirst. These are two different accounts which mean that the historical records and mythological tales are not one in the case of Devi Chintpurni. That said, both shaktipeeths are very much relevant for devotees all across the globe

and by offering spiritual abodes to pilgrims, these continue to serve as the prominent places for spiritual tourism in the Himachal Pradesh.

**Chinnmastika Peeth:** According to Markandaya Purana, even after defeating the demon in a bloody battle, the Jaya and Vijaya, companions of Sati continue to remain thirsty for the blood. Finally, in order to quench their thirst, Sati severed her head and, in this way, the place of Chinnmastika came into being. Bhai Mai Das was a keen devotee of Goddess Durga. Once upon a time, the Goddess came in his dream and asked him to build a temple at this place. So, keeping the instruction of god in mind, he built the temple in Chhaproh village. Since then, his descendants started doing the worship of Shri Chintpurni. His descendants are now the official priests of this temple. Counted among the prominent Devi Peeth in Himachal Pradesh and India, Chinnmastika Peeth or Chintpurni Peeth is one of the prominent pilgrimage sites located in the Una district of Himachal Pradesh. It is extremely popular among the devotees and it is believed that no devotee returns empty-handed from the shrine. According to the Vedas, the Chinnmastika is one of the ten mahavidayas of Devi Parvati (Daughter of Himalaya) and derived its name as she severed her head to satiate the blood thirst of her companions – Jaya and Vijaya. The elaborate mention of the Chinmastika is there in the book titled “Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas” written by David Kinsley. The author describes in detail the Ten Mahavidyas who embody different aspects of nature which is eccentric, repulsive, and importantly socially forbidden in our societies. These are specifically meant for the Tantrik practices and by focusing upon these weird qualities that are usually out of sight for the masses. The idea is to present the Tantrik side of Devi and how these goddesses can take different forms depending upon the requirements of the time. These Mahavidayas are being referred to as Awakeners and by projecting them as a group; the author has taken a holistic approach to study these divine entities. Elizabeth Anne Benard wrote extensively about the Chinmastika in the book "Chinnamasta: The Aweful Buddhist and Hindu Tantric Goddess". The book is special in the sense that it offers the intersection of the Hindu and Buddhist practices enshrined in the Tantrik philosophy for offering glimpses related to the title. It offers insights into the tantric practices that are both common and exclusive as far as the Hindu and Buddhist traditions are concerned. In other words, the

title is significant in the sense that it offers readers a peek view into how tantric practices can be exclusive as well as mutual at the same time.

**Tradition Aspects:** There is a significant difference when it comes to the spiritual Outlook behind the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika peeths. As mentioned before, the Jawala ji Shaktipeeth is without any kind of deity and represents primarily the formless aspect of God. According to mythology, the eternal flame here is considered a combination of nine different Flames representing nine different faces of the divine mother. The main flame that burns through the Silver passage is considered the representation of the Mahakali. This flame is the one which is revered by the devotees and is capable of offering both Bhakti and Mukti to the worshippers. The second flame is associated with Mahamaya Annapurna which is capable of offering enormous amounts of resources to her devotees. Whether it comes to material resources, food resources, and any other kind of supplies, the Mahamaya Annapurna is capable of full filling all the wishes of her devotee through her amazing powers. The third flame is associated with Goddess Chandi who is a symbol of annihilation and her worship is specifically significant in conquering enemies and winning over adversities. She is one of the fiercest forms of the divine mother and her invoking is specifically significant in the case of destructive powers and negative consequences. Hingalaja Bhavani is the fourth flame in Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and it is the representation of the power that is capable of demolition the miseries of each and every person who prays to the goddess with pure and divine heart. There is a separate Shaktipeeth associated with the name of Hingalaja Bhavani across the border in the province of Balochistan in Pakistan. It is located on the banks of the Hingol river and is one of the famous Shakti Peeths in Southeast Asia. Named after the mountain series Vindhyachal, Vindhyavasini is the fifth flame in Jawala Ji and its separate temple is located on the banks of the river Ganges in Uttar Pradesh. According to the Puranas and Hindu mythology, the goddess Durga incarnated herself in the form of Vindhyavasini in order to kill the Mahishasur demon. Vindhyavasini is also known for her prowess to dispose of all the troubles, worries, and concerns of devotees and hence, her worshipping is associated with blessings of all kinds of health, wealth, and allied concerns. Mahalaxmi is the sixth flame in Jawalaji Temple and the promenade characteristic of this flame is its location in the Jyoti Kund. The name of Mahalaxmi in

Hindu traditions is known to be associated with wealth and treasure and the particular flame depicts the qualities such as splendour, magnificence, wealth, richness, and luxury among others. Whoever worships Mahalaxmi with true heart and devotion gets blessed with all materialistic fortunes and deep luxury. Just next to the flame of Mahalaxmi is the seventh flame in the Jwalaji Shaktipeeth which signifies the importance of Goddess Saraswati. She is known to be associated with qualities such as intellectual knowledge, wisdom, cognitive ability, and reasoning all of which are specifically important for persons in the field of academics, exploration, science, technology, and so on. Bodies many desired characteristics such as strength power love devotion and creation and is also associated with the seasons of harvest and autumn Goddess Ambika is the eighth flame in the temple and the goddess is associated with the capability of bestowing the boon of children to couples. The last ninth flame in the temple of Jwalaji Shaktipeeth is associated with the Goddess Anjana. The divine Mother name Anjana has been associated with the qualities of offering long age, spirituality, divinity, and exhilaration to her devotees. She is significant in the sense that the divine mother has the capability of offering life to her devotees which is significant from the perspective of living a long life. The temple of Chinmastika, on the other hand, is counted among one of the ten mahavidyas related to the Devi Parvati. These ten mahavidyas are Kali, Tara, Tripura Sundari, Bhuvaneshvari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamala. The elaborate mention of the Chinmastika is there in the book titled “Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas” written by David Kinsley. The author describes in detail the Ten Mahavidyas who embody different aspects of nature which is eccentric, repulsive, and importantly socially forbidden in our societies. These are specifically meant for the Tantrik practices and by focusing upon these weird qualities that are usually out of sight for the masses. The idea is to present the Tantrik side of Devi and how these goddesses can take different forms depending upon the requirements of the time. These Mahavidayas are being referred to as Awakeners and by projecting them as a group; the author has taken a holistic approach to study these divine entities. Elizabeth Anne Benard wrote extensively about the Chinmastika in the book "Chinnamasta: The Aweful Buddhist and Hindu Tantric Goddess". The book is special in the sense that it offers the intersection of the Hindu and Buddhist practices enshrined in the Tantrik

philosophy for offering glimpses related to the title. It offers insights into the tantric practices that are both common and exclusive as far as the Hindu and Buddhist traditions are concerned. In other words, the title is significant in the sense that it offers readers a peek view into how tantric practices can be exclusive as well as mutual at the same time. Unlike Jawala Ji, there are no nine flame rituals available in the Chintpurni temple. Rather the significance of the temple is in its Deity form where Chhinnmasta is situated in the form of a Pindi. The personal form of Goddess is the centre of attraction and the name Chintpurni is famous among the locals. The name is derived from the fact that the deity is supposed to take away all worries of the devotees and offer them boons to fulfil all their desires.

**Clan Deity:** It is important to note that in terms of the recognition and popularity among devotees, Chinmastika temple is far ahead of that of Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth. It is commonly believed among the visitors and devotees that goddess Chinmastika instantly fulfils the wishes of her devotees and this explains the huge popularity the temple enjoys among pilgrims and visitors. This special ability of the temple to offer health, well-being, and other wishes makes it one of the most popular Devi Sidh peeths in India. It has been found from the literature and local traditions that Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth is the clan deity of many visitors and devotees. This explains why a number of Hindu families make a pilgrimage to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth when any auspicious occasion such as marriage or the birth of a child in the family takes place. Many devotees and families make a pilgrimage to Jawala ji Shaktipeeth in yellow clothes and this signifies the status of family goddess that Shakti Peeth enjoy among many families and clans. Lakhanpal, Thakur, Gujral, and Bhatia are the clans that consider Jawala Ji as the Clan Goddess. There are elaborate rituals associated with the clan goddess and depending upon the various festivity and occasions, these clans come to the shrine and pay their obeisance and respect to the Goddess. For every important occasion in the family right from birth to marriage, the clan deity is offered the homage with scores of people from particular clan coming together and visiting the temple barefooted. On other occasions like Navratri and associated events also Kul Devi (Clan Deity) is revered first followed by offering worships to other God and Goddesses later. Chinmastika Temple, on the other hand, is not counted among the clan deity and rather



worshipped by devotees as one of the ten Mahavidyas of Devi Parvati. The reason behind Chinmastika not being the Kul Devi is the root cause of Tantric aspect of the Deity. Although Chintpurni temple here in Himachal has more religious dimension, the focus remains on the destructive side of the being.

**Pujas and Aartis (Offertories):** There is a ritual of three-time aartis at the Chintpurni Temple with each aarti and its content being incorporated in the chapter. The morning aarti is done at 6:30 am while the Day aarti commences at 12:00 pm just before the Prashad is offered to the deity. The evening time of the aarti is between 6:30 pm and 8:00 pm and the deity goes to sleep at 10:00 pm. The priests offer the prayers at the Chintpurni temple according to their turn. These turns are decided by the Temple Administrative committee which rotate the duties of the priests. As per the information offered under the RTI Act, the total number of priests was 328. These get their turn to offer the prayers at the Chintpurni Temple as per their turn. These priests are also associated with the regular events related to the temple and enable running of many spiritual and ritual activities associated with the temple. Pilgrims who want to participate in the Hawan and Yajna also have the facility to do so by paying the requisite amount to the temple trust. The sacred fire ritual (Hawan) is conducted at the Temple every morning at 6:00 a.m. and people willing to participate in this particular activity can do so by taking permission from the temple officer and paying Rs 500 to get the wood to be lit in the hawan. The temple also witnesses a large number of devotees who come to the premises for the Mundan ceremony - a sacred tradition in Hindu culture of shaving the head of the Child for the first time and then offering these hairs to the deity. Usually, this ritual is performed when the child is between one and three years of age. In contrast to three-time aartis offered in the Chintpurni temple, the Jawala Ji Shrine has ritual of performing aartis five times in a day. The first one is in the early morning followed by another at sunrise. The Bhog aarti is performed between 11:30 and 12:30 pm while the evening aarti takes place between 7:00 and 8:00 pm. The last aarti is shayan aarti which is offered to the Goddess at the bedtime. The first one is in the early morning followed by another at sunrise. The Bhog aarti is performed between 11:30 and 12:30 pm while the evening aarti takes place between 7:00 and 8:00 pm. The last aarti is shayan aarti which is offered to the Goddess at the bedtime. In sum, there are a

total of Five aartis performed at Jawala Ji temple in comparison to the three that are offered at the Chintpurni Temple. The difference is the early morning aarti and Shayan aarti that is performed in the Jawala Ji but not being offered at the Chintpurni Temple. The most interesting aspect of the Shayan aarti is the way the entire sleeping room of the Deity is decked up with ornaments and dresses. This is being done as the offertory to the deity and the aarti is performed in two different parts. The first is being done on the main premises of the temple while the second part is recited in terms of the slokas from the Saundaryalahiri originally written by the Shankaracharya.

**Shaktipeeth Status:** It is very important to note that the different versions related to the status of the Shakti Peeth come to light when we went through extant literature and talked with priests, local people, and administrators. While there is unanimity about the status of the Shakti Peeth for the Jawala Ji, Chinmastika temple is counted as Devi Peeth and not as Shaktipeeth. As no body part of the Devi Sati fell at Chinmastika temple, and rather the divine mother has manifested herself here in the form of an idol which is without a head, this is not counted as Shaktipeeth. The majority of opinions about Chinmastika temple consider it as Devi Peeth rather than considering it as Shaktipeeth as no part of the Devi Sati's body fell here. There is another place with the same name Chinmastika Temple dedicated to the headless deity in the Jharkhand state of India. The temple is situated in the Ramgarh district and attracts devotees from all parts of the country, including Jharkhand. The Chinmastika is the name of the deity present in the temple and the idol of the deity can be seen here with her severed head on the left hand which is drinking the blood oozing from the neck. On the sides are statues of Jaya and Vijaya, here associates who are also satiating themselves from the bloodlines of the Chinmastika. However, both peeths are considered as popular religious places in the Himachal Pradesh with lakh of devotees thronging these year after year.

Jawala Ji, on the other hand is one of the Shakti Peeths in the list of total 51 Peeths that are popular across the globe. According to the popular legend, the tongue of the Sati fell here following which this place is now considered as the Shakti Peeth. It's also important to note that Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth is the only Shakti Peeth in Himachal Pradesh. There are five Peeths in Himachal including Naina Devi, Brajeshwari Devi,

Chamunda Devi, Chintpurni, and Jawala Ji. Out of these, all four other peeths except for Jawala Ji are Devi Peeths and not Shakti Peeth. Shakti Peeth is a concept associated with the places where the body parts of the Devi Sati fell which are a total of 51 in number. Jawala Ji is a place where the Tongue of Sati fell and hence it acquired the status of Shaktipeeth.

**Sister Relationship:** The sisterhood between Jawala Ji and Chintpurni is widely acknowledged in the local traditions, rituals, observances, and ceremonies. The fact that Devi Parvati is the reincarnation of Devi Sati, the relationship of sisters exists between the two deities. It is observed among devotees that Jawala ji is the elder sister while Chinmastika is considered as the younger sister. It is therefore also recognised among the devotees that before visiting Chinmastika, one has to visit the Jawala Ji and take the blessings from there. If without visiting Jawala Ji somebody visits Chinmastika then it is not considered a good ritual. Also, it is recommended that Prasad from the Chintpurni should not be carried to the Jawala Ji although it's acceptable the other way around. Extending the same logic of Prasad, it is usually considered a convention to first go to the Jawala Ji Temple for the Darshan and then follow it up with visit to the Chintpurni. Going first to Chintpurni Temple and then going to Jawala Ji is not an option. If devotees only plan to visit the Chintpurni then they can go to the temple, pay their homage and respect there, and then come back. However, if the plan is also to pay obeisance at Jawala Ji temple then it is almost like a tradition to first pay a visit to Jawala Ji and then while returning pay homage to the Chintpurni temple.

#### **5.4) Achievement of Objective 3**

- As a part of the third objective of our research, we have explored the possibilities and potential related to the religious tourism associated with Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths. We have gone into great detail to figure out the opportunities, possibilities, and various avenues of growth that both state and local economies can avail as a result of lakhs of devotees coming into the state and visiting these religious places. In order to explore these opportunities, it was essential to find out the experience of these devotees towards the convenience and amenities offered by the local administration on both these shrines. In terms of the research methodology, we have primarily used different

methods of collecting the primary data. While most of the information was collected with the help of the questionnaires distributed to the visitors visiting the Jawala ji and Chinmastika Shakti Peeths, some information was also collected with the help of observations and informal interviews. These are done in order to get insights about the intention, reasons, and relevance of the visitors who are visiting the Shakti Peeths. In order to understand the level of satisfaction perceived by the visitors who are visiting the Jawala ji and Chinmastika Shakti Peeth, we distributed questionnaires to the visitors. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the visitors at both Jawala ji and Chinmastika Shakti Peeths and a separate analysis of the fully filled questionnaires is done in order to know the satisfaction level of pilgrims about the various facilities and convenience offered by these shrines to visitors. We distributed 200 survey forms among the visitors in the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth and out of the total distributed questionnaires, 163 questionnaires were received back. On close scrutiny of the filled questionnaires, 146 fully-filled responses were received by us. 79% of the visitors who were visiting Jawala Ji think that others have positive opinions about the Shakti Peeth although only 29% feels that local people and administration are friendly towards the pilgrims. Overwhelmingly large 87% have a unique image of Shaktipeeth in their mind although there is considerable scope for improvement when it comes to the surrounding environment as more than half, i.e., 57% feel that it is not very clean and green. A total of 70% see that the improvement in the overall convenience and amenities offered by the Shaktipeeth can be improved. As clearly visible in the results of the satisfaction survey, a majority of respondents feel that local administration fails to offer a safe and secure environment to pilgrims. There is concern about the cleanliness of the surrounding environment as visitors are left wanting more when it comes to places of shopping and local cuisines around the Shakti Peeth. There is the issue associated with the availability of clean drinking water and the lack of rest benches has also been felt by visitors to the Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth. There are not enough facilities to raise the complaint and inside the Shaktipeeth, the various religious activities that are performed are not very well organized. 53% of the total visitors have expressed their satisfaction with the experience while only 42% are fully satisfied with their experience with Jawala Ji Shaktipeeth.

Image of Chinmastika Peeth out of the total responses received by us, 78% of visitors have a positive opinion of Shakti Peeth. When it comes to local people and administration, 47% of visitors were not satisfied with the friendliness of local people and administration. 90% believe that the temple is very popular among the pilgrims while 80% agree with the statement there is considerable scope for improvement for the administration to provide better facilities to the visitors. As revealed by the satisfaction survey, there is considerable scope for improvement for both the local Administration and the hygienic and clean surroundings in Chinmastika Shaktipeeth. Pilgrims expressed their satisfaction with the quality of hotels and staying facilities although the same is not true as far as the provision regarding making bookings, ordering food, and staying facilities and lack of provisions to raise complaints about the facilities and other amenities. 86% of the visitors have expressed their desire to revisit and recommend their friends and relatives to visit the destination. Again 73% gained knowledge from their visit while 82% were happy that the decision to visit Chinmastika Shaktipeeth. Overall, 68% expressed their satisfaction with their experience visiting the Shaktipeeth. Temple economy can be easily considered as one of the most striking aspects of the Indian Economy. According to the study conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the total size of the temple economy is estimated to be around Rs 3 lakh crore. This roughly translates into 2.3% of the total size of the economy. The economic contribution of the temple economy is also very much evident in Himachal Pradesh. Especially when it comes to Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths, the pilgrims are the primary source of income for the local vendors. To analyse the economic aspect of the study and how the temple economy is impacting the economic well-being of the vendors in the place, we created a survey form and took data from the vendors belonging to both Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths. Specifically, we focused on the economic aspects of conducting the business and how the inflow of pilgrims leads to the economic prosperity of vendors. The questionnaire also asks about the overall satisfaction of the vendors in running the business and whether they would like to continue with the business in the future. While a total of 73 vendors were surveyed as a part of the Jawala Ji Shakti peeth, 75 vendors from the Chinmastika peeth participated in the survey. The demographic details of the vendors who are part of the survey have been discussed in detail in chapter 4.

**Jawala Ji Vendor Survey:** Among important results of the Vendor Satisfaction Survey is the fact that an overwhelming majority of 66% expressed the wish not to continue with the business while only 34% gave an affirmative reply about whether they want to take their venture forward. This number indicates the high level of satisfaction among the vendors about the current socio-economic scenario and points towards the larger level of economic issues that vendors in Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth are facing. The results are a bit contrasting in the case of Chinmastika Peeth with a majority of 55% expressed the wish not to continue with the business while 45% gave an affirmative reply about whether they want to take their venture forward. This number indicates the high level of dissatisfaction among the vendors about the current socio-economic scenario and points towards the larger level of economic issues that vendors in Chinmastika Peeth are facing.

### **5.5) Implications**

**Theoretical Implications:** In terms of theoretical contributions, our study makes many important insights to history the main especially when it comes to the exploration of the Shakti Cult in India and that related to Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths. It's very important to understand that although the concept of the Shakti Cult is very important and is of historical significance as far as the Indian civilization is concerned, there are only a few studies that have been done exploring the importance and significance of Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths and their comparison among the various important attributes of consideration. Some of the past studies have done work in this regard but their explanation has been shrouded in vagaries and the specific way in which the entire evolutionary linkages of the Shakti concept have been stressed by the study with the help of the religious texts, ancient literature, and allied books is one of the strikingly different characteristics of our study. The study has important implications for all important stakeholders such as academicians, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers among others. In terms of scholastic implications of this particular study, it will open up the vast research area related to the Shakti Peeths and inspire future researchers to come forward and further delve into the details of various aspects related to evolutionary linkages, historical importance as well as cultural and social facets of

these places of religious importance. Future research in this area may also centre towards the need for bringing all these Shakti Peeths on one platform so that any kind of future study and investigation related to Shakti places can be conducted in a holistic and encompassing manner. That tradition related to the reverence of the Shakti Cult can also be included in the scope of the study by future researchers and the association of the Devi Cult with Shaivism also can be established going further. The insights from the research and the other academic work related to this particular field can be incorporated into the books and literature of history. Academicians can also benefit from the implications of the study and can encourage more researchers to get into the field and come up with similar kinds of comparison between five peeths related to the Shakti Cult which is located in Himachal Pradesh in India. Apart from the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths, the three other feats which are situated in Himachal Pradesh include Naina Devi, Chamunda Devi, and Brijeshwari Devi. As the study has already done the exploration of the Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths, the investigation related to the historical importance, evolutionary linkages, and related aspects of the other three peeths should be the focus of the investigation of scholars working in the interdisciplinary field of history, anthropology, sociology, and travel and tourism among others. The comparison can be then done related to the remaining three peeths with Jawala Ji and Chinmastika.

**Industry Implications:** The study is particularly relevant for the industry stakeholders especially when it comes to the concept of religious tourism and travel in Himachal Pradesh and India. A customer satisfaction survey that has been done by the study on the visitors has revealed very profound knowledge about the behaviour and the overall satisfaction these pilgrims have from the existing facilities within and around the premises of both these Peeths. It is clear from the results of the study that there is a need to upgrade significantly the various facilities related to food and lodging in the premises of both Jawala Ji and Chhinnamastika peeths. Those results associated with the availability of food, water, sanitation, and lodging facilities have very important implications for the practices and by significantly focusing on these results the hotel travel and tourism industry can consider the market value and sustainability for the long time to come. While existing facilities related to travel and tourism can make

considerable changes in their hotel and lodging premises, new construction must be done to facilitate the pilgrims and offer maximum continuity within the budget. The focus of the efforts must be on the best value-for-money experience for pilgrims as it can motivate and inspire them to make repeat visits to these pilgrim centres year after year. Along with the hoteliers and restaurateurs, the profound knowledge can also help taxi drivers, public and private Transporters, parking places, theme parks, and other businesses associated with travel and tourism to come up with improved Business models that will not only help them to earn more money but also facilitate the visitor in a manner that will create a win-win situation for all the stakeholders in the business ecosystem. As proven by many studies in the past tourism continues to contribute very significantly to the economy of Himachal Pradesh, the study has pronounced implications for enhancing the overall growth and scales of local businesses, entrepreneurs, tour and taxi drivers, tourists guide, as well as a host of allied businesses and processes associated with the local economy. The higher influx of pilgrims will definitely be going to have a positive impact on local and regional businesses but that will happen only when there is a concerted effort to offer superior services to visitors at value-for-money prices. The concept of responsible tourism can be applied to both Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Shaktipeeth as it is the responsibility of both visitors and local communities to derive a positive impact from the visits of pilgrims but at the same time continue to preserve then conserve the natural heritage, resources, and civilizational values attached with these places of religious significance. With the growing interest in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), entrepreneurial activities in Himachal Pradesh are on the rise and have been specifically concentrated in the areas where such religious shrines are located. In fact, comprehensive efforts have started to pour in from all the quarters of the society that have been focusing on enhancing the sustainability of such pilgrimage places with all five peeths of Shakti Cult located in Himachal Pradesh getting the priority from policymakers as well. The concept of ethical tourism can also help in this regard as the push of the policymakers in the government to help local entrepreneurs and businesses is very much evident from the host of efforts put into this specific domain by the Government in collaboration with the local municipalities and authorities. Local entrepreneurs and businesses catering to pilgrims can come up with different kinds of innovative activities that will



not only help pilgrims understand the social and cultural relevance of the place but also enable the cultural exchange is between the pilgrims and hosting communities.

**Policymaking Implications:** Arguably, the most important implications of the studies are for the policymakers, administrators and the local authorities which are in charge of arranging the various kinds of facilities for making the visits of pilgrims comfortable, pleasant, and reassuring. The insights generated by the study can help the state government, local administration and authorities, and regional industry and business ecosystem to achieve significant progress by enhancing the level and quality of services offered to the pilgrims. As far as the state government is concerned, there is a need to come up with a Holistic Pilgrimage Destination Policy just like we have the central government called PRASAD: Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive. This kind of holistic policy measure will help the state consolidate its resources, focus its efforts, and achieve significant results in enhancing the satisfaction level of pilgrims visiting the place for Spiritual and religious purposes. The push to enhance the prospects of responsible tourism must come from the officials, administrators, and concerned department of Himachal Tourism as the collaborative and coordinated attempts from the officials can really change the very face of pilgrimage sides in the state including Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeths. One such significant project initiated by the state government which is in the pilot testing phase is the e-connect Temples. The pilot project is in the phase of implementation at Chinmastika Peeth and according to the details, the pilgrims can pay their obeisance and perform rituals with the help of virtual mode. The development of comprehensive software is already in progress and once this pilot project is implemented, the lakhs of devotees who are unable to visit the temples in person can do all the things in a virtual mode. In addition to boosting the prospects of religious tourism, it is equally important for the policymakers to keep in mind that the increased influx of pilgrims will not have an adverse impact on the overall cultural heritage, environmental integrity, and resources of the state. It has been found in various studies that although the increase in tourism has resulted in a significant enhancement of the local economies, community development, and an increase in the taxes for the government, the damaging impact of tourist activities is also very much apparent in the form of exploitation of the natural resources, extinction of the cultural

heritage, and increase pollution and environment degradation in the tourist places. Amid the compelling need to balance out both these seemingly contradicting facets, the need to adopt, promote, and sustain responsible tourism couldn't be overemphasized. Government authorities can also go ahead and connect temples under the e-connect project which will help the state economy and take the pressure off the local administration, authorities, and communities who are involved with offering various provisions and facilities to pilgrims visiting places such as Jawala Ji and Chinmastika. As revealed by the study, the need to enhance the sanitation and cleanliness of these Peeths is of utmost importance and to that end, local authorities and administration must take up the sanitation drive at pilgrimage places at regular intervals of time. Efforts must be made to aware, sensitize, and educate the local community about their behaviour towards the pilgrims and how to offer the outsiders more courtesy so as to enable even better growth and profitability in their businesses and local economies. These stakeholders must be informed that it is only by offering holistic benefits to the pilgrims and charging them a reasonable amount of money that will ensure their long-term sustenance rather than taking the approach of fleecing them and leading them up the garden path. By strongly inculcating the need to create a win-win situation for all the stakeholders who are part of pilgrimage tourism, the all-encompassing benefits can be achieved by the tourism industry of Himachal Pradesh.

### **5.6) Limitations and Future Work**

As with any research, the lack of resources and time resulted in a couple of limitations related to our study. First of all, we have been able to cover only two peeths in our research, viz. Jawala Ji and Chinmastika Peeth. This is despite the fact that there are a total of five peeths related to the Shakti Cult in Himachal Pradesh with others named Naina Devi, Brijeshwari Devi, and Chamunda Devi. Due to the lack of resources and time as well as to make our study more significant from the perspective of application, the study was able to cover only two peeths. Second, the limited number of responses from the pilgrims could also be considered as one of the limitations of our study. However, this again arose from the fact that we had a amount of time and resources with us and the study had to be conducted within a stipulated period of time. Similarly,

we were able to analyse only two primary dimensions: a) image of the peeths and b) satisfaction with parameters of importance. There are many more dimensions that could have possibly made their way into the study but again because of the lack of resources we refrained from using a large number of variables for the study. In terms of future work, would like to extend the scope of our study to include the remaining three peeths of the Shakti Cult which are in Himachal Pradesh. Given the fact that we have already explored the evolutionary linkages of the Shakti Cult as a concept right from the time of the Vedic period, it would be easy for us to investigate the historical importance and heritage associated with the remaining three sites. We need not go and again search for the evolution of the three peeths and that will help us to study the remaining pilgrimage sites with relative ease and convenience. Just like this study, who would like to ascertain and evaluate the image and satisfaction survey of pilgrims visiting Naina Devi, Brijeshwari Devi, and Chamunda Devi? The insights from those surveys will then help us to make a direct comparison between the perceptions of pilgrims visiting these places in Himachal and find out whether the same kind of responses is there as far as the other three peeths are concerned. The comparative analysis will then make it easy to juxtapose whether facilities related to the pilgrims offered at places of Shakti cult are similar across sites or different. We also plan to come up with development of the Tourist perception scale that we are planning to come up with as a part of our future study. The development of the scale will definitely come in handy for all the stakeholders including academicians, practitioners, and policymakers as it will have multiple items that can be used in order to upgrade and enhance the facilities related to the pilgrimage sites in the state. We are specifically planning to develop the tourist perception scale by including the data from the five Shakti Cult Sites and then will compare it against the general tourism scales to compare its uniqueness and effectiveness.

## ***Bibliography***

### **Primary Sources**

#### **a) Records and Audit Reports**

- Records Available in the Temple Office of Jawala Ji Shakti Peeth
  - a) Land Records, List of Pujaris, Revenue Records, and Administrative Proceedings
- Records Available in the Temple Office of Chintpurni Temple
  - a) Acquired Land Plan, Revenue Record, List of Pujaris (turn-wise)
- Audit Report of Shree Jawalamukhi Temple, 2015, available at [https://lad.hp.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/KangraJawalamukhi2014\\_15.pdf](https://lad.hp.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/KangraJawalamukhi2014_15.pdf)
- Audit Report of Shree Chintpurni Mata Temple, Una, 2016, available at [https://lad.hp.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/UnaChintpurni2015\\_2016.pdf](https://lad.hp.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/UnaChintpurni2015_2016.pdf)
- Audit Report of Shree Chintpurni Mata Temple, Una, 2021, available at <https://lad.hp.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025/TT%20Mata%20Shri%20Chintpurni%20Ji%20C%20Una%20Report%202019%20to%202021.pdf>
- The Himachal Pradesh Hindu Public Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Act, 2007, available at <https://lac.hp.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/bHPRICEAct84Amnd2007.pdf>
- Annual Administrative Report: Kangra District, available at <https://ddtg.hp.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Annual-Administrative-Report-2022-2023.pdf>

- Himachal Pradesh State Report, Tourism Survey for the State of Himachal Pradesh (2011-12), available at [https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-07/Himachal%20Pradesh%20Final%20Report\\_%20new.pdf](https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-07/Himachal%20Pradesh%20Final%20Report_%20new.pdf)
- Mata Jawalaji: Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC), available at <https://hptdc.in/index.php/the-jawalaji-jawalamukhi/>
- Kangra Pilgrimage: District Kangra Official Report on Pilgrimage Places in Himachal, available at <https://hp Kangra.nic.in/kangra-pilgrimage/>
- Gazetteer Of The Kangra District Vol.1 (Kangra Proper 1883-84), available at <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.105611/page/n9/mode/2up>
- Gazette Rajpatra of Himachal Pradesh, available at <https://rajpatrahimachal.nic.in/LNotific.aspx?ID=27>
- Organisation Chart, Chintpurni Temple, available at <https://www.matashrichintpurni.com/organization-chart.php>
- Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on State Finances for the Year 2022-23, available at [https://cag.gov.in/uploads/download\\_audit\\_report/2024/SFAR-2022-23-HP\\_Report-No.-1-of-2024\\_English-\(21-11-2024\)-067723a8cb8cee4.29305485.pdf](https://cag.gov.in/uploads/download_audit_report/2024/SFAR-2022-23-HP_Report-No.-1-of-2024_English-(21-11-2024)-067723a8cb8cee4.29305485.pdf)

## **b) Biographies**

- Abū al-Fazl ibn Mubārak (1912). *The Akbarnāma of Abu-l-Fazl (a History of the Reign of Akbar Including an Account of His Predecessors)*, available at <https://archive.org/details/dli.csl.4907>

- Blochmann, Heinrich (1873), Ain-i-Akbari Vol.1: Internet Archive, available at <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.32526>
- Dowson, John (1871), The Posthumous Papers of the Late Sir H. M. Elliot. Susil Gupta (India) Ltd. available at [https://ia801500.us.archive.org/15/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.116023/2015.116023.Tarikh-i-Firoz-Shahi-Of-Shams-i-Siraj-Afif\\_text.pdf](https://ia801500.us.archive.org/15/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.116023/2015.116023.Tarikh-i-Firoz-Shahi-Of-Shams-i-Siraj-Afif_text.pdf)
- Firishtah, Muḥammad Qāsim (1908), Translation of the Tarikh-i-Sultan Mahmud-i-Ghaznavi, or, The history of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Internet Archive. Available at <https://archive.org/details/translationtari00khangoog>
- Jarrett, Colonel (1949), Ain I Akbari of Abul Fazl-i-Allami Vol-2: Internet Archive, available at <https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.527119>
- Jarrett, Henry Sullivan (1948), Abul-Fazl-i-'Allami. 'Ain-i-Akbari of AbuI-Fazl-i-'Allami. Translated into English, revised and further annotated by Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. 3, available at <https://archive.org/details/dli.ministry.00123>
- Mukhoty, Ira (2020), Akbar: The Great Mughal | Aleph Book Company. Aleph Book Company, available at <https://www.alephbookcompany.com/book/akbar-the-great-mughal/Akbar>: *The Great Mughal*. New Delhi
- Nazim, Muhammad (1931), The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna: Internet Archive, available at <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.80590>
- Smith, Vincent Arthur (1920), Akbar The Great Mogul, 1542-1605: Internet Archive, available at <https://archive.org/details/cu31924024056503>
- Zilli, Ishtiaq Ahmad (2022), Tarikh-I Firoz Shahi - PrimusBooks. (2022, July 22). PrimusBooks, available at <https://primusbooks.com/tarikh-firoz-shahi/>

### c) RTI Application

- Mani, Mukta (2024), Temple Officer, Mata Chintpurni, (TTC-RTI 2022, No. 417), District Una, Himachal Pradesh

## Secondary Sources

### Published Works: Articles, Books, & Book Chapters

- Agarwal, Chaitanya S., *Enigmas Revealed: Decoding The Secrets Of Mystery, Myths And Superstitions*, India: BFC Publications, 2023
- Agarwal, Sanjay, *Daan and Other Giving Traditions in India: The Forgotten Pot of Gold*, India: AccountAid India, 2010
- Alaverdov, Emilia and Bari, Muhammad Waseem, *Global Development of Religious Tourism*, NY: IGI Global 2020.
- Ashley-Farran, Thomas, *Shakti Mantras: Tapping into the Great Goddess Energy Within*, UK: Random House Publishing Group 2009
- Baba, Meher, *God Speaks: The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose*, United States: Dodd, Mead, 1973
- Baindur, Meera, *Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions*, New Delhi: Springer 2015
- Bansal, Sunita Pant, *Hindu Pilgrimage*, India: V&S Publishers, 2012
- Baranī, Ziyā' al-Dīn, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*, Pakistan: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006
- Basham, Arthur Llewellyn, *The Wonder that was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims*, New York: Macmillan Company, 1954
- Beaman, Lori G. and Sonia Sikka, *Constructions of Self and Other in Yoga, Travel, and Tourism*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2016
- Bhalla, Prem P., *Maa: The Universal Mother*, India: Educreation Publishing, 2017
- Bharadwaja, Chiranjiva, *Light of Truth*, India: Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1915

- Bharathi, Harishankar V. and Ranjana, Harish, *Shakti: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Women Empowerment in India*, Rawat Publications: Jaipur 2003
- Bhardwaj, Surinder Mohan, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography*, US: University of California Press, 1973
- Bharne, Vinayak and Krusche, Krupail, *Rediscovering the Hindu Temple: The Sacred Architecture and Urbanism of India*, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2014
- Bhattacharji, Sukumari, *Legends of Devi*, India: Disha Books, 1998
- Biswas, Soumendra Nath and Kumar, Pradip, *Mountain Tourism and Ecological Impacts: Himalayan Region and Beyond*, US: IGI Global 2024
- Bogart, Gregory C., *In the Company of Sages the Journey of the Spiritual Seeker*, Rochester: Inner Traditions International, Limited 2015
- Brenner, Philip S., *Understanding Survey Methodology: Sociological Theory and Applications*, Germany: Springer International Publishing, 2020
- Briggs, Sheila and Fulkerson, Mary McClintock *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*, United Kingdom: OUP Oxford, 2012.
- Catherine, Benton, *God of Desire: Tales of Kāmadeva in Sanskrit Story Literature*, United States: State University of New York Press, 2006
- Chakravarti, Sitansu S., *Hinduism, a Way of Life*, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991
- Chakravarty, Chintaharan, *The Tantras*, Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1963.
- Chandramouli, Anuja *Shakti: The Divine Feminine*, India: Rupa, 2015
- Chatterjee, Gautam and Chatterjee, Sanjoy, *Sacred Hindu Symbols*, India: Abhinav Publications, 2001.
- Chinnaiyan, Kavitha M., *Shakti Rising: Embracing Shadow and Light on the Goddess Path to Wholeness*, United Kingdom: New Harbinger Publications, 2017
- Chitgopekar, Nilima, *Rudra, the Idea of Shiva*, India: Penguin Books India, 2007
- Chitgopekar, Nilima, *Shakti*, United Kingdom: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2022
- Choudhury, Roy, and Chandra, Pranab, *Temples and Legends of Himachal Pradesh*, India: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1981
- Dalrymple, William, *The Last Mughal (Hindi)*, India: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017



- Das, Siddhartha, *The History of Medieval India*, India: Notion Press, 2024
- Deussen, Paul, *Sixty Upanishads of the Veda*, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers 1997
- Devi, Nirmala, *The Book of Adi Shakti*, Italy: Nirmala Vidya LLC, 2013
- Dikshitar, V. R. Ramachandra, *The Matsya Purana, a Study. Bulletin of the Department of Indian History and Archaeology*, No. 5. Madras: University of Madras, 1935
- Eaton, Richard M., *India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765*, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited, 2019
- Feuerstein, Georg, *The Encyclopedia of Yoga and Tantra*, United Kingdom: Shambhala, 2022
- Frawley, David *Vedic Yoga: The Path of the Rishi*, United States: Lotus Press, 2014
- Frawley, David, *Shiva: The Lord of Yoga*, United States: Lotus Press, 2015
- Gambhir, Dhvani, Khalid, Ahmad Mohd, and Sharma, Seema, *Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Hill States in India*, Cham: Springer 2021
- Gambhir, Dhvani, Khalid, Ahmad Mohd, and Sharma, Seema, “Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Hill States in India.” *World Sustainability Series* (2021): 273–87.
- Gangashetty, Ramesh, *Thirtha Yatra: A Guide to Holy Temples and Thirtha Kshetras in India*. (India: Notion Press, 2019)
- Gideon, Lior *Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences*, Netherlands: Springer New York, 2012
- Gillham, Bill, *Developing a Questionnaire*, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008
- Gladstone, David L., *From Pilgrimage to Package Tour: Travel and Tourism in the Third World*, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2013
- Gupta, Sanjukta, *The Cosmic Play of Power: Goddess, Tantra and Women*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishing House: Delhi 2013
- Gupta, Shanti Swarup, *A Study of Deities of Rig Veda (with the Help of Science)*, India: Abhinav Publications, 2006.

- Harding, Elizabeth U., *Kali: The Black Goddess of Dakshineswar*, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1998.
- Harishankar, Bharathi V. & Ranjana Harish, *Shakti: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Women Empowerment in India*, India: Rawat Publications, 2003
- Iyer, Saiswaroop, *Avishi: Warrior Queen from the Rig Veda*, India: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021
- Jarrett, Henry Sullivan and Sarkar, Jadunath, *The Akbar Nāmā of Abu-l-Fazl*, India: Royal Asiatic Society, 1907.
- Jreat, Manoj, *Tourism in Himachal Pradesh*, India: Indus Publishing Company 2004
- Kanda, Ravi and Mahajan, Varun, *A Study of Ancient Monuments & Historic Heritage Sites of Himachal Pradesh*, India: Rudra Publications, 2021
- Kempton, Sally, *Awakening Shakti The Transformative Power of the Goddesses of Yoga*, Delhi: Jaico Publishing 2013
- Khanna, Madhu, *Studies on Tantra in Bengal and Eastern India*, Singapore: Springer 2022
- Kinsley, David R., *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers 1986
- Kinsley, David, *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine: The Ten Mahavidyas*, Germany: University of California Press, 2023
- Kohli, Mohan Singh, *Mountains of India: Tourism, Adventure and Pilgrimage*, Delhi: Indus Publishing: 2002
- Krishna, Nanditha, *The Book of Demons*, India: Penguin Books Limited, 2007
- Kumar, Sunil, *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 1192-1286*, India: Permanent Black, 2007)
- Kumari, Lila, *Rig Veda for Modern Seekers Sacred Verses for Daily Living*, Pencil, 2024
- Kutty, Therampath Narayanan, *Footprints of Evolution*, India: Clever Fox Publishing, 2022
- Leeming, David. A., *Shakti. In: Leeming, D.A., Madden, K., Marlan, S. (eds) Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, Boston: Springer 2010

- Lingham, Durgadas (Rodney), *Traditional Yoga: Insights into the Original Yoga Tradition, Book 2: The Vedic Yoga of Indra*, United Kingdom: Lulu.com, 2013
- McKean, Lise, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement*, United States: University of Chicago Press, 1996
- Menon, Ramesh, *Devi: The Devi Bhagavatam Retold*, India: Rupa & Company, 2006
- Menzies, Jackie and Chandrasekhar, Chaya, *Goddess: Divine Energy*, United Kingdom: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2006
- Metreveli, Marina and Timothy, Dallen J., “*Religious Heritage and Emerging Tourism in the Republic of Georgia.*”, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 5 no. 3 (2010): 237
- Mishra, Lavkush, *Religious Tourism in India*, India: Mohit Publications, 2000
- Mishra, Rakesh Kumar, *MAA SHAKTI & SHIVA Anthology of Source of Power*, India: Blue Rose Publishers, 2021
- Mitra, Swati, *The Temples of Himachal*, India: Eicher Goodearth Limited, 2007
- Mittal, Sumeeti, *Shiv Shakti*, India: Notion Press, 2024
- Moorthy, Choudur Satyanarayana, *Gleanings from Rig Veda: When science was religion*, India: Notion Press, 2016.
- Mukhopadhyay, Anway, *The Goddess in Hindu-Tantric Traditions: Devi as Corpse*: UK: Taylor & Francis, 2018
- Nair, Shantha N, *Echoes of Ancient Indian Wisdom: The Universal Hindu Vision and Its Edifice*, India: Pustak Mahal Publishers, 2008
- Padma, Sree *Inventing and Reinventing the Goddess: Contemporary Iterations of Hindu Deities on the Move*, United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2014
- Pande, Alka, *Shakti: 51 Sacred Peethas of the Goddess*, India: Rupa, 2021
- Parasuraman, A., Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry. “*A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research.*” *Journal of Marketing*, 49, no. 4 (1985): 41–50.
- Pattanaik, Devdutt, *7 Secrets of The Goddess*, India: Westland, 2023
- Pattanaik, Devdutt, *Shiva to Shankara: Decoding the Phallic Symbol*, India: Indus Source Books, 2006

- Pattanaik, Devdutt, *Pilgrim Nation: The Making of Bharatvarsh*, India: Aleph Book Company, 2020
- Prakash, S., *Unlock Pending Karma and Its Correction: Law of Karma through Astrology and Transformation through Mythology*, India: Notion Press, 2021.
- Prasoon, Shrikant, *The Creator of the Universe Ma Shakti*, India: Pustak Mahal, 2009
- Ramachandran, Nalini, *Nava Durga: The Nine Forms of the Goddess*, India: Penguin Random House India Private Limited, 2020.
- Ranchan, Som P., *Das Mahavidyas: A Contemporary Discourse*, India: Abhinav Publications, 2012
- Rinehart, Robin, *Contemporary Hinduism: Ritual, Culture, and Practice*, Indonesia: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004
- Sankara, Adi, *Nirguna Manasa Puja: Worship of the Attributeless One in the Mind*, California: Society of Abidance in Truth, 2024.
- Saran, Shyam, *Cultural and Civilisational Links between India and Southeast Asia: Historical and Contemporary Dimensions*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan 2018
- Saraswati, T.N., *Parvathi*, India: Bharatha Samskruthi Prakashana, 2019
- Sengupta, Nirmal, *Traditional Knowledge in Modern India*, New Delhi: Springer 2018
- Sharma, Arvind, *A Hindu Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990
- Sharma, Arvind, *Hinduism for Our Times*, India: Oxford University Press, 1996
- Sharma, Pratha, *The Forgotten Shivlinga of the Sati Shaktipeeths*, India: Zorba Books, 2018
- Shastri, Jagdish Lal, *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology: The Nārada-Purāṇa; I* India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995
- Sidharth, Burra Gautam, *The Celestial Key to the Vedas: Discovering the Origins of the World's Oldest Civilization*, United States: Inner Traditions, 1999
- Singh, Koko, Sharma Annu, and Barua Ipshita, *Himachal*, India: Rupa & Company, 2007

- Singh, Rana and Kinsley, David R, *Sacred Geography of Goddesses in South Asia: Essays in Memory of David Kinsley*, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2010
- Singh, Sagar (2004), “Religion, Heritage and Travel: Case References from the Indian Himalayas.” *Current Issues in Tourism*, 7(1):44-65.
- Singh, Shalini (2006), “Tourism in the Sacred Indian Himalayas: An Incipient Theology of Tourism?” *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 11 (4): 375–389.
- Sirāj, Shams, ‘Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi of Shams Siraj Afif*, India: Rampur Raza Library, 2015.
- Sircar, Dineschandra, *The Śākta Pīṭhas*, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973
- Sivananda, *Lord Siva and His Worship*, India: Yoga-Vedanta forest academy, Divine life Society, 1962
- Smith, Valene V (1992), “The Quest in Guest”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19:1-17.
- Swami, Bodhasarananda, *Stories from the Bhagavatam*, India: Advaita Ashrama, 2016
- Tagare, Ganesh Vasudeo, *The Kūrma-purāṇa*, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982
- Timothy, Dallen and Olsen, Daniel, *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*, UK: Routledge 2006
- Tripathi, Amish, *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, United Kingdom: Quercus Publishing, 2014
- Upadhyaya, Nilamani, *Temples of Himachal Pradesh: Architectural, Sculptural, Religious, and Cultural Significance*, India: Indus Publishing Company, 2008
- Vanamali, *Shakti: Realm of the Divine Mother*, US: Inner Traditions 2008
- White, David Gordon, *Tantra in Practice*, United States: Princeton University Press, 2018
- Williams, George M., *Handbook of Hindu Mythology*, United Kingdom: OUP USA, 2008
- Woodroffe, John George, *Shakti and Maya: A Study in the Shakta Tantra*. India: Oxford University Press, 1917.

- Wulff, Donna Marie and Hawley, John Stratton, *Devī: Goddesses of India*, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998
- Zimmer, Heinrich Robert, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990

## List of Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Questionnaire for Image and Satisfaction Survey Analyses

##### Section - A

###### Demographic data:

**Name:**

**Age:** a) 20 – 30 ☐

b) 30 – 50 ☐

c) 50 and above ☐

**Gender:** a) Male ☐

b) Female ☐

**Income:** a) up to 3 lakh ☐

b) 3 lakh – 5 lakh ☐

c) 5 lakh and above ☐

**Education:** a) up to Matriculation ☐

b) up to Graduation ☐

c) Post Graduation and above

☐

##### Part I – Image of Shakti Peeth

The following questions are related to the General image of the ShaktiPeeth in your mind. Please tick according to the level of your agreement with each of the statements described below:

S/N	Statements	1= Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree		
1	I think people have a positive opinion about this ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
2	The local people and administration are friendly towards pilgrims	1	2	3
3	This ShaktiPeeth has a unique image in my mind	1	2	3
4	I think this ShaktiPeeth is very popular among pilgrims	1	2	3
5	The surrounding environment of ShaktiPeeth is Clean and green	1	2	3
6	Local administration takes care of needs and requirements of pilgrims	1	2	3
7	I feel there is a considerable scope for improvement for the administration	1	2	3

## Part II – Important Elements of Consideration

S/N	Statements	1= Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree		
1	Local Administration offers safe and secure environment to Pilgrims	1	2	3
2	The ShaktiPeeth is easily accessible and convenient to reach	1	2	3
3	The entire area of ShaktiPeeth is clean and offers hygienic surroundings	1	2	3
4	Pilgrims have access to affordable and Quality Hotels and Staying facilities	1	2	3
5	Local People are friendly and helpful towards pilgrims	1	2	3
6	There are sufficient local transportation facilities available in the ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
7	There are enough places to shop and access local cuisines around ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
8	Pilgrims have access to clean drinking water and toilets in the premises	1	2	3
9	There are provisions of rest benches for tourists in premises and adjoining areas	1	2	3
10	Pilgrims have access to sports, recreational, and entertainment facilities	1	2	3
11	Making bookings, ordering food, and staying facilities are good at ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
12	The prices of things and facilities are reasonable at this ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
13	There are provisions to raise complaints regarding facilities and other things	1	2	3
14	I will visit the ShaktiPeeth again if given a chance	1	2	3
15	I will recommend my friends and relatives to visit the destination again	1	2	3
16	I have gained knowledge and insights from my visit to ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
17	ShaktiPeeth offers rich cultural and social diversity to pilgrims	1	2	3
18	Inside ShaktiPeeth, religious activities and centers are well organized	1	2	3
19	I am happy that I decided to visit this ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3
20	Overall staying at this ShaktiPeeth was a favorable experience for me	1	2	3
21	I am satisfied with my visit experience to the ShaktiPeeth	1	2	3



**Appendix B**

**Demographic Details (Jawala Ji Sample)**

<b>Demographic Details of Jawala Ji Sample (n = 146)</b>		
	<b>number (f)</b>	<b>percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>		
20-30	45	31%
30-50	52	36%
50 and above	49	34%
Total	146	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	87	60%
Female	59	40%
Total	146	
<b>Education</b>		
Matriculation	32	22%
Graduate	51	35%
Post-graduate	63	43%
Total	146	
<b>Income per annum</b>		
Up to Rs 3 lakh	23	40%
Between Rs 3 to 5 lakh	66	45%
Above Rs 5 lakh	57	39%
Total	146	

## Appendix C

### Demographic Details (Chhinnmastika Sample)

Demographic Details of Chhinnmastika Sample (n = 153)		
	number (f)	percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
20-30	45	29%
30-50	55	36%
50 and above	53	35%
Total	153	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	94	61%
Female	59	39%
Total	153	
<b>Education</b>		
Matriculation	32	21%
Graduate	55	36%
Post-graduate	66	43%
Total	153	
<b>Income per annum</b>		
Up to Rs 3 lakh	25	42%
Between Rs 3 to 5 lakh	69	45%
Above Rs 5 lakh	59	39%
Total	153	

## List of Publications

### Journal Publications

- Mukta Mani, & Dr. Mohd Ashraf Dar. (2024). Residents' Attitude Towards Pilgrims: Development and Validation of Sustainable Religious Tourism Scale. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(5), 1146–1153. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i5.1873>
- Mukta Mani, & Dr. Mohd Ashraf Dar. (2024). Health Concerns among Pilgrims: Conceptual Framework for Developing Sustainable Tourism Centers, *African Journal of Biomedical Research*, 27(3s) (October 2024); 3674 –3679, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53555/AJBR.v27i3S.3015>
- Mukta Mani, & Dr. Mohd Ashraf Dar. (2024). Understanding Shakti: A Study of Jawala ji and Chintpurni Peeths in Himachal Pradesh. *History Research Journal*, XXXI, 55-63

### Conferences

- Mukta Mani and Dr Mohd Ashraf Dar (2023), "Sustainable Religious Tourism: Opportunities and Framework", presented in ***International Conference on the Role of Education, Literature, Culture, and Society in the Global Scenario***, organised by Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal held on 3-4 April 2023.
- Mukta Mani and Dr Mohd Ashraf Dar (2024), "Promoting Sustainable Tourism: Adoption of Holistic Framework and Future Roadmap," presented at the ***National Conference on The Impact of Sustainable Tourism in a Changing World: Challenges and Opportunities***, organised by Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishn Government Degree College, Dharampur, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, held on 27 September 2024.