



## EXPLORING WATERFALLS OF THE GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK CONSERVATION AREA: A SPECIAL INTEREST NATURAL ATTRACTION

**Vishal Chaudhary,**

*Research Scholar, IVS Tourism, HPU, Shimla.*

**Prof. Dr. Sonia Khan,**

*Professor, IVS Tourism, HPU, Shimla*

**Paper Received On:** 12 December 2023

**Peer Reviewed On:** 28 January 2024

**Published On:** 01 February 2024

### *Abstract*

*The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA), located in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, is renowned for its rich biodiversity and stunning natural landscapes. Among its many natural wonders, waterfalls hold a special place, serving as captivating features that enhance the park's scenic beauty and ecological significance. This research paper explores the various waterfalls within GHNPCA and their potential for eco-tourism and Special Interest Tourism. Through a combination of field observations, interviews and surveys, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the waterfalls in GHNPCA and their significance in the context of conservation and sustainable tourism.*

**Keywords:** *Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, waterfalls, biodiversity, hydrology, eco-tourism, conservation, Special interest tourism.*

**I. Introduction:** The Great Himalayan National Park is of great significance due to its abundant biodiversity and distinctive ecology. It is not only a sanctuary for numerous endangered species but also serves as a vital water source for the surrounding regions. The park is home to over 375 species of fauna, including the elusive snow leopard and the endangered musk deer. Its diverse range of flora includes over 800 species of plants, many of which have medicinal properties. Additionally, the park's pristine rivers and streams provide water for agriculture, hydropower generation, and drinking purposes for the local communities.

**Overview of Waterfalls:** Waterfalls are another enchanting feature of this park, adding to its allure and natural beauty. These hidden gems, tucked away in secluded corners of the park, offer a serene and picturesque setting for visitors to explore and appreciate. The cascading waters not only create a mesmerizing sight but also contribute to the overall water supply of the park, replenishing its rivers and streams with fresh water. There are several waterfalls that are less known to the public, providing a hidden gem for those who seek solitude and tranquility. These hidden waterfalls offer a peaceful escape from the bustling crowds. Visiting such waterfalls is not a tourism product for everyone, but for those who appreciate the beauty of nature, value a serene experience, and have a special interest in visiting such waterfalls.

**Purpose of the research paper:** The purpose of the research paper is to explore the lesser-known waterfalls in the park and bring them out to the public. This will create a new motivation to visit such natural wonders. Additionally, it seeks to highlight the importance of catering to niche interests and diversifying tourism offerings to attract a wider range of visitors. Waterfall Tourism will be a new form of tourism i.e. Special Interest Tourism in this pristine area.

## II. Background

**Description of the Great Himalayan National Park:** The Great Himalayan National Park is located in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh and is known for its stunning mountain landscapes, diverse flora and fauna, and pristine rivers and waterfalls. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and offers a range of outdoor activities such as trekking, wildlife spotting, and birdwatching. The park is home to several well-known waterfalls that attract tourists from around the world. However, there are also many lesser-known waterfalls in the park that have not received much attention or promotion. These hidden gems offer a unique and tranquil experience for those who seek to explore off-the-beaten-path destinations.

**Significance of waterfalls in the area:** Waterfalls play a significant role in the area by not only adding to the natural beauty of the park but also contributing to its ecological balance. They provide a source of freshwater for the surrounding flora and fauna, creating a thriving ecosystem. Additionally, waterfalls are often considered sacred by local communities and hold cultural and spiritual significance in the region.

## III. Methodology

**Research methods used to explore hidden waterfalls:** To explore hidden waterfalls in the area, a combination of traditional research methods and modern technology was utilized. This included

studying topographic maps, consulting local experts and guides, conducting interviews with indigenous communities, and using satellite imagery to identify potential waterfall locations. These methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the region's hidden waterfalls and ensured that no stone was left unturned in the exploration process.

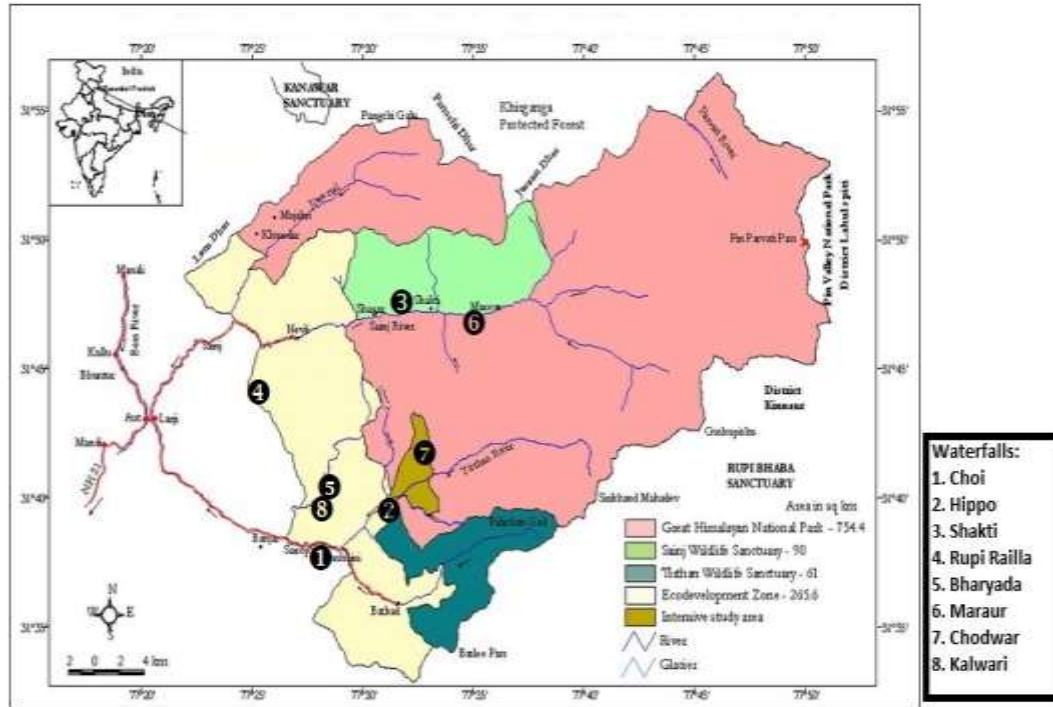
**Data collection techniques, such as field surveys and interviews:** Data collection was done with the help of interviews with local residents and park forest staff to gather firsthand information about the waterfalls. Combined efforts resulted in a thorough exploration of the area's hidden waterfalls, uncovering their beauty and contributing to a greater understanding of the region's natural wonders. The exploration process was not without its challenges, as the team had to navigate difficult terrain and unpredictable weather conditions. However, their determination and expertise allowed us to overcome these obstacles and successfully document the waterfalls in detail. The information gathered during this exploration will be invaluable for conservation efforts and promoting tourism in the region.

**Challenges faced during the research process:** Challenges faced during the research process included encountering treacherous hiking trails and steep cliffs, which required the team to exercise caution and use specialized equipment. Additionally, the team had to contend with heavy rainfall and dense vegetation, making it difficult to access some of the waterfalls. Despite these obstacles, the team's perseverance and dedication ultimately paid off, resulting in a comprehensive documentation of the area's hidden waterfalls.

#### **IV. Hidden Waterfalls in the Great Himalayan National Park**

**Description of various hidden waterfalls in the park:** The hidden waterfalls in Great Himalayan National Park offer a breathtaking sight to behold. From the majestic cascades that plunge down from towering cliffs to the serene and secluded falls nestled within lush forests, each waterfall possesses its own unique charm. These hidden gems can only be reached through challenging treks, rewarding adventurous souls with the awe-inspiring beauty of nature's wonders. The documentation of these waterfalls not only highlights their natural splendor but also serves as a valuable resource for future explorers and conservation efforts in the park.

**Some waterfalls in the Great Himalayan National Parks are:**



**1. Choi Waterfall:** In the beautiful Tirthan Valley in Himachal Pradesh, in the middle of a wild area, is the beautiful Choi Waterfall. This hidden gem is named after the respected local goddess Chhoi Mata, and it tells stories of the beauty of nature and its spiritual meaning. It's an adventure just to walk to Choi Waterfall. The walk starts in the charming village of Nagini and winds through lush forests. The old trees provide shade from the mountain sun. As the path slowly goes up, the melodic sounds of birdsong and the soft rustling of leaves mix. The rocky ground makes it difficult for hikers. Upbeat expectation grows with each step, and sneak peeks of the waterfall through the trees encourage you to keep going. When you get to Choi Waterfall, your hard work pays off in a big way. The sight is breathtaking: water roars over the edge of the cliff and turns into a sparkling sheet of silver as it falls to the pool below. The air is filled with a light mist that smells like fresh dirt and wild flowers. This natural amphitheater is filled with the sound of the waterfall, which is like a powerful orchestral piece put together by nature.



**2. Hippo Waterfall:** Tucked away deep within the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh lies the charming Hippo Waterfall. This waterfall gets its unique name from a large rock positioned at its base, whimsically resembling a hippopotamus. It's also called "Chuli Cho" in the local dialect, meaning waterfall flowing through joined palms. Reaching Hippo Waterfall requires a scenic, moderately easy hike through lush forests and villages showcasing traditional architecture. Once there, you'll witness water gracefully cascading over the hippo-shaped rock, forming a serene pool below. Feel the refreshingly cool mist, relax by the water's edge, and immerse yourself in the enchanting symphony of the falling water. Remember to tread lightly and be a responsible visitor; this gem of nature deserves our care and respect.





**3. Shakti Waterfall:** Deep within the Sainj Valley of Himachal Pradesh lies Shakti Waterfall, a powerful cascade imbued with natural beauty and local reverence. The hike to reach the waterfall is an adventure in itself, winding through dense forests and offering glimpses of traditional Himalayan life. As you approach, the roar of the waterfall grows louder, building anticipation. Water thundering down a sheer rock face and creating a mist will greet you when you arrive. Local legend surrounds Shakti Waterfall, adding a layer of spiritual significance to this stunning natural wonder. The nearby village is called Shugaad, which is around 2 km behind Shakti village. This is also called Steshar Waterfall by the villagers, as there is a local deity and his sacred groove is named after him. The stream on which this natural wonder is formed is called as *Bherad* stream.

Recently, behind this waterfall, a series of three consecutive waterfalls were explored (*on the picture right side*) and visited by GHNP forest staffer Vinay Kumar. Only the third waterfall was accessible as there is no trail to reach till the upper two. They are such a beauty to behold, with cascading water and lush green surroundings. They don't have a name. In the future, it may be recognized by an attractive name and visited by enthusiastic people.



#### 4. Rupī Raila waterfall

The Rupī Raila waterfall is situated along the route from Sainj to Shangarh. Upon observation, one will encounter a sign with the name "Rupī Raila Waterfall". You should embark on a brief trek. A brief ten-minute path will guide you to the waterfall. You will perceive the sound of the water emanating with a powerful and resonant intensity from quite a distance. Watch out if you visit during the height of the monsoon. The area will be densely populated with plants.



#### 5. Bharyada Waterfall

This waterfall is named after a local deity named Bharyadu. It is a magnificent sight to behold, with water cascading down the rocks in a mesmerizing display of power and beauty. The waterfall is on the way to Shrikot Village in the GHNP Eco zone in Tirthan Valley. There is no proper trail. The best time to visit the waterfall is in the winter. This is due to the lack of trail conditions, and it is an adventure in itself to reach this waterfall. One has to cross the stream from one side to the other several times to reach this spot, as in



summer the flow is strong and the water level is up. From Kalwari village, it takes about 1-2 hours of trekking to reach the waterfall. The water fall is huge and powerful. One can also find small flowers on the rock behind the waterfall. It is a beautiful sight to behold.

**6. Maraur Waterfall:** Deep into the Sainj valley of Himachal Pradesh lies the Maraur waterfall.

Maraaur is also a secluded village, 6 km from Shakti village. One has to reach them on foot to see these villages. Near this village lies this marvel known as Maraur Falls. From this village the waterfall can be clearly seen and the sight of the area becomes like a fantasy movie.



**7. Chodwar Waterfall:** In the local language, Cho is referred to as 'fall' and Dwar as 'cave'. This waterfall is on the way to the Rakhundi top in Tirthan Valley. This place is a little waterfall with a cave and huge cliff. And sometimes trekkers also camp overnight at this place, as there is no water source near the hilltop meadows. The water is majorly seen during rainy seasons as it is a underground spring water.

**8. Kalwari Waterfall:** In the Eco zone of GHNP in Tirthan Valley, another waterfall lies near Kalwari Village, which is known to natives but not to tourists. To visit this waterfall, one must seek guidance from the locals or hire a knowledgeable guide. The waterfall is hidden and not easily accessible. On the way to Tirthan Valley, one has to take another dirt road to Kalwari village. From here, the hike is about half an hour, and you can enjoy the majestic splendors of Kalwari waterfall in the wild. The fall is in the middle of forest



and formed on *Kalwari Nala*, the clear fresh water stream which is a tributary of Tirthan valley.

**V. Biodiversity and Ecological Importance:** Waterfalls within GHNP serve as vital habitats for a diverse array of flora and fauna. The moist microclimates created by the perpetual mist and spray support specialized plant species adapted to thrive in such environments. Mosses, ferns, and epiphytic orchids cling to the rocky surfaces surrounding the waterfalls, forming lush green



ecosystems. These habitats also provide refuge and breeding sites for amphibians, insects, and birds, contributing to the park's overall biodiversity.

## **VI. Cultural and Recreational Significance**

**Cultural importance of waterfalls to local communities:** The waterfalls within GHNP hold cultural significance for local communities, as they are often considered sacred or revered as symbols of natural beauty. These waterfalls are the site of traditional rituals, ceremonies, or gatherings that have been passed down through generations. Additionally, the waterfalls provide recreational opportunities for visitors and locals alike, offering a peaceful and scenic backdrop for activities such as hiking, picnicking, or simply enjoying the tranquility of nature.

**Tourism and recreational activities associated with waterfalls:** Local businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, can benefit from the influx of visitors seeking to explore and experience these natural wonders. It can also contribute to the economic development of the surrounding communities. This can create job opportunities and stimulate the local economy, ultimately improving the quality of life for community members. Choi waterfall has become an attraction to the visitors in Tirthan and Jibhi valley. Locals have also started earning from visitors. They have opened small stalls and selling snacks and beverages which has become a source of revenue to the locals.

**VII. Threats:** Potential threats to hidden waterfalls in the park include improper waste disposal by visitors. To mitigate these threats, conservation efforts can focus on implementing strict regulations and monitoring systems to ensure the protection of water quality. Additionally, educating visitors about the importance of responsible tourism and proper waste management can help minimize the negative impact on hidden waterfalls in the park. By addressing these threats and implementing effective conservation measures, we can ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy and appreciate these natural treasures. The modern concrete buildings nearby are adding a visual disturbance as they are depleting natural scenic beauty.

**VIII. Limitations:** The GHNPCHA hails many waterfalls. Apart studied waterfalls, other waterfalls in the vicinity are difficult to reach. Only waterfalls that were easily reachable were examined. Some unknown waterfalls were not visited because to adverse conditions and lengthy treks.

**IX. Conclusion:** In conclusion, human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and unregulated tourism have a significant impact on the waterfalls and their surroundings. These activities not

only degrade the water quality but also disrupt the delicate ecosystem that supports these natural wonders. However, through conservation initiatives such as reforestation programs, strict regulations on waste disposal, and community engagement in responsible tourism practices, we can protect and preserve these hidden waterfalls for future generations. It is crucial to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable practices and to implement effective conservation measures to ensure the long-term survival of these natural treasures.

The waterfalls of the Great Himalayan National Park represent not only natural spectacles of unparalleled beauty but also integral components of the park's ecological fabric. Understanding their geological formations, hydrological dynamics, ecological significance, and potential for eco-tourism is essential for effective conservation and sustainable management. By preserving and promoting these pristine landscapes, GHNP can continue to inspire awe and wonder while safeguarding its invaluable natural heritage for future generations.

As the park has image for various trek routes, watching and conserving flora and fauna, Eco-Tourism, it is a potential site for Special Interest Tourism catering Waterfall tourism.

**X. Importance of further research on hidden waterfalls:** Further research on hidden waterfalls in the Great Himalayan National Park is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, these waterfalls may serve as important water sources for the park's diverse flora and fauna, and understanding their hydrological dynamics can contribute to better conservation efforts. Additionally, exploring these hidden gems can also provide valuable insights into the park's overall biodiversity and potential for eco-tourism and special interest tourism allowing for more sustainable management strategies to be implemented.

## References:

- A. (2021, January 12). Great Himalayan National Park: A Hike to Hippo Waterfall and the Park's Gate. Retrieved February 17, 2024, from <https://waywardwayfarer.com/great-himalayan-national-park-gate/>
- Mohapatra, S. (2020). Altitudinal variation of woody vegetation in Tirthan valley of great Himalayan national park at Kullu, Himachal Pradesh. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Altitudinal-variation-of-woody-vegetation-in-valley-Mohapatra-Sankhyam/5f4691620feaecd36eb633df4be2447a50dcd967/figure/1>

- Pandey, S., & Gaston, A. (2019). The Great Himalayan National Park. Retrieved from [http://books.google.ie/books?id=urwAwgEACAAJ&dq=great+himalayan+national+park&hl=&cd=1&source=gbs\\_api](http://books.google.ie/books?id=urwAwgEACAAJ&dq=great+himalayan+national+park&hl=&cd=1&source=gbs_api)
- Rout, S. (2023, June 1). A guide to the Great Himalayan National Park - Stamped Moments. Retrieved from <https://stampedmoments.com/a-guide-to-the-great-himalayan-national-park/>
- V. B. (2024, January 7). Adventurous Journey to the hidden waterfall. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UurEG\\_OI888](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UurEG_OI888)

**Cite Your Article as:**

Vishal Chaudhary & Prof Dr. Sonia Khan. (2024). EXPLORING WATERFALLS OF THE GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK CONSERVATION AREA: A SPECIAL INTEREST NATURAL ATTRACTION. Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language, 12(61), 130–140. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10678813>