



## **Responsibility to Manage Pilgrim Destination: Study on HolaMohalla at ShriAnandpur Sahib**

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### **Abstract**

*The historic town ShriAnandpur Sahib is a city in Rupnagar district in the state of Punjab, India. It is located on the lower of the Himalayas surrounded by attractive natural scenery with the river Sutlej. Hola Mahalla is presently the biggest festival at Anandpur sahib. We personally visited the place and interviewed many tourists, pilgrims and local peoples in March 2012 during & after the festival. We found that local community and visitors of the festival face a lot of problems during this festival and after the festival. They thought something would have to happen in ShriAnandpur sahib during the Hola Mahalla festival in order to make the town more attractive and to give the best facilities to tourist, pilgrims and local peoples. That can be an issue of municipality by making it a clean city and DMOs (Destination Management Organizations) in sense of developing it as a planned city for avoiding rush, stampedes and problems faced by local community and visitors also. Next few paragraphs look into some statistics, geography and organisation of festival.*

**Keywords:** *Holla-Mohallah, destination management, and marketing of destination*

## 1. Introduction of festival

HollaMohalla or hola is a Sikh festival that is celebrated on the next day of the Hindu festival Holi. The festival takes place on the first day of the lunar month of Chet, according to the Nanakshahi calendar generally falls in the month of March. HolaMohalla, Holla Mahalla and Holais originated in Anandpur sahib. They are manifested by traditional valor and display of martial arts by the Nihang community of the Sikh religion. The festival is enjoyed for three days with huge enthusiasm. The festival is observed in all places across the world where Sikhs reside. The words "HollaMohalla" means "mock fight". During the festival, processions are organized in the form of army type columns accompanied by war-drums and standard-bearers and proceeding to a given spot or moving in state from one gurdwara to another. The custom begins in the time of Guru Gobind Singh who held the first such mock fight event at Anandpur in February 1701.

For people visiting Anandpur Sahib, langars (food) are organized by the local people and other welfare society as a part of community service (Sewa). Women cook the food and some others take part in cleaning utensils and other tasks that need to be carried out. Food is served to the pilgrims and visitors who eat while sitting in rows on the ground (Pangat). Gurudwara Takhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib, one of the five Sikh religious seats, is the main attraction during the festival holamohalla because mostly people worship at Gurudwara Takhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib and to watch the mock fight. Most of the Sikhs and other peoples participate in this festival from all over the world. There is huge rush during the fair. All the entrances to Anandpur sahibs are closed by the police, to stop big vehicles. Whole city is filled with crowd. Roadside vendors increased, displaying lot of items such as arms, handicraft etc. there is so much noise all around the city.

Apart from local community visitor comes in number of Lacks or Crores for enjoying the festival, and this way community get sufficient income also. During and after this festival, there are many issues are connected with this. Due to that local community and visitors of the festival face a lot of problems during this festival and after the festival.

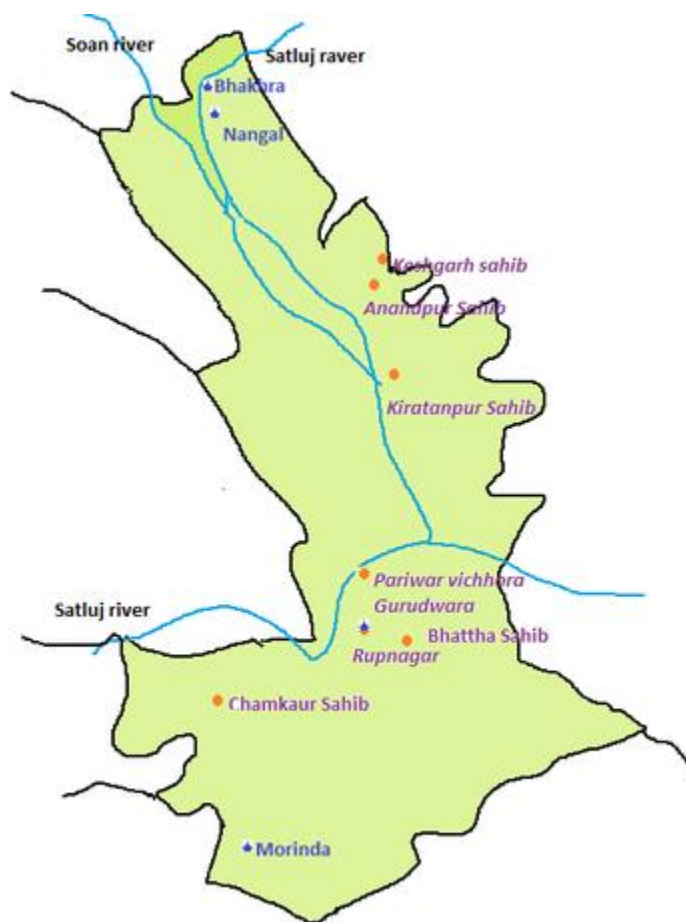


Figure 1: Tourist places and connectivity of Rupnagar district  
(Source: Rupnagar\_District\_Tourist\_Places, 2013)

We found some people were looking for medicine as they are suffering through high BP, low BP, headache, and body pain etc. We found some people, using open ground for their excreta near the city due to less toilets facilities, which produce smell. Lot of visitor's reported that their purses are:

- Toilet facilities
- Medical facilities
- Transport and parking
- Accommodation
- Crowd problem during worship, especially in case of children's and old agers
- Police control

After the festival, we found too much wastage in the city, on the road side. The dust is spread in the air and in all around the city, there is smell.

*Table 1: Factsheet for Anandpur Sahib (Adapted from: Anandpur-Tourism-Punjab, 2013)*

<b>State</b>	Punjab
<b>District</b>	Rupnagar
<b>Famous for/as</b>	Bangla Sahib
<b>Language</b>	Punjabi, Hindi
<b>Best Season:</b>	The best time to visit the Holy City of Bliss (Anandpur Sahib) is during the months of September to March.
<b>Weather</b>	Summer 35-43°C, Winter 4-20°C
<b>Local Transport</b>	Local buses, taxis, auto & Cycle rickshaws, and tractors are the local transport facility, available within the city.
<b>Pincode</b>	140118

## **2. Background of the place of festival**

Anandpur Sahib (City of Bliss) is situated on one of the lower spurs of the Shivalik Hills in Ropar District of Punjab and is well connected with the rest of the country both by road and rail. It lies 40 Kms north of Rupnagar (Ropar) and 23 Kms south of Nangal Township.

It is one of the supremely important pilgrimage centers of the Sikhs. Because on the day of Baisakhi in 1699, the 10th Guru of Sikhism Singh gave birth to the Khalsa and consummated the Sikh into the Khalsa -saint soldier. He baptized the original PanjPiare and inaugurated the order of Saint-Soldiers (holy warriors) who pledged their dedication to defend, not only Sikhs, but the fellow countrymen and their religious rights as well, in the ritual of one of India's greatest sacrificed Guru TeghBahadur who gave his life in the defense of the Hinduism on behalf of the Pandits of Kashmir.

## **3. Three (3) days of celebrations**



HollaMohalla is a three-day festival originated by the tenth Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh. The fair was basically originated to gather all Sikhs together and practice military exercises and mock battles to face the Mughal Empire at that time. This day reminds all Sikh peoples across the world about the great bravery and spirits that Guru Gobind Singh endured during the battle.

In this three-day's majestic festival, mock battles, exhibitions, display of weapons, etc., are held and shadowed by music and poetry competitions. A large number of locals community and visitors take part in the festivities and perform different adventurous or heroic stunts, such as tent pegging, bareback horse-riding, Gatka (mock encounters with weapons), standing straight on two speeding horses and various others bravery feats. There are also a number of durbars where Sri Guru Granth Sahib is present and kirtan and religious sermon take place. Sporting spotless swords, long spears, narrowed turbans, the Nihangs present a brutal picture as they gallop past on horseback spraying colors on people.

The last day of the celebration is manifested by a long procession led by PanjPyaras, starting from the GurudwaraTakhatKeshgarh Sahib. This march passes through different momentousGurdwaras, such as QilaAnandgarh, Lohgarh Sahib, Mata Jitoji and ends at the Takhat (Keshgarh). A grand langar (food) is arranged for all people visiting Anandpur Sahib by the local people as part of sewa (service). This is served to the visitors and pilgrims that are accommodated in rows on the ground, called as Pangat.

#### **4. Government policy**

The Govt. of India accorded it as a national festival in very recent time.

#### **5. Opportunities during festival**

There are many jobs opportunities in the shriAnandpur sahib as many peoples comes to worship at GurudwaraTakhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib and other religious places around the year. During the festival many peoples comes from all over the world. They look for good accommodation, food and transport facilities. They also look for other facilities such as medical facilities, tourist information Centre.

There are opportunities to provide facilities to the tourists by giving some kind of authority and training to local community to fill the new jobs.

#### **6. Environmental implications for life of changes**

Since we already know that more visitors will cause a change in particular place in different aspects. So during and after the festival we found great change in Anandpur sahib who impact on nearby area, and atmosphere in the city.

#### **7. Questions to deal with**

Following are some questions which you need to answer at the end of reading this case study:

1. Recommend the ways means to destination planners or managers for betterment of festival organization.
2. What alternates municipality can choose for making it an attractive destination for visitor and provide beautiful attire to local community?
3. Should Govt. of India interfere in the process? If yes then how and if not then why?
4. Whose prime responsibility is to take care of destination's attractiveness?

#### **8. Teaching notes of the case**

##### **8.1 Teaching objectives and target audience**

The purpose of the case is to teach the basic concepts of destination management in the classes of master's and bachelor's also. Readers also get an edge of understanding of roles of DMOs and it takes place in actual environment.

##### **8.2 Teaching approach and strategy**

- The key issues are destination management and roles of DMOs.
- The case can be discussed with the graduate and post graduate classes of *Destination Management and Planning* and *Destination Marketing* also.
- The case can be discussed after giving a fair knowledge of destination and DMOs.

### **8.3 How to analysis the case?**

The case should be first analysed individually by students and then it can be discussed in the group of 4-6 and finally they need to make group presentation in care of respective faculty for drawing sufficient conclusions on the case.

### **8.4 Further readings for making solution**

Following are some books which can be referred for knowledge of related concepts, which were faced during the reading of case study.

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### **8.5 Feedback of the case**

This case was tested in the class of MBA. 61% students identified the problem correctly and were able to develop alternate solutions that DMO could follow in scenarios depicted in the case. The case was able to generate a strong group discussion in the class. The case was also found to be suitable for individual analysis and group discussion to get maximum learning benefits for the participants.

### **8.6 Our personal recommendations towards case**

Anandpur Sahib can be developed as a tourist destination, rich socio-cultural heritage devoted exclusively to the appreciation of physical abilities of a martial people. It will sustain national and international tourism.

At the time festival, there should be adequate toilet facilities, so that pollution can be minimised. There should be proper transportation system during the festival.

State Govt. should have to focus on policy that promoting cultural heritage while providing greater economic benefits to the local population, increase community participation, all round development of Aanandpur sahib and the preservation of India's cultural heritage.

### **9. Acknowledgement**

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