



## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

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### **Introduction**

Businesses and public organizations are increasingly interested in the economic impacts of tourism at national, state, and local levels. One regularly hears claims that tourism supports X jobs in an area or that a festival or special event generated Y million dollars in sales or income in a community. —Multiplier effects are often cited to capture secondary effects of tourism spending and show the wide range of sectors in a community that may benefit from tourism. Tourism's economic benefits are touted by the industry for a variety of reasons. Claims of tourism's economic significance give the industry greater respect among the business community, public officials, and the public in general. This often translates into decisions or public policies that are favorable to tourism. Community support is important for tourism, as it is an activity that affects the entire community. Tourism businesses depend extensively on each other as well as on other businesses, government and residents of the local community. Economic benefits and costs of tourism reach virtually everyone in the region in one way or another. Economic impact analyses provide tangible estimates of these economic interdependencies and a better understanding of the role and importance of tourism in a region's economy. Tourism activity also involves economic costs, including the direct costs incurred by tourism businesses, government costs for infrastructure to better serve tourists, as well as congestion and related costs borne by individuals in the community. Community decisions over tourism often involve debates between industry proponents

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touting tourism's economic impacts (benefits) and detractors emphasizing tourism's costs. Sound decisions rest on a balanced and objective assessment of both benefits and costs and an understanding of who benefits from tourism and who pays for it. Tourism's economic impacts are therefore an important consideration in state, regional and community planning and economic development. Economic impacts are also important factors in marketing and management decisions. Communities therefore need to understand the relative importance of tourism to their region, including tourism's contribution to economic activity in the area. A variety of methods, ranging from pure guesswork to complex mathematical models, are used to estimate tourism's economic impacts. Studies vary extensively in quality and accuracy, as well as which aspects of tourism are included. Technical reports often are filled with economic terms and methods that non-economists do not understand. On the other hand, media coverage of these studies tend to oversimplify and frequently misinterpret the results, leaving decision makers and the general public with a sometimes distorted and incomplete understanding of tourism's economic effects. How can the average person understand these studies sufficiently to separate good studies from bad ones and make informed choices? The purpose of this bulletin is to present a systematic introduction to economic impact concepts and methods. The presentation is written for tourism industry analysts and public officials, who would like to better understand, evaluate, or possibly conduct an economic impact assessment. The bulletin is organized around ten basic questions that either are asked or should be asked about the economic impacts of tourism.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN INDIA**

India is a land of pilgrimage. Travel for religious purposes has been there from the most ancient times. Practically, all religions – Hindu, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism have their major and minor pilgrimage centres in different parts of the country. There are also centres of Sufism, churches and mosques that are visited by people. In fact, to a majority of domestic tourists in India pilgrimage has always been the main motivation. In our country all major temples, shrines and sacred spots are found scattered all along major riverbanks or in the hills. The confluence of holy rivers called —Sangamll, attract millions of tourists every year when pilgrims assemble there to take holy dip in these rivers. For example on the day of —Sankrantill a bath in holy Ganga water is believed to relieve a person of all the sins. Another dimension added to it is that an effort to unify the country Adi Shankaracharya established four peeth (centres) in the four corners of the country. They are Badrinath in North, Kanchipuram in South, Dwarkapuri in West and Jagannath Puri in East. To add to this

Sringerimutt in Karnataka state is also claimed to be the sacred peeth. The Indian pilgrims travel to the holy temples, the Indian holy space called “Teerth which contain the meaning of to cross”. It is a clear indication that in Indian holy space something is being crossed over. Within the holy space human beings are given the chance to transcend themselves when they come face to face, in contemplation, with the divinity. The pilgrimage, instead of diminishing in our apparently ever more secular, scientific and technologically oriented world, is experiencing considerable growth. This is primarily because in religious life of an average Indian, even rivers have played a decisive role. The rivers from time immemorial have been the symbol of purity to humans. Among these rivers the Ganga is believed to be the most sacred for all Hindus. Innumerable holy shrines like Gaumukh, Gangotri, Devprayag, Rishikesh, Hardwar, Garmukteshwar, Kannauj, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna and Gangasagar have come up on her banks through ages. These holy shrines attract millions of domestic pilgrims every year. On the other hand, river Yamuna is considered to be most meritorious to perform Gayatri Jap, worship of Keshav, Shiv or the Sun. The month of —Kartikl is pious for taking bath in Yamuna at Mathura. Traditions believe that Godavari before dividing itself into seven branches and meeting the sea, is most sacred for bath referred to as —Sapta Sagar Yatral. Besides rivers, sacred shrines have been visited extensively by domestic tourists all along the periods. The twelve Jyotirlingas, five Bhutalingas and many other temples enshrining Lingas’ in their sanctorum are the ideal terminal destinations of domestic tourists since the time of great epics. The Jyotirlingas are at Kedarmath (Uttaranchal), Kashi Vishwanath (Uttar Pradesh), Somnath (Gujarat), Baijnath (Karnataka), Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu), Ghushneshwar (Maharashtra), Bhimashankar (Maharashtra), Mahakaleshwar (Madhya Pradesh), Mallikarjuna (Andhra Pradesh), Omkareshwar (Madhya Pradesh), Nageshwar (Gujarat) and Tryambakeshwar (Maharashtra). The Bhutalingas are at Kalahastishwar (Vayulinga) at Kalahasti; Jambukeshwar (Appulinga) at Trichy; Arunachaleshwar (Bhatalinga) at Thriuvannamalai; Ekambareshwar (Prithvilinga) at Kanchipuram and Chidambareshwar (Akaslinga) at Chidambaram.

In addition to also holy rivers and sacred shrines situated on the banks of these rivers, Shakti is also worshipped as the Divine mother, a creative power both as an enforcing discipline and for securing righteousness. There are nearly fifty-one shakti peethas all over the country. These peethas are visited by tourists throughout the year. Thus, the religious tourism is a mixture of both ancient and modern cultures, i.e., from the exodus of the past to the present day where religious tourism has become a mainstay of tourism. India is a country abounding

in not only Hindu shrines but she also represents manifestations of elevating and inspiring works of Jain Tirthankars at Sravasti, Kaushambi, Hastinapur, Parasnath hills, Rajgiris, Khandgiri, Udaigiri, Khajuraho and Dilwara Temples at Mount Abu. Islami (Sufis) shrines as centres of religious influence at Ajmer (Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti), Gulbarga (Khwaja Bande Nawaj); Faridkot; Delhi (Sheikh Nizammudin Aulia); and Panipat (Shah Sharaf Bin Ali). Sikh religion though believed that real pilgrimage is inward yet their sacred shrines are located at Garhwal (Hemkund Sahib); Amritsar (Golden Temple); Taran Taaran (Anandpur Sahib), Kartarpur and Patna Sahib; Churches in Goa. At many of these centres festivals and fairs are also held.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS IN PILGRIMAGE TOURISM**

Most studies that measured specifically the impacts of pilgrimage tourism agree that sacred destinations are strongly affected by the stream of pilgrimage tourists visiting them (Collins-Kreiner et al., 2006; Rinschede, 1992; Vukonic, 1996; Din, 1989; Walpole and Goodwin, 2000). Shinde (2003) proposes a model of the dynamics of pilgrimage tourism, which allows us to further understand the interaction between pilgrimage tourists and host community and the associated impacts. As depicted there is both an immediate impact on the hosts' environment due to the direct contact of the visitors with the religious institutions, and also an indirect impact on the local economy and the society. First and most obvious impact of pilgrimage tourism is through the visits to the religious site and the visitor's contact with the religious institutions. However, apart from the religious institutions, holy sites are often surrounded by religiously orientated businesses and facilities, such as souvenir shops, travel agencies, hotels and even hospitals, providing employment for the host community (Evans, 1998). In particular, the sale of religious souvenir items, for example sacred water (Maseeh, 2002), icons and candles (Evans, 1998) or other religious things (Dubish, 1995) brings in considerable revenue, as is the case in Assisi in Italy and Lourdes in France (Fleischer, 2000). According to Secall (2003), this material perspective of interest brought about by pilgrimages has always been present in human history. As such, religious tourism can have similar economic impact as we see in other forms of tourism such as job creation, population growth and infrastructure development. The Catholic pilgrimage site Lourdes is a good example of how pilgrimage tourism can affect a destination's population growth. Lourdes, which currently receives some 6 million pilgrims per year from 140 different countries, (Lourdes, 2007) has been experiencing a constant population growth since its beginning as a pilgrimage site in 1858. This is in contrast to other cities at the edge of the Pyrenees and is

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attributable to the arrival of people from the surrounding area for job opportunities provided by the pilgrimage (Rinschede, 1992). Czestochowa in Poland, a town with a population of 250,000 attracts some 4.5 million pilgrims per year (Czestochowa, 2008; Gray, 2008) saw improving its infrastructure as a result of being a pilgrimage site (Jackowski and Smith, 1992). Some religious sites have been visited for centuries and there the impacts develop over along period of time but sometimes holy sites are —discovered suddenly, bringing dramatic and sudden changes to the local residents. Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina is one such example. Vukonic (1992, 1996, 2002) explains how the discovery of a holy shrine in 1981 resulted in a sudden growth of private accommodation and in land price inflation. In the Islamic world, income generated from the pilgrims to Mecca is the second major pillar of Saudi Arabian economy after oil (Aktas and Ekin, 2007). Pilgrimage generates annual revenues of approximately \$8 billion and over the past 30 years Saudi Arabia has invested \$35 billion in improving facilities for pilgrims (Salih, 2003).

Pilgrimage tourism is of course not free from negative impacts. El-Bakry (2003) notes that the high cost of an umra or hajj trip for Muslim people plus the increase in the number of people performing umra, gave rise to a black market for the exchange rate of the Saudi riyal. More precisely, the Saudi riyal increased 16% between Novembers. Impacts of pilgrimage tourism.

Source: Shinde, 2003, p. 93. Residents' Perceptions of pilgrimage Tourism. Against the Central Bank of Egypt's rate. In addition, the flow of riyal to the black market caused a cash deficiency forcing local banks to refuse grants even for small amounts to travellers (El-Bakry, 2003). In fact, according to Rashid (2007), operations and contracts are now set up to ensure that any element of speculation, uncertainty and gambling are eliminated or minimized. Changes in the local economy and society due to the large number of pilgrimage tourists may contribute to a process of cultural commoditization and acculturation (Ichaporia, 1983; Joseph and Kavoori, 2001; Cohen, 1988). For example, the authentic pilgrimages have given way in Sri Lanka to large-scale tourism (Pfaffenberger, 1983), which combines both recreation and pilgrimage (Singh, 2005). In Vrindavan, a popular Hindu pilgrimage centre in India, the improvements in accessibility and availability of transportation have long replaced the traditional pure form of pilgrimage on foot for the majority of visitors to the particular site (Shinde, 2006, 2007; Timothy and Olsen, 2006; Jackson and Davis, 2000). In accordance with changes in visitor patterns and the expansion of pilgrimage travel, many tourist

enterprises (hotels and tour operators) have emerged in the vicinity of the most popular temples, indicating growing tourism activity (Shinde, 2007) and diminishing the sacred atmosphere. Similarly, in El Camino, Spain, the process of secularization has been accelerated by the Council of Europe's designation of the pilgrimage route to Santiago as the first European Cultural Itinerary (Morpeth, 2007). In fact, the transformation from local religious rituals to national festivals, as is also the case in Andalusian pilgrimage, raised conflicts and problems for the local population (Crain, 1992). On the other hand, the positive impacts caused by the pilgrimage tourists often motivate residents to seek preservation of their religious sites and festivals not necessarily for purely religious reasons but also in order to safeguard the stream of pilgrimage tourists (Cohen, 1992). For instance, in Lisbon each year on June 13 on the day of the feast of St Anthony, the Town Hall sponsors the weddings of poor couples. In the year 2000, approximately 2,000 couples were married at the Town Hall and thousands more came to enjoy parades and other events citywide, making it an important event in the city's tourist calendar (Tilson, 2001). In summary, a pilgrimage site is connected to the non-sacred world and pilgrimage tourism impacts both positively and negatively on the local community.

### **THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PILGRIMAGE TOURISM**

The economic impact of pilgrimage tourism can be seen its contribution to a country, the largest contributions to pilgrimage tourism is seen in the many pilgrimage places in India (Bruner 1994). Many small places economies are highly depend on pilgrimage tourism as evidenced by the significant share of pilgrimage tourism in their total earnings. in 2009, pilgrimage tourism alone contributed 44.5 percent of the total export earnings of Indian tourism. Tourism in India has also provided a substantial contribution to Indian tourism, amounting to 13.7 percent in 2009, taking full advantage of the potential of their natural, pilgrimage tourism resources, countries like India and foreign countries are benefiting from the pilgrimage tourism. Bruner 1994; Daniel 1996).in 2009, pilgrimage tourism in India and neighbouring countries accounted respectively for 23.3 and 22.5% of their total foreign exchange earnings. In the other countries of the region, the contribution of pilgrimage tourism and is averaged between 50 to 60% mainly because of their potentialities and wealth. However in the light of the excreted continuing growth of the pilgrimage tourism in the foreseeable future, it can be assumed that the share of pilgrimage tourism in the Indian economy will be more significant. (Silberberg 1995, while there are various definitions of them converge around the concepts of improving the well being of country citizens,

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promoting higher standards of living, employment and conditions of economic and social progress. therefore in the absence of better indications to measure the impacts of pilgrimage tourism, its importance for employment has been used in the present document. The pilgrimage tourism contributes significantly to the creation of employment, both directly and indirectly in 2009, the industry in Indian region provided jobs for about 21% people. Representing an average of 8.9% of total employment. Taylor 2001), pilgrimage tourism employment in north-east-asia is estimated at 9 million jobs or 6.1% of total employment. This situation is attributed mainly to china where 1 out of 10 people works in a pilgrimage tourism related industry. (Shinde, 2007) the importance of pilgrimage tourism becomes more significant. When the structure of the work force in Indian economy is analysed. A comparison with countries in other sub regions indicated that the share of total employment in pilgrimage tourism sector in 2009 varied from 2.4 percent in India to 5% in other countries. Fueled by sustained growth, the pilgrimage tourism industry has managed to become a significant provider of employment in India. Handler and Saxton (1988), thereby improving the economic situation at the people in India. In addition, revenue generated from pilgrimage tourism has enabled Govt. to allocate pilgrimage resources, for improving pilgrimage tourism

### **Review of Literature**

Das gupta (2006) pilgrimage tourism plays a great role towards socio-economic changes. according to Indian sentiment the pilgrim centres or tirthasthan used to visit by number of tourists to earn virtue. one of such centre where taking holy dip. during maker sankranti, thought as in life of a person earns that much of virtue which one can earn by visiting all the pilgrimage centres throughout the life. the pilgrimage tourism is a vital and living experience in pilgrimage sites have also become important destinations, because they are closely linked with the cultural identity and heritage of a destinations where also pleasure components are being added to the familiar pilgrim routes and itineraries. thus due to continuous flow of pilgrims and tourists at this land, the socio-economic life of the islanders are evident. there fore, it can be said that pilgrimage tourism has opened several sources of cash earning and as a result several new occupations have emerged due to pilgrimage tourism. Shakiry (2001) the value of pilgrimage tourism in Islamic countries, pilgrimage tourism reveals many perspectives in culture and economy. exploring and developing religious land marks and facilities would lead to the rise of pilgrimage tourism in Islamic countries. Pilgrimage tourism reveals many perspectives in culture and economy. exploring

and developing religious land marks and facilities would lead to the rise of pilgrimage tourism in Islamic countries. this issue address governments whose concern it is to boost pilgrimage cultural and other types of tourism.they have to start internally by;protecting the environment and beautifying the areas in the immediate vicinity of pilgrimage sites as well as providing these areas with the necessary services, including constructing ways to facilitate them.

Laukush Mishra (2000) pilgrimage tourism is being recognized as a prime industry in most parts of the world.for the purpose of earning maximum foreign exchange.social significance of pilgrimage tourism cannot be said of less important.tourism industry requires variety as it is very essential capital and India is land of diversity.here diversity is present in every walk of life,from natural such as air,and water to social factors such as language and behaviour all varies from place to place.pilgrimage tourism,pilgrimages are not a destination only for our religious faith but they also strengthen our national unity and promote bortherhoodness also.the time has to come when these should be used to earn foreign exchange also keeping guarded our cultural heritage.in fact the other part of world may learn many things from India.indians might be poor from pocket but the wealth what they have in their behaviour is match less in the world.on domestic front religious tourism can be very helpful for regional development,employment generation,and can enroot again the cultural values.many modern social evils which are caused by materialism can be cured with the help of religious tourism.

Orland (1990) the pilgrimage tourism sites in developing countries are subjected to extraordinary economic pressures and change. Often being the only remaining open spaces in densely populated urban or rural agricultural landscapes, they are in danger of being over run, either by surrounding development, or by growing recreational uses.a site faces pressures from pilgrims, international tourists and local day-visitors, all with different goals and needs. There are two apparently conflicting goals: to increase international pilgrimages and tourism use of the site, and to enhance the site for local day-visitors. Strategies are presented which would reduce these present conflicts, allow for growth and respond to local management constraints. Mc grath (1999) the importance of pilgrimage travel as an economic, social and spatial phenomenon cannot be ignored. The term "pilgrimage tourism' implies travel to a site or worship or a sacred place; conceptually it is not unlike recreational or tourism movements as a form of short term migration, it is one of the most geographically significant forms of religious behaviour.



## **Objectives**

1. To identify the economic impacts of the pilgrimage tourism.
2. To identify the socio,cultural,economic impacts of the pilgrimage tourism
3. To identify the Positive impacts, Multiplier effect, Negative impacts in pilgrimage tourism
4. To identify the Economic dimensions in pilgrimage tourism.

## **Methodology**

The data for this study will be collected from local residents which engaged in tourism activities. Tourists will be identified as a key factor in developing tourism in local communities. This research is mainly based on secondary data such as broucher, pamphlets, books, news papers, internet, advertisement etc.

## **Scope of the study**

Pilgrimage, whether religious or secular, is experiencing resurgence around the world. This includes the motives for pilgrimage, activities during the pilgrimage, and the influence of tourism on it. The show that the visitor population ranged widely from very religious orthodox pilgrims, through "traditional" pilgrim-tourists to secular tourists. The features of present-day pilgrims can be represented on a scale that may be described as secular versus spiritual, and tourism versus pilgrimage. This typology also offers a model for the development of the pilgrimage sites. The highlight increasing convergence of old-fashioned pilgrimage and current tourism, which have much in common. Additionally, this research emphasizes the expanding nexus of holy sites, society, politics, ideology, and culture.

This study supports the idea that the economic impacts of religious tourism should not be neglected or underestimated, although religious institutions have traditionally attempted to downplay this in the past. Additionally, the argues that religion and tourism have much in common. In the modern world it is hard to ignore the impression that in the most places of pilgrimage the profane impacts of tourism are just as important if not more so than the religious.

## **ROLE OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN BALANCE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

In India, religious tourism plays a vital role in narrowing economic imbalance. Most of the places, especially rural areas and the areas which have no core competence or business, survive due to religious tourism. It provides business and employment opportunities to local

population helps to take care of their requirements. For instance, 'Sulli Karadu' a small dry rural area near Coimbatore, TamilNadu, India, well known for a rural deity which is very powerful, ought to be worshipped by offering Camphor in big quantities which is available in nearby shops. Devotees stand in mile long queue to offer their offerings. It provides livelihood to local population who sell camphor to the devotees which is supplied by camphor manufacturers. Also, it was interpreted that the whole exercise was orchestrated by the camphor manufacturers to sell their products which has been banned by TamilNadu Endowment Board to camphor in temples, by quoting the reason that would spoil the environment. However, this is a classical example on the religious tourism which fed the whole village. Also, a place called "Thadi Kombu" near Madurai, well known for a deity viz. "Shorna Bairavar" which is very powerful to collect the bad debts, it is the believe that if a pilgrim visit the place for 8 times in a particular day of the month, his/her prayers would be answered. This generates employment opportunities in the sleeping semi-urban small town, also generated business for bus owners who take devotees for charter trips on that particular day from far off places. These are all the examples of small places which generates business and employment opportunities for the local population, let alone, many famous places like "Palani", Madurai, Rameswaram, Kanyakumar, etc. in Tamil Nadu, and well known, "Sabari Malai" in kerala, which generates millions and provides employment opportunities to many. The whole kerala belt has been benefiting from lakhs for devotees visit sabari malai during particular seasons. These provide tremendous opportunities for marketers to focus on these locations to market their products and services. It is the dual benefit of catering location population as well to promote the products/services.

## **ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM**

Tourism has major economic significance for a country. The receipts from international tourism can provide a valuable source of earnings for many countries both developed as well as developing. visitor spending generates income for both public and private sector besides affecting wages and employment opportunities. although tourism is sensitive to the level of economic activity in the tourist generating countries, it provides more fixed earnings than primary products. the income from tourism has tended to increase at a higher rate than merchandise export in a number of countries especially in countries having a low industrial base. there is now and almost assured channel for financial flows from the developed countries to the developing countries rising the latter's export earnings and most important source of income for a number of countries both developed and developing.

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