

# SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

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*Abstract* : Pilgrimage can be coined as a form of journey which provide an opening for the people to visit blist places and is a feature common to more or less societies. Pilgrimage whether religious or secular, is experiencing resurgence around the world. Experiencing resurgence around the globe includes the motives for pilgrimage activities during the pilgrimage and also the influence of tourism on it. Tourism is now well recognised as an engine of growth in the various economics in the world. It has largely contributed towards the economic growth and development. Tourism nowadays acted as tool for employment generation, poverty eradication and development of the whole economy and also ensure substantial cum development. In the present scenario tourism is treated as an inevitable segment of countries economic development especially in terms of foreign exchange earnings , generation of additional incomes, inculcation of foreign values, employment generation etc.

*IndexTerms* - Pilgrimage tourism, Economic impact, Social impact, Environmental impact.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage can be coined as a form of journey which provide an opening for the people to visit blist places and is a feature common to more or less societies. Pilgrimage whether religious or secular, is experiencing resurgence around the world. Experiencing resurgence around the globe includes the motives for pilgrimage activities during the pilgrimage and also the influence of tourism on it. Tourism is now well recognised as an engine of growth in the various economics in the world. It has largely contributed towards the economic growth and development. Tourism nowadays acted as tool for employment generation, poverty eradication and development of the whole economy and also ensure substantial cum development. In the present scenario tourism is treated as an inevitable segment of countries economic development especially in terms of foreign exchange earnings , generation of additional incomes, inculcation of foreign values, employment generation etc.

Kerala the “Gods own country” is one of the top ten tourist destination of the world, is blessed with immense potential for carrying out various kinds of tourism activities. One of such form of tourism in which the graph of Kerala is showing an uptrend in pilgrimage tourism. Business and public organisations are increasingly interested in the economic impacts of tourism at national and international level. The features of present day pilgrimage tourism can be represented on a scale that may be described as secular versus spiritual and tourism versus pilgrimage. The present study would contribute to identify the need for economic dimension in pilgrimage tourism.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Vijayamand, 2012) Pilgrimage tourism is becoming a vital component as each and every of its aspect is closely linked with the cultural identity and heritage of a destination. Due to its increasing flow many pleasure aspects are also added to attract the tourists. Pilgrimage tourism has also turned to be a good income earner. India is a land of pilgrimage and pilgrim travel has always assumed great importance from ancient times. All religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism have their major and minor pilgrimage centres in different parts of the country. Sacred destinations have remained important in the stream of pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrimage tourism has a direct and immediate effect on the host population as the visitors have a direct contact with the religious institutions and an indirect effect on the local economy and society. Also such pilgrim sites are often surrounded by souvenir shops, travel agencies, hospitals and hotels which provide employment to the host community. The sale of religious souvenir items brings in a good amount of revenue. Pilgrimage tourism however is not free from negative impacts. When this aspect is combined with pleasure and recreation it paves a way to many negativities. The high cost of umra gave rise to a black market for the exchange rate of saudiriyal, then there is cultural commoditization and a acculturation, improvements in accessibility have replaced the traditional “pilgrimage on foot”, many tourist enterprises in the vicinity of most popular temples have diminished the sacred atmosphere. but on the other the positive impacts of pilgrim travel often motivate the residents to seek preservation of their religious sites and festivals.

(Ashfaq & Parveen, 2014)The study attempts to analyse the socio economic impact of pilgrimage tourism with special reference to Mata Vaishno Devi (katra) one of the popular shrine located in Jammu and Kashmir. As an impact of pilgrim tourism the town katra reflects a significant change in its land use pattern, cultural and demographic setup and the overall development of the area. The income generated by way of this has also immensely risen in the graph. This can be increased many folds if the government improves the infrastructure and the basic amenities provided to the pilgrims. The potential of the area has not yet been fully exploited and can be developed by promoting other alternative religious tourist circuits.

(Ojo & Busayo, 2017)The study examines the correlation between religious tourism and the economic development of the host communities in Africa with special reference to Nigeria. The study firmly concludes that pilgrimage tourism encourages the local

inhabitants to take up new entrepreneurial ventures, creates job satisfaction and enhances their living standards. They receive a good amount of income by hosting various religious events in their area. These events project a good brand image of the destination and attracts many investors and promotes the growth of small scale business units in the area. Tourism supports infrastructure development and pilgrim tourism encourages sustainability of the environment, enhances the local transportation networks which are enjoyed by the locals also and sustains a good living condition of the local residents.

(Terzidou, Dimitrios , & Szivas)This paper examines the views and perceptions of local residents to the socioeconomic impacts of pilgrim travel with special reference on the islands of Tinos, Greece. The findings was that majority of the local residents had a very positive and warm attitude towards the religious tourists and a positive socioeconomic outlook. Differences existed only in the frequency of their visits and age factor. The study concludes that economic considerations overrule other major concerns by the local residents.

(Nishad , Gnanadhas, & Edwin, 2007)The paper examines the common relationship shared by tourism and religion and the economic impacts of religious tourism. The study concludes that pilgrim travel is the biggest employment generator. The locals have started welcoming this because they now realize it is in the interest of others and its importance. They are now aware of preserving its character and a collective effort builds up unity also. When the number of pilgrims visiting a particular destination increases every year it contributes significantly to the development and growth of the particular place.

(Mahmoudi, Ghasemi, & Shayan, 2015)The study examines the correlation between development of religious tourism and the rise in employment and income in the rural economy. People participating in tourism like the tourists, locals and other authorities need to manage the effects the tourism on regional economic development and marketing strategies like advertisements play a big role in publicizing an area.

(Daniel & M D, 2012)The study examines the socioeconomic impacts of pilgrimage tourism with special reference to Sabarimala. The study emphasises the economic impacts of pilgrim tourism in terms of employment generation, income creation and foreign exchange. The study makes policy makers think about the negative impacts of tourism how to mitigate it and encourage more public interventions by making the locals more responsible.

(Ashfaq & Parveen, 2015)The study researches the holy shrine of shahdhara sharief (Jammu and Kashmir)as a prominent pilgrim centre, assess the importance of pilgrimage on religious communities and study the basic amenities provided at the holy centre. The study concludes that the place is not only attracting many pilgrims but also plays a major role in the economic development of the area. The place also showed a remarkable increase in the land use pattern, infrastructure and employment. The place has immense potential to be developed as a pilgrim centre and the state government authorities need to properly manage and take due care of the place.

### III.NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Pilgrimage tourism helps in giving manifold economic benefits. Few places of Kerala has been identified as places where high positive effects of pilgrimage tourism on employment, income and standard of living of the residents. The present study is to bring out the various strategies required for making pilgrimage tourism in Kerala a better destination in economic dimension. Further the study would be useful for other States also for tapping the pilgrimage potential.

### IV.OBJECTIVES

- To assess the impact of pilgrimage tourism in the growth and development of rural area.
- To analyse the economic impact of pilgrimage tourism.
- To study the environmental impact of pilgrimage tourism.

### V.HYPOTHESIS

1. Ho: Pilgrimage tourism has no significant economic impact.
2. Ho: Pilgrimage tourism has significant social impact.
3. Ho: Pilgrimage tourism has no significant environmental impact.

### VII. ANALYSIS

Table 6.1  
Comparison of economic conditions before and after pilgrimage tourism

ECONOMIC IMPACT	BEFORE (Mean)	AFTER (Mean)
Level of income	2.5	4.1
Standard of living	2.3	3.9
Diversification of economic activity	2.1	3.6
Increase in savings	2.4	3.9
Employment opportunities	2.2	4
Improvement in infrastructure	2.2	3.8
Increase in land value	2.4	4.5

\*Source : Primary data

Analysis shows the main score of economic conditions before and after pilgrimage tourism. The data indicates that there is an increase in the mean score of level of income from 2.5 to 4.1, standard of living from 2.3 to 3.9, diversification of economic activity from 2.1 to 3.6, increase in savings from 2.4 to 3.9 and so on. It indicates that there is a positive impact of pilgrimage tourism on the economic condition.

**Table 6.2**  
**Comparison of social conditions before and after pilgrimage tourism**

SOCIAL IMPACT	BEFORE (Mean)	AFTER (Mean)
Influence in the society	2	3.75
Respect for tradition	2.2	3.5
Rural development	2.3	4.17
Government involvement	2.3	4
Lifestyle changes	2.37	4.3

**\*Source primary data**

The above table shows mean score of social conditions before and after pilgrimage tourism. It indicates that there is a positive impact of pilgrimage tourism on social conditions.

**Table 6.3**  
**Comparison of environmental condition before and after pilgrimage tourism.**

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	BEFORE (MEAN)	AFTER (MEAN)
Creating environmental awareness	2.4	3.7
Maintaining natural beauty	2.3	4.7
Promotion of environmental activities	2.2	3.8

**Source: Primary data**

Result of the analysis indicates there is an increase in the mean score of creating environmental awareness from 2.4 to 3.7, maintaining natural beauty from 2.3 to 4.7, promotion of environmental activities from 2.2 to 3.8.

## V.II HYPOTHESIS TESTING

### 6.2.1 HYPOTHESIS I

Ho: Pilgrimage tourism has no significant economic effect

H1: Pilgrimage tourism has significant economic effect.

**Table 6.2.1**  
**Paired sample t test**

Economic impact	mean	Standard deviation	t value	P value
BEFORE	16.2167	2.92327	-24.302	.000*
AFTER	28.0333	2.66787		

\*Significant at 1% level.

Since p value is less than 0.1, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance that is pilgrimage tourism has significant economic impact.

### 6.2.2 Hypothesis II

Ho: Pilgrimage tourism has no significant social impact

H1: Pilgrimage tourism has significant social impact

**Table 6.2.2**  
**Paired sample t test**

Social impact	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p value
BEFORE	11.5667	2.96034	-28.668	.000*
AFTER	19.7000	2.06094		

\* Significant at 1% level.

Since P value is less than .01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. That means pilgrimage tourism had significant social impact.

### 6.2.3 HYPOTHESIS III

Ho: Pilgrimage tourism has no significant environmental impact

H1: Pilgrimage tourism has significant environmental impact.

**Table 6.6**  
**Paired sample t test**

Environmental impact	mean	standard deviation	t value	p value
BEFORE	6.9167	1.34406	-20.100	.000**
AFTER	11.4833	1.89997		

\*\* Significant at 1% level.

Since p value is less than .01, null hypothesis is rejected at % level of significance. That means pilgrimage tourism has significant environmental impact.

## V.II CONCLUSION

To conclude the study pilgrimage tourism has significant economic impacts in terms of income creation, employment generation, increasing foreign earnings and developments in infrastructure. In terms of the social impact pilgrimage tourism respects and preserves one's own traditions, values and customs, uplifts the rural economy and improves their standard of living, builds the image of a destination, and cultural integration. Finally in its environmental impact pilgrimage tourism maintaining the natural beauty of a destination, promoting environmental awareness, conserving natural resources and encouraging more environmental activities.

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