



UNDERSTANDING THE TOURIST BEHAVIOUR IN RURAL PILGRIMAGES CENTRES: A STUDY OF SELECT PLACES IN BALLARI DISTRICT

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Abstract: Pilgrimage tourism holds a significant position in India's multifaceted travel sector, encompassing a wide spectrum of religions and faiths. India, as a culturally rich and unified nation, boasts an abundance of pilgrimage destinations that cater to followers of various faiths from around the world. Although India's secular identity ensures the existence of pilgrimage sites for all religions, the preeminence of Hinduism has led to a profusion of Hindu pilgrimage destinations.

This study focuses primarily on assessing the perspectives of tourists regarding the promotion of pilgrimage tourism in Ballari District. Ballari District, situated in the heart of India, is a region replete with spiritual significance and offers a unique blend of cultural heritage and religious diversity. By understanding tourists' views on the promotion of pilgrimage tourism in this district, we can gain valuable insights into how to harness its potential for attracting visitors and fostering economic growth, all while preserving its rich religious and cultural heritage

Index Terms – Spiritual Tourism, Hindu pilgrimage, Travel landscape etc.,

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a pivotal role in a nation's economy, contributing significantly through international tourism receipts. It not only creates employment opportunities but also generates revenue for both public and private sectors. Notably, the income derived from tourism tends to exhibit greater stability compared to that from primary goods, making it a vital economic factor, particularly in nations with limited industrial foundations.

Sustainable tourism, especially when directed towards rural areas, is widely recognized as an effective instrument for revitalizing traditional sectors. and fostering economic growth in remote regions. It is built on the principles of environmental conservation, cultural heritage preservation, enhanced visitor satisfaction, and long-term economic development. Modern tourists increasingly prioritize the quality of services and access to information, which has led to a rise in the number of travel providers who leverage resources. A lack of adequate information about a destination can significantly impact tourists' satisfaction, which often stems from their initial expectations. The influence of tourist preferences and

their utilization of information sources on overall satisfaction remains an area of study that requires further exploration.

Globally, there is a resurgence in the practice of pilgrimage, driven by motivations that span the religious and non-religious spectrum. This phenomenon encompasses a wide range of reasons that drive individuals to undertake pilgrimages, their activities while on these journeys, and the profound influence of tourism on their overall experiences. The research conducted in this field reveals a highly diverse pilgrim community, encompassing individuals who are deeply spiritual and orthodox in their beliefs, alongside secular tourists, and those who fall somewhere in between, often referred to as "traditional" pilgrim-tourists. By categorizing modern-day pilgrims, a spectrum emerges that ranges from those with secular inclinations to those with strong spiritual convictions, as well as a continuum that stretches from tourism-oriented activities to pilgrimage-centered pursuits. This categorization provides a conceptual framework for understanding the proliferation of pilgrimage sites and underscores the increasingly apparent overlap between modern tourism and age-old pilgrimage traditions.

India's rich tapestry of pilgrimage destinations reflects its commitment to fostering religious tolerance and cultural harmony, exemplifying the enduring spirit of inclusivity and pluralism in the domains of spirituality and travel. As a unified nation, India hosts a plethora of pilgrimage spots that cater to a wide array of religious beliefs from around the world. India's secular values are instrumental in ensuring accessibility to pilgrimage sites for followers of all faiths, irrespective of their religious backgrounds. However, it's important to note that due to the prevalence of Hinduism in the country, India boasts an abundance of Hindu pilgrimage destinations. This diversity and inclusivity in pilgrimage locations establish India's distinctive standing in the realm of spiritual tourism, rendering it a destination of profound cultural and religious significance for individuals of varying faiths.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Bayih, B.E. (2018): State that , Tourism that revolves around religious locations has the capacity to result in the deterioration of priceless heritage, the erosion of cultural richness, environmental pollution, and a range of other unfavorable consequences. Consequently, it is crucial for policymakers to actively confront these recognized challenges linked to the advancement of religious tourism within the surveyed area. Concurrently, they must prioritize the conservation and augmentation of the region's invaluable natural and cultural assets.

Jafari, J. & Scott, N. (2014): Opinion on the spiritual tourism state that, It's vital to focus on how tourism affects Muslims as hosts and visitors. But we should remember that Islam is more than just a religion or a political movement. By recognizing the social and religious aspects and taking into account its global importance and increasing travel trends, researching how tourism and the Muslim world influence each other can extend understandability in this diverse field of study.

Kira n. Shinde (2007): States that, People in the cultural side of pilgrimage rituals often ignore or don't care about the environmental effects. They talk about transcendent things influenced by myths, religion,

and rituals. On the other hand, those not linked to religion are more aware of the environmental impacts but might feel unable to help. Only a few people actually take action to protect the environment.

Patange, P & others (2013): State that, Improved transportation has increased year-round pilgrimages in India, turning pilgrimage sites into urban areas due to higher visits and economic opportunities. This interplay of pilgrimage and urbanization is reshaping various aspects, reflected in both direct and indirect impacts from the increased number of visitors. Frequent visits are leading to more noticeable and persistent environmental effects, a departure from traditional pilgrimages.

Bleie T(2003) : Pilgrim tourism is evolving in the Central Himalayas, challenging traditional pilgrimage notions due to an influx of modern transportation. Decision-makers in the region must consider cultural implications when approving transport projects to heritage sites. Preserving traditional pilgrimage practices while promoting equitable and sustainable development is essential. The growing number of pilgrim tourists offers economic and developmental potential for both national economies and local communities.

Rountee K(2002): They argue that, Women in the Goddess movement undertake significant journeys to ancient Goddess worship sites. These "Goddess pilgrims" exhibit commonalities with other religious pilgrims and middle-class tourists interested in various forms of tourism. Their visits to sacred sites serve as expressions of both their religious identity and political consciousness. They firmly believe that personal transformation plays a vital role in societal change.

Padmini Tomer(2012): Suggest that, Festivals often cause overcrowding in dharamsalas, as Dharamsalas and budget hotels are the preferred lodging options at religious destinations and creating accommodation challenges. To resolve this, tourism departments, state governments, and religious site managements should work together to build more affordable lodging with better amenities near the religious sites for pilgrims' convenience and to ease overcrowding.

Singh(2007): Analyze that Studying the spiritual power of sacred places, influenced by human beliefs and shaped by history, geography, culture, and faith, needs consideration. The idea that "pilgrimage is like an outer journey of mysticism, and mysticism is an inner journey of pilgrimage" hasn't been explored by scholars in pilgrimage and cultural studies. Adding alchemy to this research could help us better understand the ultimate reality and humanity's place in the universe.

Sati N & others (2012): Focusing on improving connectivity through better roads and expanded airports is crucial. Additionally, restoring historical landmarks and enhancing infrastructure at sacred sites across all three regions of Jammu and Kashmir is essential to attract more pilgrims. To promote tourism in the region, infrastructure enhancements in roads, transportation, aviation, railways, hotels, and tourist sites are imperative. Tourism offers economic growth and job opportunities for local communities.

Dixit (2005): Irrespective of their motivations, all tourists, including those with religious intentions, bring about significant sociocultural impacts on the local community. This becomes particularly evident in places grappling with excessive tourism, where religious heritage sites hold pivotal roles in the tourism industry and host significant religious events. Similarly, for service providers, the motives driving a visitor's journey hold relatively little importance, as each tourist makes a substantial contribution to bolstering local economic growth, supporting public services, and facilitating infrastructure development.

III. CONSTRUCTION AND WORKING

Objectives:

1. To Study the profile to rural pilgrims
2. To understand the behaviour of rural tourists in pilgrimage place

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significance disparity in the people Demography/behaviour of people between place 1 and place 2

H1: There exists a significance difference in the people Demography/behaviour of people between place 1 and place 2

Methodology & Data:

The research relies on firsthand information obtained from 100 pilgrims (50 from each pilgrim centre through a pretested survey questionnaire. Chi-square Test is used to analyze the data

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussion:

Table showing Demographic Status of rural tourists in pilgrimage centers:

SL No	Details		Place 1 (Raravi)	Place 2 (Chelgurki)	Total	Chi Square	P Value
01	Gender	Male	38	14	52	23.07692308	1.55
		Female	12	36	48		
02	Age	Below 21	05	4	09	3.42	0.33
		21-30	12	9	21		
		30-50	18	13	31		
		50 & Above	15	24	39		
03	Annual Income	Upto 2 Lakhs	26	12	38	15.94195	0.0011
		2-4 lakhs	12	34	46		
		4-6 Lakhs	2	3	5		
		6& Above	0	1	1		
04	Occupation	Farmer	18	6	24	10.00	0.018
		Business	17	29	46		
		Employee	6	10	16		
		Others	4	5	9		

05	Qualification	SSLC & Below	34	15	51	18.69943	0.003
		PUC	6	4	10		
		Graduate	8	26	34		
		PG & Above	2	5	7		
06	Marital Status	Married	36	40	76	0.877193	0.34
		Unmarried	14	10	24		

Source: Primary Data

Analysis of the above table:

- Since the p-value for gender is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis.
- The p value is more than 0.05 therefore Null hypothesis is accepted in case of age factor
- The p value is less than 0.05 in case of Income therefore Alternative hypothesis is accepted
- The p value is less than 0.05 in case of occupation therefore Alternative hypothesis is accepted
- The p value is less than 0.05 in case of qualification, therefore Alternative hypothesis is accepted
- The p value is more than 0.05 therefore Null hypothesis is accepted in case of marital status

Table showing the purpose of Visit:

SL No	Purpose	Place 1	Place 2	Total
01	Pilgrimage	15	15	30
02	Home deity	21	18	39
03	Serene Seeking/ Rituals	14	17	31
	Total	50	50	100
Chi Square				0.521092
P Value				0.770631

Source: Primary Data

Analysis of the above table shows that, p value is more than 0.05 therefore Null hypothesis is accepted

Table Showing Mode of Transport:

SI No	Mode	Place 1	Place 2	Total
01	Bus	18	13	31
02	Two wheeler	17	14	31
03	Car	12	12	24
04	Others	03	11	14
Chi Square				5.668203
P value				0.128

Source: Primary Data

From the above table the p value is more than 0.05 hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table Showing expenses incurred:

Sl No	Expenses	Place 1	Place 2	Total
01	Less than 500	36	23	59
02	500-750	7	1	8
03	750-1000	1	5	6
04	1000 & Above	06	21	27
Chi Square				18.36
P value				0.00037

Source: Primary Data

From the above table the calculated p value is less than 0.5 therefore, Alternative hypothesis is accepted

Findings:

1. More people who are females travel to the rural tourist location Raravi where as Male travel very much to the site Chelgurki.
2. People between the age group of 30 and above visit the rural pilgrim centers in both the places.
3. People who travel to nearest pilgrim places have the income group belong to less than 4 lakhs. However, more people with higher income groups travel more to Chelgurki.
4. All the educated & uneducated people travel to Pilgrimage places, however, people with Graduation travel more to Chelgurki.
5. People who are engaged in Agriculture & Business are travelling more to these Pilgrimage centers.
6. The pilgrims who travel to these centers are mostly dependent on Public transport and two wheelers. It shows that their income levels are less to spend.
7. People who travel by bus spend around 500 rupees and who travel by own car able to spend Rs. 1000 & above.
8. It is witnessed that pilgrim in rural places happening for different purposes.

Suggestions:

1. Increased bus services are essential to boost Rural Tourism in these areas, given that a significant portion of the population relies on bus travel..
2. Educated individuals who visit these places could offer suggestions and contribute donations for the development of these pilgrimage centers, either through local communities or government initiatives.
3. Given the various rituals performed at these locations, local residents could explore offering reasonably priced accommodations as an additional source of income.

4. Considering that farmers and businessmen make an effort to visit these places, it is equally vital to raise awareness among individuals from various other occupations about the value of visiting rural travel centers.
5. Raising awareness among tourists about the importance of maintaining cleanliness is essential to prevent the spread of diseases in these locations.

V. CONCLUSION

It has been observed that frequent travel is predominantly undertaken by a diverse group of individuals, including both farmers and businessmen, spanning across various levels of literacy. These individuals demonstrate a willingness and capacity to invest their resources in these travel experiences. In light of this, it is imperative for the relevant authorities to take proactive measures aimed at the development and enhancement of these travel destinations.

The government, in particular, can play a pivotal role in spearheading the development initiatives required to elevate these places. This entails various facets, such as improving infrastructure, preserving local culture and heritage, ensuring accessibility, and promoting responsible tourism practices. By assuming this role, the government can effectively contribute to the sustainable growth and prosperity of these areas, ultimately benefiting the local communities and the broader tourism industry.

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