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Tourism Development in India

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Preface

Dear Reader,

Tourism is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which involves movement to and stays in destinations outside the normal place of residence. Man has been a confirmed traveller since ancient times - a nomad - as travelling has been a characteristic feature of human society and lifestyle. The excursions made by travellers help to discover the new places around the globe. Travel in early times is synonymous with the modern day tourism. Tourism is an ever - expanding service industry with latent vast growth potential and has, therefore, become one of the crucial concern of not only the nations but also international as a whole. It is being perceived as an important instrument of economic development. The two aspects of tourism - its capacity to generate employment both directly as well as indirectly, and its potential to earn had international for the host country - have made this industry greatly desirable for all concerned: governments, entrepreneurs and people in general. It has come, therefore, increasingly to occupy a place of important not only for the business sector but also for the concerned academic and management institutions. The main elements in the process of tourism are man, space and time. In fact, in a significant sense, it is new of the most of the influential phenomenon in the economic and social development of society. There is hardly another economic sector, which generate as many added values, employment and foreign exchange and that also at such a low cost as tourism. The economic significance of tourism is well brought out by the statistics/ figures of the world tourism and travel council (WTTC) and John Naisbaitin his book 'Global Paradox' as it contributes 10.2% to world GDP, 10.7% of capital investment, employs 10.6% of global work force, accounts for 10.9% of all consumer spending and 6.9% of all government spending.

May this book inspire you to embark on your own odyssey through the enchanting realms of India's tourism treasures, leaving footprints of appreciation, understanding, and respect in your wake.

This book is a celebration of India's journey towards becoming a global tourism powerhouse while embracing the values of inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and cultural authenticity. It is a testament to the passion and dedication of countless individuals, organizations, and policymakers who have contributed to shaping India's tourism narrative and positioning it on the world stage.

Dr. Jaimini C. Solanki,
Dr. Apexa N. Pandya, and
Prof. Jitandra D. Vihol

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A Study on Religious Tourism and Economic Development of India

Dr. Dilipkumar Chunilal Patel

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Akhand Anand Arts & Commerce College, Surat

Abstract

This Research Article Title “A Study on Religious Tourism and Economic Development of India” This article under the Study of Growth of foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings into India through the Indian tourism industry. The information needed for this research article has been received from only secondary data. This data collected by researcher various book, Journal, Magazine and Government Websites also. It also shares of the Indian Tourism Industry in the World in general. The Research Suggests Measures for increasing the growth of foreign tourist in India. Tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings in India through tourism Industry. This Research study will help the Tourism Industries Develop in India. It gives suggestion to Better Improvement.

India Introduction of Tourism

WTO has taken the concept of „tourism“ beyond a stereo type image of „holiday making“. The official accepted definition in the report is: “Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment not for leisure, business and other purposes”.

WTO has classified three types of tourism-

- a) **Domestic Tourism:**
- b) **Inbound Tourism:**
- c) **Outbound Tourism:**

These three basic forms of tourism can be in turn being combined to derive three categories of tourism.

- Internal Tourism: This comprises domestic and inbound tourism.
- National Tourism: domestic and outbound tourism.
- International Tourism: inbound and outbound tourism.

Types of Tourism in India:

All **types of tourism in India** have registered impressed growth in the last decade ever since the Indian Government decided to boost revenues from the tourism sector by projecting India as the ultimate tourist spot.

1. Adventure tourism
2. Wildlife tourism
3. Medical tourism
4. Pilgrimage tourism
5. Eco tourism
6. Cultural tourism

Why Religious tourism:

Religious tourism is when a person travels to a pilgrimage site primarily based on their religious belief. These travelers perform pilgrimage as a way to worship and enjoy salvation. Religious tourism usually involves followers of particular faiths visiting locations that some people regard as holy sites. In many instances, religious tourists journey to these sites on the anniversaries of events that are of importance to followers of specific religions.

Various Famous Religious Tourism places:

1. Ayodhya Ram Mandir
2. Vaishno Devi Temple, Jammu Kashmir
3. Sun Temple in Konark, Odisha
4. Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh
5. Dargah Gharib Nawaz in Ajmer, Rajasthan
6. Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
7. Vrindavaan, Uttar Pradesh
8. Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu
9. Hampi, Karnataka
10. Bodhgaya, Bihar
11. Karni Mata Temple, Rajasthan
12. Thousand Pillar Temple, Telangana
13. Golden Temple Amritsar, Punjab
14. Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha
15. Ranakpur Temple, Rajasthan
16. Hemkund Sahib, Uttarakhand
17. Elankanni Church, Tamil Nadu
18. Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
19. Dwarka, Gujarat
20. Badrinath Dham, Uttarakhand

21. Madurai, Tamil Nadu
22. Shirdi, Maharashtra
23. Omkareshwar and Mamleshwar Temple, MP

Review of Literature

Naucratis Sharma (2013)¹ in their article “Economic Growth of Tourism Industry in India” Tourism is a very well-known word from last many decades. Tourism is the world’s most rapidly growing industry all over the world. India has lots of natural, historical, cultural resources with an immense amount of fascinating mountains, seas and deserts. Today tourism is the largest service industry in India, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and providing 8.78% of the total employment.

Pail Holder*(2007)³“Rural Tourism – Challenges and Opportunities” This paper attempts to probe the impact of marketing of rural tourism in India, rural tourism can help in shaping our society. It can have both positive and negative impacts on rural as well as urban communities. There is a scope of rural tourism in India. Rural Tourism can develop a win-win situation for both the rural and urban communities. If a proper marketing plan is done rural tourism, it could bring lots of benefit to our society.

Abhijit Das (2013)⁴ in their article “Growth and Prospects of Cultural Tourism in North Bengal (W.B) India with Special Reference to Malta District: A Study of Tourism and Recreational Geography.” This study has been conducted in the context of socio-economic issues, environmental issues, and sustainable livelihood issues. For this analysis the sample size was restricted to 200 respondents. In the conclusion part discussed about data collected from diverse sources to draw meaningful solution and figure out suggestion for promotion of tourism industry.

Jetsam Pays (2006)¹¹ in their article “Tourism Employment (An Analysis of Foreign Tourism in India)” the paper is as much about the estimates as it is about the methodology that we have used in arriving at these estimates for tourism which is a composite sector. Employment coefficients for the tourism sector in India are estimated to be 584 in 1993– 94 and 393 in 2004–05.

Dr. Dines Das (2012) ¹² in the research article “Tourism Industry in North-East Indian States: Prospects and Problems” This paper makes an attempt to explore the potentiality from North-East Indian states which will maintain a bright prospect of economic development in terms of tourism industry in near future.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the present study are:

- 1 To study impact of Religious tourism the growth of Foreign tourist arrivals.
- 2 To study Foreign exchange earnings in Indian Tourism Industry.
- 3 To Valuable Contribution of Indian Tourism Industry and the World and especially the Asian and Pacific region.
- 4 To Comparative study year by year the level of stability of the India Tourism in foreign tourist arrivals, Foreign exchange earnings, and domestic tourist visits in India and Indian tourists going to Foreign Country.
- 5 To suggest measures improvement for policy and increasing the growth of foreign tourist arrivals and to increase foreign exchange earning of India as a direct result of tourism.

Research Methodology:

The study was based on a range of only secondary data collected from various government website sources such as the Ministry of Tourism, and Statistical department of India on the Government of India, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and other Tourism relevant websites. In order to study the Particular objectives, statistical tools like Compound Annual Growth Rate. The study concerned the growth and stability of India tourism. Parameters like foreign tourist arrivals into India, foreign exchange earnings, domestic tourist visits within India and Indian tourists going Foreign Country were all carefully researcher's analyzed.

Source of Information:

1. Local articles from newspaper.
2. Other documents related to the study will be used:
3. Newspaper
4. Monthly Magazine
5. Books/literature/research papers/articles etc.
6. Internet: Government various Department Websites
7. Research conducted by other state tourism board

Data Analysis

Ftas in India Through Gender Wise Distribution During 2015 To 2021

YEAR	ARRIVELS	Gender Distribution (%)		
		Male	Female	Not reported
2015	8027133	59.3	40.7	0.0
2016	8804411	59.4	40.6	0.0
2017	10035803	59.4	40.5	0.01*
2018	10557976	58.6	41.4	0.01
2019	10930355	58.9	41.1	0.0
2020	2744766	57.8	42.2	0.0
2021	1527114	59.7	40.3	0.0

Source: Bureau of Immigration, India, *: transgender.

Nbound Tourism: Foreign Tourist Arrivals (Ftas), Arrivals of Non-Resident Indians (Nris) And International Tourist Arrivals (Itas) 2015 To 2021.

Source: Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India

Year	FTAs in India (in Million)	Percentage (%) Change over Previous year	NRI's arrivals in India (in Million)	Percentage (%) Change over Previous year	International Tourist Arrivals in India (in Million)	Percentage (%) Change over Previous year
2015	8.03	4.6	5.74	5.7	13.76	5.0
2016	8.80	9.6	6.22	8.4	15.03	9.2
2017	10.04	14.1	6.77	8.8	16.81	11.8
2018	10.56	5.2	6.87	1.5	17.42	3.6
2019	10.93	3.5	6.98	1.6	17.91	2.8
2020	2.74	-74.9	3.59	-48.6	6.33	-64.7
2021	1.52	-44.5	5.48	52.6	7.00	10.6

Top 15 Source Countries for Ftas in India During 2020 & 2021

Rank	Country	FTAs in India in 2020	% Share in 2020	Rank	Country	FTAs in India in 2021	% Share in 2021
1	Bangladesh	549273	20	1	United States of America	429860	28.1
2	United States of America	394092	14.4	2	Bangladesh	240554	15.8
3	United Kingdom	291874	10.6	3	United Kingdom	164143	10.7
4	Canada	122868	4.5	4	Canada	80437	5.3
5	Russian Federation	102166	3.7	5	Nepal	52544	3.4
6	Australia	86758	3.2	6	Afghanistan	36451	2.4
7	France	74243	2.7	7	Australia	33864	2.2
8	Germany	72558	2.6	8	Germany	33772	2.2
9	Malaysia	69897	2.5	9	Portugal	32064	2.1
10	Sri Lanka	68646	2.5	10	France	30374	2.0
11	Thailand	52626	1.9	11	Maldives	26571	1.7
12	Japan	48191	1.8	12	Sri Lanka	25989	1.7
13	Afghanistan	47561	1.7	13	Russian Federation	17567	1.2
14	Nepal	40822	1.5	14	Iraq	16213	1.1
15	China	39586	1.4	15	Netherlands	15631	1.0
	Total top 15 countries	2061161	75.1		Top 15 countries	1236034	80.9
	Other countries	683605	24.9		Other countries	291080	19.1
	Grand total	2744766	100		Grand total	1527114	100.0

Source: Bureau of Immigration, India

Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism in India During 1991, 2001, 2011 & 2021

Year	FEE in ₹ terms		FEE in US\$ terms	
	₹ Crore	% Change over previous year	US \$ Million	% Change over previous year
1991	4318	-	1861	-
2001	15083	-3.5	3198	-7.6
2011	83036	25.5	17707	22.2
2012	95607	15.1	17971	1.5
2013	107563	12.5	18397	2.4
2014	120367	11.9	19700	7.1
2015	134844	12.0	21013	6.7
2016	154146	14.3	22923	9.1
2017	177874	15.4	27310	19.1
2018	194881	9.6	28586	4.7
2019	211661	8.6	30058	5.1
2020	50136	-76.3	6958	-76.9
2021	65070	29.8	8797	26.4

Findings and Suggestion

Findings:

- ✎ FTAs in India according to gender during 2021 are given in While the proportion of female for most of the countries is in the range of 30% to 50%, for some countries like Turkey, China and Pakistan, it was substantially low (less than 30%) in 2021. On the other hand, females outnumbered the males in FTAs in India from countries like Thailand (59.4%), Kazakhstan (56.3%), UAE (52.1), Mauritius (49.3%), Maldives (49.1%), U.S.A. (46.0%), Canada (45.9%), Netherlands (45.8%), Iran (45.7%) and Bhutan (45.7%)
- ✎ NRI arrivals have registered 52.6% growth in 2021 over 2020. The International Tourist Arrivals in India has registered annual growth of 10.6% in 2021 over 2020, respectively. The month-wise break up of NRIs arrival and International Tourist Arrivals in India during 2019 -2021 along with the growth rates are given in respectively.
- ✎ The share of these 15 countries in total FTAs in India shows a generally increasing trend from 1981. This share, which was 49.6% in 1981, increased to 75.1% in 2019 and 80.9% in 2021.
- ✎ The month-wise FEEs from tourism and corresponding percentage change over previous

years during 2019-2021 in ₹ terms and US\$ terms are given in Tables 2.11.2 and 2.11.3, respectively.

Suggestion

- ✓ Religious tourism should be a very important of Indian tourism. At the Same Time Religious tourism for sustainable livelihoods must be encouraged.
- ✓ India should make the most of its developed to natural resources and labor to develop not only traditional products but also nontraditional products of tourism India.
- ✓ Tourism Department should promote and develop the tourism in the new potential places, the state govt. should give the priority to create and provide the infrastructure as well as basic amenities at all such places according to the urgent needs and requirement of tourists.
- ✓ First priority should be given in order to provide the better transport facilities with good frequency including lodging, boarding and accommodation with reasonable rates. Apart from it trained guides should be appointed at tourist places for projecting the best image of the country by providing the actual information of the tourist destinations and caring for the safety of tourists including to ensure their pleasant stay.
- ✓ Good hotels, restaurants and guest houses should also be developed at all such potential places by providing all sort of facilities like electricity, drinking water, air conditioners, television, internet, computers and other important items and equipment to update the tourist with all the latest information's regarding the tourist places.
- ✓ Education, research and training are the wheel of tourism. Human resource management should be given priority. Importance should be given to inductive research on historical importance and contemporary relevance. Tour operators, guides must develop a good performance with tourists. From touring to learn we should move to learning to tour.
- ✓ To make more developed such areas, the state govt. with the help of central govt. various types of tourisms should be established like to developed Garden and zoo parks, golf course, rope car and boat houses, keeping in mind, the geographical, socio-economic and environmental conditions of these tourist places.
- ✓ The Govt. of India and the concerned States Govt. Should provide the maximum additional funds to improve the road connectivity mainly in and around tourist places of importance like National Highways and Airport to heritage sites and important tourist places.

- ✓ Road connectivity connection the role of State Government is very much appreciable and the Government is providing all sorts of facilities in order to strengthen the road connectivity in and around such places.
 - ✓ The promotion for tourism in Abroad / Overseas more should be given to the publicity through media, Newspaper, radio channel, leading print publications, T.V. Channels, Information Technology and Internet to popularize world heritage sites including tourist centers of India including India.
- Visa on arrival: Such type of facility should be provided India to those countries from where maximum tourist comes to India to earn more foreign exchange.

Conclusion:

The Religious Tourism and Economic development in India are satisfied, overall, as the foreign tourism growth measures the positive effects of globalization and at the same time reduce its adverse effects. The trade balance and government accounts are in a better position, owing to the additional receipts from tourism. The ongoing growth of India tourism also reduces the government's burdens. Some Steps should be initiated to maintain the consistency in the growth patterns of the Indian tourism industry. Growth should of course, be incremental and should be initiated by the Government, as well as public and private agencies. Together they can cooperate to the facilities and provide the necessary tools to support the different idea of the tourism industry. Special suggest must be undertaken to promote Religious tourism India if it is to achieve a suitable level of sustainability in the global competitive world of tourism.

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- what is religious tourism - Search (bing.com)

The Impact of Religious Tourism on the Indian Economy

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Abstract:

Religion has been one of the oldest reasons for travel in India. While the tourism and hospitality industries are important to the India's GDP, leisure travel, specifically makes up a significant part of the tourism market. Religious tourism in India has evolved into a formidable economic force, with Government of India spearheading the Temple Economy. From the sacred city of Kashi to the historical Ayodhya, temples are no longer just places for prayer; they are bustling hubs driving economic growth and transforming lives. The prospects of religious tourism in India are promising, with potential benefits for various sectors and a significant impact on the country's economy and job market. The present study aims to demonstrate the significance of religious tourism and its impact on the India economy. Religious tourism provides a sacred and spiritual environment that has the potential to shape the motivational state of individuals searching for cultural and religious landmarks and destinations to support their spiritual well-being. Hence, it is imperative to maintain close relationships between religion, culture, and tourism as they play a crucial role in promoting spirituality and human development, particularly in the context of economic development.

Keywords: religion; religious tourism; development;

Introduction:

Religious tourism has emerged as a booming market in India, according to the Delhi based National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) which shows that of the 230 million tourist trips undertaken in India, the largest proportion is made up of religious pilgrimages. Undertaken by both rural and urban Indians, they outnumber leisure holidays in hill stations, getaways to sea beaches and even trips to metropolitan cities. As many as 23 million people visited Tirupati, a temple town near the southern tip of India to catch a glimpse of a deity known as Lord Balaji. Tirupati's annual list of pilgrims is higher than the total number of travellers visiting Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata put together. In the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir 17.2 million devotees trek uphill for 15 km to pay respects to a female goddess called Vaishno Devi. According to Ministry of Tourism data, religious tourism

witnessed 1439 million tourists in 2022 and the places of religious tourism earned ₹1.34 lakh crore in the same year. The sector is expected to generate a revenue of 59 billion by 2028, creating 140 million temporary & permanent jobs by 2030.

What is religious tourism?

Religious tourism is one of the earliest forms of tourism and represents a significant, evolving, growing, and increasingly diverse sector of the global tourism market. Religious tourism has taken place since the dawn of civilization. Pilgrims travelled to pay homage to the sacred places and their guardians throughout the world. Religion has influenced and shaped man's thoughts and philosophies since the dawn of civilization. Man's journey in quest of religious ideologies began since then. The exodus of the Jews in search of the Holy land has become a legend and finds an important place in Biblical reference.

A spiritual desire to see a site of religious renown initiated religious tourism. The visit to legendary shrines and temples is considered as a holy act a tourist engages in his life span. It is more than just a visit but is a spiritual quest. It is driven by faith, an ardent soul-searching mission at the altar of God no matter what form of religion he advocates.

Religious tourism can be classified under the broad heads like faith-oriented expeditions, holy pilgrimages, missionary travels and leisure holidays. According to the World Tourism Organization, the world's most important religious destinations see an approximate visit by around 300 to 350 million pilgrims annually. The most important driving force to inspire religious tourism is the intensity of faith. A religious site is a destination looked upon by tourists with great wonder and respect. At times, scientific explanations and logic fail to answer a crisis and seeking a solution at the altar of god seems the last resort. This infuses hope and a need for a sacred trip inspiring religious tourism.

Religion and tourism are interlinked with each other. Early tourism was in the form of visiting religious pilgrimages such as Christians travelling to Jerusalem and Muslims to Mecca and Hindus to Kedarnath and Amarnath. Pilgrimage has always been one of the dominant factors for motivating people to travel. Tracing back to religious history it is found that major religions have globally stimulated tourism as a foundation for spreading their own religious beliefs.

Religious tourism in India:

More than 60 per cent of tourism in India is associated with religious and spiritual tourism. In recent years, travel in India has witnessed a significant transformation, with pilgrimage tourism emerging as a popular trend. Holy sites across the country are now

attracting devotees in unprecedented numbers. The surge is coming from both: devotees from all parts of India as well as devotees from across the globe. There is no doubt that faith-based tourism is a revenue-generator for India, estimated at 902 million U.S. dollars in 2022, approximately accounting for 6 to 11 percent of the global faith-based travel market.

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 which are visited by millions. 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. Beside these temples and shrines a huge number of religious melas are held all across India over the years such as Kumbh Mela, Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Eid-Ul-Fitr, Shivaratri and Baisakhi etc.

Contribution of Religious Tourism to India's Economy:

- In 2022, 14.33 crore Indians and 64.4 lakh foreign tourists visited temples and pilgrimages. (Ministry of Tourism Data)
- This generated an income of 1.35 lakh crore at these pilgrimage places.
- The total contribution of religious and pilgrimage tourism constitutes 60 per cent of total domestic tourism.
- It was nearly Rs 11 lakh crores, given a total contribution of more than Rs19 lakh crores in 2022-23 (That is, 7 per cent of GDP at current prices in 2022-23) by tourism.

Effect of Religious Tourism on Indian economy:

Tourism, as a cross-sectoral activity, has a great impact on the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of countries. In terms of economic importance, tourism is considered as a smoke-free industry that has the greatest ability to replace other income-generating industries. This industry works especially for countries that have a single product economy. Religious tourism, as an economic, social and cultural reality has the following tasks and functions in the society: mental recovery, peace of mind, enjoying the spiritual atmosphere, observing different manifestations of pilgrimage customs and traditions, spiritual products, fertility, the occupation of knowing spiritual culture, reviving national pride, having cultural heritage, knowing life and how to build self-confidence. Cultural practices including, preservation of cultural resources, cultural convergence, cultural exchanges, cultural capital

growth are among the most important functions and effects of religious tourism in society. Religious tourism can be a source of economic and spiritual value for any country (Vukonic 2002). In fact, tourism can affect economic growth and development by contributing to income, improving the local economy, increasing job opportunities, improving investment, developing infrastructure and increasing tax revenue and attracting capital.

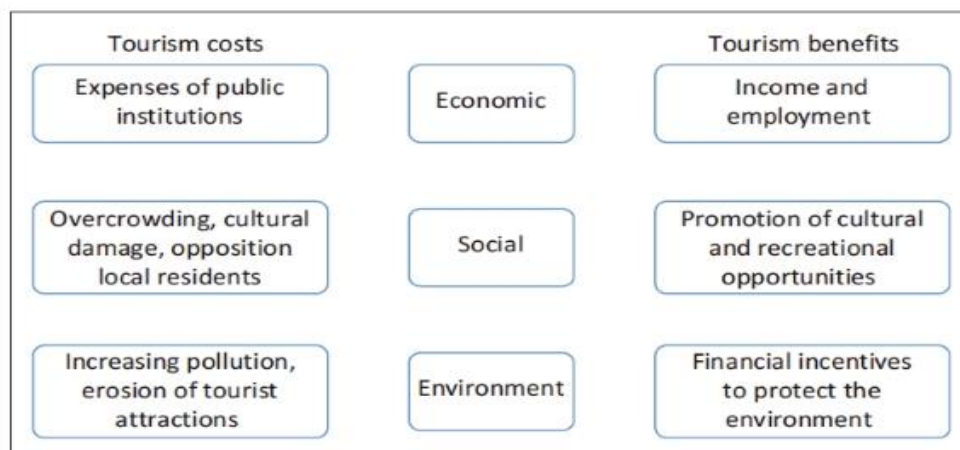


FIGURE 1: Advantages and disadvantages of tourism.

Economic impact and Job Creation:

According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) travel and tourism (including its direct, indirect and induced impacts) accounted for 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world, 10.3% of all jobs (333 million), and 10.3% of global GDP (\$9.6 trillion) in 2019. Meanwhile, international visitor spending amounted to \$1.8 trillion or 6.8% of total exports.

According to WTTC, tourism contributed about 7% or 15723.3 billion to the Indian GDP in 2019. The sector employed 40.1 million people accounting for about 8.4% of India's total employment. Even if religious tourists account for a third of the total tourists their contribution to GDP or employment generation seems quite significant.

From the economic point of view, religious tourism is a great revenue earner. It generates employment at the site and leads to the growth of ancillary business connected with religion - promoting general upliftment of the economy of the religious site.

From the standpoint of being a revenue earner to a country's tourism industry, the religious tourism niche offers contributions at a commendable scale. Holy visits to Balaji Tirupati temple in southern part of India pour in heaps of gold donated by the devout tourists to the tune of several million dollars. Religious tourism is thus a pillar of strength for a nation's economy.

The Kumbh Mela 2019 was estimated to have generated revenue of 1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh according to a report by the apex industry body Confederation of Indian

Industry. Although the Kumbh Mela is spiritual and religious in nature, the economic activities associated with it generate employment for over six lakh workers across various sectors (CII report).

The travel and hospitality sector, particularly in Ayodhya, has experienced a surge in job creation, adding 20,000 jobs in the last six months. Projections indicate that an additional 25,000 jobs will be generated annually in this sector alone. The positive spillover effects are anticipated to extend beyond tourism, influencing the broader economy of the cities hosting religious sites.

Tourism Hub:

India, with its rich history, diverse culture, and natural beauty, has the potential to turn all district into a tourism hub. Collaborative efforts between districts, state governments, the central government, and the private sector can translate this potential into reality. By leveraging the unique offerings of each district, India aims to become the premier global tourism destination.

Investment Opportunities:

The rapidly growing Indian tourism sector presents lucrative investment opportunities. The government's focus on showcasing the strength of India's religions and philosophies to the world aligns with the exponential possibilities for the tourism sector. As the largest service industry in the country, tourism holds the key to driving employment, export earnings, and regional development.

Promoting Sustainable Development Through Religious Tourism:

Religious tourism can play a pivotal role in sustainable development by integrating economic, social, and environmental aspects. A study emphasizes the need for comprehensive planning, including awareness generation and tapping niche segments like heritage and spiritual tourism. India can utilize its rich cultural heritage and natural resources to develop eco-friendly and sustainable infrastructure, promoting local handicrafts, and cuisine, and creating employment opportunities for local communities.

Ensuring Benefits for Local Communities:

To ensure that religious tourism benefits local communities and preserves the cultural heritage of the region, collaboration with locals is crucial. Inclusive tourism planning, involving local communities, can lead to equitable sharing of benefits. The government and private sector can focus on eco-friendly tourism packages, emphasizing responsible practices that contribute positively to the local economy.

Conclusion:

Considering the increasing importance of religious tourism in the economic and social development of human societies, and the existence of a special religious attraction can draw tourists to the region and be effective in the development of that place. To improve Religious tourism and its economy some important Initiatives need to be taken. Initiatives such as the renovation of old temples, construction of all types of economy and luxury hotels, expansion of infrastructure and civic amenities, the establishment of tourist information centers in these religious and pilgrimage places, and their connectivity with different parts of the country to reach these places, will boost religious tourism in India. This will increase religious tourism's contribution to the Indian economy.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Religious tourism plays a pivotal role in shaping India's economic landscape, offering a multifaceted impact on various sectors of the economy. This paper delves into the intricate web of economic consequences stemming from religious tourism, with a primary focus on India. The nation, renowned for its diverse religious heritage, experiences a significant influx of domestic and international tourists seeking spiritual and cultural enrichment.

The economic impact is evident in the tourism sector, where pilgrimage sites such as, Tirupati, Jagannath Puri, Dwarka and Amritsar draw millions of visitors annually. The influx of pilgrims stimulates the hospitality industry, leading to the establishment of hotels, restaurants, and other service-related businesses around these religious centres. This not only generates employment opportunities but also contributes to the growth of ancillary services.

Improved connectivity to religious destinations enhances accessibility, prompting infrastructural developments such as airports, roads, and railways resulting in profound effect on the transportation sector. The resultant surge in transportation services not only facilitates smooth travel for pilgrims but also bolsters regional connectivity, fostering economic development in previously underserved areas.

Moreover, the retail and handicraft industries thrive as pilgrims often engage in religious shopping, purchasing souvenirs, and traditional artifacts. Local markets around religious sites benefit from increased demand, creating a robust market for indigenous products.

Additionally, the economic impact extends to cultural preservation and heritage conservation. Increased tourism revenues contribute to the maintenance and restoration of religious monuments, ensuring the preservation of India's rich cultural and historical legacy.

In conclusion, religious tourism in India serves as a potent catalyst for economic development, influencing sectors such as tourism, transportation, hospitality, retail, and cultural preservation. A comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to harness the full economic potential of religious tourism while addressing challenges associated with sustainability and responsible tourism management.

Introduction

Religion has influenced and shaped man's thoughts and philosophies since the dawn of civilization. A spiritual desire to see a site of religious renown initiated religious tourism. Religious tourism is one of the earliest forms of tourism and represents a significant, evolving, growing, and increasingly diverse sector of the Global tourism market. It has been an integral part of India's cultural fabric for centuries. India, with its rich tapestry of diverse religions and spiritual traditions, attracts millions of domestic and international tourists seeking solace, enlightenment, and a connection with the divine. Beyond its cultural and spiritual significance, religious tourism also plays a crucial role in shaping India's economic landscape.

In the recent times Religious tourism has turned an economic multiplier across the country.

According to the World Tourism Organization, the world's most important religious destinations see an approximate visit by around 300 to 350 million pilgrims annually.

Early tourism was in the form of visiting religious pilgrimages such as Christians travelling to Jerusalem and Muslims to Mecca and Hindus to Kedarnath and Amaranth but now the scenario has changed where Religion and tourism are interlinked with each other focussing on uplifting the economy of the country.

During the 49-day Kumbh Mela in 2019 in Allahabad, a record of 24.01 crore people visited the Sangam city making it one of the world's largest religious gatherings in the world. The visitors included 10.30 lakh foreign tourists and estimated to have generated revenue of Rs.1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh according to a report by the apex industry body Confederation of Indian Industry.

Economic impact of religious tourism

Religious tourism holds a significant place in India's tourism sector, with the country being home to diverse religions and a plethora of sacred sites. The economic impact of religious tourism in India is profound, influencing various sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and local businesses.

According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) travel and tourism (including its direct, indirect and induced impacts) accounted for 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world, 10.3% of all jobs (333 million), and 10.3% of global GDP (\$9.6 trillion) in 2019. Meanwhile, international visitor spending amounted to \$1.8 trillion or 6.8% of total exports. (business economy magazine)

It contributed about 7% or `15723.3 billion to the Indian GDP in 2019. The sector employed 40.1 million people accounting for about 8.4% of India's total employment. From the economic point of view, religious tourism is a great revenue earner. It generates employment at the site and leads to the growth of ancillary business connected with religion - promoting general upliftment of the economy of the religious site.

From the standpoint of being a revenue earner to a country's tourism industry, the religious tourism niche offers contributions at a commendable scale. For instance, the annual Islamic Hajj brings in around \$ 16.5 billion to Saudi Arabia's exchequer, which is roughly close to 3% of the country's GDP.

Citing a few famous religious pilgrims in India let us see the contribution from them in Indian economy.

The Balaji Tirupati Temple



The Balaji Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh in southern India is a pilgrimage and heritage tourist destination and has been graded as one of the most important, richest, and most visited pilgrimage places in terms of attracting number of tourists from different parts of the world in India. The growth percentage of tourists has gradually increased by 12.48%.

It is one of the most ancient pilgrimage places in India with a population of 395.7 thousand people (2020) and an estimated GDP per capita of \$.9 thousand. Out of the 358 cities

covered in Asia, Tirupati ranks as the 224th most populated, and displays the 345th highest GDP per capita. It had almost 3 crore devotees visits in 2022 with an offering of heaps of gold, donated by the devout tourists to the tune of several million dollars.

According to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) the net worth had reached nearly Rs3 lakh crore as the 2022. The data also shows that Lord Balaji's Hundi in Tirumala has an annual income of Rs1,400 crores (4 Jan 2024) which goes in the Govt. treasury after spending on local expenditure.

Source: <https://www.economictimes.com>, <https://www.quora.com>

Vaishnavdevi



The pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi at Katra in Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as a big boon for the local economy, generating almost Rs 475 crore every year and providing employment to 27,000 people.

In financial year 2022, it had 36.4 lakh devotees visits with offerings and donations contributing to the highest amount toward the income of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, valuing to above 1.67 billion Indian rupees.

The temple had received 1.2 tonnes of gold as donations over a period of 5 years and is estimated to collect Rs500 crores worth of donations every year (12 Apr 2023). The steady stream of tourists visiting the Temple has also resulted in the development of infrastructure in the region. The government has taken steps to improve the roads, water supply, and electricity supply to accommodate the growing number of visitors which has not only improved the standard of living for the local people but has also created new employment opportunities in the construction and engineering sectors.

Source: - <https://www.economictimes.com>

Jagannath Puri



Spread on a wide area of around 3000 sq. km, the district of Puri is one of the famous pilgrimages of Eastern India. Being a tourist destination. As per the reports, the net worth of this temple is INR 150 crores, and owns around 30,000 acres of land registered under the name of Lord Jagannath. (1 Sept 2023)

Puri witness millions of tourists, visitors and devotees from all over the globe every year and its economy is thriving on Tourism industries to the extent of about 80 percent, while rest comes from the other two segments being, Handicrafts and the Cottage industries.

The temple is the focal point of the city and provides employment to about 6,000 men to perform the rituals and provides economic sustenance to around 20,000 people. According to [Colleen Taylor Sen](#), an author on food and travel, the temple kitchen has 400 cooks serving food to as many as 100,000 people. According to J Mohapatra, Director, Ind Barath Power Infra Ltd (IBPIL), the kitchen is the largest and biggest kitchen of the world.

Another most vital factor that affects the economy of Puri is its Handicraft and Cottage Industry. Also the manufacturer of the textiles, applique work done in the nearby places of Puri plays an important role in contribution towards the growth and development of the economy of the district. The delicate silver filigree works are believed to be some of the best art works in the world. Also the stone carving, bamboo work, the lacquer work made with sea shells and the artifacts are some of the most popular products of the Cottage and Handicraft Industry of Puri. providing employment to thousands of people working in these industries along with heavy revenue to the Govt.

The agro based industries, marine based industries, forestry units, and leather manufacturing units along with the tourism industry have emerged as revenue earners to the Govt. of the district in the recent years. Due to the presence of the golden beach on the coast

of the Bay of Bengal at Puri the Fishing industry has got a great boost and has also been one of the important factors contributing towards the Economy of Puri.

Source: - <https://www.en.wikipedia.org> & <https://journals-times.com>

Dwarka



The Dwarkadhish temple located at Dwarka city of Gujarat, in western India, is one of the destinations of Char Dham, a Hindu pilgrimage circuit. The temple revenue for the year 2020-21 with a cash income was Rs.6.35 crores, and 409 grams of gold and 19.62 kilograms of silver. Due to the influx of pilgrims, the demand for hotels have increased with foreign and domestic tourists visiting Dwarka. According to estimation of the Government of India, 20-25 million, constitutes the NRI, who make regular visits. This has become the market drivers of growth of economy of Dwarka.

Source: - <https://www.dwarkaonline.in>

An overall view of Economic Contribution of religious tourism

Contribution to GDP:

According to the NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) survey, the Hindu temple economy is worth Rs.3.02 lakh crore, or about \$40 billion and 2.32 percent of GDP. Religious travel costs Rs. 2,717 per day/person, social travel costs Rs. 1,068 per day/person, and educational travel costs Rs. 2,286 per day/person. This equates to a daily expenditure of Rs.1316 crore and an annual expenditure of Rs.4.74 lakh crore on religious travel.

Religious tourism makes a substantial contribution to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2022, 14.33 crore Indians and 64.4 lakh foreign tourists visited temples and

pilgrimages. (Ministry of Tourism Data). This generated an income of 1.35 lakh crore at these pilgrimage places.

The influx of pilgrims and tourists stimulates economic activities such as transportation, accommodation, food services, and retail. Share of total religious tourism is estimated at 60 per cent of total domestic tourism, while 11 per cent of foreign tourists in India. Out of the total contribution of more than Rs.19 lakh crores in 2022-23, about Rs.11 lakh crores, (that is, 7 per cent of GDP at current prices in 2022-23) came from tourism. (10 Jun 2023)

The government's plans to attract FDI worth more than \$100 billion, creating 100 million jobs in the tourism industry.

Contribution to employment:

One of the significant benefits of religious tourism is its role in employment generation. According to Ministry of Tourism Data, religious tourism witnessed 1439 million tourists in 2022 and the places of religious tourism earned Rs.1.34 lakh crore the same year. Tourism sector gives employment to more than 39 million people amounting to a share of 8.78 per cent in India's total employment

The financial contributions from the tourists have a cascading effect on the local and regional economies, boosting trade and creating employment opportunities.

The demand for services related to religious tourism results in the creation of jobs in various sectors. This includes jobs in transportation, hospitality, retail, and tour guiding. The demand for accommodations, transportation, and local services increases, providing a boost to various sectors and supporting livelihoods.

Infrastructure Development:

The consistent flow of religious tourists necessitates robust infrastructure to accommodate their needs. To cater to the increasing numbers, governments and local authorities often invest in improving transportation networks, enhanced amenities and constructing better roads, airports, and railway stations. Additionally, there is a push for the development of hotels, guesthouses, and other accommodation facilities. This focus on infrastructure development not only enhances the religious tourism experience but also leaves a lasting impact on the overall socio-economic development of the region and stimulates economic growth.

Cultural and Heritage Conservation:

Religious sites in India are often intertwined with rich cultural and historical significance. The economic benefits derived from religious tourism contribute to the

conservation and maintenance of these sites. Revenue generated from entrance fees and donations is often channelled into the preservation of architectural marvels, artworks, and cultural heritage, ensuring their longevity for future generations.

Foreign Exchange Earnings:

Religious tourism significantly contributes to foreign exchange earnings in India. Over the years, India's rankings on major global indices such as the World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (WEF) and the UNWTO Tourism Barometer have steadily improved. As a result, the Indian government intends to attract FDI worth more than US\$100 billion over the next few years. International pilgrims bring foreign currency, and the money spent on accommodations, transportation, and souvenirs directly contributes to the country's foreign reserves. This influx of foreign exchange not only supports the local economy but also strengthens the national economic position strengthening the Govt. treasury.

Promotion of Handicrafts and Local Industries:

Religious tourism serves as a catalyst for the promotion of local handicrafts. Pilgrims often seek souvenirs and religious artifacts as memorabilia from their spiritual journeys. This creates a market for local artisans and craftsmen who produce traditional handicrafts, religious artifacts, and cultural products. The economic impact extends to small businesses and cottage industries that thrive on the demand generated by religious tourists. This symbiotic relationship between religious tourism and local industries contributes to the preservation of traditional crafts and skills.

It provides a platform to show case indigenous traditional products. Local artisans benefit from the increased demand for religious paraphernalia, contributing to the growth of cottage industries, preservation of traditional craftsmanship and a sustainable livelihood to artisans.

Digitalization and Marketing:

The advent of digital platforms has revolutionized the way religious tourism is promoted. In the digital age, religious tourism has embraced technology to enhance visitor experiences and reach a wider audience. Virtual tours, online booking platforms, and digital marketing strategies play a crucial role in attracting tourists and promoting religious destinations. Social media platforms provide a space for pilgrims and tourists to share their experiences, creating a virtual community that further promotes religious tourism. This digital transformation not only makes information more accessible but also contributes to the economic growth of the sector.

Challenges and Opportunities:

While religious tourism brings numerous economic benefits, it also poses challenges such as environmental concerns, infrastructural strain, and potential cultural degradation. Sustainable tourism practices, community engagement, and responsible tourism initiatives can address these challenges, ensuring that the economic impact is positive and balanced.

1. Overcrowding at popular religious sites can lead to environmental degradation, strain on local resources, and inadequate infrastructure. To harness the full potential of religious tourism, sustainable practices and responsible tourism initiatives are essential.
2. Governments and local authorities must strike a balance between reaping economic benefits and ensuring the long-term preservation of cultural and natural resources.
3. To maximize the economic impact of religious tourism, there is a growing emphasis on diversifying the tourism offerings around religious sites. Integrated tourism circuits that include historical and cultural attractions, adventure tourism, and wellness retreats need to be developed. This approach not only enhances the overall tourist experience but also creates new avenues for economic growth.

Conclusion:

Religious tourism in India stands as a powerful economic force, weaving together spirituality, culture, and commerce. The economic impact of religious tourism extends far and wide, influencing various sectors and fostering holistic development which extends beyond the immediate pilgrimage sites, influencing regional development, employment generation, promotion of local industries and hospitality industries and an overall economic prosperity. Additionally, religious tourism can serve as a tool for socioeconomic and cultural development, promoting sustainability and responsible tourism practices. As India continues to position itself as a global tourist destination, the economic benefits of religious tourism will play a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future.



The Government of India further expects that there will be substantial increase in total number of tourists in the coming years and the growth rate is expected to increase by 1.5%. Robust increase in religious tourism will subsequently increase the levels of income and the overall economic growth of the region.

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Religious Tourism in India: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

A type of tourism that is mainly or entirely motivated by faith is known as religious tourism. Possibly the most well-known kind of tourism is this one. Another way to refer to it is spiritual tourism. It is a form of tourism in which people go on pilgrimages, on missions, or just for fun, either alone or in groups. In India, religious tourism has a bright future. India is wonderfully blessed with historic temples and sacred celebrations. India is the birthplace of many religions, including Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, all of which have thriving spiritual cultures. Together, they offer a workable, alternative lifestyle to the materialism and conflict that are common in the West. This essay discusses the main issues and challenges facing the tourist sector while spotlighting religious tourism in India.

Keyword: Tourism, Religious Effect in India Tourism

OVERVIEW

Travel for religious or spiritual reasons, or pilgrimage, and the viewing of religious sites and artefacts, which is a subset of sightseeing, is the two main genres of religious tourism, also known as spiritual tourism, sacred tourism, or faith tourism. The nation's spiritual atmosphere respectfully exudes the scents of Dharma, Karma, and—above all—forgiveness. India, a secular country where several religions coexist in perfect harmony, is appropriately referred to as the "Land of Faith." India's tourism industry is growing rapidly and is important to the country's economy. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2018 tourism supported 42.673 million jobs, or 8.1% of India's total employment, and generated ₹16.91 lakh crore (the United States\$240 billion), or 9.2% of the country's Economy.

Based to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019, India was ranked 34th out of 140 countries total. Among the top 25% of positioned countries, India saw the greatest progress, moving up six spots from the 2017 survey. Out of 140 countries, the research ranks India's tourism sector's value intensity twelfth. It mentions India's excellent air transport

network (ranked 33rd), particularly considering the country's current state of development, and its sensible ground and port infrastructure (ranked 28th). The country performs well in social assets, business travel, and normal assets (coming in at number eight), as well as at number fourteen. However, a few distinct aspects of its tourism infrastructure are still quite young. Keeps up the Incredible India battle concentrated on advancing the tourism in India.

India was ranked 34th out of 140 nations in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019. Among the top 25% of positioned countries, India's improvement in placing in the 2017 report was the highest, moving up six spots. Out of 140 countries, the value intensity of India's tourism sector is ranked thirteenth in the report. It mentions that, considering the country's current state of growth, India has an excellent air transport system (ranked 33rd) and a decent ground and port infrastructure (ranked 28th). The country also does well in social assets, business travel, and normal assets (ranked eighth, fourteenth, and ninth, respectively). However, certain segments of its tourism infrastructure are still quite young.

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS IN INDIA (2014–2018)

Year	Arrivals (millions)	Change (In Percentage)
2014	7.68	10.2
2015	8.03	4.5
2016	8.8	9.7
2017	10.04	14
2018	10.56	5.2

Source: "India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2018"

RELIGIONS IN INDIA

India is a place of huge holy places and different kind of cultures. The people in the country are classified into different religious groups each one is having their own traditions religious formalities like holy places, worshiping method, and other religious discipline in their daily life style. Below are the religions and their life style of worshiping in India.

HINDUISM

Hinduism is an Indian mode of life or religion. In South Asia, Hinduism is mostly practiced in India and Nepal. One of the oldest religions on the globe, Hinduism is sometimes referred to by people who practice it as Sanatana Dharma, which means "the eternal convention" or the "interminable way" in the history of humanity. Scholars see Hinduism as a hybrid religion created by a variety of Indian communities and customs. Hinduism has no founder and its origins are not certain. They acknowledge that God built the universe and

everything in it and that knowledge of God has always existed in the minds of animals. Hinduism contains a diverse range of thought patterns that are linked by concepts like rituals, cosmology, texts, and pilgrimages to sacred places. Hindu rituals comprise.

Worship

Most Hindus adore (puja) consistently at home and have a place of worship there. A sanctuary can be anything from a room, a little special raised area or just pictures or statues. Relatives frequently venerate together. At the holy place, Hindus make contributions to a murti. A murti is a hallowed statue of God, or a divine being or goddess. The Hindu structure for mutual worship is called Mandir (Hindu Temple). The sanctuaries are committed to various divine beings and are the focal point of religious life. Outside India, individuals basically assemble at the Mandir at the end of the week. Admirers rehash the names of their preferred divine beings, goddesses, and the mantras. Water, natural product, blooms and incense are offered to the divine beings.

Famous Holy places in India

- Varanasi (Kashi) Lord Shiva temple
- Tirupati, Lord Venkateswara temple
- Shirdi, Sai Baba temple
- Shakhi Peeta's (Temples of Goddess)
- Jyotirlingas (Temples of Lord Shiva) and more.
- Ayodhya Recently (Ram Mandir) just add-on list

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the importance of religious tourism in India.
2. To study the issues and challenges of religious tourism in India.

1) Infringement of Carrying Capacity:

The majority of large and minor strict focuses around the country suffer from the negative impacts of shorter but intense seasons that alter the local environment for the rest of the year. A prime instance is the Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand. It lasts from May to roughly November and places a significant burden on the Garhwal district's transport infrastructure. When paired with the downpour and a lot of roadway expansion that is still in the works, this suggests avalanches, which can result in lengthy detours, accidents, and fatalities.

2) Waste Management:

To some degree a subordinate of the issue of conveying limit, the waste administration issue has disturbed as science and innovation developed to usher us into the 'period of plastic'.

3) Air Pollution:

The sheer volume of movement in this specialty makes the figures staggering. While prepares still figure out how to assimilate a dominant part of the movement volume, a serious considerable number of significant strict tourism locales in India are still just open by street or foot, or a mix of the two (take the instance of sloping areas).

4) Monetizing Religion:

In the race for creating whatever number specialties as would be prudent, there is regularly the issue of religion being 'adapted', as the host network gets progressively determined by the 'benefit intention'.

5) Lack of investigation of strict trusts:

There is a need to advance guidelines which oversees the budgetary status and guideline of strict trusts as it hopes to relieve worldwide worries about tax evasion and fear monger financing exercises. Such a law will likewise make ready to make open names of associations that case charge exclusion to guarantee more prominent straightforwardness. This is particularly pivotal in a situation when a portion of India's strict trusts are among the most extravagant on the planet.

The present discussion runs around the way that the money related profit from strict tourism are insufficient to counterbalance its socio-ecological effects. In any case, it must be remembered that the impacts of tourism action work in different planes, from straightforwardly influencing the nearby economy to affecting choices at the arrangement confining level.

CONCLUSION

The growth of basic infrastructure is greatly aided by tourism, which also creates revenue for the government and the local community, balances regional development plans through the "umbrella" effect, and promotes peace and sociocultural harmony. To avoid the negative effects, tourism development must be regulated in any area. The study comes to the conclusion that, while it relates to the experiences of visitors, there is a continuum of religion ingrained in tourism. Multiple laws ought to be enacted to promote travelers from around the world. Indian travel agencies ought to make use of the internet and inform people about religious travel. To promote and maintain the religious tourism destinations, the government must work diligently and resolutely.

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A study of the impacts of religious tourism on sustainable development and the tourism industry

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Abstract

This study was conducted with the objective of investigating the effects of religious tourism on the economic development of traditional settlements. The research method is descriptive and analytical. The independent variable is 'religious tourism' which is related to income' and 'employment'. In fact, the development of religious tourism in areas with religious and traditional rituals has a positive impact on employment generation, increase in income and economic prosperity. The study has analyzed the issues and studied the challenges of pilgrimage tourism and significant solutions to achieve sustainable measures towards it. The study has used secondary data.

Key Words: tourism industry, sustainable development, religious

Introduction

Ecotourism is a sub-component of the field of sustainable tourism. Ecotourism's perceived potential as an effective tool for sustainable development is the main reason why developing countries are now embracing it and including it in their economic development and conservation strategies. Ecotourism, as an alternative tourism, involves visiting natural areas in order to learn, to study, or to carry out activities environmentally friendly, that is, a tourism based on the nature experience, which enables the economic and social development of local communities. It focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, its landscape, flora, fauna and their habitats, as well as cultural artifacts from the locality. A symbiotic and complex relationship between the environment and tourist activities is possible when this philosophy can be translated into appropriate policy, careful planning and tactful practicum. Carefully planned and operated ecotourism sites, especially if it is village-based and includes local participation, is able to provide direct benefits that might offset pressure from other less sustainable activities that make use of natural and cultural resources. Eco tourism, natural

resources, cultural heritage, rural lifestyle and an integrated tourism is a type of local economic activities. Therefore, ecotourism in natural and cultural areas was carried out with a number of elements in their natural landscape and cultural landscape (water, vista, topography, vegetation, clean air), as well as in the variety of recreational activities suitable for all kinds of environments. Therefore, ecotourism and its natural assets and raw materials to create, as well as directing people to travel is an attractive force. However, there are several significant challenges associated with pilgrimage tourism in India including poor infrastructure, unstable political conditions, hygiene issues, misguiding of tourists, poor maintenance and lack of sustainable development which affects the growth of pilgrimage tourism in India. It is significant to adopt significant measures and strategies for promoting sustainable development specifically in the field of pilgrimage tourism in India in order to more effectively yield potential opportunities and growth associated with it.

Objectives of the study

- To analyse the issues associated with pilgrimage tourism for sustainable development;
- To explore the needs and benefits associated with sustainable development in the field of pilgrimage tourism in India;
- To offer significant solutions for the development of sustainable measures for enhancing pilgrimage tourism in India.
- To analyse Effect of religious tourism on economy

Tourism planning and development

Since ages, nature worship and the conservation ethics have been an inseparable part of Indian thought and traditions. Traces go back to ancient civilisations of India, when people used to nurture the philosophy of the oneness of life. The Indian tradition has always taught that, humankind is a part of nature and one should look upon all creation with the eyes of love and respect. organizations, transportation, physical environment, services and information, and promotional activities need to be integrated for effective planning and development of tourism in any particular region. On the other hand, Smith, (2015) argued that a sustainable development plan is also required for managing the environmental issues associated with tourism. It has also been considered that there is a significant need for safeguarding cultural and historical places due to their heritage uniqueness and efforts need to be taken to prevent any physical destruction in order to facilitate effective maintenance of the various sites. Hence, it is imperative to preserve the cultural heritage along with environmental protection.

What is Sustainable Development

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts

Issues and concerns in pilgrimage tourism in India

As put forwarded by Ghimire (2013), a lack of concentration towards the environmental issues associated with pilgrimage tourism has created both air and water pollution in India. In addition, it has been also identified that the concern of government towards the development of infrastructure and physical environment of pilgrimage due to increasing numbers of foreign tourists is not well maintained, which affects the sustainability and viability of the places visited by tourists, depicted in Fig: 2. Based on the article proposed by Du Cros and McKercher (2014), ecological degradation, accommodation, tariffs, catering, water supply, sewage, and sanitation are also other major problems associated with pilgrimage tourism in India that seek immediate attention.

Measures towards sustainable development in tourism

tourism in India is significant due to its wide range of unique natural and cultural attractions. Specifically, it has been observed that the government of India is highly concerned about other environmental issues regarding pollution but has a very limited concern for the development of tourism, although tourism contributes to the major portion of revenue and economic growth, depicted in Fig: 3. It has been suggested by Rao and Suresh (2013), that appropriate policies and strategies need to be framed in order to attain sustainable development in tourism with the integration of both the tourism department and citizens. In addition, safeguarding the environment including infrastructure, water, air, and land, is highly relevant for the tourism department in India in order to manage masses of tourists and attract them to perhaps return for future trips and promote India by word of mouth.

Socio-Economic Issues

Just because something is marketed as ecotourism, it does not necessarily mean that the long-term motto of providing socio-economic benefit with protection of environment to the host areas will be achieved.

The fact that ecotourism business is often owned and controlled by outside interests in just the same way as mass tourism means the economic benefits often are not used for the protection of the areas or to support the local community. Besides, the carrying capacity of host

areas is not calculated. As a result, there is a breakdown of civil amenities during peak season when the influx of tourists is tremendous.

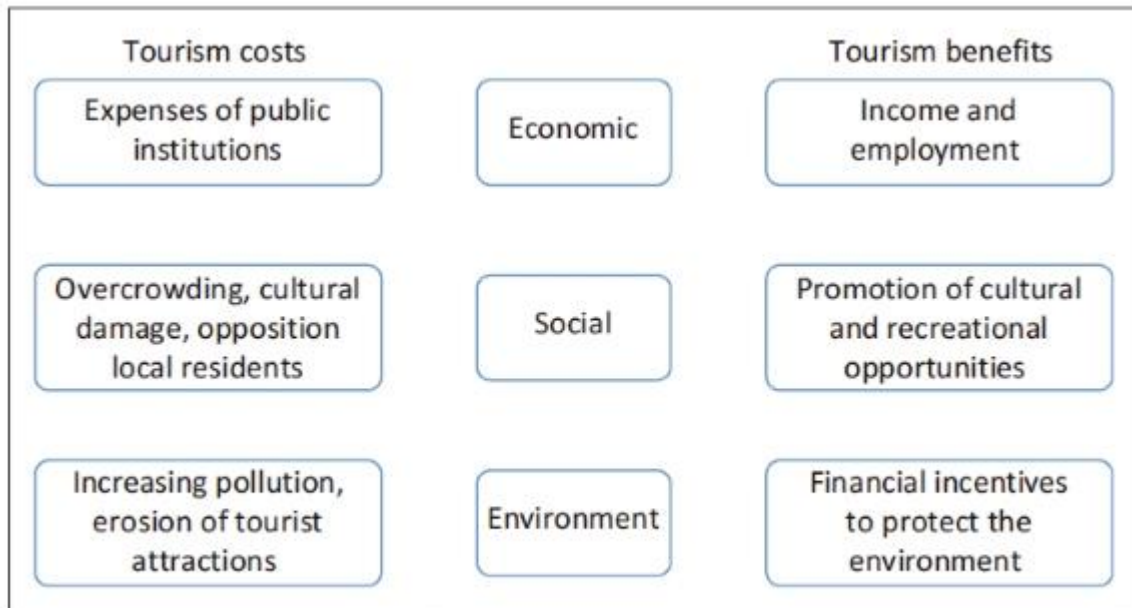


FIGURE 1: Advantages and disadvantages of tourism.

Conclusions

- In considering Shinde (2018), it is clear that the policy framework and governance mechanisms in India for religious or pilgrimage tourism are not adequate. In addition, the complexities that have been raised due to the transformation from traditional pilgrimage practices to a modern religious tourism economy have created significant tensions. It has been identified by the researcher that at the local level, the management of the tourism department is highly conscious about its promotional and management style and processes, but they do not address the negative environmental impacts in any sense. Furthermore, the researcher has observed that there is an institutional gap in dealing with the direct and indirect impacts of religious or pilgrimage tourism in India including systematic and structural problems. In addition, it has been also evaluated that due to the increase in the number of agencies under the tourism government structures, the problems based on environmental concerns are not being considered as they should be. Challenges including congestion, huge crowds and high densities create significant pollution which is not considered by the religious actors. Hence, there is a significant need to align religious actors and government agencies to step forward from the traditional platform and attain sustainable pilgrimage tourism in India.

- Setting up 24-hour chain stores in cities to supply needed materials, handicrafts, cultural and religious goods.
- . Economic support for local people to use tourism facilities.
- The researcher found that the major impact on the environment due to pilgrimage tourism includes stress on basic services such as water supply, degradation of natural resources and increases in pollution specifically in peak seasons. Furthermore, the disposal of wastewater and issues of sewerage into the natural ecosystem is also a critical issue requiring urgent attention. On the other hand, solid waste including plastic, bags, food items, flowers as well as sand and silt from sweeping the streets are dumped openly at the nearby landfills or in water bodies affecting the entire environment critically and often irreparably.

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Gujarat Tourism Place Somnath

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The **Somnath temple**, is a Hindu temple located in Prabhas Patan, Veraval in Gujarat, India. It is one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites for Hindus and is the first among the twelve jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva.^[1] It is unclear when the first version of the Somnath temple was built, with estimates varying between the early centuries of the 1st millennium and about the 9th century. The temple is not mentioned in the ancient Sanskrit texts of Hinduism; while various texts, including the Mahabharata and Bhagavata Purana, mention a tirtha (pilgrimage site) at Prabhas Patan on the coastline of Saurashtra, where the temple is presently located, there is no evidence that a temple existed at the site in ancient times.^{[4][5][6]} The temple was reconstructed several times in the past after repeated destruction by multiple Muslim invaders and rulers, notably starting with an attack by Mahmud Ghazni in the 11th century. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, historians and archaeologists of the colonial era actively studied the Somnath temple because its ruins showed a historic Hindu temple that was turning into an Islamic mosque.^{[11][12][13]} After India's independence, those ruins were

demolished, and the present Somnath temple was reconstructed in the Māru-Gurjara style of Hindu temple architecture. The contemporary Somnath temple's reconstruction was started under the orders of the first Deputy Prime Minister of India, Vallabhbhai Patel after receiving approval for reconstruction from Mahatma Gandhi. The reconstruction was completed in May 1951, after Gandhi's death.^{[14][15]}

Location

The Somnath temple is located along the coastline in Prabhas Patan, Veraval, Saurashtra region of Gujarat. It is about 400 kilometres (249 mi) southwest of Ahmedabad, 82 kilometres (51 mi) south of Junagadh – another major archaeological and pilgrimage site in Gujarat. It is about 7 kilometres (4 mi) southeast of the Veraval railway junction, about 130 kilometres (81 mi) southeast of the Porbandar airport and about 85 kilometres (53 mi) west of the Diu airport.^[16]

The Somnath temple is located close to the ancient trading port of Veraval, one of three in Gujarat from where Indian merchants departed to trade goods. The 11th-century Persian historian Al-Biruni states that Somnath has become so famous because "it was the harbor for seafaring people and a station for those who went to and fro between Sufala in the country of Zanj (east Africa) and China". Combined with its repute as an eminent pilgrimage site, its location was well known to the kingdoms within the Indian Subcontinent Literature and epigraphical evidence suggest that the medieval-era Veraval port was also actively trading with the Middle East and Southeast Asia. This brought wealth and fame to the Veraval area, as well as the temple.^[19]

The site of Prabhas Patan was occupied during the Indus Valley Civilisation, 2000–1200 BCE. It was one of very few sites in the Junagadh district to be so occupied. After abandonment in 1200 BCE, it was reoccupied in 400 BCE and continued into the historical period. Prabhas is also close to the other sites similarly occupied: Junagadh, Dwarka, Padri and Bharuch.^[19]

Nomenclature and significance

Somnath means "Lord of the Soma" or "moon".^[note 1] The site is also called *Prabhasa* ("place of splendor").^[21] Somnath temple has been a *dyotirlinga* site for the Hindus, and a holy place of pilgrimage (*tirtha*). It is one of five most revered sites on the seacoast of India, along with the nearby Dvaraka in Gujarat, Puri in Odisha, Rameshvaram and Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu.^[22]

VISITING PLACES near SOMNATH TEMPLE

BHALKA TIRTH

This sacred tirth is located on the Prabhas Veraval highway and one of the few famous tourist places in Somnath. The arrow of the poacher named Jara hit Shree Krishna at this spot. The latter was resting under a pipal tree when the poacher misread the foot of Bhagvan Shree Krishna as a deer and hit from a distance. This divined leela of Shree Krishna is immortalised by this beautiful temple. Make sure to visit Bhalka Tirth on your Gujarat getaway. One of the famous **Somnath tourist places**.

TRIVENI GHAT

Triveni Ghat is also known by two other names – Triveni Sangam and Triveni Sangam Snanghat. It is one of the major places to visit in Somnath and is situated right at the point of confluence of three holy streams, namely Saraswati, Hiranya, and Kapila before they merge into the sea making it one of the best places to visit in Gujarat in summer. According to Hindu Mythology, if you take a dip in the holy waters of Triveni Sangam Snanghat, you'll be rid of all your sins and acquire Moksha by merging with the Almighty. One of the best **Somnath tourist places**.

SOMNATH BEACH

If you're looking for romantic places to visit in Gujarat, this place is a real treat for beach lovers visiting Somnath, this is absolutely clean and beautiful shores to hang out with your friends and family. However, do keep in mind that you're not allowed to enter these waters owing to the high tides and the unpredictable climate here causing frequent showers. The water can get pretty dangerous, so make sure you stay at a safe distance from it. But don't worry, the beauty of the beach and the stroll-worthy sands will totally make up for it. Visiting this place is one of the best things to do in Somnath.

PRABHAS PATAN MUSEUM

Want to get an insight into the intriguing history of Gujarat? You must visit the Prabhas Patan Museum in Somnath that will tell you a great deal about the past of this city via its collection of old stones, ancient sculptures, and temple remains that have been restored and kept here. A must tour **Somnath places to visit**.

GIR NATIONAL PARK

This is a home to the Asiatic lions and considered to be a perfect place to enjoy a time amidst the wildlife preserved beautifully in their natural habitat. Also called Sasan-Gir, this

forest cum sanctuary was established in 1965. Spread across an area of 1412 sq kms, this place is located at a distance of 65 kms from Junagadh and 2 hours away from Somnath. One of the famous **Somnath places to visit**.

PRACHI TIRTH

Prachi Tirth is a religious centre importance for performing the sacred rituals for the ancestors. According to a legend, lord Krishna who was a descendant of the Yadu Vansh, performed rituals at the tirth for his ancestors. Religiously, Prachi tirth is considered just as important as Kashi for Hindu ceremonies.

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ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન સ્થળો અને ભારતનો આર્થિક વિકાસ

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અર્થશાસ્ત્ર વિષય

મો.: ૯૪૨૯૮૩૫૪૮૨

પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગ : વ્યક્તિઓના સમૂહને જુદાં જુદાં મહત્વનાં સ્થળોનું નિરીક્ષણ કરવા માટે જવા-આવવાની સુવિધાજનક સેવાઓ પૂરી પાડતો ઉદ્યોગ. વિશ્વપ્રવાસન સંઘ, મેડ્રિડ, સ્પેનનાં ધોરણો અનુસાર સામાન્ય ધરેડવાળી જીવનશૈલીમાંથી ઉદભવતો કંટાળો દૂર કરવા માટે પોતાના રહેવાના અથવા કામ કરવાના સ્થળેથી 24 કલાકથી ઓછા નહિ અને 1 વર્ષથી વધારે નહિ તેટલા સમય સુધી દૂર દૂર જઈને સ્વગૃહે પાછા ફરવાના સ્પષ્ટ આશયવાળા એકથી વધારે વ્યક્તિઓના સમૂહ દ્વારા આરામપૂર્વક કરાતા આવાગમનને પ્રવાસ કહેવાય છે. આ પ્રવાસીઓની પાયાની જરૂરિયાતો; જેવી કે સુવિધાજનક મુસાફરી, રહેઠાણની આરામદાયક સગવડ, સ્વાદિષ્ટ ભોજન અને વિવિધ સ્થળોની મુલાકાત અને નિરીક્ષણની સુવ્યવસ્થા પૂરી પાડવા માટે શરૂ થયેલા ઉદ્યોગને પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગ કહેવાય છે.

પ્રાચીન સમયમાં હિંદુઓ, મુસલમાનો, ખ્રિસ્તીઓ અને યહૂદીઓ પોતપોતાની ધાર્મિક માન્યતા અનુસારનાં કે કાશી, મક્કા અને જેરૂસલેમ જેવાં પવિત્ર સ્થળોની યાત્રાએ જતા હતા. વળી મધ્ય એશિયામાં પશ્ચિમથી પૂર્વ સુધી વિસ્તરેલા રેશમમાર્ગ (silk route) ઉપર પણ વેપાર અર્થે પ્રવાસ થતો હતો. પરંતુ સાંપ્રત સમયમાં પ્રવાસના હેતુઓ બદલાયા છે. હવે ધાર્મિક માન્યતા ઉપરાંત સૂર્યસ્નાન, સમુદ્રદર્શન, વન્યપ્રાણી અભયારણ્ય દર્શન, યૌન સંબંધ, વિશ્રામ, દર્શનીય સ્થળોનું નિરીક્ષણ, સાંસ્કૃતિક, સામાજિક અને રાજકીય મિલન, મિત્રો અને સગાંવહાલાંઓનું આતિથ્ય, ધંધાનો વિકાસ, અધિવેશનો, પરિષદો અને પરિસંવાદોમાં હાજરી વગેરે બહુવિધ હેતુઓથી પ્રવાસ કરાય છે. આગામી વર્ષોમાં આ હેતુઓ પણ બદલાય અથવા વિસ્તરે તેવી પૂરી સંભાવના છે. પરદેશમાંથી કોઈ એક દેશમાં આવતી વ્યક્તિઓના પ્રવાસને તે દેશના પરિપ્રેક્ષ્યમાં આગંતુક (inward bound), તે દેશમાંથી પરદેશમાં જતી વ્યક્તિઓના પ્રવાસને બહિર્ગંતુક (outward bound) અને દેશમાં જ અવરજવર કરતી વ્યક્તિઓના પ્રવાસને અંતર્દેશીય પ્રવાસ કહેવાય છે. સર્વ પ્રકારના પ્રવાસોનું કદ પ્રવાસીને પ્રાપ્ત અવકાશ, પ્રવાસ માટે તેણે ચૂકવવી પડતી કિંમત, ગંતવ્યસ્થળો તરફ તેનું આકર્ષણ વગેરે અનેક બાબતો ઉપર આધાર રાખે છે.

પ્રવાસ-ઉદ્યોગના ઘટકો વૈવિધ્યસભર છે. તેમાં (1) પરિવહન-વ્યવસ્થા, (2) રહેઠાણ-વ્યવસ્થા, (3) ભોજન અને ઉપાહાર-વ્યવસ્થા, (4) પ્રવાસન-ધંધાના આડતિયા, અને (5) સરકારનાં પ્રવાસન-માહિતી-કેન્દ્રો – આ બધા પ્રાથમિક અથવા મુખ્ય ઘટકો છે તથા (1) દુકાનો અને વિક્રયકેન્દ્રો (emporias), (2) મોટર-ટેક્સી, ઓટોરિક્ષા અને ઘોડાગાડીઓ જેવાં વાહનો, (3) ફેરિયાઓ અને મજૂરો, (4) ગંતવ્યસ્થળે પ્રાપ્ય ટેલિફોન જેવાં

સંચારસેવામથકો, (5) ગ્રાહકો શોધી આપતા દલાલો, (6) સ્થળોની માહિતી આપતી પુસ્તિકાઓ, પ્રવાસ-નકશા, માર્ગદર્શિકા અને સામયિકોનું પ્રકાશન, (7) વૃદ્ધ, બીમાર, અશક્ત, નાની ઉંમરના પ્રવાસીઓ જેવા માટે ટફ, કંડી કે ડોલી જેવાં સાધનોની ઉપલબ્ધતા અને (8) કલાકારો, નાટ્યકારો, વાદકો અને સંગીતકારો જેવા મનોરંજકો દ્વિતીય-સ્તરીય ઘટકો કહેવાય છે.

સરકારી નિયંત્રણો જેવાં કે પાસપોર્ટ, વીઝા, જકાત-નિયમનો, ચલણ, વીમો, આયકર, વિદેશ મુસાફરી કર, રોગપ્રતિરોધક રસી-ટંકામણ, સ્વાસ્થ્ય-વીમો, પુરાવસ્તુઓના બહિર્ગમનનો અધિનિયમ વગેરે વિદેશ-પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગ ઉપર અસર પાડે છે. વળી ઋતુઓનું હવામાન પણ પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગ ઉપર પ્રભાવ પાડે છે; કારણ કે પ્રવાસીઓ બહેતર હવામાન પસંદ કરતા હોવાથી ઉનાળામાં વિશ્વભરનાં ગિરિમથકો, ભૂમધ્ય સમુદ્રના કિનારાઓ, અથવા અમેરિકાના પશ્ચિમ કાંઠા ઉપર અને શિયાળામાં ભારત જેવા હૂંફાળા પ્રદેશમાં પ્રવાસ કરવાનું પ્રવાસીઓ પસંદ કરે છે.

પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગથી રોજગારી, આવક અને વિદેશી હૂંડિયામણમાં ફાયદો થતો જરૂર દેખાય છે પરંતુ થાઇલેન્ડ, ફિલિપાઇન્સ અને પૂર્વ આફ્રિકાના દેશો જેવા કેટલાક પ્રદેશોમાં ફાલેલી વેશ્યાગીરી અને જાતીય ઉપભોગની વૃત્તિ, વિકસતા દેશોમાં વધેલી ભિક્ષાવૃત્તિ, પ્રાચીન અથવા ધાર્મિક સ્થળોમાં ફરવાથી ઉદભવતાં ઘેલછા અને ઉન્માદ, વિદેશી પ્રવાસીઓ સાથે છેતરપિંડી, નદી-સરોવરોનાં પાણીનું પ્રદૂષણ, હવા અને અવાજનું પ્રદૂષણ, વન્ય અને સામુદ્રિક જીવોનો વિનાશ અને માનવભીડ જેવાં વિઘાતક પરિણામોથી વિશ્વની પ્રજાઓ ઉપર પ્રવાસનની આર્થિક, સામાજિક, સાંસ્કૃતિક, પર્યાવરણીય અને રાજકીય ક્ષેત્રે લાભદાયક તથા નુકસાનકારક એમ બંને પ્રકારની અસરો પડે છે.

ઉપલબ્ધ માહિતી અનુસાર 1993માં વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે 60 કરોડ પ્રવાસીઓએ 350 અબજ ડોલર ખર્ચીને વિશ્વપ્રવાસ કર્યો હતો, જ્યારે 2,000 સુધીમાં 93 કરોડ પ્રવાસીઓ અને 2020 સુધીમાં તે વધીને 1.6 અબજ થશે જે 2,000 અબજ ડોલર જેટલો ખર્ચ કરશે તેવું અનુમાન છે. વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે પ્રવાસીઓની સંખ્યામાં વાર્ષિક સરેરાશ 4.3 %ની અને એમને લીધે થતી આવકમાં 6.7 %ની વૃદ્ધિ થશે અને આ વૃદ્ધિદર વિશ્વની સંપત્તિમાં સંભવિત વધારાના આશરે 3 %ના વાર્ષિક વૃદ્ધિદર કરતાં ઘણો ઊંચો છે. 1995થી 2005 સુધીમાં પ્રવાસનક્ષેત્રે 14.40 કરોડ નવી નોકરીની તકો ઊભી થશે, જેમાંથી 11.2 કરોડ જેટલી નોકરીઓ માત્ર એશિયા પ્રશાંત વિસ્તારમાં ઊભી થશે. પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગનો વિશ્વના કુલ મૂડીરોકાણમાં 7%નો, કુલ સેવા-ઉત્પાદનમાં 6%નો અને વ્યક્તિઓને રોજગારી આપવામાં 7%નો ફાળો છે. 1996માં પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગમાંથી કમાણી કરતા વિશ્વના દસ ટોચના દેશોમાં યુ.એસ. (15.1%), સ્પેન (6.7%), ફ્રાન્સ (6.6%), ઇટાલી (6.4%), યુ.કે. (4.6%), જર્મની (3.7%), ઓસ્ટ્રિયા (3.5%), હૉંગકોંગ (2.5%), ચીન (2.4%) અને સિંગાપુર(2.2%)નો સમાવેશ થાય છે. તે સામે વિશ્વના પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગમાંથી ભારત માંડ 1% કમાણી કરે છે. પ્રવાસીઓની વાર્ષિક સંખ્યાના આધારે વિશ્વનાં દસ ટોચનાં મનોરંજનસ્થળોમાં ડિઝનીલેન્ડ, ટોકિયો, જાપાન (170 લાખ); ડિઝનીલેન્ડ, કેલિફોર્નિયા, અમેરિકા (150 લાખ); મેજિક કિંગડમ, બ્યુએના વિસ્તા સરોવર, ફ્લોરિડા, અમેરિકા (138 લાખ); ડિઝનીલેન્ડ

માર્ને-લા-વેલી ફાન્સ (117 લાખ); ડિઝનીવર્લ્ડ, બ્યુએના વિસ્તા સરોવર, ફ્લોરિડા, અમેરિકા (112 લાખ); એમ. જી. એમ. સ્ટુડિયો, બ્યુએના વિસ્તા સરોવર, ફ્લોરિડા, અમેરિકા (100 લાખ); યુનિવર્સલ સ્ટુડિયો, ઓર્લેન્ડો, ફ્લોરિડા, અમેરિકા (84 લાખ); એવરલેન્ડ, ફ્લોરિડા-ડો, દક્ષિણ કોરિયા (80 લાખ); બ્લેક પુલ પ્લેઝર બીચ, બ્લેક પુલ, યુ.કે. (75 લાખ) અને યોકોહામા, હાકેજીમા સી પેરેડાઇઝ, જાપાન(69 લાખ)નો સમાવેશ થાય છે. ભારતના તાજમહાલનું સ્થાન ટોચનાં આ 10 સ્થળોમાં આવતું નથી એ બાબત ઉલ્લેખનીય છે.

ભારતમાં પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગનાં વૃદ્ધિ અને વિકાસ માટે માગ(demand)નાં વિવિધ પરિબલોમાં જાહેર રજાઓ, ઉનાળુ વેકેશન, નિવૃત્તિ પછીનો ફાજલ સમય, કામનો બોજો ઘટવાથી વધેલી નવરાશ, ઘરકામમાં શ્રમ ઘટાડતાં સાધનોના વપરાશથી સ્ત્રીઓને મળેલો ફાજલ સમય, કુટુંબોની વાસ્તવિક આવકમાં વધારો, કામઘંઘા અને નોકરીઓમાં સ્ત્રીઓના પ્રવેશથી કુટુંબના વૈચારિક વલણમાં થયેલો ફેરફાર, નાનું કુટુંબ, ઉચ્ચ શિક્ષણ અને વધેલી આયુર્મર્યાદાના લીધે જીવન તરફ બદલાયેલો ઝોક, પ્રવાસન માટે નાણાં ધીરવાની ઊભી થયેલી વ્યવસ્થા, સરકાર, સ્થાનિક સંસ્થાઓ, જાહેર અને ખાનગી ક્ષેત્રના કર્મચારીઓને પેશગીની સવલત વગેરેનો સમાવેશ થાય છે. તેવી જ રીતે પુરવઠા(supply)નાં પરિબલોમાં રેલવેની જાળગૂંથણી, પરિવહન-ભાડામાં અપાતી છૂટછાટ વગેરેનો પણ સમાવેશ થાય છે.

1960ના અરસામાં ભારત સરકારે પ્રવાસન-ઉદ્યોગનું મહત્વ સ્વીકારીને ભારતીય પ્રવાસન વિકાસ નિગમ (India Tourism Development Corporation, ITDC) અને અશોક હોટલ જેવી આધુનિક પંચતારાંકિત હોટેલની સ્થાપના કરી તથા કાશ્મીરના ગુલમર્ગ અને હિમાચલ પ્રદેશના બરફ ઉપર સરકવા માટેનાં પટાંગણો, કોવાલમમાં સમુદ્રતટ, દિલ્હી-આગ્રા-જયપુર વચ્ચેનો સુવર્ણ ત્રિકોણ જેવાં આનંદપ્રમોદનાં સ્થળો વિકસાવ્યાં. દેશમાંની રાજ્ય સરકારોએ પણ પ્રવાસનનું માળખું વધારે મજબૂત કરવા માટે 1980માં રાજ્યસ્તરીય પ્રવાસન નિગમો સ્થાપ્યાં છે. આ બધા પ્રયત્નોથી ભારતમાં આવતા વિદેશી પ્રવાસીઓની સંખ્યા જે 1951માં માત્ર 16,829 હતી તે 1992માં પાકિસ્તાન અને બાંગ્લાદેશના 4,32,914 પ્રવાસીઓ સહિત 18,67,651 થઈ હતી. ભારતમાંથી વિદેશ જતા પ્રવાસીઓની નોંધ મુંબઈ, કલકત્તા, દિલ્હી, ચેન્નઈ, તિરુવનન્ટપુરમ્, અમદાવાદ, અત્તારી રોડ જેવાં સ્થળોએ પ્રવાસીઓ પાસેથી એકત્ર કરવામાં આવતાં આરોહણ-(embarkation)-કાર્ડ ઉપરથી કરવામાં આવે છે, પરંતુ નાનાં નાનાં સ્થળોએથી થતાં આરોહણો ગણતરીમાં લેવાતાં નથી. વળી પ્રવાસના હેતુ, ગંતવ્યસ્થળો, કાયમી કે કામચલાઉ વિદેશગમન એવું કોઈ વર્ગીકરણ પણ કરાતું નથી. આંતરરાષ્ટ્રીય પ્રવાસન બજારમાં ભારતનો હિસ્સો હાલમાં માત્ર 1% જેટલો છે.

સંદર્ભો

૧. પાનસેરીયા પ્રફુલ્લકુમાર એમ. ગુજરાતમાં પ્રવાસન ઉદ્યોગ -સૌરાષ્ટ્ર યુનિ. રાજકોટ
૨. ચૌહાણ લલિત એમ. ગુજરાતમાં પ્રવાસન ઉદ્યોગોનો વિકાસ -સૌરાષ્ટ્ર યુનિ. રાજકોટ
૩. ગુજરાત પ્રવાસ નિગમ લીમિટેડ ગુજરાતી રાજ્યની પરિચય પુસ્તિકા

ભારતમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન અને આર્થિક વિકાસ
Religious Tourism and Economic Development of India

Patel Pritikumari H.

Subject – Economics

(M.A., UGC – NET, GSET)

મુલાકાતી વ્યાખ્યાતા

સરકારી વિનયન, વાણિજ્ય અને વિજ્ઞાન કોલેજ, ઉમરપાડા.

સારાંશ :-

ભારત ભૌગોલિક રીતે વૈવિધ્યપૂર્ણ દેશ છે. તે વિવિધ સંસ્કૃતિઓ ધરાવે છે. જે તેને આંતરરાષ્ટ્રીય પ્રવાસન ખર્ચની દ્રષ્ટિએ અગ્રણી દેશ બનાવે છે. ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન અને અર્થવ્યવસ્થાનું પોતાનું અર્થશાસ્ત્ર છે, જે સમાજ અને દેશ માટે મહત્વનું યોગદાન પ્રદાન કરે છે. ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનનાં વિકાસ સાથે દેશનો આર્થિક વિકાસ પણ સંબંધ ધરાવે છે. આવા ધાર્મિક કેન્દ્રો મોટી સંખ્યામાં રોજગાર અને વ્યવસાયની તકો ઊભી કરી દેશના આર્થિક વિકાસમાં મદદરૂપ બને છે. પ્રસ્તુત અભ્યાસમાં ભારતના ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન ઉદ્યોગો દેશના આર્થિક વિકાસમાં કેવી રીતે મદદરૂપ થાય છે? તે અંગેની સમજૂતી મેળવી શકાય છે.

પ્રસ્તાવના :-

ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન એ કોઈ નવો ખ્યાલ નથી. લોકો વર્ષોથી ધાર્મિક સ્થળોની મુસાફરી કરી રહ્યા છે. વર્તમાન સમયમાં ધાર્મિક પર્યટનો એક વિશિષ્ટ બજાર બની રહ્યા છે. જેમાં લોકો તેમની માન્યતાઓને કારણે ખાસ કરીને ધાર્મિક સ્થળોની મુલાકાત લે છે. જ્યારે કોઈ વ્યક્તિ મુખ્યત્વે તેમની ધાર્મિક માન્યતાના આધારે તીર્થસ્થાનોની યાત્રા કરે છે, ત્યારે તેને ધાર્મિક પર્યટન કહે છે. ભારતમાં મંદિરો, ધર્મસ્થાનો અને તીર્થસ્થાનો પોતાનું અર્થશાસ્ત્ર ધરાવે છે. તેમનું યોગદાન સમાજ અને દેશ માટે ઓછું નથી. ઘણાં બધાં લોકો મંદિરોની આસપાસ પોતાનું જીવનનિર્વાહ કરે છે. વર્તમાન સમયમાં ધાર્મિક સ્થાનોનો વિકાસ એ આજીવિકાના મુખ્ય સ્ત્રોત તરીકે અસ્તિત્વ ધરાવે છે. આ ઉપરાંત, તે દેશના અર્થતંત્રના વિકાસને પણ વેગ આપે છે. પ્રસ્તુત સંશોધન અભ્યાસમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનોનો વિકાસ દેશના આર્થિક વિકાસ માટે કેવી રીતે મદદરૂપ થાય છે? તેની ચર્ચા કરવામાં આવી છે.

ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનનો ખ્યાલ :-

ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન એ પ્રવાસનના પ્રારંભિક સ્વરૂપોમાંથી એક છે. જે વૈશ્વિક પ્રવાસન બજારના નોંધપાત્ર વિકસતા અને વધુને વધુ વૈવિધ્યસભર ક્ષેત્રનું પ્રતિનિધિત્વ કરે છે. સંસ્કૃતિના પ્રારંભથી જ ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનની શરૂઆત થઈ હતી. સંસ્કૃતિની શરૂઆતથી જ ધર્મે મનુષ્યોના વિચારો અને ફિલસૂફીને પ્રભાવિત અને આકાર આપ્યો છે. વિખ્યાત ધાર્મિક સ્થળો જોવાની આધ્યાત્મિક ઇચ્છાથી ધાર્મિક પર્યટનની શરૂઆત

થઈ છે એમ માની શકાય. ધાર્મિક સ્થળો એ એવા સ્થળો છે જે પ્રવાસીઓ દ્વારા ખૂબ જ આશ્ચર્ય અને આદર સાથે જોવામાં આવે છે. કેટલીકવાર, વૈજ્ઞાનિક સમજૂતીઓ અને તર્ક કોઈ સંકટનો જવાબ આપવામાં નિષ્ફળ જાય છે અને ભાગવાનની શક્તિ પર ઉકેલ શોધવો એ છેલ્લો ઉપાય લાગે છે. જેના લીધે ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનને પ્રેરણા આપતી પવિત્ર યાત્રાને પ્રેરણા મળે છે.

ભારતમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનો :-

ભારત એ પવિત્ર તીર્થસ્થાનો ધરાવતો દેશ છે. ભારતમાં મંદિરો અને યાત્રાધામો એ ધાર્મિક શહેરો – નગરોમાં રહેતી નોંધપાત્ર વસ્તી માટે આજીવિકાના મુખ્ય સ્ત્રોત તરીકે છે. ભારતમાં કેટલાક રાજ્યોમાં ધાર્મિક કેન્દ્રો નીચે મુજબ છે :-

- ઉત્તર પ્રદેશ : વારાણસી, મથુરા વૃંદાવન, અયોધ્યા, કુશીનગર, પ્રયાગ, સારનાથ, ચિત્રદુટ
- ઉત્તરાખંડ : હરિદ્વાર, ઋષિકેશ, કેદારનાથ, બદ્રીનાથ, ગંગોત્રી, યમુનોત્રી, દેવપ્રયાગ.
- તમિલનાડુ : મદુરાઈ, રામેશ્વરમ્, કન્યાકુમારી, મહાબલીપુરમ્, કાંચીપુરમ્ , કુંભકોણમ્
- ઓડિશા : પુરીમાં જગન્નાથ મંદિર
- ગુજરાત : સોમનાથ, દ્વારકા, અંબાજી, શામળાજી, બહુચરાજી, પાલિતાણા, ગિરનાર, સંજાણ, ખમાસા, ડાકોર, પાવાગઢ, અક્ષરધામ.
- પંજાબ : સુવર્ણ મંદિર (અમૃતસર)
- ઝારખંડ : દેવધર ખાતેનું બૈદ્યનાથ મંદિર , રાંચીમાં જગન્નાથ મંદિર
- મધ્ય પ્રદેશ : ઉજ્જૈનનું મહાકાલ મંદિર

ભારતમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનનો વિકાસ :-

વર્તમાન સમયમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનોએ દેશના આર્થિક વિકાસ માટેના નવા દ્વાર ખોલ્યા છે. દેશના તમામ રાજ્યોમાં અનેક નાનાં-મોટાં ધાર્મિક સ્થળો આવેલાં છે. આવાં સ્થળોની આસપાસ રહેતા લોકો માટે તે રોજગારીના સ્ત્રોતો પણ છે. સ્થાનિકોને ફૂલ, પ્રસાદ વેચવા જેવા અનેક નાનાં-મોટાં કામો કરીને કમાણીની તકો મળી રહે છે. વિવિધ ધાર્મિક પરંપરાઓનાં કારણે ભારત વિશ્વભરના લાખો તીર્થયાત્રીઓ અને પર્યટકોને આકર્ષિત કરે છે. એક અંદાજ મુજબ, વર્ષ ૨૦૨૨માં દેશમાં ૧૭૩૧ મિલિયનથી પણ વધુ ધરેલુ પર્યટકો આવ્યા હતાં, જેમાં ૩૦ મિલિયનથી વધુ પર્યટકોએ ધાર્મિક સ્થળોની યાત્રા કરી હતી.

ભારતનાં મોટાભાગના સ્થાનિક પ્રવાસીઓ માટે તીર્થયાત્રા હંમેશા મુખ્ય પ્રેરણા બની રહી છે. આપણા દેશમાં તમામ મોટા મંદિરો, પવિત્ર સ્થળો મુખ્યત્વે નદી કિનારે કે ટેકરીઓમાં પથરાયેલા જોવા મળે છે. આ મંદિરો-ધર્મસ્થાનોની બાજુમાં કુંભ મેળો, મકરસંક્રાંતિ, પોંગલ, ઈદ-ઉલ-ફિત્રા, શિવરાત્રી અને વૈશાખી જેવા ધાર્મિક મેળાઓ વર્ષોથી સમગ્ર ભારતમાં મોટી સંખ્યામાં યોજાય છે.

કુંભ મેળો એ હિંદુ ધાર્મિક મેળો છે. જે દર બાર વર્ષે અલ્હાબાદ શહેરને અડીને ઉત્તર ભારતના મેદાનો પર ગંગા અને યમુના નદીઓના સંગમ પર થાય છે, જે વિશ્વનો સૌથી મોટો માનવ મેળાવડો છે. ઉપરાંત,

હરિદ્વાર, નાસિક અને ઉજ્જૈનમાં પણ કુંભમેળાઓ યોજાય છે. વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯માં અલ્હાબાદમાં યોજાયેલ ૪૯ દિવસીય કુંભમેળાની લગભગ ૨૪.૦૧ કરોડ લોકોએ મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. જેમાં ૧૦.૩૦ લાખ જેટલા વિદેશી પ્રવાસીઓ સામેલ હતા. જે વિશ્વના સૌથી મોટા ધાર્મિક મેલાવડાઓમાંનો એક બન્યો હતો. એવી જ રીતે હરિદ્વાર કુંભ મેળો કોવિડ-૧૯ રોગચાળા વચ્ચે વર્ષ ૨૦૨૧માં ૧ એપ્રિલથી ૩૦ એપ્રિલ સુધી યોજાયો હતો. કુંભ મેળા ફોર્સ નામની એક સરકારી સંસ્થાએ જણાવ્યું હતું કે, ૧૪ જાન્યુઆરીથી ૨૭ એપ્રિલ સુધી ૯.૧ મિલિયન યાત્રાળુઓએ ગંગા નદીમાં પવિત્ર ડૂબકી લગાવી હતી. સૌથી વધુ શુભ ગણાતી ગંગામાં સોમવતી અમાવસ્યાના શાહી સ્નાન માટે લગભગ ૩૫ લાખ શ્રદ્ધાળુઓ આવ્યા હતા.

પ્રવાસીઓની મુલાકાતો (લાખમાં)

સ્થળો	૨૦૧૬	૨૦૧૭	૨૦૧૮	૨૦૧૯	૨૦૨૦	૨૦૨૧
ઋષિકેશ	૫.૯૨	૬.૭૮	૬.૬૨	૮.૬૪	૧.૭૨	૨.૯૩
કેદારનાથ	૩.૧	૪.૭૧	૭.૩૨	૧૦	૧.૩૫	૨.૪૩
બદ્રીનાથ	૬.૫૪	૯.૨	૧૦.૪૮	૧૨.૪૫	૧.૫૫	1.99
હરિદ્વાર	૨૦૫.૦૮	૨૧૦.૦૯	૨૧૫.૭૮	૨૧૭.૭	૪૦.૨૨	૧૨૭.૧૮

સ્ત્રોત : ઉત્તરાખંડ પ્રવાસન વિભાગ

કુંભ મેળા વિના પણ લાખો પ્રવાસીઓ દર વર્ષે ગંગાના કિનારે આવેલા પવિત્ર ઘાટ હર કી પૈરીમાં સ્નાન માટે હરિદ્વારની મુલાકાત લે છે. વર્ષ ૨૦૧૬ અને ૨૦૧૯ની વચ્ચે લગભગ ૨૦ મિલિયનથી વધુ લોકોએ હરિદ્વારની મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. વર્ષ ૨૦૨૦માં કોવિડ-૧૯ને કારણે મુલાકાતીઓની સંખ્યામાં ભારે ઘટાડો થયો, જે વર્ષ ૨૦૨૧માં વધીને ૧૨.૭ મિલિયન થઈ ગઈ હતી. ઉત્તરાખંડના અન્ય સ્થળો પૈકી ઋષિકેશ, કેદારનાથ અને બદ્રીનાથમાં પણ વર્ષોથી ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસીઓની સતત વૃદ્ધિ જોવા મળી છે. જમ્મુમાં આવેલું વૈષ્ણોદેવી મંદિર ભારતનું બીજું પવિત્ર યાત્રાધામ છે. ગુફાની અંદર સ્થિત આ મંદિર દેવી વૈષ્ણોદેવીને સમર્પિત છે. દર વર્ષે લગભગ ૮ મિલિયન યાત્રાળુઓ મંદિરની મુલાકાત લે છે.

વૈષ્ણોદેવીના દર્શનાર્થીઓ

વર્ષ	દર્શનાર્થીઓ (લાખમાં)
૨૦૧૬	૭૭.૨૩
૨૦૧૭	૮૧.૭૮
૨૦૧૮	૮૫.૮૭
૨૦૧૯	૭૯.૪૦
૨૦૨૦	૧૭.૨૦
૨૦૨૧	૫૫.૮૮

સ્ત્રોત : શ્રી માતા વૈષ્ણોદેવી શ્રાદ્ધન બોર્ડ

વારાણસી જેને “ કાશી ” તરીકે પણ ઓળખવામાં આવે છે, તે હિંદુ અને બૌદ્ધ એમ બંને ધર્મમાં સૌથી આદરણીય યાત્રાળુ શહેરો પૈકી એક માનવામાં આવે છે. વર્ષ ૨૦૧૫માં ભારતીય પ્રવાસીઓની સંખ્યા ૫૪.૧ લાખ હતી, જે વધીને વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯માં ૬૪.૫ લાખ થઈ હતી. દર વર્ષે ૩ લાખથી વધુ વિદેશી પ્રવાસીઓ આ શહેરની મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. આશ્ચર્યજનક રીતે, વર્ષ ૨૦૨૦માં કોવિડ-૧૯ને કારણે મુસાફરી પ્રતિબંધો વચ્ચે પણ વારાણસીમાં લગભગ ૮૯ લાખ પ્રવાસીઓ આવ્યા હતાં.

તિરુપતિ નજીક તિરુમાલા ખાતે ભગવાન શ્રી વેંકટેશ્વરના પ્રાચીન પહાડી મંદિરે વર્ષ ૨૦૨૧માં કોવિડ-૧૯ને કારણે દેશ-વિદેશમાંથી ૧૦ મિલિયનથી વધુ શ્રદ્ધાળુઓએ મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯ સુધી લગભગ ૨૫ મિલિયન ભક્તોએ મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. અમૃતસરમાં આવેલ સુવર્ણ મંદિર શીખ ધર્મનું સૌથી પવિત્ર સ્થળ છે. જેને યુકે સ્થિત World Book of Records (WBR) દ્વારા વર્ષ ૨૦૧૭માં વિશ્વમાં સૌથી વધુ મુલાકાત લેવાયેલ ધાર્મિક સ્થળ તરીકે પ્રમાણિત કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું, જે ગિનીસ વર્લ્ડ રેકૉર્ડ્સ પછી પોલ બીજા ક્રમે છે. સુવર્ણ મંદિરમાં અઠવાડિયા દરમિયાન ૧.૫ લાખથી ૨ લાખની વચ્ચે લોકો આવે છે. રાજસ્થાનના અજમેર ખાતે સ્થિત અજમેર શરીફ દરગાહ, આદરણીય સૂફી સંત મોહનુદ્દીન ચિસ્તીની સમાધિ મુસ્લિમો માટેનું પવિત્ર સ્થળ છે. જેનું નિર્માણ મુઘલ સમ્રાટ હુમાયુ દ્વારા કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું. જ્યાં દરરોજ ૧.૫ લાખ શ્રદ્ધાળુઓ દરગાહની મુલાકાત માટે આવે છે.

ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસન અંગેના પ્રવાસન મંત્રાલયના આંકડાઓ તપાસીએ તો, વર્ષ ૨૦૨૨માં મંદિરોની કુલ કમાણી રૂ. ૧.૩૪ લાખ કરોડ થઈ હતી, જે વર્ષ ૨૦૨૧માં રૂ. ૬૫,૦૦૦ કરોડ, વર્ષ ૨૦૨૦માં રૂ. ૫૦.૧૩૬ કરોડ, વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯માં રૂ. ૨,૧૧૬ કરોડ અને વર્ષ ૨૦૧૮માં રૂ. ૧,૯૪,૮૮૧ કરોડની કમાણી હતી. જેનાં પરથી કહી શકાય કે ધાર્મિક સ્થળોની કમાણી બે ગણી ઝડપથી વધી રહી છે. એક અંદાજ મુજબ વર્ષ ૨૦૨૦માં ઉત્તરાખંડના ચાર ધામોની યાત્રા માટે લગભગ ૪૦ લાખથી વધુ શ્રદ્ધાળુઓ પહોંચ્યા હતાં. જે વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯માં લગભગ ૩૨ લાખ હતો. આ ઉપરાંત, વર્ષ ૨૦૨૨ના જુલાઈમાં વારાણસીમાં લગભગ ૪૦.૦૩ લાખ ઘરેલુ પર્યટકો પહોંચ્યા હતા. જે વર્ષ ૨૦૨૧ના જુલાઈમાં લગભગ ૪.૬૧ લાખ જેટલી સંખ્યા હતી.

દેશનાં કુલ સ્થાનિક પ્રવાસનમાં કુલ ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનનો હિસ્સો લગભગ ૬૦ ટકા હોવાનો અંદાજ છે. એવી જ રીતે, ભારતમાં લગભગ ૧૧ ટકા વિદેશી પ્રવાસીઓ ધાર્મિક અને તીર્થસ્થળોની યાત્રા માટે આવે છે. ભારતના જીડીપીમાં પ્રવાસનનો હિસ્સો લગભગ ૭ ટકા જેટલો રહ્યો છે. એટલે કે, પ્રવાસક્ષેત્ર લગભગ ૩૯ મિલિયન લોકોને રોજગારી આપે છે. આ સ્થિતિમાં ભારતીય અર્થતંત્રમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનોનાં ફાળા અંગે કોઈ શંકા રહેતી નથી, કારણ કે પ્રવાસનનો મોટો હિસ્સો આ સેગમેન્ટમાંથી આવી રહ્યો છે. ઉપરોક્ત બાબતો પરથી કહી શકાય છે કે, દેશના ધાર્મિક સ્થળોએ પર્યટકોની સંખ્યામાં સતત વધારો થઈ રહ્યો છે.

દેશના આર્થિક વિકાસમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનનો ફાળો

ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનો દેશના આર્થિક વિકાસ માટે અર્થતંત્રને વેગ આપી રહ્યા છે. એક અંદાજ મુજબ વર્ષ ૨૦૨૨માં લગભગ ૧૪.૩૩ કરોડ ભારતીયો અને લગભગ ૬૪.૪ લાખ વિદેશી પ્રવાસીઓએ મુલાકાત લીધી

હતી. જેના પરિણામે આ યાત્રાધામોને લગભગ ૧.૩૫ લાખ કરોડની આવક પ્રાપ્ત થઈ હતી. કુલ સ્થાનિક પ્રવાસનમાં લગભગ ૬૦ ટકા જેટલું યોગદાન ધાર્મિક અને યાત્રાધામ ધાર્મિક અને યાત્રાધામ પ્રવાસનનું છે. ઉપરાંત, વર્ષ ૨૦૨૨-૨૩માં કુલ પ્રવાસન તે સમયનાં પ્રવર્તતા જુડીપીના પ્રવર્તતા દર ૭ ટકાના સંદર્ભમાં જોતાં લગભગ કુલ રૂ. ૧૯ લાખ કરોડથી પણ વધુ યોગદાન હતું, જેમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનોનું યોગદાન લગભગ કુલ ૧૧ લાખ કરોડ જેટલું રહ્યું હતું.

WTTC (વર્લ્ડ ટ્રાવેલ એન્ડ ટુરિઝમ કાઉન્સિલ) મુજબ, વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯માં ભારતના જુડીપીમાં પર્યટન ક્ષેત્રનું યોગદાન લગભગ ૭ ટકા અથવા ૧૫,૭૨૩.૩ બિલિયન જેટલું હતું. આ ક્ષેત્રે ૪૦.૧ મિલિયન લોકોને રોજગારી આપી હતી. જે ભારતની કુલ રોજગારીના લગભગ ૮.૪ ટકા જેટલો હિસ્સો ધરાવે છે. જો ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસીઓ ત્રીજા ભાગનો હિસ્સો ધરાવતા હોય તો પણ જુડીપી કે રોજગારીના સર્જનમાં તેમનો ફાળો નોંધપાત્ર છે. દેશના પ્રવાસન ઉદ્યોગમાં ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનો આવક મેળવવા માટે વિશિષ્ટ યોગદાન આપે છે. દક્ષિણ ભારતમાં આવેલ બાલાજી તિરુપતિ મંદિરની મુલાકાતો માટે શ્રદ્ધાળુ પ્રવાસીઓ દ્વારા દાનમાં આપેલા સોનાના ઢગલા કેટલાય મિલિયન ડોલરના હોય છે. સર્વોચ્ચ ઉદ્યોગ સંસ્થા ભારતીય ઉદ્યોગ સંઘના અહેવાલ મુજબ, વર્ષ ૨૦૧૯માં યોજાયેલ કુંભ મેળાથી ઉત્તરપ્રદેશને લગભગ ૧.૨ લાખ કરોડની આવક થઈ હતી. સીઆઇઆઇએ અહેવાલમાં જણાવ્યું કે, કુંભ મેળો આધ્યાત્મિક અને ધાર્મિક પ્રકૃતિનો હોવા છતાં, તેની સાથે સંકળાયેલી આર્થિક પ્રવૃત્તિઓ વિવિધ ક્ષેત્રોમાં છ લાખથી વધુ કમદરોબમતે રોજગારી પૂરી પાડે છે. આમ, ધાર્મિક પ્રવાસનો દેશની અર્થવ્યવસ્થા માટે શક્તિનો આધારસ્તંભ છે.

ભારતમાં પ્રવાસન ક્ષેત્રના વિકાસ સામેના પડકારો

- પ્રવાસન ઉદ્યોગ દ્વારા સામનો કરવામાં આવતી મુખ્ય સમસ્યાઓ સંબંધિત છે.
- પ્રવેશ ઔપચારિકતા (વિઝા) સરળ રીતે ઉપલબ્ધ હોતું નથી. ડાયરેક્ટ ફ્લાઇટ્સ અને મુસાફરીની કિંમત ઘટાડવા માટે વધુ કનેક્ટિવિટી તરફ ઘણું કરવાની જરૂર છે.
- પ્રવાસીઓની સલામતી અને સુરક્ષા
- પ્રવાસન માળખાનો અભાવ છે. પ્રવાસન ક્ષેત્ર માત્ર સમૃદ્ધ વારસાને જાળવવા પર કેન્દ્રિત ન હોવું જોઈએ પરંતુ પર્યટન માટે વિશ્વસ્તરીય ઈન્ફ્રાસ્ટ્રક્ચર બનાવવા પર પણ કેન્દ્રિત હોવું જોઈએ
- પ્રવાસન સ્થળોમાં સ્વચ્છતા અને સ્વચ્છતાનો અભાવ રહેલો છે.
- જોડાણનો અભાવ
- ઉચ્ચ અને બહુવિધ કરવેરા, વગેરે.

પ્રવાસન ક્ષેત્રના વિકાસ માટે ભારતની પહેલ

- કેન્દ્રીય બજેટ ૨૦૨૩-૨૪માં, પ્રવાસન મંત્રાલયને US\$ 290.4 મિલિયન ફાળવવામાં આવ્યા છે.
- કેન્દ્રીય બજેટ ૨૦૨૩-૨૪ હેઠળ, ભૌતિક, ડિજિટલ અને વર્ચ્યુઅલ કનેક્ટિવિટી, ઉપલબ્ધતાની સુવિધા દ્વારા આરોગ્યપ્રદ પ્રવાસન અનુભવ પ્રદાન કરવા માટે ૫૦ પ્રવાસન સ્થળોનું સંપૂર્ણ

પેકેજ વિકસાવવા માટે 5 વદેશ દર્શન યોજના માટે US\$ ૧૭૦.૮૫ મિલિયનની ફાળવણી કરવામાં આવી છે.

- બજેટ ૨૦૨૩-૨૪ હેઠળ, સરકારે પ્રસાદ હેઠળ પ્રવાસી સર્કિટના વિકાસ માટે US\$ ૩૦.૨૫ મિલિયન ફાળવ્યા છે .
- પ્રવાસન મંત્રાલયે SAATHI (મૂલ્યાંકન, જાગૃકતા માટે સિસ્ટમ) નામની પહેલ દ્વારા સલામત રીતે કામગીરી ચાલુ રાખવા અને COVID-19 રોગચાળાથી ઉદ્ભવતા જોખમોને ઘટાડવા માટે હોસ્પિટાલિટી ઉદ્યોગને તેમની તૈયારીમાં મદદ કરવા માટે ક્વોલિટી કાઉન્સિલ ઓફ ઈન્ડિયા (QCI) સાથે ભાગીદારી કરી છે.
- પર્યટન મંત્રાલયે વર્ષ ૨૦૨૩ને 'વિઝિટ ઈન્ડિયા' વર્ષ તરીકે પણ નિયુક્ત કર્યું છે, જે આપણા રાષ્ટ્રને જે વૈભવ અને ભવ્યતા આપવાનું છે તેના સાક્ષી બનવાનું વિશ્વને આમંત્રણ છે.
- ભારત સ્વચાલિત માર્ગ હેઠળ પ્રવાસન ઉદ્યોગમાં ૧૦૦% સીધા વિદેશી રોકાણ (FDI)નું સ્વાગત કરે છે .
- વચગાળાના બજેટ ૨૦૨૪ અનુસાર, જાહેર પરિવહન માટે ઈ-વાહનો ઉપલબ્ધ કરાવવામાં આવશે. રેલવે-દરિયાઈ માર્ગને જોડવા પર પણ ભાર મૂકવામાં આવશે. જેના પરિણામે પ્રવાસન કેન્દ્રોના વિકાસને વેગ મળશે.

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Prospects and Challenges for Tourism Sector Development in India

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Introduction

For humans, tourism and travel are necessary. It is a circumstance and procedure where a person travels temporarily to another location and country. This is how tourism is conceptualized. The tourist sector is becoming more and more important. India boasts a rich historical legacy that includes the Taj Mahal, several forts, natural wonders, and more. Since 2000, India has benefited greatly from the tourist sector. India received foreign exchange earnings from the foreign tourist that visited the country. The UNWTO (2013) states that the tourism industry contributes around 9% of the global GDP. In 2012, tourism contributed USD 1.3 trillion to global exports, or 6% of total exports. Travel and tourism are becoming a more significant global service export area.

India has a rich cultural history and is a very varied nation. In addition to leaving behind their amazing monuments, the numerous invaders who came to India also left behind their cultures. These days, every state celebrates its festivals and has its unique customs. India's natural beauty, which stretches from Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south and from Arunachal Pradesh in the east to Gujarat in the west, as well as its multiculturalism, draw a lot of visitors from all over the nation. For instance, in addition to the Imam bara, Lucknow is home to numerous eateries that serve excellent Nawabi food and are well-known for their Chikan embroidery. The tourist industry generates 10% of the country's income. However, for a variety of reasons, the tourism industry lags behind the other important industries, meaning that while our country is "developing," others are "developed."

Historical Context of Tourism in India:

India's allure as a tourist destination is centuries old. From the majestic Taj Mahal to the serene backwaters of Kerala, the country has been a magnet for explorers, traders and leisure travellers. The growth of tourism in India has been marked by significant sites and milestones that showcase its rich heritage.

Current Status of Indian Tourism Sector

In recent years, India has witnessed a surge in the number of tourists and has become one of the most sought-after destinations in the world. With diverse attractions ranging from

historical monuments to natural landscapes, the country offers a wealth of experiences for every traveler.

- India's tourism sector witnessed a growth of 4.5 per cent in terms of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) to 8.2 million arrivals in 2015 and a growth of 4.1 per cent in foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) to US\$21.1 billion. In 2016, FTAs grew by 10.7 per cent to 8.9 million and FEEs grew by 9.8 per cent to US\$23.1 billion. Domestic tourist visit earnings to States/UTs were estimated at about Rs 143 crore in 2015
- Two major schemes have been implemented for creation of tourism infrastructure - Swadesh Darshan (integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits) and PRASHAD (pilgrimage rejuvenation and spiritual enhancement drive).
- India is promoting better tourism products to promote itself as a 365-day destination which includes cruise, adventure, medical, wellness, golf, polo, etc.
- Other major initiatives include - signing of MoUs and agreements with various countries for promotion of tourism, promotion of tourism research, Swachh Pakhwada as part of Swachh Bharat Mission etc.
- As a result of these efforts, India could improve its 12th place position in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017. India was ranked 40th in the survey of 136 countries in the biennial index prepared by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Prospects for Tourism Sector Development in India

Scenic Beauty

India is a country with great tourism potential. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat, each region has its own uniqueness and culture – these regions have the power to mesmerize tourists with their natural features like cold/hot deserts (Ladakh/Rajasthan), rivers (Ganga and Brahmaputra), forests (Nilgiri and North East), islands (Andaman and Nicobar) etc. Also, the wide diversity in the landscape here offers many options to tourists from India and abroad. Apart from the natural landscape, the cultural heritage spread across the country can also play an important role in the development of tourism in the country.

Birthplace of Religions

India is the birthplace of three religions – Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The vast landscape has innumerable sacred and religious tourist sites which are enough to attract tourists from South East and East Asian countries. The full potential of Dilwara Jain Temple in the West, Buddhist sites in the East and North East and famous Hindu temples in the South is yet to be fully explored.

Domestic Tourists

India is the second most populous country in the world with a population of 1.25 billion. In other words, they can offer at least 1.25 billion tourist visits if the right policies and infrastructure are in place. Taking a cue from Modi's Mann Ki Baat, policymakers should think for the future and come up with appropriate strategies to tap the domestic tourism potential.

India is as exotic, seductive, and breathtakingly beautiful. Perhaps this explains why the tourism sector in India grew and prospered so rapidly. Here, the primary objective of all tourists—both domestic and foreign—is tourism. In fact, there are several exceptions—such as acts of terrorism and particular regional customs—that hinder their expansion. But nowadays, people's interest in tourism has increased rather than decreased. The Indian government has also developed and launched a number of noteworthy initiatives to increase tourism. In the past, statements like "Gaya ko gaya so gaya" were frequently used. At the time, many believed that only a select few could afford the luxury of travel. Since there were no means of transportation around the world at the time, people had to walk thousands of kilometers to get anywhere. But lately, everything has completely changed. Rapid technical advancements in transportation have facilitated travel for individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Religious tourism, beach and wildlife tourism, conference tourism, trekking tourism, adventure and sports tourism, and cultural tourism are only a few of the many aspects of tourism. India did not give tourism much attention in the past. But of days, the business is growing quickly and occupies a special place in the nation's economic system. At the beginning of the fifth decade, India became the first country in Asia to focus on tourism as a business; however, other countries that started much later have already overtaken India in this regard. Of the 42 crore 9 lakh tourists who travel to other countries worldwide, just 4.4% come to India. which shouldn't indicate that we will make much progress. In addition to providing numerous fantastic employment opportunities in a variety of connected industries, tourism in India also fosters international harmony and national unity in addition to providing social and economic benefits.

A tourism policy that highlights the country's progress and concurrently invites more private businesses to participate has been devised to assist the expansion of tourism in our country. For example, the travel and tourism industry heavily depends on the hotel sector. Many plans have been made to move it forward. The government invites hoteliers to participate in a discussion. Studies are also being conducted on the facilities provided to tourists in the United States. A further tactic to stimulate the hotel sector is to exclude newly built hotels from

business taxes for a five-year term. There will be initiatives to stop power outages in hotels, akin to those in developing sectors. The PayingGuest program is being reviewed as part of the new tourism policy. The government has also undertaken a great deal of other important duties and decisions related to the expansion of tourism. There's a new tourist destination open. This 7,630 square meter tourism center is located in Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, and is furnished with modern communication equipment.

In India, tourism promotes both national and international cohesion while offering social and economic benefits. It also provides an abundance of fantastic job opportunities in a range of tourism-related businesses. The Tenth Plan of India specifically mentions domestic tourism as a means of attaining social and cultural cooperation as well as national integration. Domestic tourism rose dramatically as a result of several measures, including concession schemes for leisure travel implemented by the federal, state, and private governments. Nonetheless, the lack of good information about tourist attractions, the expensive accommodation system, and the difficulty of making train reservations prevented domestic tourism from growing in line with the neglect. In India, there are numerous organizations and agencies working to promote travel both domestically and outside.

Among these are the Department of Tourism, the Council of Catering Technology, the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, and the Tourism Development Corporation of India. The tourism department is the hub of it all. and are principally in charge of developing the resources and infrastructure for tourists in the country. It runs thirty tourism offices throughout the country in addition to many locations outside. The 1966-founded Tourism Development Corporation of India is responsible for the start-up, expansion, and advancement of tourism. Travelers can take advantage of a wide range of amenities from housing and dining to transportation, entertainment, shopping, and seminar preparation.

The Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITM), located in New Delhi, was established in January 1999 and offers courses at several levels related to tourism and travel management. The institute also provides supervision and training for entry-level employees in the tourism sector. Transportation has a particularly important role in the expansion of tourism. The main means of transportation include automobiles, trains, and aircraft. Most overseas visitors choose air travel because of the shorter traveling time. Indian Airways, Air India, and Vayudoot are the airlines that offer domestic travel in India. A few private airlines are also making an effort to provide air travel services; these airlines provide drivers, tour managers, ticket assistants, flight attendants, guides, and air hostesses for the convenience of their customers.

In domestic tourism, railways receive particular emphasis. India is believed to possess the largest railway network in Asia and the second largest network globally. Indian Railways operates about 19000 trains that connect over 7000 railway stations. Approximately 67,000 route kilometers are served by railways in India. The railroads employ about 30 lakh workers, of which 14,000 work as officers. Many tourist-attracting programs are available from railways, including "Travel as per your choice", "Group tours", "Concessional return tickets", and "Castles on wheels". The Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express are two examples of the long-distance high-speed trains that the railroads have just begun running. These trains connect several cities and well-known tourist attractions. The Vande Rail, the world's most modern, fastest, and most pleasant train, has started operating. Only in the past several years has Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector showed remarkable promise. Since the end of the terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, a large number of people have started visiting the region. The sector's use of road transportation is another distinctive feature. Reputable, sizable hotels provide automobile transportation services for guests traveling alone or in groups.

There are already 250 accredited tour companies that provide travellers with buses and coaches that adhere to international standards. This kind of endeavour has resulted in an 8–24 percent increase in international tourist arrivals in India over the previous year, according to a poll done by Shivan Tourism Directorate. The main elements of eco-tourism are listed in the Environment Ministry's sources as woods, rivers, seas, mountains, gardens, animals, etc. The government has introduced cultural ecotourism as a means of protecting them. The assertions made regarding the immense potential of ecotourism have been noted by the Indian government. There are fresh reasons why wealthy countries and travellers from the West are lured to India: they are tired with their manufactured and dull cultures. Similar to this, if the projects are carried out properly, there's no denying that the growth of the tourism industry would surely take a different direction.

Challenges for Tourism Sector Development in India

In spite of the above attractions that India offers to the tourists, there are many challenges before a well-developed tourism system. Some of them are;

Lack of Infrastructure

This is a major challenge for the Indian tourism sector. The economic and social infrastructure related to tourism, hotels, connectivity, human resources, sanitation, health facilities etc. are largely under developed in India. The poor quality of infrastructure is clearly reflected in India's 112th rank in the ICT readiness component and 104th rank in the health

and hygiene component of the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017. The main reason for this apathy is the poor allocation of financial resources. It is worth noting that in the 2017-18 budget, the government has allocated only Rs 1840 crore for a major sector like tourism.

Lack of Necessary Skills

One of the biggest obstacles facing India's tourism business is the scarcity of people with the necessary training for the travel and hospitality sectors, which makes it challenging to give visitors to the country top-notch experiences.

Difficult Visa Application Procedure

Even with the advent of e-visa, the majority of travellers and guests visiting India still find the visa application process to be quite time-consuming and difficult. The pandemic has made the visa application process much more difficult.

Issues with Infrastructure and Connectivity

Travellers frequently encounter challenges when visiting certain historical places because of these issues. For instance, the ordinary population still has difficulty accessing several popular tourist destinations, such as Kanchenjunga.

Insufficient Promotion and Awareness

Despite a notable upsurge in recent years in the promotion of India's tourism sector, there is a deficiency in the internet dissemination of information on Indian tourist sites. It is challenging for both domestic and foreign travellers to obtain the necessary information from tourist information centres since they are improperly managed.

Tourist Security

Safety of tourists, especially foreign tourists, is a major obstacle in the path of tourism development. Attacks on foreign nationals, especially women, raise some questions on India's ability to welcome tourists from far-flung countries. India was ranked 114th in terms of security aspects in the World Economic Forum Index 2017 among the 130 countries surveyed. Foreign tourists coming to India often have to face robbery and theft etc., due to which a negative image is created in their minds about India and the law and order of the country.

Access to the Common Man

Most tourist destinations in the country are inaccessible to the poor, women and the elderly. This is due to the high cost of travel, poor connectivity and a series of permissions required for various reasons. Indian Divyangs, who constitute 2 percent of the total population, cannot access many tourist destinations in the country.

Conclusion

The path of tourism development in India is a dynamic journey, marked by growth, challenges and adaptation. As the country evolves into a global tourist destination, responsible and sustainable practices will be key in ensuring that the benefits of tourism accrue to all stakeholders. Despite the rapid growth in the tourism sector in the country, India's share in international tourist arrivals is less than 0.50%, while the share in global international tourism receipts is around 1.30%. Tourism not only provides jobs in the tertiary sector but also stimulates growth in the primary and secondary sectors of the industry. Therefore, the government should encourage private sector participation in a big way for the overall development of the tourism sector as it has the potential to act as the main driver of inclusive growth.

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The Impact of Religious Tourism on the Economy and Tourism Industry

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Abstract:

This paper examines the multifaceted impact of religious tourism on both the economy and the broader tourism industry. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, it explores the economic contributions, socio-cultural implications, and policy considerations associated with religious tourism. Drawing upon case studies and statistical data, this paper sheds light on the significant role that religious tourism plays in shaping destination economies and tourism landscapes worldwide. Moreover, it discusses the challenges and opportunities that arise from managing religious tourism sustainably, considering factors such as infrastructure development, cultural preservation, and community engagement. By analysing the diverse perspectives and empirical evidence surrounding this phenomenon, this paper aims to provide insights for policymakers, destination managers, and researchers seeking to understand and harness the potential of religious tourism for economic and societal development.

Keywords: Religious tourism, Economy, Tourism industry, Socio-cultural impact, Policy considerations

Introduction:

Religious tourism is the pioneer from of tourism which has begun almost with the dawn of humanity. From the ancient times religious destinations were not only a part of the cultural landscape but they also had become a vital factor in local marketing and prime parts of the economy of hosted destinations. Religious tourism is an important part of the tourism industry it called special interest tourism, which usually related to the followers of particular faiths who visit locations that are considered as holy sites.

Economic Contributions of Religious Tourism:

Quantitative analysis of revenue generation

Religious tourism holds significant economic potential, contributing to revenue generation through various channels. Quantitative analysis of its economic impact reveals several key contributions:

1. **Revenue from Pilgrimages:** Religious tourism often involves pilgrimages to holy sites, generating income from entrance fees, donations, and purchases of religious items and services.
2. **Hospitality Sector:** Increased religious tourism leads to higher demand for accommodation, dining, transportation, and other hospitality services, contributing to the local economy.
3. **Souvenir Sales:** Visitors often purchase religious souvenirs, memorabilia, and artifacts, providing revenue streams for local artisans and businesses.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** To accommodate religious tourists, governments and private entities invest in infrastructure projects such as roads, airports, hotels, and utilities, stimulating economic growth and employment.
5. **Cultural Exchange and Trade:** Religious tourism fosters cultural exchange and trade, as visitors often engage in buying local crafts, foods, and cultural products, boosting local economies.
6. **Job Creation:** The influx of tourists creates employment opportunities in various sectors such as tourism, hospitality, transportation, and retail, reducing unemployment rates and enhancing livelihoods.

Quantitative analysis of these factors can provide insights into the economic benefits of religious tourism, aiding policymakers and stakeholders in strategic planning and resource allocation.

Employment opportunities and income distribution

Infrastructure development and investment inflow Religious tourism can have a significant impact on employment opportunities and income distribution. Infrastructure development, including hotels, transportation, and other facilities, creates jobs both directly and indirectly, benefiting local communities. Investment inflow, driven by the demand for religious sites, can stimulate economic growth, leading to improved income distribution by providing opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment across various sectors.

Socio-Cultural Implications of Religious Tourism:

Religious tourism often leads to the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage sites. As pilgrims and tourists visit these sites, there's increased attention and investment in maintaining them. This can include restoration efforts, educational programs, and infrastructure improvements, all contributing to the conservation of cultural identity and history. Additionally, the influx of visitors can stimulate local economies, fostering community pride and engagement in cultural traditions.

Social integration refers to the process of bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs to form cohesive and inclusive communities. Interfaith dialogue is a crucial aspect of social integration, as it fosters understanding, respect, and cooperation among people of different religious faiths. By engaging in dialogue, individuals can learn about each other's beliefs, values, and practices, leading to greater empathy and harmony within society. Effective interfaith dialogue promotes peace, tolerance, and mutual acceptance, ultimately contributing to a more cohesive and interconnected global community.

The impact on local communities and traditions can vary based on factors like economic development, globalization, and cultural exchange. Sometimes, there's a blend of traditional practices with modern influences, while in other cases, traditions may be preserved or lost altogether. It's important to consider both the positive and negative effects of change on communities and their traditions.

Policy Considerations and Sustainable Management:

In discussing policy considerations and sustainable management in the tourism industry, several key aspects come into play:

1. **Environmental Conservation:** Policies should focus on minimizing the environmental impact of tourism activities. This includes measures to protect fragile ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and natural resources. Sustainable management involves enforcing regulations on waste management, controlling pollution, and promoting eco-friendly practices such as renewable energy use and water conservation.
2. **Cultural Preservation:** Sustainable tourism policies should also aim to preserve local cultures and traditions. This involves promoting cultural sensitivity among tourists, supporting local artisans and businesses, and implementing measures to safeguard historical sites and indigenous knowledge.

3. **Community Involvement and Benefit Sharing:** Effective policies should prioritize the involvement of local communities in tourism planning and decision-making processes. This can include initiatives such as community-based tourism projects, revenue-sharing schemes, and capacity-building programs to empower local residents to participate in and benefit from tourism activities.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Sustainable tourism policies should address the need for appropriate infrastructure development to support tourism activities while minimizing negative impacts on local communities and the environment. This may involve investing in sustainable transportation systems, promoting responsible land use planning, and developing tourism facilities in a way that respects natural and cultural heritage sites.
5. **Regulatory Frameworks and Standards:** Governments play a crucial role in establishing regulatory frameworks and standards to ensure the sustainable management of the tourism industry. This includes setting guidelines for tourism operators, implementing zoning regulations, and enforcing codes of conduct for visitors to minimize their impact on local ecosystems and communities.
6. **Education and Awareness:** Policies should also focus on raising awareness among tourists, industry stakeholders, and local communities about the importance of sustainable tourism practices. This can be achieved through education campaigns, training programs, and information dissemination initiatives to promote responsible travel behavior and environmental stewardship.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Sustainable management requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of policies and initiatives. Governments should establish mechanisms for tracking key performance indicators related to environmental conservation, socio-cultural impacts, and economic benefits to ensure that tourism development remains sustainable in the long term.

By integrating these considerations into policy frameworks, governments can promote sustainable management practices that balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to protect the environment and support local communities for the long-term viability of the tourism industry.

Challenges and Opportunities

Environmental sustainability and carrying capacity The relationship between environmental sustainability and carrying capacity is fundamental. Ensuring sustainability

means managing human activities in a way that doesn't exceed the carrying capacity of the environment. This involves practices such as reducing resource consumption, minimizing pollution, conserving biodiversity, and promoting renewable energy sources. By staying within the carrying capacity, we can maintain ecological balance and prevent environmental degradation.

Conflict resolution and peace-building effort

Combining conflict resolution and peace-building efforts with innovation in religious tourism experiences can be a powerful strategy for fostering understanding, empathy, and reconciliation among communities with diverse religious backgrounds. Here's how these two concepts can intersect:

1. **Interfaith Dialogue and Engagement:** Incorporating opportunities for interfaith dialogue and engagement within religious tourism experiences can help break down stereotypes and promote mutual understanding among people of different faiths. By facilitating conversations and interactions between travellers and local communities, these experiences can promote empathy and build bridges across religious divides.
2. **Promotion of Shared Cultural Heritage:** Many religious sites hold significance for multiple religious' traditions, serving as points of convergence rather than contention. By highlighting the shared cultural heritage of these sites, religious tourism experiences can promote a sense of commonality among visitors from different religious backgrounds, fostering a shared appreciation for the richness and diversity of human spirituality.
3. **Peace Education and Conflict Transformation:** Religious tourism experiences can serve as platforms for peace education and conflict transformation initiatives, offering opportunities for visitors to learn about the historical, cultural, and social factors that have contributed to conflicts in the region. By promoting education, dialogue, and reconciliation, these experiences can contribute to long-term peace-building efforts and help prevent future conflicts.
4. **Empowerment of Local Communities:** Innovative religious tourism experiences should prioritize the empowerment of local communities, ensuring that they have a stake in the tourism industry and benefit directly from its economic opportunities. By involving local residents in the development and management of tourism initiatives, these experiences can foster a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural heritage, while also promoting economic development and social cohesion.

5. **Creative Approaches to Conflict Resolution:** Innovative approaches to religious tourism can incorporate creative methods for conflict resolution, such as storytelling, art, music, and cultural performances. By tapping into the power of creativity and expression, these experiences can help transcend language barriers and facilitate meaningful connections between people from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

Overall, integrating conflict resolution and peace-building efforts into religious tourism experiences requires a holistic approach that prioritizes empathy, dialogue, and community empowerment. By harnessing the transformative potential of tourism, we can promote peace, reconciliation, and mutual respect among people of diverse religious traditions.

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