CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
About the Chapter:

This chapter discusses the current scenario of tourism at Global and national level. The impacts of Travel & Tourism run deep into our economies. It is not just about the money visitors spend on travel, accommodation, activities and souvenirs, visitor exports etc. By its very nature, the industry stimulates the engagement and collaboration of communities, tourists, governments, local suppliers and businesses throughout the supply chain. The chapter tries to make distinction between religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism. However, this distinction needs to be made and explored in order to comprehend the kind of process tourism, especially religious tourism is both physically at the individual and social level, and from the cultural and theoretical point of view, in order to realize its benefits and circumvent or limit its negative aspects. Religious tourism, broadly defined to include tourism that is motivated fully or partly by spiritual values is a vehicle for change for the better and can lead to peace if properly guided by codes of ethics and conduct for tourists as well as managers that are sourced from religions and social-cultural values derived from religions. In fact, the philosophies of the four major religions in terms of followers – Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity are not conflicting, if we examine their spiritual aspects and bases. All these religions aspire to be world religions, but are hindered by barriers like ritualism, ethnicity and nationalism, so the question of scale is also important. India's competitive advantage lies in the area of religious tourism because its religious heritage and culture is unique. Religious tourism has a big future in India. India is richly endowed with ancient temples and religious festivals. Religions originating in India, be it Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism or Buddhism, have a vibrant culture and spiritual philosophy.

1.1 TOURISM: A GLOBAL ACTIVITY

Travel & Tourism is a truly global economic activity – one which takes place in destinations across the world, from leading capital cities and smaller towns and villages in rural and coastal areas, to some of the remotest points on the planet. It is one of the world's largest industries, or economic sectors, contributing trillions of dollars annually to the global economy, creating jobs and wealth, generating exports, boosting taxes and
stimulating capital investment. Nearly 260 million jobs worldwide are supported by Travel & Tourism – either directly in the industry or in related sectors. And these jobs are vital not only for the livelihoods of those employed, but also for their families and the wider communities in host destinations. Today there are few people who have neither contributed to the growth of Travel & Tourism through their own spending, nor felt the impacts of others’ expenditure. When managed responsibly, Travel & Tourism can be a significant catalyst for the economic and social transformation of less resource-rich countries and communities. In many small island states, for example, tourism provides the only feasible alternative to basic agriculture as a source of income for local residents. And, in an increasingly globalised world, Travel & Tourism is fundamental to international relations, business and cross-cultural understanding. Travel & Tourism is one of the world’s leading industries, or economic sectors, representing a major source of GDP, employment, exports and taxes. The rapid rise in global demand for Travel & Tourism over the past few decades has been spurred by the rise in living standards, in turn fuelled by growing wealth, coupled with the increased affordability of air travel. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international arrivals worldwide have more than doubled since 1990, rising from 435 million to 675 million in 2000, and to 940 million in 2010. And these figures do not take account of domestic tourism which, by all accounts, generates up to ten times more arrivals than international tourism.

1.2 TOURISM IMPACTS

Tourism has a number of positive benefits in terms of increased incomes, increased employment, and added avenues for upward mobility for locals, increased revenue and increased foreign exchange earnings. However, there are also some socio-economic and environmental impacts associated with these benefits that need to be highlighted. Tourism sector has stimulates other economic sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, poultry, handicrafts, transport, construction, etc. through its backward and forward linkages and cross-sectoral synergies. Expenditure on tourism induces a chain of transactions requiring supply of goods and services from the related sectors. The consumption demand, emanating from tourist expenditure also induces more employment and generates a multiplier effect on the economy. The performance in tourism sector has been quite impressive.
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The tourism has positive effects, but also negatives. In the positives is the creation of employment, the increase in the economic levels, the positive effect for the new inversions in the conservation of natural spaces, avoids the migration of the local population, and improves the economic and socio-cultural level of the local population. The commercialisation of the local’s products, interchange of ideas, costumes and the sensitisation of the tourist and local population for protection of the environment. The tourism is one of the few intensive sectors of employment, is one of the few alternatives to the destruction of employ caused by the technological change, the globalisation process and the reduction of the working time.

In the negative effects, as important then the positives, is the rising of the consume of ground, water, energy, destruction of landscapes with the creations of new infrastructures, the raise in the production of disposals, the alteration of ecosystems, the introduction of exotic species of animals and plants, the lost of traditional habits, the raise of the prostitution (sexual tourism), the narcotic traffic, more forest fires and the raise of the prices of the houses. The tourist flows contributes to the climate change, the acid rain, and the formation of the troposphere ozone, mainly because the transports of the tourist by air or by road are one of the principal sources of emissions of carbon dioxide and another contaminant gases.

Benefits of Travel & Tourism

Travel & Tourism also generates spin-off benefits of a social and cultural nature. The industry directly helps to keep, or to bring, families and social networks together. A significant proportion of all international trips – up to a third of all arrivals for some large developed markets – are to visit friends and/or relations (VFR travel). In addition, Travel & Tourism indirectly promotes cultural heritage and global communication, helping to enhance understanding between people. This in turn can lead to improved international relations between governments, fostering world peace. The industry provides some of the most flexible employment and working practices found across the entire economy. Hotels and catering, for example, typically employ more women, ethnic minorities, older people and part-time workers than almost any other sector – a diversity reflecting the highly flexible nature of many jobs. Jobs can often be carried out in many different locations away from the conventional workplace, such as at home. For women, this can play an important part in promoting gender equality – empowering women at all levels of society.
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1.3 TOURISM AS A CATALYST FOR GROWTH

Travel & Tourism is a dynamic industry which boosts economies by generating income, employment, investment and exports, thus stimulating economic growth. But it also generates valuable spin-off benefits, either by developing infrastructure that other industries can use or by creating positive publicity for individual countries and destinations. Simply through its own existence, Travel & Tourism boosts trade, skills and investment in other unrelated industries. To highlight a few examples:

1 A recent study commissioned by WTTC showed that business travel was responsible for one third of the growth in global trade over the past decade.
2 Of the US$1.2 trillion of annual global foreign direct investment (FDI), around US$76 billion is for local infrastructure such as transport links, hotels and convention centres.
3 Many of the skills developed by Travel & Tourism training programmes, from high-end management to basic customer service, are transferable to other sectors of the economy. As their graduates find jobs across these different sectors, Travel & Tourism has a positive ‘spillover’ effect on productivity. The Travel & Tourism industry also plays a key economic role in facilitating international opportunities for work – important not only for highly skilled professionals but also for manual workers who repatriate at least part of their earnings back to their home countries and communities.
4 The demand for many products and services is known to depend in part on the overall impressions of the country from which they come – and such ‘country-of-origin’ effects can be significantly enhanced and manipulated through Travel & Tourism. This helps countries to boost exports generally – e.g. Italian fashion or French fine wines and to attract wider investment.

Globally, more than 50% of people now live in cities, and forecasts predict this figure will rise to a staggering 75% by 2025. This creates a big threat to the smaller, more remote communities. But Travel & Tourism can provide a lifeline to these same communities, allowing essential services and supplies to be delivered, as well as generating vital income from visitors. Travel & Tourism provides a vital source of income and employment in many developing countries around the world. As an example, Travel & Tourism directly or indirectly supports 76% of all jobs in Aruba, 31% in Belize and 27% in Namibia. Without this economic lifeline, millions more people would live in poverty in these countries, or be forced to leave their home countries in search of work.
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The major cultural differences between people around the world can, and often do, create tensions and conflicts. By enabling people to visit, study and work in other countries, Travel & Tourism builds vital bridges to help overcome these problems. Indirectly, it can also promote the exchange of cultures and global dialogue, which in turn fosters understanding between people, boosting national pride, helping to preserve and promote cultural heritage, and protect indigenous people and their way of life.

Aviation

Air transport lies at the heart of modern, globalised economies. Some 3 billion passengers and more than 50 million tonnes of freight are flown around the world every year. And about one third of the value of global trade in manufactured goods is transported by air. Aviation is in itself one of the world’s most important economic sectors. Oxford Economics has estimated that over 5.5 million workers are employed directly in the industry worldwide and that, if aviation were a country, it would rank 21st in the world in terms of GDP – with its US$425 billion contribution considerably larger than that of some members of the G20 group of nations. Aviation also generates further economic benefits. It enhances efficiencies through economies of scale, increased competition and innovation, and access to wider pools of human resources. In particular, the benefits to society of expenditure on research and development by the aerospace industry are very significant, adding 70 cents to GDP year after year for every dollar initially invested.

Cruise

Despite being hard hit by the global economic recession in 2008 and 2009, both in terms of passenger demand and global cruise value sales, the cruise sector has been one of the fastest-growing sectors of Travel & Tourism over the past ten years – and indeed over the last two to three decades. To illustrate the point, the average annual passenger growth rate for the (largely American) members of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has been more than 7.5%, reaching 14.8 million in 2010 (up 10% over 2009). This puts the total estimated cruise passenger count at more than 16 million worldwide. While North America dominates the global cruise business, the share of other regions is increasing and Europe now accounts for more than 5 million cruise passengers annually, as well as showing much stronger value growth in the last five years. Industry experts believe the total number of Europeans taking cruises could more than double by 2020. Global data for the economic impact of the cruise sector is hard to come by. However, recent research by the European Cruise Council estimates that, in 2010, the sector generated €14 billion in direct spending and
accounted for nearly 300,000 jobs in the region. Less recent research in the Caribbean suggests that the sector generated 41,500 jobs in 2006 with US$600 million in wage income to Caribbean residents.

**Hospitality**

The economic reach of the hospitality sector is uncommonly broad: its supply chain generates business activity for many other parts of the economy and, in particular, for the retail, recreation, transport and restaurant sectors. Hotels also provide a forum for business meetings, trade shows and conventions that are an important catalyst of economic growth. Hospitality is a major global growth industry. There are now some 12.7 million hotel rooms around the world, including 4.9 million in the USA and 3.9 million in Europe. In total, the number of new rooms planned or under development (1.3 million) equates to more than 7% of the existing worldwide stock, while in the Middle East and Africa – which together are responsible for almost half the new rooms under construction – the share is more than 20%. Jobs in the hospitality sector are occasionally considered to be inferior or ‘non-career’ posts. In reality, to keep any large hotel operating round the clock takes not only receptionists and room attendants, but also a diverse team of highly skilled specialists with backgrounds ranging from accountancy to information technology. At the same time, hospitality is an important employer as it offers a wide range of full- and part-time jobs for young people, first-time job seekers, minority groups, retired people, and working mothers. Research has shown that, in times of economic recession, hospitality can also take up unemployment faster than almost any other sector.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

Between 2000 and 2010, the growth in Travel & Tourism’s direct contribution to global GDP as volatile, with economic uncertainties, diseases and terrorist attacks all having an impact. The decade recorded a growth of 9.7% overall, with Travel & Tourism’s direct contribution to GDP ending the period at US$1,770 billion in 2010 (based on 2011 prices). Regionally, the balance of growth was uneven. Africa and the Middle East saw Travel & Tourism’s direct contribution to GDP rise by 69.6% and 64.7% respectively, while Asia Pacific and Latin America enjoyed increases of approximately 43%. Europe, meanwhile, suffered a decline of 9.9% over the same period, and the USA, the world’s largest market in monetary terms, was down 5.3%. If the GDP impacts created by investment and supply-chain effects are taken into account, the total Travel & Tourism industry was worth US$5,760.9 billion in 2010 (in terms of its contribution to GDP) – a rise of 16.6% over its 2000 level, albeit down US$98.2 billion on its 2007 pre-credit crunch peak.
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Employment

Globally, direct employment in Travel & Tourism rose 8.3% from 2000 to 2010, equivalent to the creation of an additional 7 million jobs. But annual growth rates fluctuated sharply. The impact of 9/11, in particular, contributed to a decline of 3.1% in 2001, while 2004 saw the fastest growth of the decade, of 4.5%. An employment peak of 98.6 million was reached in 2006, and not exceeded until 2011. The global distribution of growth in direct Travel & Tourism employment was again very uneven. Exactly two-thirds of worldwide growth occurred in Asia, where the number of Travel & Tourism jobs rose by almost 5 million between 2000 and 2010 – 2.8 million of which in China alone. The fastest growth in percentage terms was in the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America, where policymakers began to take steps to unlock the economic potential of Travel & Tourism, and individual destinations benefited from the rapid expansion of global air travel. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), for example, saw remarkable growth of 167.9% in direct Travel & Tourism employment over the decade as Dubai and, more recently, Abu Dhabi became premier international business and leisure tourism hubs. Employment growth in mature markets proved more difficult to achieve. Both Europe and the USA saw declines of 10.5% in direct Travel & Tourism employment between 2000 and 2010 – although the underlying trend appears more stable if the one-off effects of 9/11 and the 2008-2009 economic recession are discounted. If the additional Travel & Tourism employment impacts generated through investment and the supply chain are included, the number of Travel & Tourism jobs worldwide increased by 17.6 million between 2000 and 2008 (peak to peak on the world economic cycle), and by 11.6 million between 2002 and 2010 (trough to trough).

Capital Investment

The decade through 2010 enjoyed a rapid rise in investment across the Travel & Tourism industry, as destinations became more competitive in their pursuit of increasingly affluent global travellers. Globally, Travel & Tourism capital investment rose by 41.8% between 2000 and 2010, and by 66.3% to 2008 – ie before the availability of development finance was hit by the credit crisis. Travel & Tourism investment peaked at US$726.8 million in 2008 (2011 prices), with the Americas and Asia Pacific each accounting for 34%, and Europe for 23%, of the total. All world regions have seen solid growth in Travel & Tourism investment since 2000, with the exception of Western Europe. In the USA, despite sluggish growth in industry GDP and employment, there has been a concerted drive in investment to remain competitive, with Travel & Tourism capital outlays up by a third from 2000-2008 and by 20% between 2002 and 2010. The highest percentage growth rates in Travel &
Tourism investment have predictably been seen in Asia, some parts of Africa and the Middle East. This includes overall growth of more than 600% in India from 2000-2010, and 230% in the UAE. However, in both cases this rapid growth stemmed from a very low base, and annual investment is still, in absolute terms, a small fraction of that made in the USA or Europe.

**Visitor Exports**

Total worldwide visitor exports (ie spending by foreign visitors on Travel & Tourism goods and services, including transport, outside their home countries) grew by 20.1% between 2000 and 2010. This was significantly faster than the corresponding growth in industry GDP or employment over the same period. Particularly strong growth in visitor exports was seen between 2004 and 2008, with annual growth of 8.7% in 2004 alone. This was in line with the wider economic climate of the time, with unprecedented levels of disposable income among consumers (and business profits), combined with a rapid expansion of airline passenger services and a significant rise in the demand for foreign travel for both business and leisure. Although European and North American consumers still accounted for 60% of worldwide visitor exports by 2010, the most notable trend over the decade was the growing contribution of Asian travellers to the total, rising from a 19% share in 2000 to 25%. Growth in incomes in both emerging and developed Asian markets drove a rise in the region’s visitor exports of US$99.2 million from 2000-2010 – equivalent to more than half the overall global increase over the same period. While the region’s population is much smaller, the US$33.1 million rise in visitor exports from Middle Eastern consumers in 2000-2010 – more than the corresponding increase generated by European and North American travellers combined – is also significant, and probably indicative of future trends.

**The Fast-Changing Operating Environment**

Driven in large part by the different events that coloured the first decade of the 21st century, but also by the economic environment, emerging markets and rapid advances in technology –notably in digital and social media – the Travel & Tourism industry was also confronted with a whole host of new challenges which have had a profound effect on the way the industry is structured.

**Emphasis on Safety and Security**

Arguably, 9/11 was one of the most influential events in terms of its impact on recent world history, not least on Travel & Tourism. Although terrorism was by no means new to the industry or the travelling public, 9/11 brought to the fore a host of issues concerning safety and security within the sector. Tighter border controls including stricter visa
regulations, heightened airport security screenings and body scanners, as well as the introduction of biometrics for identification purposes, are just some of the measures introduced to address safety and security issues – and which, in the process, have added to the hassles of flying for the general public.

**Low-Cost Carriers**

The aviation sector has undergone a significant structural transformation over the past decade, with the birth of a new airline model, the lowcost carrier (LCC). With their focus on no-frills, point-to-point services, LCCs have had a significant impact on the demand for airline travel, making it suddenly affordable for a much wider segment of the population in all key world regions. Operating to/from less-used secondary airports, LCC services have also helped to open up and regenerate smaller regions, boosting employment and spreading prosperity. While the future growth of the LCC model is linked inextricably to the price of oil, the rapid growth of LCC services over the past ten years has also put significant pressures on full-service, legacy airlines to reduce fares and costs in order to remain competitive.

**The Rise of Internet and Mobile Communications**

Not surprisingly, given the huge advances in technological applications for the Travel & Tourism industry and, in particular, distribution today’s consumer is constantly plugged into the World Wide Web. Thanks to online research, tourists of all ages are also much more informed about available products and services when they make their travel decisions. They now tailor their own itineraries and packages, comparing prices and products even controlling prices by putting in bids for products and services on sites such as Priceline. Mobile technology has taken this one step further and consumers are now able to research, book and review products on the move.

**Shorter, More Frequent Leisure Trips**

With travel becoming so much more accessible, in terms of destination and product choice as well as price, the ten years between 2000 and 2010 spurred a rapid increase in travel frequency, with the growth in short breaks not surprisingly outpacing that of longer leisure trips. Not only did this boost domestic travel but, at the market’s peak in 2008-2009, a significant share of Europeans especially those suffering time constraints were taking upwards of four to five foreign short breaks a year, often at the expense of longer annual holidays. And the trend has spread to Asia, where the rising new middle classes have also been quick to take advantage of the new opportunities to travel abroad.
The Changing Consumer

Fast-growing emerging markets, such as Brazil, India, China and Russia (the BRICs), have also been a game changer, forcing the Travel & Tourism industry to focus greater attention in terms of marketing and product development on new travel source regions, especially Asia. The surge in demand from China, in particular, has resulted in hotels and other suppliers employing Mandarin speakers, introducing menus catering for Chinese consumers, and generally placing much more emphasis on specialised, on-the-job market training. In the Western world, an ageing population with time and money to spare has also had an important bearing on the industry’s development, both in terms of product and marketing/distribution. Furthermore, the rise in ‘green consumerism’ – increased environmental awareness and concern about issues such as climate change – has led to a greater focus among consumers on authenticity in destinations, products and travel experiences. The Travel & Tourism industry is undergoing a revolution in sustainable practices.

More and more hotels, attractions and entertainment facilities, as well as transport companies, are signing up to basic environmental codes and to corporate social responsibility (CSR), and many are overhauling business models to incorporate social, cultural and environmental sustainability. As consumer preferences evolve to demand better environmental performances by the companies from which they buy their travel, forward-thinking entrepreneurs are carving out lucrative new niches in the market – from eco-hotels to purpose-built, carbon-neutral convention centres, with holiday packages increasingly encompassing some form of ‘voluntourism’. Most importantly, Travel & Tourism’s close relationship with the natural environment – effectively its nine-to-five ‘office’ – is causing more and more of its leading companies to embrace the concept of optimal, rather, than maximum, profitability. Travel & Tourism has strong inherent links to the environment. In some countries, the natural environment and its wildlife, flora and fauna are what distinguishes them from other tourism destinations. Industry, governments, investors, communities and travellers therefore have a clear vested interest in preserving the local environment and ensuring the sustainable use of its resources for the benefit of future generations.

Tourism Impacts in Different World Regions

All regions of the world benefit from Travel & Tourism to a substantial degree, although there are clearly important differences in the way they each contribute to the global Travel & Tourism industry. As an example, although China and India between them account
for half of global Travel & Tourism employment, the world's two fastest-growing economies currently generate just 10% of global Travel & Tourism GDP. The reasons for this are easy to explain. Productivity and income per worker, are much higher in advanced economies like the USA, Japan and the EU. Together, these developed economies account for over half of world Travel & Tourism GDP despite a relatively low share of Travel & Tourism jobs. And this is despite the fact that productivity in emerging markets is typically higher in tourism than in the rest of the economy, while the reverse is true in developed economies.

1.4 TOURISM 2020 VISION FORECASTS

The UNWTO Tourism 2020 Vision forecasts show that international tourist arrivals are expected to reach over 1.56 billion by the year 2020. This demonstrates an annual growth rate of 4.1 per cent over the period 1995-2020. Long-haul travel worldwide will grow faster than intraregional travel. In 1995, long-haul travel accounted for 18 per cent of all international trips; by 2020 this is expected to increase to 24 per cent.

GRAPH 1.1

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS IN SOUTH ASIA

Source: UNWTO

Forecasts for international tourist arrivals to South Asia show that there will be almost 19 million arrivals in 2020. This represents an annual growth rate of 6.2 per cent. Consequently the overall share of arrivals to the South Asian region is expected to increase...
over the forecast period from 0.7 per cent in 1995 to 1.2 per cent in 2020. Long-haul travel to South Asia will grow at 6.7 per cent a year, higher than for intraregional tourism - at 4.0 per cent a year. The *Tourism 2020 Vision* study forecasts that there will be almost 17 million outbound tourist arrivals generated from South Asia in the year 2020. This represents an annual growth rate over the period 1995-2020 of 5.6 per cent one-and-a-half points above the global average of 4.1 per cent.

**GRAPH 1.2**

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS BY RECEIVING REGION

The 22 destinations of the Indian Ocean country grouping are forecast to receive 179 million international tourist arrivals in the year 2020, thus recording an annual growth rate of 6.3 per cent over the period 1995-2020. Consequently, the Indian Ocean region is gaining market share of worldwide tourist arrivals, and by 2020 one-in-every-nine (or around 11 per cent) of tourist arrivals will be to an Indian Ocean country. Thailand will become the leading Indian Ocean destination with a forecast of 36.9 million arrivals in 2020, an average annual growth between 1995 and 2020 of 6.9 per cent. India is the seventh largest Indian Ocean country in terms of arrivals. The individual inbound country forecasts for the main tourist destinations within South Asia show that the leading countries will be India (8.9 million

*Source: UNWTO*
arrivals in 2020), Iran (3.4 million), Nepal (just under 2 million), Sri Lanka (1.4 million) and Maldives (1.4 million).

The outbound forecasts from South Asia show that India will expand the most rapidly at 5.7 per cent a year between 1995-2020 to reach 6.7 million arrivals. While the global economic recession of 2008-2009 had a significant impact on Travel & Tourism, it was relatively short-lived, and the recovery has been sustained through 2011 so far. More significantly, the growth of Travel & Tourism is expected to outpace that of the global economy over the next decade.

**Direct Contribution of Travel & Tourism**

The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to global GDP is expected to rise by 54% in the next decade to over US$2,860 billion by 2021, accounting for nearly 3% of global GDP. The Travel & Tourism industry is expected to create an additional 21 million (net) direct jobs over the next decade, taking total direct employment to over 120 million (more than 3.5% of total employment). Including the wider effects from investment, the supply chain and income impacts, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism is forecast to reach nearly 10% of global GDP (US$9,227 billion) and 10% of global employment (325 million jobs) by 2021. The global recession had a damaging impact on almost all large industries. Across the world, Travel & Tourism started to see a drop-off in international tourist arrivals growth from the beginning of 2008. From enjoying average annual growth in arrivals of around 5% in the middle of the decade, the industry suffered 18 months of decline from mid-2008. Nevertheless, a strong recovery has restored growth to pre-2008 levels since the start of 2010. The fastest rate of growth is forecast to occur in Brazil, equivalent to around 12% a year, followed by Montenegro and Argentina with around 9% each.

Though still the smallest of WTO’s tourism regions, South Asia has been recording consistently strong growth over the past four decades due to the growing number of new destinations on offer in the region, and the expansion of the tourism product developed in the main countries of the region. These developments have served to attract in particular the long-haul interregional tourist. South Asia’s world share of tourist arrivals has increased two-and-a-half times over 1960, i.e. from 0.3 per cent to 0.8 per cent currently, though the 1980s were a weak period when South Asia’s share decreased from 0.8 per cent in 1980 to below 0.7 per cent in 1990. However, the 1990s have seen strong growth in the region, outstripping the global rise in arrivals in each successive year except 1993.
A series of National Tourism Administration (NTA) surveys undertaken by the WTO over the last two years shows that NTAs are increasing their promotional activity, seeking to diversify both their tourism products and the markets attracted. The application of the principle of focusing on geo-graphic markets and market segments affords the best prospects for growth. Collaboration with the private sector is a central component of South Asian NTAs' marketing strategy. Domestic tourism promotion is a priority for three-of-the-four South Asian NTA respondents to the survey. Tourism is being increasingly embraced by the countries of South Asia as a key part of their economic development policies but success will be determined by the speed and extent to which the countries: n improve access (both interregional and intraregional) and infrastructure; n achieve socio-political stability, and are able to convince prospective tourist markets of the safety and security of tourists; and put into place regional collaboration programmes in respect of inter alia aviation services and marketing; and exploit the abundant opportunities in the region for small-to-medium scale non-mainstream tourism development afforded by the growing volumes of tourists seeking out different experiences; and provide fully-competitive investment and operating conditions for foreign and local interests.
1.4 RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Religious tourism, also commonly referred to as faith tourism, is a form of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. North American religious tourists comprise an estimated $10 billion of the industry. Tourism and pilgrimage have been said to be closely related. The relationship between tourists and the religions and religious contexts is very important. Why tourists travel to places of religious significance and how they conceive of their travels are important questions to both the study of tourism and of religion. This thesis is particularly concerned with those tourists who engage in religious practice or have some form of spiritual experience in a religious context. Whether such tourists' experiences and behaviours are like pilgrim experiences is a relevant starting point, for historically the interaction of religion and travel has revolved around this point. However, there are further questions that spiritual tourists pose, for their particular modes of travel are somewhat unique. One of the key distinguishing factors of pilgrimage is that it is formed out of the desire for some form of change and the belief that this can be found at the pilgrimage site. Tourism, by contrast, occupies a functionally and socially different position. At its simplest, we may think of tourism as 'sightseeing'.

Where pilgrimage can appear to be explicitly religious, tourism can appear to be explicitly secular. Therefore, pilgrimage and tourism, despite operating on different planes of meaning, can have some significant areas of overlap. We can see that there may be tourists having similar experiences to pilgrims, and pilgrims who really may be indistinguishable from tourists. Spiritual tourists are for the most part regular tourists. However, what distinguishes them is their seeking out of religious settings and experiences. They differ from pilgrims in that they are not necessarily affiliated with one religion (or at least not with the one(s) at the locations they journey to as tourists), and that they are not necessarily there for the same reasons as pilgrims.

Religion, faith and spirituality are so intertwined that a clear differentiation of all three aspects are necessary for a deeper understanding of the role of religious tourism in Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, Buddhism and Hinduism may be considered as philosophical thought rather than religions and some of the authors have broached this element and called for a broader definition of 'religious' tourism. Statistics on religious tourism of Asia and the Pacific are limited or vague. This is partly due to the close link between religion and culture.
in Asia where it is difficult to separate the motivation of travel except in the specific case of pilgrimages and religious festivals.

It is estimated that in the US alone some 25% of the traveling public is interested in some form of pilgrimage or faith-based tourism. When one adds to this the number of people who travel for faith-based conventions, and faith based activities such as weddings, bar mitzvahs or funerals, the number becomes extraordinarily large. World Religious Travel is one of the fastest growing segments in travel today. Religious travel is estimated at a value of US$18 billion and 300 million travelers strong.

PHOTO 1.1
PILGRIMAGE IN MECCA

Major faith based destinations such as Israel, Italy and Saudi Arabia have developed large pilgrimage. Group or Individual Tourism Pilgrimages may occur as a form of group or individual tourism. Especially among young people (who compose about one third of the faith-based visitors) there are a great number of people who seek spiritual aspects to their vacations. Think through what areas of your community offer a chance to increase self awareness or spirituality. Less Threatened by Economic Crisis Pilgrimage travel is often less
prone to economic ups and downs in the market place. Because faith-based travelers are committed travelers they tend to save for these religious experiences and travel despite the state of the economy. Faith travelers tend to have different motives for travel then do travelers for other reasons. For example, the faith-based traveler often travels as part of a religious obligation or to fulfill a spiritual mission. Faith-based travel can provide a steady flow of income to a local tourism economy. All Ages and All Nationalities The pilgrimage and faith based market has the advantage of appealing to people from around the world, of all ages and of all nationalities.

Modern religious tourists are more able to visit holy cities and holy sites around the world. The most famous holy cities are Jerusalem, Mecca and Varanasi. The most famous holy sites are the Church of the Nativity, The Western Wall, Brahma Temple at Pushkar and the Kaaba. Religious tourism has existed since antiquity, and unlike commercial tourism, is not done for exclusively hedonistic purposes. A study in 2011 found that pilgrims visited Jerusalem for a few reasons: to understand and appreciate their religion through a tangible experience, to feel secure about their religious beliefs, and to connect personally to the holy city.

Religious Tourism and Cultural Tourism

In addition, as a result of marketing and a growing general interest in cultural tourism, religious sites are being commodified and packaged for a tourism audience (Olsen, 2006). As a consequence, pilgrimages and other religious journeys are becoming tied to other types of tourism, and religious places are being visited for a variety of reasons such as their architecture and historical importance, some of which have nothing to do with religion directly. This view is in line with Rinschede’s (1992, p. 52) definition of religious tourism as “That type of tourism whose participants are motivated either exclusively or in part for religious reasons.” Thus, religious sites are simultaneously sacred and secular as they are visited by both pilgrims and religious travelers and tourists. V. L. Smith (1992), in order to conceptualize the varying relationship between pilgrims and tourists, placed them on a continuum. At one end of the spectrum lies sacred pilgrimage (a journey driven by faith, religion, and spiritual fulfillment) while at the opposite end lies the secular tourist (driven by more materialistic motivations). Situated between the two are infinite possibilities of sacred-secular combinations of religious tourists who are “more pilgrims than tourists” or “more tourists than pilgrims.” This scenario is further complicated by the combination of pilgrimage travel with New Age Spirituality (Rountree, 2002). According to Baum (2000), the concept
of religion has shifted with the advent of modern secularizing trends such as postindustrialism, cultural pluralism, and scientific rationality.

PHOTO 1.2
CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS IN PALM SUNDAY JERUSALEM

1.5 RELIGIOUS TRAVEL AND MAJOR RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

Practice emphasizes that religion has played an important role for the development of many activity fields and also for human development. Many researches deal with religious phenomenon and analyze it as a determinant factor, a cultural element, and an important component of economic and social activities. Motivation for tourism services consumption in rural areas is diversified, being intimately related to needs such as physical recreation, relaxation, thirst for knowledge, cultural identity discovering, etc. When religious rural tourism is analyzed, the range of determinations is limited and the personal and intimate aspects have a high percentage. There is a direct connection between the legacy of every religious denomination, the family value system and the motivation for pilgrimage, to the detriment of the modern promotion methods. Culturally, these areas are special especially because traditions and values cannot be separated from the religious element. The knowledge-based society is also a new concept. It calls into question important principles for the development of religious tourism in rural areas.
Religion and culture are closely connected and people often visit cultural heritages associated with their religions, for example, the Mogao Caves, Porala Palace, Leshan Giant Buddha, Mount Taishan, the Mountain Resort in Chendge City and its Outlying Temples, Temple and Cemetery of Confucius, the Kong family mansion, and the Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains. Visiting religious sites or going on pilgrimages is the oldest tradition in many religions and with some of the sites being given UNESCO recognition, these trips are becoming more inviting and popular.

Religious tourism comprises many facets of the travel industry including:

1. Pilgrimages
2. Missionary travel
3. Leisure (fellowship) vacations
4. Faith-based cruising
5. Crusades, conventions and rallies
6. Retreats
7. Monastery visits and guest-stays
8. Faith-based camps
9. Religious tourist attractions

Religious traditions fall into super-groups in comparative religion, arranged by historical origin and mutual influence. Abrahamic religions originate in the Middle East, Indian religions in India and Far Eastern religions in East Asia. Another group with supra-regional influence are African diasporic religions, which have their origins in Central and West Africa.

a) **Abrahamic Religions**

Abrahamic religions are the largest group, and these consist mainly of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Bahá'í Faith. They are named for the patriarch Abraham, and are unified by the practice of monotheism. Today, around 3.4 billion people are followers of Abrahamic religions and are spread widely around the world apart from the regions around Southeast Asia. Several Abrahamic organizations are vigorous proselytizers.\(^7\)

b) **Indian Religions**

Indian religions originated in Greater India and tend to share a number of key concepts, such as dharma and karma. They are of the most influence across the Indian subcontinent, East Asia, Southeast Asia, as well as isolated parts of Russia. The main Indian religions are Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.
c) **East Asian religions**

East Asian religions consist of several East Asian religions which make use of the concept of *Tao* (in Chinese) or *Do* (in Japanese or Korean), namely Taoism and Confucianism, both of which are asserted by some scholars to be non-religious in nature.

d) **African Diasporic Religions**

African diasporic religions practiced in the Americas, imported as a result of the Atlantic slave trade of the 16th to 18th centuries, building on traditional religions of Central and West Africa.

e) **Indigenous Ethnic Religions**

Indigenous ethnic religions, formerly found on every continent, now marginalized by the major organized faiths, but persisting as undercurrents of folk religion. Includes African traditional religions, Asian Shamanism, Native American religions, Austronesian and Australian Aboriginal traditions, Chinese folk religion, and postwar Shinto. Under more traditional listings, this has been referred to as "Paganism" along with historical polytheism.

f) **Iranian Religions**

Iranian religions originated in Iran and include Zoroastrianism, Yazdanism, Ahl-e Haqq and historical traditions of Gnosticism (Mandaeism, Manichaism). It has significant overlaps with Abrahamic traditions, e.g. in Sufism and in recent movements such as Bábism and the Bahá'í Faith.

g) **New Religious Movement**

New religious movement is the term applied to any religious faith which has emerged since the 19th century, often syncretizing, reinterpreting or reviving aspects of older traditions: Hindu reform movements, Eckankar, Ayyavazhi, Pentecostalism, polytheistic reconstructionism, and so forth.
### TABLE 1.2
**MAJOR RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGIOUS CATEGORY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS (IN MILLIONS)</th>
<th>CULTURAL TRADITION</th>
<th>MAIN REGIONS COVERED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Christianity</td>
<td>2,000–2,200</td>
<td>Abrahamic religions</td>
<td>Predominant in the Western world (Europe, the Americas, Oceania), Sub-Saharan Africa, the Philippines, and East Timor in Southeast Asia. Minorities worldwide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Islam</td>
<td>1,300–1,650</td>
<td>Abrahamic religions</td>
<td>Middle East, Northern Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Western Africa, Malay Archipelago with large population centers existing in Eastern Africa, Balkan Peninsula, Russia and China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No religion</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>Secularism</td>
<td>Predominant in the Western world. Minorities worldwide, see Irreligion by country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hinduism</td>
<td>828–1,000</td>
<td>Indian religions</td>
<td>South Asia, Bali, Mauritius, Fiji, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and among the overseas Indian communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Buddhism</td>
<td>400–500</td>
<td>Indian religions</td>
<td>South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia and some regions of Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Folk religions</td>
<td>400–500</td>
<td>Folk religions</td>
<td>Africa, Asia, Americas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chinese folk religions (including Taoism and Confucianism)</td>
<td>400–500</td>
<td>Chinese religions</td>
<td>East Asia, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Shinto</td>
<td>27–65</td>
<td>Japanese religions</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sikhism</td>
<td>24–28</td>
<td>Indian religions</td>
<td>Indian subcontinent, Australasia, Northern America, Southeast Asia, the United Kingdom and Western Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Religion Type</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Jainism</td>
<td>Indian religions</td>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>India, and East Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Bahá’í Faith</td>
<td>Abrahamic religions</td>
<td>7.6–7.9</td>
<td>Noted for being dispersed worldwide[28][29] but the top ten populations (amounting to about 60% of the Bahá’í World Faith adherents) are (in order of size of community) India, United States, Vietnam, Kenya, DR of the Congo, Philippines, Zambia, South Africa, Iran, Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Cheondoism</td>
<td>Korean religions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>North and South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Tenrikyo</td>
<td>Japanese religions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Japan, Brazil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Wicca</td>
<td>New religious movements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States, Australia, Europe, Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Church of World Messianity</td>
<td>Japanese religions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Japan, Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Seicho-no-Ie</td>
<td>Japanese religions</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>Japan, Brazil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Rastafari movement</td>
<td>New religious movements, Abrahamic religions</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Jamaica, Caribbean, Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Unitarian Universalism</td>
<td>New religious movements</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>United States, Canada, Europe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6 STATISTICS OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Although no definitive study has been completed on worldwide religious tourism, some segments of the industry have been measured:

- According to the World Tourism Organization, an estimated 300 to 330 million pilgrims visit the world's key religious sites every year.
- According to the U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, Americans traveling overseas for "religious or pilgrimage" purposes has increased from 491,000 travelers in 2002 to 633,000 travelers in 2005 (30% increase).
- According to the Religious Conference Management Association, in 2006 more than 14.7 million people attended religious meetings (RCMA members), an increase of more than 10 million from 1994 with 4.4 million attendees.
- The United Methodist Church experienced an increase of 455% in mission volunteers from 1992 with almost 20,000 volunteers compared to 110,000 volunteers in 2006.
- The Christian Camp and Conference Association states that more than eight million people are involved in CCCA member camps and conferences, including more than 120,000 churches.
- Religious attractions including Sight & Sound Theatre attracts 800,000 visitors a year while the Holy Land Experience and Focus on the Family Welcome Center each receives about 250,000 guests annually.
- 50,000 churches in the United States with religious travel programs
- One-quarter (25%) of travelers said they were currently interested in taking a spiritual vacation.

1.7 RELIGIOUS TOURISM AND PILGRIMAGE IN INDIA

In India, it is a duty for a Hindu, Jain or Buddhist to go on a pilgrimage in order to earn religious merit for themselves and their families and friends. Visiting India is like getting in touch with an extra sense. The country is not only a place full of religious sites but also spirituality. Even regular visits to places such as Agra, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur where fabulous castles, forts and palaces come in abundance would melt every visitor's heart. Religious sites are often connected with births, deaths and other important events, like Shravanbelgola, a very important religious monument in South India. Bahubali is another popular monument visited by thousands of tourists everyday, and there are thousands of such sites in India.
A traditional Hindu family would visit Dhams situated in all four directions which were established by a Gura born in the 8th century AD. In the old days, it used to take several months to reach Badridham, which is located in the high Himalaya, from the foot of the hills called Rishikesh. The religious zeal of the people carries on. These religious tourists stay at appointed places for relaxation and rest. Such journeys are often considered pilgrimages/family vacations and everyone in the family will try their best to make it. Foreigners like to travel in groups to India too. They visit sites connected with the Buddha, like Kushinagan, Sarnah, Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Sanchic. These visitors are from all over the world, for instance, Japan, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. Important festivals are also major attractions for tourists, for example, Dussehra. Dussehra is celebrated in every city and village in India. The one in Kulu in which a statue of the deity is taken out in a procession is a very special occasion and it draws visitors from the entire Himalaya region. The Elephant procession in the temple of Trichur in Kerala is another such occasion. It is not just about religion, but relaxation and entertainment as well. In India all rivers are considered sacred. They believe a dip in any river would bring merit and salvation to the
person. The government and state governments of India are raising funds for and providing assistance in the establishment of hotels for heritage-visitors. And there are also churches in places like Goa, Bombay and New Delhi which are also great tourist attractions. Religious tourism is a very important segment in India, and it is not only for the rich but also the poor who travel to fulfill traditional religious obligations.

PHOTO 1.4
BUDDHIST DEVOTEES IN A MONASTRY

The political, cultural, and social significance of travel by Muslims for religious purposes in, and from Asia, is of vital importance when one sees that five countries in the region have the following populations professing the Islamic faith: Indonesia: 203 million; Pakistan: 174 million; India: 161 million; Bangladesh: 145 million; and Iran: 74 million. Moreover it is incumbent on Muslims who have the means and the ability to perform the Hajj at least once in their lifetime. This along with the Umrah or the ‘lesser pilgrimage’ constitutes an act of religious tourism that is unparalleled in other religions. The importance of Ziyarat (visiting sacred sites) also makes travel an integral part of the Muslim psyche. Ziyarat is of special significance for domestic travel especially in Indonesia. While elaborating on some of the principle Islamic tenets, attention is drawn to customs and practices such as food habits (Halal food), the preponderant role of modesty that can influence social mingling and dress codes etc all of which influence religious travel and marketing of products to attract Islamic travellers.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Religious Tourism: Respect of the Sacred

Religious tourism that calls for socially responsible actions by "respecting the sacred" and through "stewardship of sacred sites". The involvement of local communities is as important as the discerned visitor in protecting and preserving the religious/cultural sites, events and pilgrimages that form the base of religious tourism. Good governance can guaranty the long term future of these 'products' that should not be viewed merely as a source to generate revenue but also as services where participation and care of the communities are vitally important.

The analysis involves concepts such as: rural tourism, pilgrimage, religion, culture, consumption need, terms developed during years of observations and theoretical and practical advances. Joining two such complex notions in order to obtain the third - "religious rural tourism" - requires a phenomenological qualitative analysis as part of a dominantly comprehensive outlook. With this end in view, we evaluate the importance of numerous interactions and associations on the basis of the relation between religious destination and the tourist's consumption motivation. These concepts, apparently not convergent, require more profound and systematic boundaries in order to give the chance to a sustainable development.

The notion of tourism developed from the initial identification of both motivation and destination. The concept of religious tourism was explained by stressing the major difference in respect to other types of tourism, i.e. the spiritual motivation. We do not consider the association between religious motivation and tourism activities sufficient in order to determine the concept of religious tourism. This mere association generates a frequently met confusion between religious tourism and pilgrimage. We shall now demarcate several specific elements of pilgrimage as a form of travel that are relevant to our argumentation. There exists a motivation of travel and it is profoundly religious, destination - religious one. The activities in which the pilgrim voluntarily engages have religious significance (ceremonies, current activities, penance). The quality of services is not regulated and depends on the local offer from the religious or public administrations. Spending 24 hours does not necessarily mean accommodation in tourism structures; the accommodation is usually freely offered or the quality and the price are both very low. Means of transportation - quality is not necessarily a criterion in selecting them. Generally, religious tourism is a mix between elements of religious attraction, general tourism motivation, and transportation. In the practice of tourism agencies, the management exploits both dimension of the potential client, that of pilgrim and that of tourist, and the delimitation is not conceptualized at the
level of tourism product (transportation, board and lodging, complementary activities etc. To render complete the concept of religious tourism, we focus upon other significant aspects, the destination is rural, in a religiously meaningful place and the activities involved go beyond the usual or routine ones, it involves travelling, the accommodation at the destination place is for at least one night.

1.8 RELIGION AND SPIRITUAL INCLINATION

This is especially so since contemporary social processes of globalization and localization, which compete with religions as forces for harmony, as well as their paradoxical products — disharmony, discord and conflict — are necessary in any assessment of religious tourism, its impacts and potential. Tourism is spiritually inclined or favourably disposed towards the values of different cultures and is sensitive towards, and cognizant of, differences, has an important role to play in creating social solidarity at various levels, and hence is crucial in the maintenance of existing social structures and creation of organization and structure where none existed before. There is need to look at religious tourism, spiritual tourism, and the philosophies of all the major (and some of the minor) religions with respect to traditional, modernizing, and modern societies, and underscores that despite negative factors and forces like terrorism, racism, economic recession and possible self-imposed limitations on travel due to concern for climate change, tourism is and can be a greater force for peace than envisaged by those who think of it as merely a ritual.

There are some practical aspects of religious tourism, such as economic and political benefits and mutual understanding. Religion has an enormous influence in the daily life of Asians and the four major religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity all play a major role in South-East Asian society. Invariably, religious tourism in the region is closely linked to these faiths. Religions have inspired the construction of some of the most spectacular monuments in the region and all forms of art and architecture find expression in them. However, religious tourism has not been fully exploited due to the high sensitivity of the subject, the lack of scientific data and its overwhelming domestic nature. Varanasi in India is a famous Hindu holy city, located at the banks of the Ganges River. It is, however, often called the "City of Temples," where almost every road crossing has a nearby temple. A center of pilgrimage (as many as a million pilgrims visit Varanasi each year), the city has links to Buddhism and Jainism as well.
In ancient Greece, sages built an Earth Goddess shrine at Delphi because of the abundance of *plenum*, an energy they believed bubbled out of the slopes of Mount Parnassus. In the Chinese tradition there is a similar life force called *chi*. Sufis call it *baraka* and Hindus know it as *prana*. If this invisible energy seems fanciful to you, don't forget that is how people felt about radio waves a mere 100 years ago. Perhaps 21st century establishment scientists will verify earth energies, but regardless of official endorsement, many travelers are creating their vacations around visiting places of power and spirituality.

From ancient stone circles and jungle-tangled pyramids to gothic cathedrals and mountaintop shrines, sacred places attract us with a mysterious power. Since the beginning of time, people have visited sacred sites for healing, inspiration and guidance. Mainstream western scientists may scoff at suggestions that water from holy wells can cure illnesses or that ancient megaliths can deliver messages from the spirit world, but the concept of powerful places has been known to many cultures for thousands of years. The oldest known pilgrimage site is Mount Kailash in Tibet, which has been a holy travel destination for an incomprehensible 15,000 years. Walking the 32-mile trail around Kailash takes about three days, at altitudes as high as 18,000 feet. Buddhists say the ritual circumambulation erases the sins of one lifetime, and 108 times around the mountain will enable you to reach Nirvana.
Christian Pilgrimage

The first Christian pilgrim was Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, who toured the Holy Land in 326 C.E. and identified (not necessarily accurately) many of the sites associated with Jesus. In medieval times, the tradition of Christian pilgrimages really took hold, with Jerusalem the ultimate destination. Pilgrims who couldn't manage or afford the long voyage could still do penance or seek cures by visiting European shrines devoted to various saints. Canterbury Cathedral, dedicated to Saint Thomas, was England's most popular pilgrimage site, as described in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written in the 14th century. In northern Spain, Santiago de Compostela, with the cathedral said to contain the bones of Jesus' disciple St. James, was second in popularity only to Rome as Europe's most-visited pilgrimage destination of the Middle Ages. South America's most famous sacred site, Machu Picchu, is a mountaintop citadel about 60 miles northwest of Cusco, Peru. There are several hundred stone buildings, built on terraces and connected by a maze of stone steps and pathways. Enhanced by the dramatic natural surroundings, the atmosphere of Machu Picchu is as holy and inspirational as any cathedral. Some buildings, such as the Temple of Three Windows, are made from enormous stone blocks weighing up to thirty tons and fitted together without mortar. It is utterly mind-boggling to consider how such construction could have been accomplished by a supposedly "primitive" culture, many believe to be pre-Incan by thousands of years. Today you don't have to leave North America to find places known
for miracles. In Chimayo, New Mexico there is an adobe chapel where 2,000 believers congregate each Good Friday, and 300,000 pilgrims are drawn annually.

PHOTO 1.7
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

In a small room at the back of the chapel, known as the "Room of Miracles," is a hole in the floor through which people scoop out sand, said to have curative properties. The walls of the room are lined with hundreds of letters and pictures from visitors thankful for the healing they say they received.

Sedona, Arizona has also been a pilgrimage destination from prehistoric times to the present day. Not only the local Hopi and Navajo, but natives from as far as Canada and Central America journeyed there for healing and learning long before Europeans invaded North America. The area's dramatically-shaped red sandstone rocks are said to emit powerful energy partly because of their high concentration of magnetic iron. Sedona was settled by aboriginals from the four sacred directions: Apache from the East, the ancestors of the Hopi from the South, Yavapai from the West and Athabascans from the North. This seems to be the way with many pilgrimage sites. They are first identified as places of natural earth energy, then, in time, the land is developed by adding monoliths, stone circles, shrines, cathedrals etc. Over the centuries, as people gathered to celebrate or worship at the places, they add their own human energies.
1.9 PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

Pilgrimage tourism may be one of the earliest and most important forms of tourism. Faith based tourism exists throughout the world, from India to Mexico, from Israel to Saudi Arabia. From Biblical times pilgrimages have not only been calls to spirituality but also major economic drivers that impact not only the soul but also the pocketbook. The Bible speaks of ascending to Jerusalem at least three times a year for each of the Biblical harvest festivals. Likewise the Islamic world is famous for the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca. For many millennia people have made pilgrimages to cities, shrines, rivers, mountains. Cities around the world have developed religious tourism not only at their main centers but also in places where miracles have been reported such as in Fatima in Portugal and Lourdes in France. Furthermore, while pilgrimages are usually associated with religious events or locations, they may also come in the form of visits to places where political events have occurred, burial sites of political leaders, or famous monuments. For example, during the Communist period of Russian history there, millions of people made a pilgrimage to Lenin’s tomb and in the USA millions visit the monuments that punctuate Washington, DC. Pilgrimage tourism in many ways parallels other forms of event tourism. Amarnath cave in Jammu and Kashmir is very popular pilgrimage for the Hindu travellers for many years.

PHOTO 1.8

DEVOTEES ON THE WAY TO AMARNATH PILGRIMAGE
While some form of spirituality, wish for divine healing or thankfulness inspires the trip, in many ways these pilgrimages also reflect many of the characteristics of other forms of tourism venues. A visitor to any of these religious sites will quickly note that in the modern world of pilgrimage tourism (and from what we can learn from ancient texts, also in the ancient world) the places produce secondary industries. Be these, the souvenir industry or the lodging industry, a series of dependent industries quickly develop around the site. Secondly, just as in some many other forms of tourism, the visitor (pilgrim) must be a believer in the narrative. Thirdly there is a difference between a pilgrimage, whose primary basis is faith-oriented, and a trip in which the person’s primary purpose is other then the spiritual narrative. These people may be classified as pilgrimage based tourism but they are not spiritual pilgrims. Thus, entering into the world of religious pilgrimage sites is an exercise in spiritual emotion rather than cognition. While all pilgrimages are faith-based travel, not all faith-based tourism is pilgrimages. Faith based travel may take place for life cycle events, for missionary work or humanitarian interest projects and for religious conventions and conclaves. Although from a social psychology viewpoint pilgrimages are based on emotion, faith-based tourism is big business. To help you deal with this growing travel trend. Here are some essentials to help the busy travel and tourism professional.

Religious tourism is motivated by faith or religious reasons has been in evidence for centuries. In more recent times, however, it has been suggested that modern tourism has become the functional and symbolic equivalent of more traditional religious practices, such as festivals and pilgrimages. In other words, it is claimed by some that tourism is a sacred journey. To date, however, little work has been undertaken to explore this position; the purpose of this paper, therefore, is to contribute to this debate. It has long been recognised that a variable relationship exists between the institutions of religion and tourism. On the one hand, religious tourism may be identified as a specific type of tourism ‘whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons. Tourism is functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives’; it may be understood either as a regular secular ritual (the annual vacation) that acts as a counterpoint to everyday life and work or as a more specific rite of passage or ‘personal transition’ undertaken at particular junctions in peoples’ lives. In either case, however, it can be argued that tourism is ‘the modern equivalent of festivals and pilgrimages found in more traditional, God-fearing societies’. Thus, the varying relationship between tourism and religion may be conceptualized as a continuum based upon the degree of intensity of religious motivation inherent in people. At one extreme lies sacred pilgrimage, a
journey driven by faith, religion and spiritual fulfillment; at the other extreme lies the secular tourist who may seek to satisfy some personal or spiritual need through tourism. Between these two points can be found different forms/intensities of religious tourism motivated to a greater or lesser extent by religious or, conversely, cultural or knowledge-based needs.

**Academia and Public Attention of religious tourism**

Religious tourism is an ancient phenomenon that has received considerable attention in both academia and the public at large recently. Over the last two decades, it has substantially increased in number, with various purposes including enhancing local culture, tradition, rituals and history, providing means for preservation of sacred places and contributing to the local economy by stimulating both international and domestic tourism. Despite the increasing popularity of religious tourism, little research has been conducted on the motivations of tourists which have a profound impact on the marketing and promotion of India as a religious destination globally. India’s tourism potential, despite a wealth of natural and cultural resources, has not been fully tapped and its performance compared to later entrants like China and Thailand into the world tourism market is poor. There is wealth of cultural heritage, the backbone of religious tours, bestowed by the interplay of major religious faiths, three of which - Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism – were born in India.

Most of all outbound tourist traffic from Asia remains within the Asia and Pacific region itself, while the second, highlighted the importance of seeing religion in the perspective of a rapprochement of different civilizations in a world more and more embittered by strife and insecurity. Major religions and religious philosophies of the world ranging from Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism, have their roots in Asia. Furthermore, these religions have their own offshoots giving rise to a multitude of other religious denominations. In the wake of human movement either through conquests or by trade and travel, the divine and philosophical messages have spread far and wide throughout Asia.

The UNWTO estimates that 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world’s key religious sites each year. The Asia and Pacific region is blessed not only with religious sites but also because it forms the hub of pilgrim centres, religious festivals, and other related cultural activities of a religious nature. The political, cultural, social and economic significance of travel for religious purposes is an important element in the fabric of the Asian society that has not been fully researched nor clearly understood, hence UNWTO sponsored this study to establish a clear-cut picture of religious tourism in, and from, Asia and the Pacific. The geographical extent of Asia is vast and it is not possible to include all the countries that
constitute it in a study of this nature. Furthermore, Asia falls under the purview of different departments of UNWTO to which countries are assigned according to their geographical distribution: The present study is confined to member states of the Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and the Commission for South Asia (CSA).

Practically all Asian archaeological monuments have some connotation to religion and form the backbone of tourist circuits. Therefore, it is difficult to differentiate between the cultural and the religious tourist. As with the Tourism Satellite Accounts there is a need for more and precise information on religious tourism as opposed to cultural tourism. The study has clearly identified areas of interest that appeal to the religious aspects of travel and it is left to the administrators and the travel professionals to glean this information as accurate and universally applicable data are indispensable for marketing and promotions. While the information provided by the various contributors on marketing of religious tourism in Asia and the Pacific in the publication will be mutually beneficial to all Commission for East Asia and the Pacific (CAP) and Commission for South Asia (CSA) members States, UNWTO’s ultimate goal is to develop guidelines for best practices in religious tourism in the region, based on the results from all phases of the study.

Religious tourism is not one type of tourism, as is the case of secular tourism and describes two different types of religious tourism, a tourism performed through a religious duty, and tourism where the knowledge is recorded and quoted for wider dissemination. Should the aim of religious tourism be to obtain the Blessings of God, it would achieve another objective, and that is to attract tourists. Religious tourism is an internationally expanding phenomenon and conceptually, practice greatly exceeded both theoretical advances and practical regulations. In this field, practice is far more developed than the theoretical approaches. There are also some reservations in using the term religious tourism especially because of the connotations associated to this notion by tourism companies and also because of the way in which they structure their service packages.

There is an important aspect of these demarcations is the one between religion and culture. We intend an epistemological approach of these notions, but first of all some specifications are needed. Even if including the religious element into the explanation of the concept of culture entails the need to treat religious tourism as subsidiary to cultural tourism, the practical way of its manifestation requires a separate approach. It is obvious that sometimes we cannot make a major distinction between the elements, i.e. when we visit religious sites and holy places etc., historical and cultural heritage. Thus the motivations of some consumers are complementary to each another. From this point of view, Cohen
proposes a classification according to the way of spending the free time: tourists interested in existential problems; tourists interested in new experiences/knowledge; tourists interested in relaxation/entertainment. Pavicec, following Smith, makes a parallel between two opposite categories: tourist and pilgrim on one hand, the sacred and the profane on the other hand.

1.10 RELIGIOUS TOURISM-WAYS OF MANIFESTATION

The religious tourism can be classified as follows:

1. **Domestic religious tourism:** The residents of a country visit their own country.
2. **Inbound religious tourism:** The non-residents of a country visit another country (different from their own).
3. **Outbound religious tourism:** The residents of a country visit another country.

Another three forms of tourism can be associated to the above ones:

1. **Internal religious tourism** - it comprises domestic tourism and inbound tourism.
2. **National religious tourism** - it comprises internal tourism and outbound tourism.
3. **International religious tourism** - it comprises inbound tourism and outbound tourism.

Starting from the notion of religious cultural tourism, there are two types of travels:

1. **Monofunctional travel** - its sole purpose is religious and here we mention the religious travels undertaken during ceremonies dedicated to a certain religious act, religious sites with miracle-working icons, etc. Here the tourist is similar to the pilgrim.
2. **Plurifunctional travel** - it combines the religious purpose with the cultural one and thus the number of sites to be visited is very large.

According to the nature of the religious beliefs, we can identify:

**Christian tourism**

It can be grouped into the following categories

1. Orthodox tourism
2. Catholic tourism
3. Protestant tourism
4. Hindu tourism
5. Judaic tourism
6. Islamic tourism etc.

According to the periodicity of tourist flows:

a. **Seasonal religious tourism:** It depends on the main events, ceremonies, festivals
b. **Weekly religious tourism**: Especially on weekends such as Sunday for Christians, Sabbath for Jews etc.

c. **Random religious tourism**: It depends on leisure time, occasional spiritual motivation, financial responsibility.

According to the number of tourists and the method of organization: Organized or mass religious tourism; Micro tourism or semiorganized into small groups and at private initiatives and individual religious tourism.

As regards Orthodox religious tourism, some essential elements can be detailed (Alecu, 2003):

1. Occasional religious tourism
2. Exceptional religious tourism

1. **Occasional religious tourism** involves travelling to monasteries, hermitages and monasteries near the emittent localities. Main monasteries/metropolitan churches in the region. Main characteristics of occasional religious tourism: it is designed to fulfil specific religious duties. Generally, the tourists do not stay for the night, except for the large monasteries. It is intensely personal and the expenses with other touristic services are occasional and tourists usually travel in small groups and use their own means of transportation.

2. **Exceptional religious tourism** is occasionated by important religious events and it can be grouped into the following recipient destinations such as church in the village or hermitages and monasteries of less importance near rural localities as well as in important monasteries or cathedrals/metropolitan churches in the area.

Exceptional religious tourism has the following characteristics:

a) It is generated by the great religious events.
b) It becomes a mass phenomenon in the case of pilgrimage to important monasteries.
c) Tourists stay for the night.
d) On the occasion of undertaking pilgrimage to village churches, tourists also visit their relatives.
e) It generates expenses due to other touristic or complementary services as well.
f) Tourists mostly use public transport.
g) Travelling groups are larger.
h) It requires special preparations from the part of organizers.
i) It is time- and space-limited, which allows the organizers to anticipate and prepare it.
1.11 INDIA AND RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Domestic tourism in India is more than 300 million; major portion of domestic tourism is religious tourism in our country. Four out of six major religions of world originated in India, this can be termed as unique speciality of our country. This all created a lot of influence on the people of our country to be more religious and devoted towards culture and customs, rituals and also to take part in the religious activities and visit religious places/sacred places. Religion is "dharma" in Hindu philosophy. For Indian, religion means way of life, life of people. Whereas religion in the western society is more concerned with life as an optimistic, religious tourism as a one term signify people “who visit destination other than their usual destination for the purpose of offerings, blessing, devotional attitude, performing rituals, and seeking peace of mind by visiting temples, mosque, church, monasteries, religious place, shrine, etc. In India religious tourism contributes major portion of domestic tourism. Indian mythology plays a dominant role in the lifestyle of the people, which make religious sites more important to the people. From Indus valley civilization to Vedic period and in the modern era religion it is a key for the people, origin of the four religious beliefs is from India.

India’s main religion, Hinduism is practised by approximately 82% of the population. Along with Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism, it is one of the world’s oldest extant religion, with roots extending beyond 1000 BC. Islam is India’s largest minority religion; around 12% of total population is Muslim. Islam was introduced to northern India by invading armies and to the south by Arab traders. Christian comprise around 2.3% of the population, with around 75% living in South India, while the Sikhs – estimated at around 1.9% of the population – are mostly found in the northern state of Punjab. Around .76% of the population is Buddhist, with Bodhgaya (Bihar) being a major pilgrimage destination. Jainism is followed by about 0.4% of the population, with the majority of Jains living in Gujarat and Mumbai. Parsis, adherents of Zoroastrianism, number roughly 90,000. Historically Parsis settled in Gujarat and became farmer, however, during British rule they moved into commerce, forming a prosperous community in Mumbai. There are believed to be less than 17,000 Jews left in India, many of whom live in South India. Tribal religions have so merged with Hinduism and other mainstream religions that very few are now clearly identifiable. It’s believed that some basic tenets of Hinduism may have originated in tribal culture.
Religious tourism has a different mode, each community, ethnic group at the ground level different form each other. They have their own way of worship and sacred beliefs. Hinduism is different from other religious side by side there is difference in the beliefs of Hindus among themselves. When we talk about religious tourism it means people who travel for religious urge, so better to call them religious tourist. Before evaluating the potential and prospect of religious tourism in India, we have to identify the religious sites which are primary need to satisfy urge a religious tourist. We can differentiate these sites on the religion basis.

**Hinduism:** Hinduism has no founder, central authority or hierarchy and isn’t proselytising religion. Source of religion is some text and this text fall into two categories: those believed to be the words of god (*Shruti*, meaning heard) and those produced by people (*Smriti*, meaning remembered). The Vedas are regarded as *Shruti* knowledge and are considered the authoritative basis for Hinduism. The oldest of the Vedic texts, the Rigveda, was compiled over 3000 years ago. Upanishads are considered as the later part of Vedas. The *Smriti* texts comprise a large collection of literature spanning many centuries and include expositions on the proper performance of domestic ceremonies as well as proper pursuit of Government, economics and religious law. Among its better known works are the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Puranas, which expand on the epics and promote the notion of the Trimurti. All places related with the legends in *Puranas* are considered to be sacred and visit to these places is recommended for Hindus.

**PHOTO 1.9**

**PILGRIMS AT THE GHATS OF GANGES**
Buddhism

Buddhism arose in the 6th century BC as a reaction against the strictures of Brahminical Hinduism. Gautam Buddha was the founder of Buddhism and its eight-fold path. Buddhism is divided into mainly two sects “Hinayana” and Mahayana. Third one is Bajrayana which is followed by the people of Himalaya as Lamas in Buddhism give a message of abstaining from luxury, worldly things and harm to anybody. People every year visit places, which are related with the life time of Gautam Buddha. These places are Sarnath, Sanchi, Bodhgaya, Vaishali, Rajgir, Nalanda etc. These places are coined as Buddhist circuits and Buddhist devotees visit all these places. There are other places like monasteries throughout India where Buddhist monks reside and meditate.

Sikhism

Guru Nanak Dev was the founder of Sikh religion in the 15th century. Last the tenth Guru Govind Singh transformed Sikh community to a warrior class in 1699. Guru Granth Sahib is a compilation of devotion and message conveying thought of Gurus, Saints, and sacred books. Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, Patna, Manikaran are some of the important centres of Sikhism.

PHOTO 1.10
PILGRIM IN GOLDENT TEMPLE, AMRITSAR
Islam

Islam was founded in Arabia by the Prophet Mohammed in the 7th century AD. The Arabic term islam means to surrender, and believers (Muslims) undertake to surrender to the will of Allah (God). In India islam was brought by invaders like Mohammad Gauri and Indian population gradually shifted towards the Islam due to social and autocratic reasons. Most of the raids by foreign invaders aim at to loot wealth and propagate islam. Every invader try to influence people. Quran is the sacred book and Mosque is a place of worship for Muslims. In India there are several mosques and other holy places of Muslims like Jama Masjid (Delhi, Agra, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bijapur, Fatehpur Sikri, Junagarh, Mandu, Srinagar), Ajmer, Mumbai, Srinagar etc.

Christianity

Christianity is said to have arrived in South India with St Thomas the Apostle in AD 52. However, scholars say it's more likely Christianity arrived around the 4th century with Syrian merchant, Thomas Cana, who set out for Kerala with 400 families. Catholicism established a strong presence in South India in the wake of Vasco-de-Gama’s visit in 1498. People from West showed their keen interest in Asian countries, which leads to presence of Christianity in India. French, Portuguese, Dutch and British influence the Indian culture and society. Inculcation of Christianity by the missionaries leads to change of religion by many devoted Hindus. All over India there are leading and fine structure of churches. Especially in Goa, Kerala, and some in north India like Shimla, Dharmshala, Dalhousie etc.

Jainism

Jainism spread mostly during the time of Mahavir Jain, who was 24th Tirthankar of Jainism. Jainism like Buddhism put pressure on renunciation and salvation attain from luxury and give up worldly things. Even clothing is prohibited by some religious leaders. There are several places in India which are important for Jain people. Jain temples are known for their architecture styles. Dilwara temples, Ranakpur, in Rajasthan are devoted to Jain, which is one of the most important sites for the Jain followers. Other places are Sravanbelagola, Pawapuri and Nalanda (Bihar), Parasnath (Jharkhand) etc.

Religious Activities and Pilgrims

Religious activities are undertaken by religious pilgrims, devoted Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Jews visit their respected religious places in search of peace, salvation and renunciation. Every religion has its beliefs and myths which compel the followers to act accordingly on the auspicious occasion, as during navratras (nine holy nights) Hindu people perform fast and devout towards almighty, on the other hand Muslim
community abstain from eating and even drinking water at day time during the mouth of Ramzan (Roza).

Indian domestic tourism is mostly dominated by religious tourism. As a developing economy contribution of leisure tourism is not much as in developed countries. Being the centre and hub of four religions of the world, Indian contribution to the world religious tourism is also vital. There are important points that we have to consider while analysing the importance of religious tourism.

1. Religious tourism is key part of Indian domestic tourism.
2. It helps in economic development of the country by way of movement of people.
3. Religious tourism helps in National and International integration and cooperation among different ethnic group.
4. Religious tourism helps in preservation of culture and our built heritage.
5. Religious tourism helps to earn foreign exchange by way of visit by NRI’s and foreigners to religious centres.
6. Religious tourism helps people to seek peace, sanctity, salvation, contentment, among them and built a model character by following ideal thoughts groups.

Religion as earlier discussed is a way of life, approach, spiritual power to support in wreaked hours. So people through out prefer to be more religious with open minded approach. We expect 21st century human being to be more open with his approach and have international understanding as preached by the different sects. There are most beautiful and world famous circuits in India. Indian tourism should promote these religious circuits, like Buddhist circuit, Char dham, temples of south India, Monasteries in Himalayas, Dargahs or Shrines of Sufi Saints in more innovative way. Side by side more important is infrastructural development at religious places and around of famous Shrines, Temples, Mosque, Monasteries, Churches, so that during the peak seasons they feel as ease with basic amenities, as of Navratras for Hindus, Ramjan for Muslims, X-mas for Christians, Kalchakra for Buddhist.

Religious centres like Varanasi, Rishikesh, shrine of Muin-ud-din-chisti at Ajmer, Golden temple, are centre of cosmopolitan approach and of international understanding among different ethnics. Religious tourism with regard to pilgrims and pilgrimages by the followers of different religion, no doubt is important part of tourism industry especially in India, where every person is follower of one or another religion and have different way of worship even within one religion. There are supposed to be 33 million Gods and Goddesses in Hindu religion alone, which is a major portion of Indian population. Hindu religion has
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INTRODUCTION

thousands of pilgrimage centers and sacred places scattered throughout the country. India being a home of major centre for Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Hindus, for this government can offer and project religious tourism as its ‘USP’ (Unique Selling Preposition) for domestic and international market of tourism industry.

India’s main religion, Hinduism is practiced by approximately 82% of the population. Along with Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism, it is one of the world’s oldest extant religion, with roots extending beyond 1000 BC. Islam is India’s largest minority religion; around 12% of total population is Muslim. Islam was introduced to northern India by invading armies and to the south by Arab traders. Christian comprise around 2.3% of the population, with around 75% living in South India, while the Sikhs – estimated at around 1.9% of the population – are mostly found in the northern state of Punjab. Around .76% of the population is Buddhist, with Bodhgaya (Bihar) being a major pilgrimage destination. Jainism is followed by about 0.4% of the population, with the majority of Jains living in Gujarat and Mumbai. Parsis, adherents of Zoroastrianism, number roughly 90,000. Historically Parsis settled in Gujarat and became farmer, however, during British rule they moved into commerce, forming a prosperous community in Mumbai. There are believed to be less than 17,000 Jews left in India, many of whom live in South India. Tribal religions have so merged with Hinduism and other mainstream religions that very few are now clearly identifiable. It’s believed that some basic tenets of Hinduism may have originated in tribal culture.

The Volume of Religious Tourism in India

Religious tourism has emerged as a booming market in India. A study by the Delhi based National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) shows that of the 230 million tourist trips undertaken in India, the largest proportion is made up of religious pilgrimages. Such journeys, which are undertaken by both rural and urban Indians, outnumber leisure holidays in hill stations, getaways to sea beaches and even trips to metropolitan cities. The research also shows that of all the package tours organised in India, religious trips accounted for 50 per cent, much higher than leisure tour packages at 28 per cent. For instance, 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. To manage such a large number of people, infrastructure has been beefed up by religious trusts, state governments, private chains and the central government. The management committee of the Golden Temple -- the holiest Sikh shrine -- in the city of
Amritsar in Punjab offers online booking for accommodation around the temple complex. Japan’s Nikko Hotels has lined up a series of hotels along the Buddhist circuit in east India, while Indian Tourism Development Corporation has upgraded its facility at Bodh Gaya, the place where Lord Buddha first meditated. To control crowds, Tirupati has a close circuit network to ensure security. Also to streamline crowd flow, devotees have to strap on the mandatory white electronically checked bands on their right wrists.

1.12 OTHER TOUCHES IN INDIAN RELIGIOUS TOURISM

For a number of foreigners, of course, especially those from across Asia, India is the land of Buddha – land that spreads over modern day Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in north India. Buddhist pilgrims from Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka and recently, China throng these two states at any point of time in the year. They visit the banyan tree at Bodhgaya under which Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. They visit Sarnath, where Buddha gave his first sermon, and Kushinagar where he attained salvation. The ruins of Nalanda, where Buddha taught, and Vaishali, where he preached his last sermon are also considered key hubs of the Buddhist pilgrim circuit.

There are no official statistics on the number of foreign Buddhist pilgrims visiting India, but industry sources believe that more than 2 million Buddhist pilgrims have been visiting India every year, considering that 84 per cent of Japan’s population is Buddhist; 95 per cent of Thailand is Buddhist; 47 per cent of Korea is Buddhist and with Buddhism being the dominating religion in China, there is clear evidence many people from the People’s Republic would like to visit India. In fact, visitors from Chinese servers to the ‘Incredible India’ website have outpaced those from India by nearly 150 per cent.

Data at Grey India Worldwide, the tourism ministry’s promotion agency, showed that 64.63 per cent of all Asian browsers in March this year were from China. Even though not all these surfers will visit India, and of those who actually do, not all will come for religious reasons, there is no doubt that a religious pilgrimage could eventually be a big draw in China, if marketed properly.

The potential of religious tourism market in India has already been realised. The priority now is to nurture and develop this market so that more value can be extracted. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has recommended that the new government should identify 25 domestic tourist sites and spend up to US$ 22 million in each site to develop infrastructure. It would be a small but important step towards bringing Indian culture to the 21st century.
Religious Tourism - India’s Very Unique Selling Proposition

The international tourism market is no longer about “one shoe fitting all.” It is divided into specialized segments ranging from shopping to adventure sports and from animal safaris to nightlife. Each region of the world is seeking to exploit its strengths. India’s competitive advantage lies in the area of religious tourism because its religious heritage and culture is unique. Religious tourism has a big future in India. India is richly endowed with ancient temples and religious festivals. Religions originating in India, be it Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism or Buddhism, have a vibrant culture and spiritual philosophy. Together, they present a viable, alternative way of life as compared to the materialism and confrontation prevalent in the West. There is a revival of religious attitudes not only in India but the world over. The second and third generations of the Indian diaspora are actively seeking out their roots in religion. The religions of Indian origin are also proving to be an attraction to many persons of non-Indian origin because these religions advocate a pacifist and inclusive approach to life. This is evident from the posts that can be read on the numerous blog sites devoted to religion. And there can be no better way to introduce these aspirants to Indian religions than to entice them to come to India and undertake and experience religious tourism themselves.

Temples and Festivals

Within its distinct segment, religious tourism in India offers a variety to attract different kinds of tourists. In time, it has the potential to become a commercially viable endeavour. To begin with, there are pilgrimages to several world-renowned temples and shrines, such as Tirupati, Vaishno Devi and Sabarimala. For those seeking more enduring pilgrimages, there are the Char Dhams (four holy sites) at the four corners of the country and the twelve Jyotirlingas scattered across the land. But traveling to temples and seeking the blessings of the gods is only one aspect of religious tourism and an aspect that may not interest many. Foreigners to India are fascinated by the gaiety and pomp that marks religious festivals. These can also be made nodal points for promoting religious tourism in India. Some fairs like the Kumbh at Haridwar and Pushkar camel fair already draw significant tourists, but much more can be done. Durga Puja in Kolkata is a spectacle beyond compare. Myriad statues of Kali with her blood soaked tongue and garland of skulls in every nook and corner of the city will enthuse those not accustomed to such crowds. The Rama Lila in the hinterland of Uttar Pradesh is another experience that cannot be had anywhere in the world. The one at Ramnagar goes back two centuries without a break and can be showcased as a historical and social event as well.

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Hindu Religious Tourism Centers In India

The major Hindu religious tourism centres in India are:

1. Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
2. Haridwar, Uttarakhand.
3. Tirupathi Temple, Andhra Pradesh.
4. Akshar Dham, Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat.
8. Kailash Temple, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.
10. Chidambaram Temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.
11. Mahabalipuram Temple, Tamil Nadu.
12. Rameswaram Temple, Tamil Nadu.
17. Guruvar Temple, Guruvayoor, Trichur, Kerala
18. Kodungallor Temple, Trichur, Kerala.
20. Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Trivandrum, Kerala.
22. Kalighat Kali Mandir, Kolkata, West Bengal.
24. Puri Temple, Orissa.

According to the Ministry’s Tourism Satellite Accounts, religious tourism segment contributed almost 20% towards the total domestic tourism consumption and this contribution is likely to increase annually. Such figures, often based on estimates from formal components (such as travel costs, accommodation in registered places, etc.), should be considered only as partial indicators of the volume of religious tourism market. Religious tourism industry is largely centred on devotion-based informal activities in pilgrimage centres. With examples from religious tourism destinations and by examining aspects such as products offered,
services required, major driving forces, organizers and managers, and modes of operation, it
draws attention to the structural differences between two important segments within religious
travel: religious tourism and spiritual tourism. Understanding these differences is necessary to
develop appropriate strategies for sustainable growth of these segments and the overall
religious travel industry.

Summary
Tourism is functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans
use to embellish and add meaning to their lives”, it may be understood either as a regular
secular ritual (the annual vacation) that acts as a counterpoint to everyday life and work or as
a more specific rite of passage or ‘personal transition’ undertaken at particular junctions in
peoples’ lives. The beliefs, motives, and forms of pilgrimage differ from culture to culture,
each fashions its own version. Further, each pilgrim interprets their cultural model of it to
suit their personal circumstances and beliefs. Religious tourism, also commonly referred to
as faith tourism, is a form of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups for
pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious
tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. North American
religious tourists comprise an estimated $10 billion of the industry. Tourism and pilgrimage
have been said to be closely related. The relationship between tourists and the religions and
religious contexts is very important. Why tourists travel to places of religious significance
and how they conceive of their travels are important questions to both the study of tourism
and of religion. One of the key distinguishing factors of pilgrimage is that it is formed out of
the desire for some form of change and the belief that this can be found at the pilgrimage
site. Tourism, by contrast, occupies a functionally and socially different position. At its
simplest, we may think of tourism as ‘sightseeing’. It can be seen that there may be tourists
having similar experiences to pilgrims, and pilgrims who really may be indistinguishable
from tourists. Religion, faith and spirituality are so intertwined that a clear differentiation of
all three aspects are necessary for a deeper understanding of the role of religious tourism in
Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, Buddhism and Hinduism may be considered as philosophical
thought rather than religions and some of the authors have broached this element and called
for a broader definition of ‘religious’ tourism. There is huge potential of religious tourism in
India which needs to get proper attention.
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