Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: PILGRIMAGE TOURISM
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1.1 Introduction

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 2010). 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 (WTTC, 2011). The term tourism connotes different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. There is hardly any single definition to cover all the aspects of the term ‘Tourism’. There are various definitions of tourism which can be placed in the context of their conceptual basics. The particular concern and perspective of each individual theorist has led to the evolution of a number of different definitions for the phenomenon of tourism (Gilbert, 2004). Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines tourism as the business activity connected with providing accommodation, services and entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure (Hornby, 1997).

Tourism means the temporary, short-term movement of people to the destination outside the place where they normally live and work and their activities during their stay at these destinations (Burkart, and Medlik, 1981). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines Tourism as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (www.unwto.org). Jafari(1977) as cited in(Gilbert, 2004)- emphasized knowledge-based approach to the concept of tourism. According to him, tourism is the study of man away from his usual environment, of the industry which responds his needs, and of the impacts that both he and industry have on the hosts’ socio-cultural, economic and physical environment. Tourism is indeed multi-sectoral industry and a truly multidisciplinary field of study (Jafari, 2000). Tourism is multi-sectoral activity characterized by multiple services provided by a range of suppliers. It is an economic sector in India (11th Five Year Plan, GOI, 2008). Tourism is a complex system of supply and demand wherein destinations provide different products and the visitors
desire diverse experiences. Given the diversity of tourism phenomena, scholars have identified many types of tourism such as cultural tourism, adventure tourism, religious tourism, sport tourism, cruise tourism and so on (Timothy and Boyd, 2006). Pilgrimage tourism is one among them, which falls under the umbrella of cultural/heritage tourism.

The reasons why people choose to engage in tourism are diverse and multifaceted (Page, 2007). The motivations for undertaking tourism have been researched extensively by geographers, sociologists and others, including the business community (Griffin, 2007). The reasons may include sightseeing, meeting friends and relatives, pilgrimage, cultural enrichment, health and recreation (Bhatia, 2007). Crompton (1979) identifies nine motives. Seven of them were classified as socio-psychological motives which include escape from a perceived mundane environment; exploration and evaluation of self; relaxation; prestige; regression; enhancement of kinship relationship; and facilitation of social interaction. The remaining two motives were classified as alternate cultural category which covers novelty and education. Socio-psychological motives were found to be unrelated to destination attributes whereas the motives in alternate cultural category were noted to be at least partially aroused by the particular qualities of the destination. Tourism is driven by a wide array of interests such as entertainment, religion, culture, adventure, education, sports, health and business (MOT, Annual Report, 2007-08). People travel for various reasons and the main purpose of travel determines the form of tourism (Sinha, 1998).

The UNWTO definition of tourists recognizes the following categories as characterizing the main purpose of travel: leisure, recreation and holidays, visiting friends and relatives, business and professional (Including for study), health treatment, religion and pilgrimage and sport (MOT, Domestic Tourism Survey 2002-03). Religion has been a dominant motive for travel from the time of early pilgrimages to contemporary journeys to sacred places. Religious buildings, rituals, festivals and ceremonial events are important tourist attractions for those with a casual interest as well as more religious purpose (Henderson, 2003). Simply, travel to the sacred/holy sites with the religious motives is described as pilgrimage, and the sacred/holy site is referred as pilgrimage site. The motivation for visiting pilgrimage centers may range from very pious purpose to simple curiosity and sightseeing (Timothy, 2002; Shackley, 2001). Most religions of the world today endorse or accept
some form of religious travel, and this form of tourism is growing in importance. The sacred sites visited by pilgrims include churches, mosques, temples, grave sites, sacred groves and caves, rivers, mountains, sites of miracles, and locations of divine visitations (Metreveli and Timothy, 2010). Every year millions of people travel to major pilgrimage destinations around the world (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). According to UNWTO (2011), 300 to 330 million tourists visit the world key religious sites each year. Religiously motivated travel has become widespread and popularized in recent decades, occupying an important segment of international tourism (Olsen and Timothy, 2006).

1.2 Pilgrimage: A Conceptual Focus

Pilgrimage refers to any travel that involves a religious experience (Griffin, 2007). Pilgrimage is travel inspired by religious reasons towards holy places which encompasses elements of geographic environment, holy mountains, sites of revelations or the activities of the religious founders, shrines containing relics of saints and so on (Jafar, 2000). Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines Pilgrimage as a journey to a holy place for religious reasons or a journey to a place that is connected with somebody/something that one admires or respect (Hornby, 1997). Pilgrimage is an important aspect of the religious culture world over. The pilgrimage is mentioned in almost all the religious books of the world. The pilgrimage in ancient period was very backbreaking but slowly with the passage of time and with the technological advancement, pilgrimage has become comfortable and joyful as well. The phenomenon of pilgrimage is currently experiencing resurgence throughout the world with longstanding shrines still attracting those in search of spiritual fulfillment (Digance, 2003) Pilgrimage is an established custom in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Judaism, and Christianity. Following are the brief detail of pilgrimage in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Sikhism.

1.2.1 Concept of Pilgrimage in Hinduism

For Hindus, a place of pilgrimage is a Tirtha or Tirthasthan and pilgrim is Tirthyatri. According to Hindu tradition, a Tirtha is a place where one can gain nirvana, true enlightenment and also achieve Moksa i.e. liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death. Gaya(Bihar), Allahabad and Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), are
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places of great religious importance, particularly for death rites. These three places have acquired a group name, Trishali (Davidson & Gitlitz, 2002). Religious scriptures of Hindu encourage travel to holy places. The virtues of pilgrimage have been highlighted in various Hindu religious books viz; Brahmanas, Mahabharata, Puranas etc. The Veda, religious text of Hindus, enjoined that unless a man went on pilgrimage to the four “Dhams” or holy places of the country he would not attain ‘release’ and would therefore continue to suffer rebirth for his sins (Bhatia, 1978, 2007). The four important Hindu Pilgrimage Centers or Dhams in India are Puri (Odisha), Rameshwaram(Tamil Nadu), Dwarka(Gujarat) and Badrinath(Uttarakhand) (Bhatia, 2007). The other important Hindu pilgrimage destinations in India are Varanasi, Paryaga(Allahabad), Mathura, Haridwar, Ayodhya and Kancheepuram (Bharati, 1963). Hindu pilgrims, like pilgrims of other religions, are impelled by a sense of obligation and drawn by the hope of transformation. The push is to fulfill the precepts of the holy texts or oral traditions, to meet one’s obligations to oneself or one’s parents. However, the motives for pilgrimage are diverse such as to ask a specific favor/support of the deity, to fulfill a vow made at a time of stress, to get rid oneself of sins, to introduce one’s children to the obligations and rites of pilgrimages and so on. Some of the shrines are likely to have a reputation of providing for specialized needs, like the relief of barrenness(Baidyanath-dham) or the curing of leprosy(Rajgir and Konark) (Davidson & Gitlitz, 2002). The fundamental aspect of pilgrimages is Darshan i.e the auspicious moment of seeing and being seen by the deity of the holy place.

1.2.2 Concept of Pilgrimage in Buddhism

The religious tradition of Buddhism promotes travelling to the places associated with the life of Lord Buddha. For Buddhism, the visit of the places associated with the key events of Lord Buddha is obligatory. From the very first pilgrimage was central to Buddhist worship. Pilgrimage to four principal sites was endorsed by Lord Buddha and sanctioned by scripture. In later years other sites associated with Gautama’s life also became pilgrimage centers. There are eight places of Buddhist pilgrimages (Davidson & Gitlitz, 2002). Out of these four places are associated with the key events in the life of Buddha and the other four places are associated with the scenes of four principle miracles of Lord Buddha. These places
are Lumbini (Nepal), Bodh-Gaya (Bihar), Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), Kusinagar (Uttar Pradesh), Shravasti (Uttar Pradesh), Sankasia (Uttar Pradesh), Rajgir (Bihar) and Vaishali (Bihar). Out of these eight places, seven are in India and one, the Buddha’s birthplace, Lumbini, is in Nepal. And out of these seven Buddhist pilgrimage places in India, three places viz; Bodh-Gaya, Rajgir and Vaishali are in Bihar. Besides, the above mentioned eight places, many other places rose to prominence during the course of development of the religion. These are sites of important stupas, monasteries etc. and they are also considered sacred by the followers. These places attract the visitors from the different parts of the world. Emperor Asoka on his twentieth regnal year in 249 BC embarked on a holy pilgrimage visiting all these eight places. He built stupas and raised pillars with inscriptions to commemorate his visit to these holy places. These towering monolithic pillars made of polished sandstone and topped with animal capitals have helped to identify the exact locations of the Buddhist world’s most sacred places even after they fell into ruins following the downfall of Buddhism in India. Many of these Asokan pillars still stand as a symbol of his faith and devotion. These pillars are located at Lumbini, (Nepal), Vaishali and Lauriya Nandangarh, (Bihar), Sarnath and Sankasia (Uttar Pradesh). Thereafter succeeding Buddhist kings, queens, nobles and wealthy people followed this landmark journey of King Asoka. As a result, India became studded with Buddhist monuments and shrines (San, 2002).

1.2.3 Concept of Pilgrimage in Jainism

Pilgrimage is a popular activity among Jains (Davidson & Gitlitz, 2002). The followers of Jainism visit the places associated with the life of founder of the Jain religion and other places associated with the 23 Thirthankars. The places associated with conception, birth, penance, attainment of supreme knowledge and salvation of Jain Tirthankars constitute sacred spots for the followers of Jainism. These sacred places are called Teerth or Teerth kshetras. These Teerth are classified into three categories.

- **Nirvana or Siddha Kshetra:** The places of salvation of any Jain Tirthankars or an ascetic saint. The foot prints are installed there to memorize the event. Kailashgiri, Sammed Sikhar, Champapur, Pawapuri and Girinargiri are some of the places associated with the salvation of Jain Tirthankaras.
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- Kalyanaka Kshetra: These are the places associated with the conception, birth, penance and attaining knowledge of Tirthankaras. Hastinapur, Ayodhya etc. are some of the places which fall under Kalyanaka Kshetra.
- Atishya Kshetra: These are the places associated with the miracles or wonderful events. All the sacred places of Jainism other than Nirvana and Kalyanaka kshetra are known as Atishya Kshetra.

In the modern Jain tradition in India, some holy individuals attract pilgrims to their monasteries (Brockman, 1997). Jain pilgrimage sites are located in different parts of India, especially in the north-west and eastern parts of the country.

1.2.4 Concept of Pilgrimage in Islam

Muslim pilgrimages may be divided into two broad categories: obligatory and voluntary. The obligatory pilgrimage in Islam is the Hajj to Mecca (Bhardwaj, 2011). The annual pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj) constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam. “Make the pilgrimage and visit the sacred house for Allah’s sake” (Qur’an 2:196). The pilgrimage to Mecca is conditional and is not applicable to all Muslims until or unless they become financially capable and fulfill other criteria. The voluntary pilgrimage is a tradition of visiting sacred shrines, the graves of saints and imams and the tombs of martyrs of the faith. The practices of visiting these are termed as Ziyarat. Thousands of people visit the tombs and the places of miracle work in India. People visit cutting across religious affiliation to the tombs of Muslim Sufi saints out of devotion and also to make requests and to seek the saint’s blessing. Numerous Khanqahs, shrines, mosques, tombs and mausoleums of the Muslim saints, martyrs, Sufis and other holy personages attest to the popularity of Ziarat in most of the Muslim countries. In spite of the non-obligatory nature of a Ziarat, probably many more people participate in them every year than in the annual Hajj to Mecca (Bhardwaj, 2011). There are “literally thousands of tombs and graves of Muslim Sufi saints throughout northern and central India and Pakistan which are visited by Muslim as well as Hindu pilgrims (Bharati, 1963). An informal hierarchy of levels of pilgrimage centers in Islam ranges from Mecca at the very apex down to locally venerated shrines of holy people (Bhardwaj, 2011).

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1 Retrieved from www.jainteerth.com/about teerth.asp. on 2nd May 2013
1.2.5 Concept of Pilgrimage in Sikhism

Gurudwara is a sacred spot for Sikhs. The literal meaning of Gurudwara is gateway to God. The Gurudwaras associated with historical development of Sikh religion are important centers of Sikh pilgrimage. Unlike Hinduism and Islam, there is no religious obligation for undertaking pilgrimage in Sikh religion. The religious scripture emphasizes on purity of mind rather than physically going to the holy places. The religious scripture of Sikhism asserts that God's name is the only true pilgrimage and pilgrimage is the contemplation on the word that gives inner spiritual light (Guru Granth Sahib: 687 as cited in Jutla, 2002). Contrary to the canon of religious scripture, Sikhs still go on pilgrimage. They visit the places associated with their gurus and historical development of Sikhism. These places of religious importance are scattered in different parts of India and in Pakistan (Jutla, 2002).

1.3 Pilgrimage Tourism: Concept and Evolution

The tourism literature reveals that religion has been one of the motivating factors for travel in the past and continues to be the same in present as well. Religious places are one of the important attractions for tourism across the world. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam all these religions promote travel for religious purposes. Travel provides an opportunity to fulfill one's desire to move away from the routines of life in order to seek changes, such as spiritual, religious or recreational. Such travel, depending on the motivation, the destination and the journey, generally finds expression within the spectrum of two polar types of travels, pilgrimage and tourism (Shinde, 2007). The concept of pilgrimage and tourism are inextricably knotted (Davidson & Gitlitz, 2002). The relationship between tourists and pilgrims has been recognized for several decades by medieval scholars and by tourism historians (Smith, 1992). Researchers from various disciplines explored relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. Today, pilgrimage is defined differently and can be considered as traditional religious journey or modern secular journey (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Development of tourism is hard to understand without a study of religion and the practice of pilgrimage in ancient times (Olsen and Timothy 2006; Vukonic, 2002). The debate on the issue of pilgrimage versus tourism or pilgrim versus tourists can be better understood by analyzing the diverse views of the tourism scholars on similarity and differences between the two. Some researchers advocate
that pilgrims are tourists, whereas some others view that pilgrims are not tourists because pilgrims travel for spiritual reasons, while tourists travel for secular reasons such as curiosity or pleasure (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). The researcher in this study has not touched upon this debatable issue. United Nations World Tourism Organization defines a tourist as people who travel away from their homes for less than a year (Gladstone, 2005) and for the purpose of recreation, pleasure, sport, business, VFR, meeting, religion, conference, mission, health or studies (Gilbert, 2004). The definition of a pilgrim in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary reads: “a person who journeys to a sacred place for religious reasons” (Hornby, 1997). Thus from the definition pilgrim also fits into the definition of a tourist. Olsen and Timothy (2006) comment that motivations and activities undertaken by travelers have little to do with whether a person is a tourist or not. Motivation for travel is not integral to the definition of tourist or the meaning of tourism. From the perspective of tourism, pilgrim and tourist are same because both groups avail the same tourist facilities at pilgrimage destination, such as the local transportation, accommodation and infrastructure. Olsen (2010) comments that pilgrim and tourist dichotomy is an outdated argument and comparing pilgrims and tourists is a fruitless exercise because the meaning of traditional pilgrimage has changed over time. There is no clear difference between a tourist and a pilgrim. “A tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist” (Turner and Turner, 1978).

A Pilgrimage center is a place of religious importance for pilgrims, whereas for tourists it happens to be a place of social, historical and cultural importance (Macanell, 1973). Eade(1992) on the basis of his 22 years observation and interaction with pilgrims and tourists at Lourdes as a volunteer helper, reports that it is not easy to differentiate tourists from pilgrims. Guptas(1999) makes a note that apart from devotional aspects, looked at from the broader point of view, pilgrimage involves sightseeing, travelling, visiting different places and, in some cases, voyaging by air or sea, etc. and buying the local memorabilia. Modern tourism is regarded as one of the newer phenomena in the world whose origin in rooted in pilgrimage (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Tourist facilities and modern amenities available at pilgrimage destinations are being used by both pilgrims and tourists. Both pilgrims and tourists use same modern tourism infrastructure and can undertake journeys only if they have ‘discretionary income, leisure time, and social sanctions permissive of
travel’ (Smith, 1992). They use modern means of transportation, accommodation, 
food and catering facilities. Therefore, religious travelers are recognized as a special 
type of tourist (Vukonic, 2002), and pilgrimage as a form of tourism (Vukonic, 2002; 
Olsen, 2003). Thus, Pilgrim is a tourist who is motivated by religious factors (Olsen 
and Timothy, 2006).

In this era of globalization and modern technology, the phenomena of 
pilgrimage and tourism increasingly overlap, because many people travel with the 
objective of achieving both the recreational and the religious need and there are 
immense difficulties in distinguishing between the two. The resulting form of travel 
does not belong to either of these two discrete categories, yet shows characteristics 
peculiar to them and therefore is described in composite terms such as pilgrimage 
tourism or religious tourism (Shinde, 2007). Religious tourism is that type of tourism 
whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons. 
Religiously motivated tourism is probably as old as religion itself and is consequently 
the oldest type of tourism (Rinschede 1992). Pilgrimage comes under the broad 
banner of religious tourism where the motivation is to visit religious sites or events. 
Pilgrimage tourism is embedded within a complex of heritage/cultural tourism and 
mass tourism activities. What constitutes heritage for one group is conversely a 
religious place or artifact for another (Rotherham, 2007).

In addition to being places of worship for people of a specific faith, many 
sacred spaces are viewed by the larger travelling public as important destinations and 
attractions in their own right because of their historical or aesthetic values (Metreveli 
and Timothy, 2010). Thus, pilgrimage tourism refers to travel of people to pilgrimage 
sites with the purpose of religious or others, and falls under the umbrella of cultural 
tourism, which includes movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations 
such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other 
cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, 
and pilgrimages (Pedersen, 2002). In tourism literature religious or pilgrimage 
tourism is used interchangeably. The researcher does not find unity in the usage of 
term religious tourism or pilgrimage tourism. Although literature indicates that 
pilgrimage is a component of religious tourism, but in practical sense these two terms 
are most often used interchangeably. In context of Indian tourism industry, generally, 
the term pilgrimage tourism is used to describe the travel to pilgrimage centers.
1.4 Pilgrimage Tourism Scenario in India

Pilgrimage tourism is one of the key segments of India’s tourism sector (Sharma, 2013). Tourism literature indicates that pilgrimage as a religious cultural phenomenon has been common to Indian religions. Long before the development of modern tourism, the travelling for religious purposes was a widespread phenomenon in many parts of the world including India (Bhatia, 2007). Travel and tourism has been integral part of Indian tradition and culture. In the bygone era, travel was primarily for pilgrimage. People also travelled to participate in fairs and festivals in different parts of country (Bezbaruah, 1999). The practice of bathing for ritual purification is very old in India and perhaps dates back to the Indus valley civilization. Many rivers are considered sacred in the ancient Vedic tradition. A large number of Hindu sacred places are thus associated with the numerous rivers and sacred lakes and ponds (Bhardwaj, 2011). The practice of ritual bathing is still very popular among Hindus particularly on specific occasions like during Kumbh Mela and Maha Mela(Rajgir). India has variegated tourism resources and presents a kaleidoscopic variety of destinations both for domestic and international tourists. The tourism attraction of India includes historical monuments, places of religious importance, mountain and beach resorts, wildlife and interesting ecosystems, water and winter sports etc. (MOT, 2005). K. Chiranjeevi, the Union Tourism Minister while addressing media during ‘World Travel Market-2012’ in London, said, “Tourists from the world over can find the destination or product of their desire in India, be it heritage sites, forts, beaches, backwaters, lakes, mountains, adventure, wildlife, culture, festivals, medical, wellness, MICE, religion, and shopping. India offers something for everyone and that is why we proudly say that India is an incredible destination with a range of products found nowhere else” (IATO Newsletter, October-December, 2012).

India’s great competitive strength from tourism point of view is its ancient and yet living civilization that gave rise to four of the world’s great religions and philosophies (National Tourism Policy, MOT, 2002). India, being the land of many faiths, is dotted with the pilgrimage centers/sites of different religions. Travel to pilgrimage centers was integral part of Indian culture in the past and continues to be the same in the present day (Bhatia, 2007). As regard the purpose of travel, religion and pilgrimage accounted for 15% of domestic tourism in India (MOT, Domestic
Tourism Survey 2002-03). Domestic tourism in India is mainly pilgrimage related (11th Five Year Plan, GOI, 2008). Pilgrimage sites constitute the major tourist attraction in states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh (FICCI, 2013) and Bihar. The top ten places visited by domestic tourists for the purpose of leisure, holiday, religion and pilgrimage in India are: Tirupati, Puri/Jagannath/Bhuwaneshwar, Vaishno Devi, Bangalore, Haridwar, Delhi, Nainadevi, Mathura, Ajmer Sharif and Amritsar (MOT, Domestic Tourism Survey 2002-03). Out of ten places, eight places happen to be major pilgrimage centers. Rinschende(1992) observes that religious travel offers the only opportunity to travel for people in developing countries where mass tourism is in its incipient stage. This is held true for India as the Domestic Tourism Survey, indicates that travel for religious purpose and pilgrimage formed the most significant component in domestic tourism. The Ministry of Tourism survey shows that 12.24% foreign tourists visited India for religion and pilgrimage, and 25.23% of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) visited India mainly for religion and pilgrimage (MOT, International Passenger Survey 2003). The religious and social visits will remain the biggest reasons for domestic tourism in India (FICCI, 2012). The National Tourism Policy of India outlined that due importance should be given to pilgrimage tourism and it should be so designed that the infrastructure created under it serves as a backbone of international tourism in times to come.

The modern expression of pilgrimage in India is different from its traditional form. This modern expression of pilgrimage is visible in visitors’ behavior and at pilgrimage destinations. This modern type of travel indicates more touristic characteristics, including the changing pattern of visits to sacred destinations, limited engagements of visitors with rituals, commercial organization package tours, novel ways of marketing the destinations and the consumerist behavior of visitors (Shinde, 2007). Although package tours comprise an extremely minute segment (1.7%) of domestic tourism in India, domestic travel with the purpose of religion and pilgrimage accounted for the largest share of domestic package tours (MOT, Domestic Tourism Survey 2002-03). Pilgrimage tourism, along with MICE tourism and Health tourism, has emerged as one of the major tourism products in India. Majority of foreign tourists visiting India are Individual travelers (Primarily Business visitors), religious travelers and medical tourists (FICCI, 2013). The tourists’ traffic in India, both domestic and foreign, has witnessed tremendous growth over the years. This
remarkable growth in tourist arrival may be attributed to several factors such as improved tourism infrastructure at the destinations, better connectivity to different tourist destination, effective marketing and promotion and so on. Millions of foreign as well as domestic tourists visit the pilgrimage centers in India, which also happens to be places of historical, architectural, and cultural importance. The number of foreign tourists’ arrival in India during 2012 was 6.58 million, whereas the number of domestic visit to all states/union territories was 1036 million (MOT, Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2012). Ministry of Tourism has taken several initiatives for the development and promotion of pilgrimage tourism. In the year 2012, India had signed MoU on tourism with ASEAN to promote Buddhist pilgrimage tourism in India (Sharma, 2013). Ministry of Tourism has identified six national circuits (viz; Buddhist circuit, Hindu circuit, Sufi circuit, Jain circuit, and Sikh circuit and Christianity circuit) on the basis of religion across all States and Union Territories except North-East. These circuits are proposed to be developed during the 12th Five Year Plan, in an integrated manner with central financial assistance and appropriate involvement of state governments and private sector (MOT, 2012). Ministry of Tourism is engaged in preparing a catalogue of tourist destinations including pilgrimage destination across the country and the facilities available at such destination. So far details of 243 destinations have been compiled and many more are to be included (Sharma, 2013).

1.5 Pilgrimage Tourism Scenario in Bihar

India is endowed with diverse tourism attractions and each state of India has its own distinct features in terms of tourism attractions. The tourism attractions of Bihar are primarily religious in nature. India is blessed with plenty of well-known pilgrimage destinations wherein Bihar stands to hold its own significant position. Pilgrimage tourism is the strongest sub-sector of Indian tourism and the uniqueness of Bihar lies in being one of the most diverse, multi-religious pilgrimage destinations (MOT Report on Bihar, 2012). From time immemorial, Bihar has been distinguished for its spiritual outlook (Diwakar, 1959). The strength of Bihar tourism emanates from its association with religious personalities whose birth, enlightenment, missionary activities, and death in Bihar sanctified the numerous spots. Lord Buddha attained enlightenment in Bihar and that was the birth of a new religion i.e. Buddhism. Lord Buddha spent his 46 years at different places mostly in Bihar for spreading his
teaching. During the period lord Buddha used to stay at a particular place in rainy season of every year and remaining eight months of the year he travelled from place to place for preaching (Roy, 1974). The 10th Sikh guru, Gobind Singh was born in Bihar and spent his early years in Bihar. Bihar is the birth place of three Jain Tirthankars. There are many Sufi pilgrimage centers in Bihar associated with different orders of Sufism. Many a places in Bihar are believed to have been consecrated by Rama’s presence while he was on the way to Mithila. The Balakanda section of Ramayana records the journey of Rama and his halting places in Bihar (Roy, 1974). Gaya is one of the most important Hindu Pilgrimage Centers in India. Recently in the year 2002, the inclusion of Mahabodhi Temple Complex (Bodhgaya) in the list of world heritage sites brought Bodhgaya on the cultural map of the world.

There are a large number of pilgrimage sites in Bihar associated with Lord Buddha, Jain Tirthankaras, Guru Gobind Singh, Muslim Sufi saints and Rama’s consort Sita and Hindu belief system. The sacred spots like temples, mosques, Dargahs, Caves, kunds, hills and sites of miracles are spread all over Bihar. There are several artificial cave temples or dwellings of the Ashokan and post-Ashokan periods in Bihar. There are three such caves in Barabar hill and three in the Nagarjuna hills in Jahanabad district, and one at Sitamarhi in Nawada district (Bhattacharyya, 1974). The major pilgrimage destinations of Bihar are Bodh-Gaya, Gaya, Nalanda/Rajgir, Pawapuri, Patna and Vaishali. Gaya/Bodhgaya is among ten most popular tourist places in India visited by foreign tourists (MOT, International Passenger Survey 2003), whereas it stands at 45th rank in terms of domestic tourists visit (MOT, Domestic Tourism Survey 2002-03). These pilgrimage attractions of Bihar will be discussed in the third chapter of this study entitled “Pilgrimage Tourism of Bihar: An Overview”.

The pilgrimage sites in Bihar, like elsewhere in the world, attract large number of pilgrims and tourists from different parts of India and the world as well. The tourist inflow in Bihar, both foreign as well as domestic, has experienced an unprecedented growth. The foreign tourist visits has gone up from only 85 thousand in 2001 to approximately 1.9 million in 2012, registering a growth rate of 1180% over the year 2001. The domestic tourists’ visit has also gone up dramatically from 5.9 million in 2001 to 21.4 million in 2012, registering a growth rate of 260% over the year 2001. The growth rate of foreign and domestic tourist visit in the year 2012 over
the year 2011 was 12.8% and 16.5% respectively. The share of Bihar in total foreign
tourist visits in India has continuously improved. In 2006 Bihar ranked 16th in terms
of total foreign tourist visits with its share of 0.72%, whereas in 2012 it ranked 7th
with its share of 5.3% in total foreign tourists visits in India. The number of foreign
tourists in Bihar was greater than that of Goa in 2009 and than that of Kerala in
2012 (MOT, Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2012). The trend shows that Bihar
is heading towards realization of its tourism potential.

1.6 Pilgrimage Tourism: A Boon for the Economy

Tourism is the largest service industry in India and its importance lies in being
an instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in
remote and backward areas (12th Five Year Plan, GOI). Tourism is a multi-dimensional
activity and it encompasses a large number of economic activities. With its backward
and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy, like transport, construction,
handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture, etc., tourism has the potential to
not only be the economy driver, but also become an effective tool for poverty
alleviation and ensuring growth with equity. Tourism is widely seen as an effective
means for achieving economic development in the destination area. Tourism plays a
key role in socio-economic progress through creation of jobs, enterprises, and
infrastructure and revenue earnings. The Planning Commission has identified tourism
as the second largest sector in India in providing employment opportunities to low
skilled workers (MOT, Annual Report, 2011-12). Tourism is an important sector of
the Indian economy contributing 6.8 per cent of the country’s GDP and 10.2 per cent
of employment (MOT, TSA-2009-10). The benefit of tourism is visible in direct
employment in hotels, restaurants, retail establishments and transportation (Kotler,
Bowen and Makens, 2011). Tourist expenditure on accommodation, food and drink,
local transport, entertainment and shopping is an important pillar of the economies of
many destinations, creating much needed employment and opportunities for
development. The employment potential is the highest in the tourism sector as
compared to any other sector. Revenue capital ratio is very high in tourism industry. It
is estimated that an investment of Rs. 1 million creates 47 direct jobs and 11 indirect
jobs, which far surpasses the employment potential from agriculture and industrial
sector (National Tourism Policy, MOT, 2002).
In the modern world, the religious places have become the centers of economic activities. Tourism stimulates the development of hotel industry, transportation facilities, entertainment facilities, souvenir industry and so on. The growth of Tourism at Pilgrimage centers in India has led to the development of infrastructural facilities and related industries that provide services to the visitors at pilgrimage center. The growth of tourism in Bihar has led to development of tourist infrastructure and prompted the building of international airport at Gaya to facilitate the accessibility of tourists from different South East Asian countries. The pilgrimage destinations of Bihar are visited by millions of tourists every year. The continuous flow of tourists creates consistent demand for transportation, accommodation, entertainment, shopping etc. and as a result, it generates revenue for governments and employment opportunities for local people, rickshaw-puller, taxi-driver, hawkers, vendors, guides and photographers. Tourism is the major source of income for the people at various pilgrimage destinations in Bihar. In addition to a large number of hotels and catering units, there are hundreds of shops and stalls of local products, handicrafts and religious articles at the different pilgrimage centers in Bihar. A pilgrimage spot like Sufis’ tombs and temples generates demand for religious articles (e.g. chadars, flowers, sweets, agarbatti etc.). There are a number of restaurants, dhabas, tea stalls, confectionary shops, souvenir shops and others catering the needs of tourists in Bodhigaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, vaishali and other pilgrimage spots in Bihar. At Rajgir, Jain pilgrims avail the facilities of ‘doli’ to be carried out on the top of five hills. This provides source of income for several families at Rajgir.

Thus, pilgrimage tourism offers several benefits to the economy of Bihar and can be instrumental in facilitating the ongoing process of development in Bihar. It can be consistent source of revenue, employment and income to a destination economy. Most important advantage of pilgrimage tourism of Bihar is its multi-religious characteristics. In addition to economic impact, Pilgrimage tourism promotes national unity and integrity and enhances international understanding among different nations. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee\(^2\) said about the importance of tourism as “Tourism is a major engine of economic growth in most parts of the world. Several countries have transformed their economies using the tourism potential to the fullest. Tourism has great capacity to create large scale employment of diverse

\(^2\) Former Prime Minister of India had stated in the Chief Ministers’ Conference held on October  30, 2001 New Delhi.
kind—from the most specialized to the unskilled and all of us know that generation of massive productive employment opportunities is what India needs the most (MOT, National Tourism Policy, 2002)

Summing up the foregoing discussion, this chapter articulates the meaning of tourism and familiarize with the varied motives of the tourists for engaging in tourism activity, significant among them being pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrimage, however, has diversity of concepts to different major religions of India. Travel for religious/pilgrimage purposes forms the most significant component of domestic tourism in India. The state of Bihar which is the focus of this study is endowed with several pilgrimage tourism destinations for major Indian religions and their followers abroad. The state of Bihar is dotted with the pilgrimage sites associated with different religions. Besides, the state has several other tourism spots of ancient historical attraction for the tourists in general. The tourism potential of Bihar favorably impacts the State which has become a star attraction for domestic as well as foreign tourists. The inflow of domestic tourists shot up 260 per cent and that of foreign tourists 1180 per cent over the period of 2001-2012. The next chapter explores the work so far done on various aspects of pilgrimage tourism in general and in the context of Bihar through a comprehensive literature review and traces out the research gap which this study attempts to bridge. It also explains the research design, sets up objectives and hypothesis as well as the plan of work.
REFERENCES


Chapter 1: Introduction: Pilgrimage Tourism


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