Abstract

PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN NORTH INDIA-AN EVALUATION

PADMINI TOMER
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

DR. R. S. ARORA
PROFESSOR, SUPERVISOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

India is a home of different religions having large number of world famous pilgrimage sites. Thus, it provides excellent opportunities for pilgrimage tourism. Due to enough sacred sites, the prospect of pilgrimage tourism in North India is very bright. However, the survey of literature on tourism has revealed that no comprehensive research work has been undertaken to study the growth and potential of pilgrimage tourism in North India. Hence the present study has been undertaken to study the pilgrimage tourism in north India covering Mata Vaishno Devi in Jammu, Jwalaji and Chintpurni in Himachal Pradesh, Golden Temple in Amritsar, Kurukshetra in Haryana and Haridwar in Uttarakhand. The study uses both primary and secondary data. The present study is three dimensional in nature. Firstly, it attempts to study the growth of foreign and domestic tourism in India and appraises the tourism policy. Secondly, it examines the management of selected pilgrimage sites in North India and facilities available at these places. Thirdly, it studies the pilgrims’ behaviour and opinion of pilgrims regarding basic tourism infrastructure facilities.

The study appraises the tourism policy at central and state levels and highlights the growth of tourism in terms of foreign tourist arrivals and domestic tourism along with reasons for variations. Further, it highlights the differences in management pattern of selected pilgrimage sites e.g. Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in Vaishno Devi, Mata Jwalaji and Chintpurni Devi Trust at Jwalaji and Chintpurni, Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee in Golden Temple, Kurukshetra Development Board in Kurukshetra and Trust, Sabhas and Akharas in Haridwar.

Based on data collected from 500 pilgrims (100 from each selected site), it studies the pilgrims’ behaviour and opinion of pilgrims regarding the basic tourism infrastructure facilities available at the selected pilgrimage sites. The results have indicated that at most of the places pilgrims face the problems related with basic tourism infrastructure facilities like accommodation, food, sanitation, drinking water, transportation, shopping and parking etc. The study ends with some suggestions for the improvement of pilgrimage tourism in North India.

Key Words: Pilgrimage, Tourism, North India, Growth, Management, Problems.