



“EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SOLAPUR, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA”

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural India is setting up to pitch faith tourism by developing more religious tourist circuits to attract foreign Tourist. Religious Tourism can be defined as travel with this core motive involving experiencing religious forms, or the goods they induce, like art, culture, customs and architecture. Being just about the most ancient civilizations on the world, India has been around contact with almost all the major religions on the world. Religious Tourism in India is the foundation of society and order of Religious culture, principles supports to policy, management and development objectives India each Pilgrimage is also a popular feature of Indian historic culture with a long history. Indian religious tourism potentialities have been one of the important sources for country development particularly due to the presence of many religious tourist places in India. In india it reflects religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism offer opportunities for diversify revenues India keep strong foundation of ancient culture ,50 religious and 845 languages ,over 3 millions Gods ,Goddess and historical monuments.

Religious Tourism in India has exponential growth in the modern years. India is one of the most preferred destinations for Religious Tourism both overseas and domestic travellers. Tourism enables the International traveller to understand and experience India's cultural diversity first hand. According to official estimates the Indian tourism industry has outperformed the global tourism industry in terms of growth in the volume of foreign tourists as well as in terms of revenue. The main reason for the growth in Religious tourism in India is the tremendous progress made by the Indian economy. Though it must be said

that infrastructure is still a constraint. To sustain the current growth the government should invest in infrastructure like transport, accommodation, better roads, health and hygiene etc. To propel growth the industry has invested in new technology, like art of security systems. India is really a unique country that has plenty to offer to the tourists. Rich culture, heritage and history of India alone attract a lot of tourists to travel India each year. India is a big country with plenty of destinations to travel to the tourists.

Keywords: Heritage, tourism organizations, sustainable development and tourism package.

INTRODUCTION:

During the early part of human history, man would have travelled under compulsion primary to satisfy his biological needs. In the subsequent periods, the emergence of empire gave impetus to travel for political, business, social and religious. Traveling during those times was difficult because of the antiquated transport facilities and lack of safety and comfort in route ¹ Time and cost were the other major basic constraints. The Romans visited temples, shrines, festivals and baths for health and for amusements² Origin of religious visits; particularly the Hindu pilgrimages greatly enlarged the dimension of travel in the past. The incredible progress in the field of industries and other productive activities directly led to economic and social progress, greater progress, higher real income, longer leisure times, and increasingly cheaper and varied tourist plant facilities ³ The spread of education has created ³ cultural awareness and has stimulated desire to travel ⁴

Religious Tourism has emerged as a dominant economic factor in India and in international horizon. With its economic and all other advantages, religious tourism can certainly play a determining role in the development of poorer economies which suffer from an adverse balance of payment situation, a high degree of social backwardness, besides the other environmental problems. However, to achieve success in religious tourism, India needs to adopt planning and management approach on scientific lines. Fortunately, religious tourism planning and development is now increasingly attending the attention of researchers from different disciplines ranging from geography, history, sociology, economics, commerce management and environmental sciences. Being a resident of solapur research project related to the religious tourism came as an obvious choice, of researcher. So the researcher has selected a topic related to the religious tourism industry.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the existing tourism facilities in the temples in an around Solapur regions
2. To examine the existing tourism patterns, arrivals and use patterns in the District
3. To assess the existing problems in the way of tourism development in the District particularly in terms of tourist facilities, information, and publicity awareness aspects.
4. To analyse perception of tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
5. To suggest practical measures towards accelerated development of tourism in the district.

6] To recommend the suggestions based on findings and conclusions.

Hypothesis:

The study was also undertaken to test the following hypothesis:

- 1] Good treatment is not given to the tourists by the temple pujari's.
- 2] The tourists are not satisfied with the facilities provided by the management.

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED:

Sample Design:-The study will be confined to in an around Solapur district.

Sample size is restricted to 160 respondents. Convenient sapling method is followed in selecting respondents. The inquiry is in the form of a sample survey. The sample consists of places like Solapur, Pandharpur, Tuljapur and Akkalkot.

Method of Data Collection:

The three prime methods to be used are: 1) Survey Method. 2) Questionnaire/ Schedule and 3) Interview; besides published literature

Apart from this the following sources are used:-

- a) Primary Source: This data which is collected is fresh and original in character. The data is collected with the help of well-structured questionnaire along with formal interview and personal discussions.
- b) Secondary Source: This data is collected from published literature, company records and internal documentation. It is also collected from the temples website.

Further the researchers had recorded his observations during the data collection. Also he had conducted the group discussions to understand the opinion and attitude of the respondents in general.

Methods of Data Analysis: The data collected with the help of questionnaire is given code and the code book is prepared. As the researchers are well versed with computer technology they had feed the data in excel sheets. With the help of excel sheets the tables are prepared, analyzed and interpreted.

On the basis of the findings of the tabulated information in previous chapter, and the observations during the data collection work recorded by the researchers is considered and conclusions are drawn out by the research investigator which will helped him to recommend few precise suggestions.

Scope of the study: The present study undertaken by the researchers is focused on certain specified religious areas within the regular limits and is restricted to religious places in and around Solapur district.

The geographical scope of the study covers Solapur, Pandharpur, Tuljapur and Akkalkot.

The tourism scope is confined to the religious tourism in different temples. By religious scope we mean that the treatment given to the tourist by temple management people and also facilities provided to the tourists by the temple management. All the temples are considered according to convenient, and are holly places in the jurisdiction of Solapur, and osmanabad are covered for the purpose of the study.

The objective scope is to study the religious places and to find out impediments or hurdles for development and making workable suggestions to overcome hurdles.

The investigative scope of the study is to find out whether the treatment given by management people to the tourist is good one and the satisfaction level of the respondents with the facilities provided.

The periodical scope of the study is confined to the duration of the research.

1.7 Significance of the study:

In fact, tourism is inter-disciplinary subject for the study by nature, each of its aspect being too complex and too complicated, and hence any amount of knowledge may still leave much quarter for further studies. From the Solapur point of view, the significance of the study lies in identifying and highlighting the problem areas in the field of religious tourism development. It specially aims towards finding answers to problems and shortcomings in the field of infrastructure development, quantity and quality of transport, accommodation etc. The suggestions from the respondents incorporated herein, would provide guidelines for future course of action to be followed. The study on religious tourism in Solapur may be equally important for all those interested in undertakings similar studies in the context of other states and regions, because certain methods and approaches evolved and employed here by the researcher ought to be helpful in carrying out further studies of a similar nature.

Review of literature: Review of literature is concerned to the study of previous research work in the field of chosen research problem and other problems related to religious tourism.

It deals with the important studies about the various aspects of travel, recreational, hospitality tourism and pilgrimage both in India and in the foreign countries. Many books have been written by scholars expressing their views on tourism and its issues. In this chapter the reports of Ministry of Tourism and Government of India about the issues of tourism have been analyzed.

Review of literature: An attempt is made to review the literature pertaining to the religious tourism. In order to get acquaintance with the research process, to understand the research gaps in the chosen research problem and earlier research studies associated with religious places books, Ph D thesis, published research articles and published proceedings of conference papers were reviewed and the reviewed literature is presented under the following heads viz, book review, research articles, conference proceedings review and Ph D thesis.:-

J.K.Sharma (2000) in his book entitled, "Tourism Planning and Development: A New Perspective" has emphasised on an integrated approach and incremental increase in the quality of service in tourism for an effective management of tourism. He has said that transportation, services, information and promotion, physical environment and tourism organizations are the basic components for planning and developing tourism in a particular region. He has made an attempted to present an alternative plan and 42 development process which is sustainable, for tourism and also suggested for conceptualizing sustainable development the importance of forming concepts⁴.

G.S. Batra and R.C. Dangwal (2001) in their book titled, “Tourism Promotion and Development” have viewed that India has great tourism potential due to its unique cultural and natural attractions. The potential has not been fully exploited and whatever attempt made in this direction has not met the expected”. They have further explored immense vistas in Indian tourism⁵.

S.Gill (2002) in his book entitled, “Tourism and Hotel Management” has provided information regarding the quality and accountability of hotel services. Today tourism has acquired the status of modern industry. Both government and private sector consider tourism as an important element in their planning. This study has analyzed the various aspects of hotel management like hotel rate, quality of hotel service and hotel accounting⁶.

Romila Chawla (2003) in her book entitled, “Tourism in the 21st Century” has emphasized on the important features of the tourism industry, its contribution to the national integration and creation of harmonious social and cultural environment and also suggests the promotion of arts, crafts and culture to bring about prosperity and sustainable development. She has listed the essential aspects and challenges of tourism in the twenty first century⁷.

O.P. Kandari and Ashish Chandra (2004) in their book entitled, “Tourism Development Principles and Practices” have noted that planning and assessment are important parts of sustainable development of tourism. They have focused on issues of tourism development, particularly from economic, ethnic and environmental perspectives and also have explained the goals and strategies for effective tourism practices and have identified the key issues of carrying capacity and community participation. He has also stated that role of tourism in rural development is fundamentally an economic one and can help to sustain and improve the quality of life in rural areas⁸.

Bhatt and B.S. Badan (2006) in their book titled, “Sustainable Tourism” have summarized that as tourism provides enormous opportunities, it also brings serious adverse impacts on the environment, physical appearance, economy, health, safety and social values of the people who live in the tourist destination. In response to these challenges, government has to take steps to create a sustainable and economically successful tourism environment. The authors have suggested that the Government can develop a code of conduct for the use tourist destination by institutions and individuals. It is mainly concerned with the economic and environmental impacts of tourism on the society⁹.

D.S. Bhardwaj, Manjula Chaudhary and S.S.Boora (2006) in their book entitled, “International Tourism-Issues and Challenges” have evaluated the employment 49 potentiality of hospitality industry in India. It should be noted that in the global economy, tourism is expected to be the leading job creator in the next decade and India will have to take serious initiatives to benefit from it. The purchase on Indian goods and handicrafts by tourists has indicated their appreciation of our art and culture. Their appreciation has generated immense benefits to the people and the nation. They have further stated that the performance of the hotel industry is closely linked to the state of economy and the inflow of tourists into the country. The study concluded that the main problem faced by tourism industry is creating customer satisfaction. In some

cases, food quality, service and accommodation facilities are not satisfactory in Indian hotels. So it is necessary to improve the services in tourism industry in the country¹⁰.

M.R.Biju (2006) in his book entitled, “Sustainable Dimensions of Tourism Management” has examined the global, national and regional evolution of tourism sector. The commercial viability of tourism depends upon scientific product planning and development of attractive tourism products. For this skilled manpower is required. The author has stated that in Kerala tourism is recognized as an important sector for the development on account of its potential for generating income and employment¹¹.

N. Kreiner and N. Kliot (2000) in their article titled, “Pilgrimage Tourism in the Holy Land: The Behavioural Characteristics of Christian Pilgrims” have viewed that there is a significant difference between pilgrims” and tourists” behaviour towards any religious site in spite of the fact that both had three common elements like discretionary income, leisure time and social sanctions. The study also highlighted certain parameters like age, socio-economic status and nationality which are very important for the purpose of studying tourists” and pilgrims” behaviour. It reveals that the persons who belonged to low social-economic group come under the category of pilgrims and those who belonged to high socio-economic group to perceive themselves as tourists. The study has concluded that although various differences are there between tourists and pilgrims, it is very difficult to present those differences¹².

A. Mehta and R.S.Arora (2000) in their article titled, “Tourism Industry in Punjab-An Appraisal of Promotional Activities” have highlighted that the share of 41 advertisement expenditure to total management expenses has decreased. Further, published material of the tourism department is incomplete, unattractive and insufficient for foreign tourists. The study has recommended that the state government must adopt a standardized form of media for the promotion of tourism industry in Punjab¹³.

H.Wilson and J.Venes (2001) in their article titled, “Factors for Success in Rural Tourism Development” have highlighted the role of rural tourism in the economic development of rural community. They have viewed that rural tourism could develop easily with active participation of local government and people. They have indicated several factors namely tourism package, good leadership, support of local government, funds, strategic planning, coordination between local people and technical assistance for tourism promotion and so on which are essential for rural tourism development. The authors have also viewed that rural tourism provides income and employment opportunities to local people in rural areas utilizing huge natural resources¹⁴.

M.R.Biju (2002) in his article on “Global Tourism: The Evolutionary Process”, has viewed that the main reason behind tremendous growth of travel industry is emergence of railways, shipping, motor car and airplane. Moreover, introduction of paid holiday and mass tourism concept also have encouraged travel habits among the people. Further, due to the development of information technology, people could travel to far off places, which are almost inaccessible a few decades ago. The study has concluded that 43 the advancements made in transport and communication systems are the main reasons behind rapid growth of tourism globally¹⁵.

V. Caprihan and K.Shivakumar (2002) in their article entitled, “Redefining Tourism Marketing Strategies” have observed that tourists’ decisions world-wide are negatively influenced by unfavorable conditions like terrorist attacks, war, epidemics and calamities etc. It reveals that the Indian Government has adopted various measures like subsidies, tax breaks, and shifts in marketing strategies and increased advertising to minimize negative impact of unfavorable conditions. However, India has adopted age old tourism strategies targeting only two countries U.K. and USA. The author has emphasized on the adoption of innovative and customized tourism strategies by Indian Government¹⁶.

S. Singh (2002) in his article entitled, “Tourism in India: Policy Pitfalls” has highlighted the need for managing the impact of tourist and pilgrim mobility in the Indian Himalayas. The study has shown that heavy flow of pilgrims and tourists during the peak season from April to June lead to problems relating to accommodation, catering, sewage, sanitation, water supply, tariff and ecological degradation. The study has suggested the 44 need for travel regulations, education for visitors, marketing of alternative destinations and targeted marketing to get rid of problems arising from mass tourism and pilgrimage¹⁷.

P.O.George (2003) in his article on “Strategic Management in Tourism” has highlighted that tourism involves too many intermediaries like government, semi-government and private organizations providing different hospitality services to visitors. He has emphasized the need for master plan with long term vision including development of basic tourism facilities such as road, railways, airport, walkways, drainage, benchmarking and tourism laws for development of tourism. The author also has recommended a strategic management committee for the administration of the function of tourism¹⁸.

D. Bar and K.Hattab (2003) in their study on “A New Kind of Pilgrimage: The Modern Tourist Pilgrim of Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Palestine” have stated that tourism and pilgrimage stand at opposite ends of a continuum with wide range of journey within these two ends. They have highlighted five factors of motives, duration, religious affiliation, social background, travelers’ reaction and services used by tourists which are differentiated pilgrims from tourists. The authors have revealed that the main reason behind modern tourists’ travelling is cultural curiosity, education and desire to enrich themselves with various knowledge and experience. Despite this, they have found that pilgrims prefer to visit holy sites only during religious festivals. The study concludes that while pilgrims most of the time visits only religious places but the modern tourists visit the holy places and secular places equally¹⁹.

A. Bahuguna (2004) in his article on “Tourism in India: Development Perspective” has stated that Tenth Five Year Plan considers enhancing India’s competitiveness as a high tourist destination. Moreover, he has pointed out that the share of India in world tourism is stagnant with only 0.38 per cent. Further, in case of domestic tourism India has a prominent share of 4.3 per cent worldwide. She has concluded that India has vast potential for different types of tourism like ecotourism, pilgrimage tourism and health tourism, which require proper planning²⁰.

S.C.Woodward (2004) in his article on “Faith and Tourism: Planning Tourism in Relation to Places of Worship” has opined that the income generated by religious sites 47 can be used for repair and maintenance of those particular sites and other religious sites. The study highlights that most of the world famous religious sites are not able to accommodate large number of visitors at one time which lead to several accidental damages, noise pollution, overcrowding, theft incidents, littering and parking problems. The author has suggested several remedies like charging for vehicle access and entry fees to religious site and so on to overcome the above mentioned problems. He feels that there is need for separate planning for those who visit for religious purpose and those who visit only as sightseers²¹.

R.K. Singh and D.K.Mishra (2004) in their study on “Green Tourism in Mountain Regions- Reducing Vulnerability and Promoting People and Place Centric Development in the Himalayas” have revealed that Manali’s experience about the environmental problems like acute shortage of water, overcrowded roads, heavy traffic, excessive garbage, unplanned growth of illegal constructions and sanitation problems. They have suggested different short and long term strategies for accommodation, transportation, water, sewage, energy and finance. The study has suggested that cautious steps must be taken by the state government to avoid mass tourism and create healthy eco-tourism in Manali²².

S.P. Bansal and P.Gautam (2004) in their study titled, “Heritage Tourism in Himachal Pradesh” have stated that globally 37 per cent tourism is cultural motivated and it is growing at the rate of 15 per cent annually. The authors have described that lack of resources, lack of expertise, lack of ready product, lack of mutual knowledge and 46 minimal marketing are the main reasons affecting heritage tourism in Himachal Pradesh. They suggest the introduction of entrance fees for tourists visiting heritage centers and a separate heritage management board to preserve and promote the heritage sites²³.

R.Mishra (2000) in his thesis entitled “Pilgrimage Tourism - A Case Study of Brajmandal” has stated that with the increased mobility of urban class, more and more people are undertaking weekend trips. The study has also highlighted the main problems regarding poor infrastructure and facilities such as accommodation, quality food, shopping areas, public convenience, and communication and cheating and misguiding etc, faced by. The author has suggested both operational measures like restructuring tourism in accordance with laws, need for systematic approach in managing tourism development, interacting with tourists in a healthy manner and supportive role of non-governmental organizations and operative measures like strategy for tourism development, creation of a Development Board and creation for the region on the line of Vatican City to increase the tempo of pilgrimage tourism²⁴.

M.B.Potdar (2003) in his thesis entitled, “Tourism Development in South Konkan” has shown that beaches, horticulture, scenic beauty, historical monuments, temples and churches, local folk arts, handicrafts, food and festivals, biotic life are the resources for tourism. She has analyzed some problems and suggested remedial measures for better development of tourism in south Konkan²⁵.

J. Vijayan (2007) in his thesis entitled, “Tourism Development and Involvement of Local People at Destination” has found out that the attitude of local people in tourism 51 centers towards tourism development is positive and tourism has a major impact on the economic life of the destination population. From the study, it is found out that the tourism officials have not succeeded in bringing awareness of benefits from tourism to the local people. It is suggested that the Government of Kerala should take speedy measures to educate the societal benefit by tourism development through various types of programmes. Further, he has suggested that Government should form co-operative societies of educated and trained youth in destinations and provide support to run various kinds of tourism enterprises²⁶.

RESEARCH GAP: A substantial volume of literature both at the micro and macro levels can be seen on the subject of tourism. The literature survey has helped to understand and appreciate the earlier studies conducted in the field of tourism and it has provided a broad framework for various aspects of tour, travel, tourism, developmental, recreational and hospitality already found in the tourism industry. This study also compares the growth and development of tourism from tourist’s expectation point of view. But studies on importance of tourism in the study regions are almost scanty. To cover this research gap in the district of Solapur this vibrant topic has been chosen for study.

Hypothesis:

Ho: Good treatment is given to the tourists by the temple pujari’s.

H1: Good treatment is not given to the tourists by the temple pujari’s.

Sr.No	Name of the temple	Temple Staffs behavior			Total
		Good	Poor	Harassing	
1	Tuljabhavani temple	42 (25.60)	11 (6.70)	01 (0.60)	54 (32.92)
2	Shri Swami Samarth temple	48 (29.26)	00 (00)	01 (0.60)	49 (29.86)
3	Vitthal Rukmani temple	35 (21.34)	00 (00)	02 (1.21)	37 (22.55)
4	Siddheshwar temple	18 (10.97)	05 (3.04)	01 (0.60)	24 (14.62)
Total		143 (87.19)	16 (9.75)	05 (3.04)	164 (100)

As majority of the respondents had rated their views as good (87.19%) treatment is given to the tourists by the temple pujari’s . Therefore state that, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H₀: The tourists are satisfied with the facilities provided by the management.

H₁: The tourists are not satisfied with the facilities provided by the management.

Name of the Temples	Comment	Time of Prasad	Quality of food	Drinking water	Shade (during standing in queue)	Security	Storage locker
Tuljabhavani temple	Yes	34	22	37	42	37	17
	No	20	32	17	12	17	37
Siddheshwar temple	Yes	20	9	19	21	13	11
	No	04	15	05	03	11	13
vitthal-Rukmini temple	Yes	32	14	32	28	11	27
	No	05	23	05	09	26	10
Shri Swami Samarth temple	Yes	49	40	38	45	30	38
	No	00	09	11	04	19	11
Total		164	164	164	164	164	164

$\chi^2=140$, $df=35$, $P<0.000$, Table value= 45.31.

As calculated chi-square value is found greater than table value. Therefore state that, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Findings:

1. It is found that most (34.14%) of the respondents prefer lodges to stay.
2. Majority of the respondents prefer private vehicle (53.64) for religious tours.
3. It is found that the condition of roads is Average (50.60%).
4. Majority (83.49%) of the respondents visit the temple more than Two to four times.
5. **Tuljabhavani temple:** Majority (69.43%) of the respondents are satisfied with the Time of Prasad, Drinking water, Shade and Security but they are not satisfied with Storage locker (40.74) and Quality of food (31.48).
6. **Siddheshwar temple:** Majority (76.03%) of the respondents are satisfied with the Time of Prasad, Drinking water, Shade and Security but they are not satisfied with Storage locker (37.5) and Quality of food (45.83).
7. **Vitthal-Rukmini temple:** Majority (80.4%) of the respondents are satisfied with the Time of Prasad, Drinking water, Shade and Storage locker but they are not satisfied with Security (29.72) and Quality of food (37.83).
8. **Shri Swami Samarth temple:** Majority (81.63%) of the respondents are satisfied with the Time of Prasad, Drinking water, Shade, Storage locker, Security and Quality of food.
9. It is found that, Majority (83.53) of the respondents opined that bribe is not asked to worship the god.

10. It is found that, Majority (87.19) of the respondents opined that the behaviour of the temple staff towards the respondents is good.

11. Majority of the respondents (68.90%) are in the opinion of having female pujari's in the temple.

Suggestions:

In this section the researcher presents the following suggestions pertaining to existing problems and prospects of religious places selected for the study based on findings of the study.

1. The people prefer to stay at Lodges. So, good conditions of the lodges are to be maintained.
2. The people prefer private vehicles. There is a need to have an organised private vehicle transport for more convenient of the people.
3. The roads are found average and not good. There is a need for the development of roads.
4. The **Tuljabhavani temple, Siddheshwar temple management**, can improve its Storage locker system and Quality of food.
5. The **Vitthal-Rukmini temple management** can improve its Security and Quality of food.
6. As the people expects female pujari's in the temples, here the management can thing for the same.

Scope for Further Research: There is a wide scope for further research in the field like:

- 1) Further research can develop on transport industry for religious.
- 2) comparative study can be done of amenities provided by the temple management, cleanliness etc.

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