

Anthropology of Pilgrims with Regard to Accommodation and the Activities they Performed while Visiting Shahdra Sharief Shrine

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Abstract

Tourism is a prosperous industry; within tourism pilgrimage tourism is evolving a lot in these days. It has been found that pilgrimage tourism increased many fold in every nook and corner of the world. May it be the case of Christine, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist followers, pilgrimage of all of these has risen in these years. Pilgrims, like tourists, also spends money on traveling, accommodation, donation, eating, and purchasing. Spending of these pilgrims becomes a source for earning natives of pilgrimage destination. Keeping, this thing in mind, this study has been conducted to know various activities of pilgrims. Herein this paper only accommodation related activities, time duration of trip of pilgrims and various activities which were performed by pilgrims has been recorded, specifically from those pilgrims who visits to Shahdra Shrief Shrine Rajouri of State Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords

Pilgrims, Shahdra Shrief, Accommodation, Tour, Trip, Activities.

Introduction

Name of Jammu and Kashmir remains associated with tourism since, 100s years. But pilgrimage in the State is a new trend which evolved and got many folds increased in last few decades. There are a number of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Shikh Shrine. Among them Shri Mata Vashno Devi Katra, Shri Amarnath, Shahdra Shrief, Charar Sharif, Hazaratbal, and Nangali Sahib Gurdawara are prominent religious places. Pilgrims visited Vashno Devi recorded all-time high during 2011. Similarly, pilgrims comparatively to other Muslim Shrine in the State are increasing day by day to Shahdra Shief Shrine from last few years.

Shahdra Shrarief is the Shrine of Baba Ghulam Ali Shah Badshah (RA) which is located in the mid of hills of State Jammu and Kashmir in Tehsil Thanamandi of District Rajouri. Millions of visitors and pilgrims visited this Shrine round the year but during the summer season, this Shrine received a large number of tourist from within the State and different parts of the country. Therefore, while visiting Shrine pilgrims spend money on different activities like transportation, accommodation, donation, purchasing, and eating. This money generates the income for the localities and the people living in the Rajouri. The incoming visitor may not be considered as pure pilgrims, there are different types of visitor's visits there. This can be understood by the activities they perform while visiting Shahdra Shrief. This study is endeavored to analyze visitors accommodation related facet, activities they performed and duration of their trip, time they spent at the Shrine and the factor facilitate to their visits to Shahdra.

Objectives

This study is conducted for pilgrims who visit Shahdra Sharief Shrine Rajouri, therefore:

1. This work is devoted to studying accommodation related aspect of pilgrims.
2. Duration of trip of pilgrims and time spend by them at Shrine

3. Various activities performed by pilgrims while visiting Shrine.

Hypotheses

In the light of objectives following hypotheses has been laid down:

- H₁: Tourism has made a significant contribution to the economic development and upliftment of social status of people living in the vicinity of the shrine
- H₀: The pilgrimage tourism does not provide any scope for socio-economic transformation of the region.

Research Methodology

A sample of 1000 respondents has been selected non-probability sampling techniques and responses were recorded from 1000 respondent but at the time of scrutinizing of responses only 734 responses were found valid and fit for the study. Non-probability sampling technique is used because in such type of study were we have not prior data available we cannot apply random sampling or probability method, so for study of such nature we therefore usually apply non-probability sampling method. But with due care we can incorporate random affect within this method also which we have done here. Data are collected through a well-structured questionnaire and tabulated and analyzed using SPSS and Excel. Basic statistical techniques like frequency, limit of central tendency, percentage, cross tabulation, and Chi-square test have been used. The reason behind using these simple statistics is that the aforesaid objectives and hypothesis are completely addressed and explain by these methods therefore we confined to applying these research techniques. Moreover in these kinds of the study where we have open-ended questions rather than Likert-type scale. It is difficult to apply parametric test, so we used non-parametric tests.

Review of Literature

Dasgupta et al. (2006) stated that pilgrimage tourism plays a great role towards socio-economic changes. According to Indian

sentiment the pilgrim center's or tirthasthan used to visit by a number of tourists to earn virtue. One of such center where taking a holy dip. During maker sankranti, thought as in the life of a person earns that much of virtue which one can earn by visiting the entire pilgrimage center's throughout the life. The pilgrimage tourism is a vital and living experience in pilgrimage sites have also become important destinations, because they are closely linked with the cultural identity and heritage of destinations where also pleasure components are being added to the familiar pilgrim routes and itineraries. Thus due to a continuous flow of pilgrims and tourists at this land, the socio-economic life of the islanders are evident. Therefore, it can be said that pilgrimage tourism has opened several sources of cash earning and, as a result, several new occupations have emerged due to pilgrimage tourism.

Vijayanand (2012) describes that pilgrimage tourism is playing a major role in socio-economic development. Among other observations, it has shown that, for many countries of the region, the economic significance of pilgrimage tourism is very large when measured against gross domestic product and exports. For many countries in general and the least developed countries in particular, pilgrimage tourism is a sector in which they have comparative, if not competitive, advantages for which they can efficiently convert domestic resources into foreign exchange. If appropriately used, such foreign exchange can purchase the investment goods necessary to support more broadly based economic development policies. The study has demonstrated that the social significance of pilgrimage tourism, measured in terms of employment (especially unskilled labor), is very large. It has also illustrated that appropriate pilgrimage tourism-related interventions can play a role in raising the standard of living and in reducing poverty in local communities.

Further, Dasgupta et al. (2006) study concludes that the key elements of a pilgrimage are religious belief and knowledge within a particular socio-cultural context. In a country like India where for the masses tourism may not be economically feasible; the pilgrimage is a vital and living experience. Pilgrimage sites have also turn out to be important tourist destinations, because they are closely linked with the cultural identity and heritage of destination like Ganga Sagar, where also pleasure component are being added to the familiar pilgrim routes and itinerates.

Malik and Abdulla (2013), studied Potential, Prospects and Challenges of Development of Tourism in Rajouri and Poonch which is published in Acme Intellects International Journal of Research in Management, this study is explores unexplored tourism potential of the area.

In another attempt Malik (2013) undertakes development of difficult region through Travel, Trade and Tourism: A Case Study of Twin Border Districts Rajouri and Poonch which is also published in International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services and Management Research. This study sets a relation between cross-border tourism and economic development in the area.

Discussion (Analysis of Primary Data)

Accommodation related analysis

The total duration of the entire trip of the pilgrims and average days spends at the shrine. Decides the place of stay, expenditure incurred on the stay and their entire accommodation related activities.

Duration of the trip

Thousands of people visit Shahdra Shrief Shrine throughout the year from State Jammu and Kashmir and from different parts of the country. As the bulk of the respondents belongs from the same area. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were on 1-day visit which represents 82% of the sample size. Table 1 shows that 13% visitors were on 2 days visit and 4% visitors were on 4 or more than 4 days journey. Only 2% of the total respondents comes under 3 days tour duration. Duration of visits which dominates respondent response was 1 day, and least percentage comes under 3 days journey (Figure 1).

Time spent at Shrine

Thousands of people, who visit Shrine of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah (RA), after performing routine rituals, proceed for a meal at the common mess (Langar). After taking food, day visitors, and others went back to their places or some stays at different hotels in Rajouri. Pilgrims who stay at the shrine they opt any among free dormitories, restaurant, TRC, the house of nearby people for a night stay. It is found that 81% respondents were the day visitors, they did not halt for night stay, therefore, they spend only 1-day at Shrine. Remaining 12%, 4%, and 2% respondents were the 2 days, 4 or more than 4 days and 3 days visitors as depicted in Table 2. They stayed 2 days, 4 or more than 4 days and 3 days at the holy Shrine (Figure 2).

Place of stay (night stay)

As the average duration of tour decides the number of days spends and the preference of staying place. Distribution Table 3 shows that 36% of the respondent stayed at Shrine, in dormitories. About 12% in stayed at Shrine restaurant and 10% and 4% in hotels and tourist reception centers and tourist huts.

Table 1: Duration of trip

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
1-day	596	81.2	81.2	81.2
2 days	93	12.7	12.7	93.9
3 days	15	2.0	2.0	95.9
>4 days	30	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average=1-day

Table 2: Time spent at Shrine

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
1-day	596	81.2	81.2	81.2
2 days	93	12.7	12.7	93.9
3 days	15	2.0	2.0	95.9
>4 days	30	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average=1-day

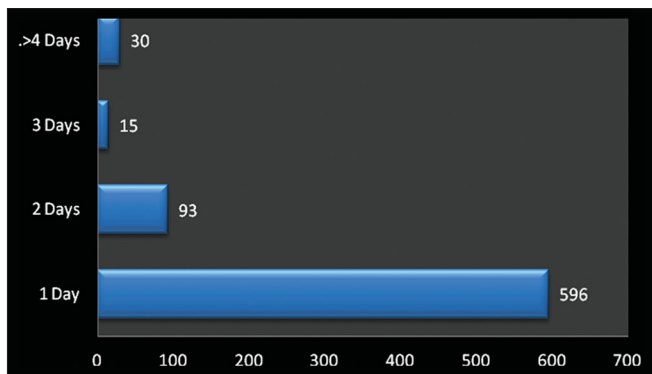


Figure 1: Trip duration

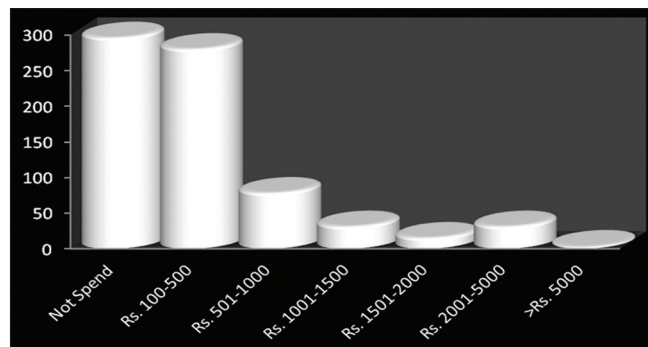


Figure 4: Spending on accommodation

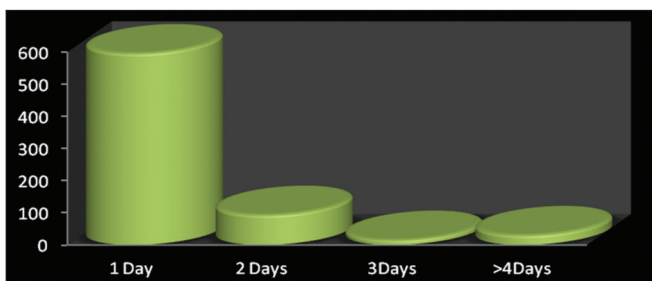


Figure 2: Time spent at the Shrine

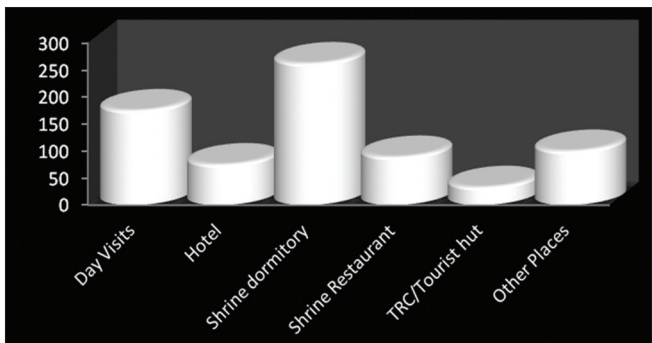


Figure 3: Place of stay

Remaining 24% were the day visitors they did not stay at any of these destinations and went back to their places (Figure 3).

Expenditure incurred on accommodation

Table 4 shows that respondents who stayed at different places during their tour, spends a proportion of their money on hired accommodation. It is seen that 38% of the respondents spent an average of Rs. 100-500 on accommodation. 11% respondents spend in between Rs. 501-1000 and 4.2% respondents spend Rs. 1001-1500 on their accommodation. There are 2% respondents who spend in between Rs. 1501 and 2000 and again 4% respondents spend an average amount in between Rs. 2000 and 5000 on accommodation related activities. Table 5 shows that there is also a small proportion of respondent (0.4%) who spends >Rs. 5000 on their accommodation, remaining respondents were the day visitors they didn't spend on accommodation; they contain 40% of the total sample size (Figure 4).

Religious/faith related activities

A large section, i.e., 38% of the respondents visited to Shrine for just to have glimpses of the Holy Mizar. There were

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by their place of stay

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Day visits	175	23.8	23.8	23.8
Hotel	75	10.2	10.2	34.1
Shrine dormitory	262	35.7	35.7	69.8
Shrine restaurant	89	12.1	12.1	81.9
TRC/Tourist hut	33	4.5	4.5	86.4
Other places	100	13.6	13.6	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average=Shrine dormitory

Table 4: Spending on accommodation

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Have not spend	296	40.3	40.3	40.3
Rs. 100-500	280	38.1	38.1	78.5
Rs. 501-1000	78	10.6	10.6	89.1
Rs. 1001-1500	31	4.2	4.2	93.3
Rs. 1501-2000	15	2.0	2.0	95.4
Rs. 2001-5000	31	4.2	4.2	99.6
>Rs. 5000	3	0.4	0.4	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average=Rs. 300

also a good percentage of the devotees who visit again to Shrine after approval of their wish, and the person coming exclusively for praying at Darbar and asking for favor for their wish, these are 24%, 16% and 12% respondents. Distribution Table 5 also shows that 8% respondent visits to the Shrine not specifically related to religious faith, or something related to wish or donation, they just visited there like common tourists (Figure 5).

Factor facilitates this visit

Factor which motivates the respondents for visit shows some interesting facts that bulk of the visitors are coming regularly to the Shrine during summer season after revival of the Mughal road; these respondents account 22% of the total respondents.

Table 5: Religious activities performed

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Not specific related to religious activity	61	8.3	8.3	8.3
Visit to Shahdara Shrief Just to have a Glimpses of Darbar	281	38.3	38.3	46.6
Came exclusively for asking something related to wish	94	12.8	12.8	59.4
Coming for donation after approval of wish	180	24.5	24.5	83.9
All of above	118	16.1	16.1	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average=Visit to Shahdara Shrief Just to have a Glimpses of Darbar

Table 6: Factor facilitates this visit

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Others	322	43.9	43.9	43.9
Revival of Mughal Road	165	22.5	22.5	66.3
Revival of Poonch Rawalakote Road	16	2.2	2.2	68.5
Religious motivation	137	18.7	18.7	87.2
Scenic beauty	32	4.4	4.4	91.6
Revival of Mughal road, religious motivation, scenic beauty ^{a,c,d}	56	7.6	7.6	99.2
Revival of Poonch Rawalakote road, religious faith, scenic beauty ^{b,c,d}	6	0.8	0.8	100.0
Total	734	100.0	100.0	

Average=Revival of Mughal Road

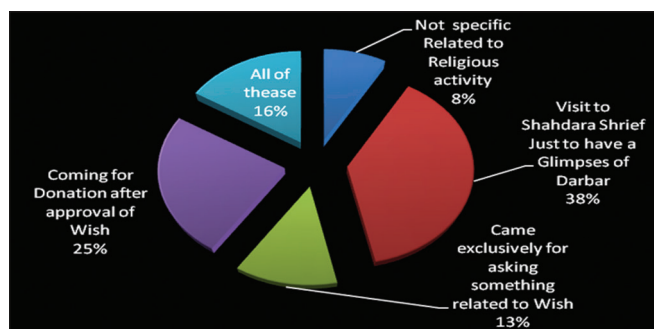


Figure 5: Religious activities performed

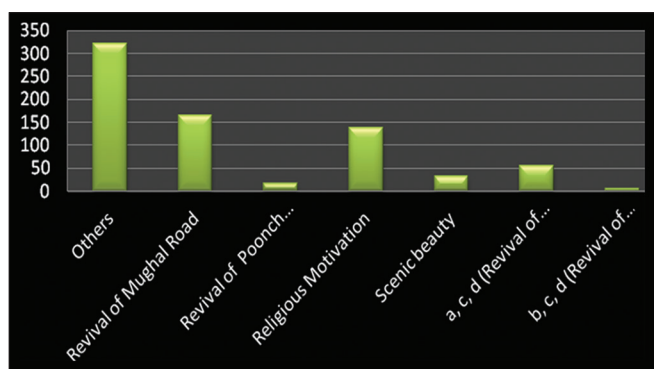


Figure 6: Factor facilitates this visit

Respondent’s visits related to religious motivation, scenic beauty and revival of Poonch – Rawlakote Road contains 19%, 4% and 2%. Some respondent’s visits facilitate factor were a mixture of the entire factor like a revival of the Mughal road, religious faith, and scenic beauty, this section of respondents comprises

of 8% of total sample size. 0.8% visitors facilitate factors were a revival of Poonch Rawlakote road, religious motivation and beauty of the area as shown in Table 6 (Figure 6).

It is pertaining to mentioned here that Mughal road is a historical route which was firstly used by Emperor Akbar the Great in 1556 AD, then after it was used by Mughals to Visit Lahro to Kashmir. It is a majestic and shortest route to Kashmir, heaving pictures-tic view around. This road is nearby to Shrine, therefore, visitors who visits Mughal road also goes to Shahdra Shrief Rajouri.

Duration of stay and expenditure incurred on the accommodation

Table 7 depicts that majority of the visitors stay 1-day at in Shahdra and they spend approximately Rs. 500-1000 on their accommodation. Another 73% of the 1-day visitor’s sections pay out Rs. 1501-2000 for their accommodation. Similarly, Table 5 shows a various combination of spending pattern of the visitors for their accommodation for 1, 2 3 and 4 days stay which ranges from Rs. 100-500, Rs. 500-1000, Rs.1000-1500, Rs. 1500-2000, Rs. 2000-5000 more the 50,000 respectively.

Chi-square test as shown in Table 7a proves that the expenditure of visitors on accommodation and their duration of stay are significantly different. Therefore, null hypothesis which reads that there is no relation between spending on accommodation and duration of stay stands rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This test also supports our principle hypothesis i.e. therefore, from Chi-square test it is found that null hypothesis is not true and is rejected as

Table 7: Spending on accommodation * Time spent at shrine cross tabulation

Spending on accommodation	Time spent at Shrine				Total
	1-day	2 days	3 days	>4 days	
Have not spend					
Count	267	17	1	11	296
% within spending on accommodation	90.2	5.7	0.3	3.7	100.0
Rs. 100-500					
Count	221	41	6	12	280
% within spending on accommodation	78.9	14.6	2.1	4.3	100.0
Rs. 501-1000					
Count	53	17	5	3	78
% within spending on accommodation	67.9	21.8	6.4	3.8	100.0
Rs. 1001-1500					
Count	25	5	1	0	31
% within spending on accommodation	80.6	16.1	3.2	0.0	100.0
Rs. 1501-2000					
Count	11	4	0	0	15
% within spending on accommodation	73.3	26.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
Rs. 2001-5000					
Count	16	9	2	4	31
% within spending on accommodation	51.6	29.0	6.5	12.9	100.0
>Rs. 5000					
Count	3	0	0	0	3
% within spending on accommodation	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total					
Count	596	93	15	30	734
% within spending on accommodation	81.2	12.7	2.0	4.1	100.0

Table 7a: Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Significant (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	58.213 ^a	18	0.000
Likelihood ratio	57.388	18	0.000
Linear-by-linear association	17.509	1	0.000
Number of valid cases	734		

^a15 cells (53.6%) have expected count <5. The minimum expected count is 0.06. df: Degree of freedom

p-value of Chi-square test supports the alternate hypothesis i.e., tourism has made a significant contribution to the economic development and upliftment of social status of people living in the vicinity of the shrine has been accepted. In the meantime the second null hypothesis, i.e., the pilgrimage tourism does not provide any scope for socio-economic transformation of the region is also rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8 and 8a show that Chi-square value of 8.16 (degree of freedom [df]=9, N=734), p<0.05 is significant at 12 df,

showing that there is a significant at 9 df, showing that there is significant difference in trip duration and days/time spent at shrine.

Conclusion

Tourist and pilgrims who used to visit different they perform various activities. During their visit spending on travelling, accommodation, shopping and allied activities are the major segments of tourist expenditure. This expenditure of tourist, on the other hand, becomes income for the people who are residing nearby the destination where pilgrims and tourist visits. This fact is proved a herein case of Shadra Shrief Shrine. Therefore, it can be concluded as most of the visitor visits to Shrine are from catchment areas, therefore, average trip duration of these visitors is of 1-day. They also spend 1-day in the Shrine. As inputs from primary data that there is various type of accommodation available in the Shrine, but the average number of visits who spent the night there preferred stayed in Shrine free dormitories. There are various activities performed by a visitor who visits Shrine, but the majority of the visitor said that they just visited to have glimpses of Shrine only. On enquiring about the factor which facilitates their visit to Shahdra, the majority of them said that they visited there because of the revival of historical Mughal road.

Table 8: Time spent at shrine * Trip duration cross tabulation

Time spent at Shrine	Trip duration				Total
	1-day	2 days	3 days	>4 days	
1-day					
Count	554	40	1	1	596
% within time spent at Shrine	93.0	6.7	0.2	0.2	100.0
2 days					
Count	32	50	7	4	93
% within time spent at Shrine	34.4	53.8	7.5	4.3	100.0
3 days					
Count	4	3	7	1	15
% within time spent at Shrine	26.7	20.0	46.7	6.7	100.0
>4 days					
Count	6	0	0	24	30
% within time spent at Shrine	20.0	0.0	0.0	80.0	100.0
Total					
Count	596	93	15	30	734
% within time spent at Shrine	81.2	12.7	2.0	4.1	100.0

Table 8a: Chi-square tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	8.160E2 ^a	9	0.000
Likelihood ratio	360.368	9	0.000
Linear-by-linear association	410.176	1	0.000
Number of valid cases	734		

^a8 cells (50.0%) have expected count <5. The minimum expected count is 0.31. df: Degree of freedom

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