

The Emergence of India as A Destination for Spiritual Tourism.

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Abstract: Spirituality, broadly defined, has become a major scholarly topic in society and business. Hence, "spiritual tourism" is now part of the tourism industry. This has increased awareness and study interest in spiritual tourism. Civilized nations have long practised tourism. Hence, tourism literature history is wide. Only a few tourism niches have recently opened to scientific examination. Only a few scholars have studied spiritual tourism methodically. This article examines spiritual tourism research and its possibilities for future tourism study. As spiritual tourism research grows, a model classifying travel literature has been created. The model categorises tourism literature. Five publications have published research on religious and pilgrimage tourism since 1992, and several key meetings have been analysed. This paper reviews spiritual tourism literature on Uttarakhand, India.

Keywords: Tourism marketing, research on tourism, spiritual tourism, classification of tourism literature, and tourism research.

Introduction:

Tourism is important to many nations because tourists spend money, tourism businesses pay taxes, and tourism-related service industries provide jobs. Tourism is a powerful tool for economic growth and has direct and indirect effects on society. Tourism requires leisure time, discretionary funds, and travel-friendly society, according to Sharpley (2020). Tourism boosts economic progress, cultural preservation, and international peace. Liberal arts and business academics have noticed that religion, in its wider definition, has become a major area of study. Spiritual tourism is now part of the tourism industry. Spiritual tourism, also referred as religious tourism destinations, includes all world religions, their physical locations, people's emotional connections to them, and traveller infrastructure. This sort of tourism, often called pilgrimage tourism, attracts people who want to trek to heaven or live simply. "Spirit tourist seems to be a newer academic word, but it is most obviously not an unique phenomenon," says Stephenson (2014). Religious tourism is not new. "Spiritual tourism" has caught the attention of researchers worldwide. Its potential to become the industry's most profitable sub-segment is driving this interest, not its spirituality. This paper examines the emergence of spirituality tourism as a successful research field in light of past research. This article summarises previous studies in this field.

Review of Academic Literature:

The study of tourism is regarded as an established subfield of the field of research, and it has garnered a lot of enthusiastic interest from scholars. Many geographically relevant, industry-specific case-based studies, as well as theoretical models, have been documented in publications by multiple authors. These works cover a variety of topics of tourism research. An overview of research that has been conducted in a variety of subfields of tourism and that has been published in prominent academic journals and conference proceedings has been presented in this section.

Recent Advances in Tourism Research include the Following:

The meaning of tourism as well as its reach have been gradually expanding over time. In 2017, *Katrakilidis* defined tourism as "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected to any earning activity." This definition describes tourism as "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents" (Getz, 2016). The Tourism Society of England provided a definition for it in 2016: "Tourism can be defined as the temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations that are outside of the places where they normally live and work as well as the activities that people engage in while they are visiting each destination. It incorporates actions for any and all purposes." *Yung* (2019), on the other hand, cautioned against the temptation to overgeneralize, to propose universal models, and to conceive of the dynamics of tourism as a process that proceeds in a linear fashion. On the other hand, the author favoured a multilinear approach, a variety of typologies, and a diversity of types in order to better understand the dynamics of tourism. The International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism defined tourism as consisting of specific activities that are chosen voluntarily and carried out in environments that are distinct from those of the home. In an earlier piece of work, *Brooks*, (2022) put up a conceptual framework connecting tourism to the concept of passionate leisure. The tourist business has become the sector that contributes the most money to many countries' economies in the modern era. In recent years, this business in the service sector has evolved into a significant competitive force for the industries in the core manufacturing sector. As a direct result of this, there has been a substantial rise in the amount of research interest in the field.

There has been a substantial amount of written work published on a variety of topics concerning the principles and scopes of various areas of tourism. Mukhopadhyay is credited with making an early, crucial contribution to the fundamental economic analysis as well as the theoretical and applied methodology that is applicable to the tourist sector. Researchers, utilising a competition paradigm in their research, investigated the connection between social prosperity and tourism. In addition to this, the authors presented a conceptual model as a means of demonstrating the connections. In an earlier piece of work, Researchers went one step further and proposed a framework for the general study of tourism. This framework could be applicable for several fields, including academic research, education, business, and government arenas of tourism, and it made use of economic, technical, and holistic approaches.

Researchers provided a measuring model that is applicable to the lodging industry. This model is based on the four worlds created by researchers. The authors presented a demonstration of how the measurement scale might be improved further so that it can be utilised by destination marketers. Research on tourism does make use of performance measurement, albeit to a lesser level.

Researchers of a seminal study on the ethical dimensions of tourism, made the observation that ethical marketing of tourism products should promote promotion of the destination in order to attract a greater number of tourists. Yeoman et al. did a good job of discussing the concept of "authentic-seeking," which was taken into consideration within the context of tourism and focused on the possibilities for researchers. They investigated new methods of setting up virtual exhibitions in tourism art while they were working on an alternative strategy. The investigation of written texts can be done using a cutting-edge technique that has been given the name "virtual curation."

Several authors have taken a comprehensive look at the tourism sector by examining it from the point of view of numerous distribution channel views. In their recently released paper, authors assert that "there is no attempt in the tourism management literature offering frameworks or models, which can aid the tourism organisations in evaluating and controlling the overall tourism value chain." They have proposed a value chain model as a means of performance evaluation in the tourist industry. This model would enable the many actors in the industry to interact and coordinate their processes and activities in a more developed manner. The approach of content analysis was used by researchers to identify patterns of activity that exist in the context of the general environment of the tourism industry as well as possible trends that emanated from this environment and would influence the tourism industry in the near future. These patterns and trends were found to have an effect on the tourism industry. The authors have noticed two key trends: (i) a higher emphasis on precise targeting and aggressive marketing, and (ii) an increased reliance on technology in marketing to and providing service to visitors.

Marketing and promotion of tourism are seen as absolutely necessary for the productive growth of the tourism industry. In more recent times, there has been a substantial rise in the amount of domestic as well as international tourism that is carried out for a variety of reasons, including leisure, the modification of the natural environment, and religious or spiritual reasons. As a direct result of this, there has been a meteoric growth in the number of academic research activities focusing on the marketing aspects of the tourism industry. Numerous authors have usually conducted an analysis of the psychographic and demographic profiles of tourists, as well as their perceptions regarding the performance of a variety of tourism services. It is clear that a significant amount of attention in studies on tourism has been paid to various aspects of tourism marketing makes the observation that only a little amount of focus has been placed on the ethical marketing of tourism products. "The trend has been to look at definitional components of tourism marketing, which has been followed by prescription towards the management procedures," the author states that this has been the case. Researchers acknowledge that marketing and promotion are plainly vital for the effective development of tourism and hospitality, but he says that despite this fact, "it is often disregarded."

While addressing a variety of marketing management challenges, Researchers have offered a comprehensive analysis of the role that marketing management plays in the tourism industry. They have brought to light the importance of management and information analysis duties for service providers in the tourist industry, such as the many different kinds of private companies and public agencies. Researchers have performed an in-depth analysis of the numerous changes that are taking place in travel and tourism marketing and has arranged these changes according to a variety of overarching themes and underlying themes. It has been also studied and discussed the major themes and trends that are developing in the tourism business. The author highlights the importance of being proactive in order to prevent potential tourists from migrating to rival places and adds that the growth of tourism is a method to improve a country's economic as well as its social well-being. It has been observed that in a global market system that is becoming increasingly complex, the tourism industry needs to employ societal marketing methods that assist regional growth. Concerns regarding the national tourism industry's marketing techniques have also been addressed.

A very well vacation company's marketing process is vital for a tourist organisation to deliver and meet conditions in a continually changing environment, according to a conceptual framework on tourism marketing planning.

Scientists' stresses that one must take a holistic view to tourist marketing's multiple components. He believes a heuristic approach is needed to assess the ramifications, relevance, and efficacy of different tourist marketing strategies and methods in changing situations. Tourism promotion and marketing have also been examined. Numerous studies have stressed the necessity of vacation destination marketing using http data and relevant analyses. Researchers examined marketing and suggested modifications to tourism marketing philosophy, corporate structure, and structural design. Researchers suggested a national tourism marketing plan use multiple tools and tactics. The author outlined national tourism marketing. Researchers used multiple analysis methods to investigate management literature and tourism research at the macro and micro levels. Researchers found India's tourism segmentation variables. This supports product mix planning. Research was done over a decade ago. Postcolonial theory was used to analyse marketing image trends at each destination. The writers summarised their Third World brochure research. Similarly, provides a structure for organisations to properly implement an experiences marketing plan. Researchers coined "Electronic Word-of-Mouth (WOM)" to describe a cheaper way to promote hospitality and tourism.

In the ever evolving and increasingly competitive marketing landscape, marketing of tourist destinations has become increasingly important. The significance of it has been demonstrated by researchers with the assistance of domain-specific data and pertinent analysis. An outline of the theoretical study that addresses several concerns in the process of establishing marketing strategies for destinations is presented. The aim of this article is a synthesis of the various marketing theories as well as the relationship between marketing and planning of destinations, including the conflicting and symbiotic nature of that interaction. researchers centred their research on the idea of, and the ability to measure, destination image. Within the context of an intradisciplinary marketing viewpoint, the research also put out a conceptual model of the image of a tourist location. researchers collaborate together to construct a model that explains how an individual feels about a location after having visited it. Studies that were conducted in the city of Hong Kong served as the basis for researchers' model on "Tourism Destination Competitiveness," which was proposed by the authors. Researchers made an effort to evaluate the relative attractiveness of competing tourist sites by basing their analysis on the

perceptions that individual tourists have regarding where they choose to spend their vacation. The authors also emphasised the importance of using micro and macro data to conduct an analysis of the attractiveness of tourism destinations. Researchers have presented new techniques for established destinations to offer in a creative and sustainable way. Researchers employed a factor-cluster segmentation approach for the segmentation of visitors, while researchers presented these new approaches. On the other hand, researchers identified five worldwide drivers of tourism change and explored their influences on changes in the values and attitudes held by tourists. Researchers used the results of a survey they conducted in five different tourist destinations in South Australia to investigate the connection between involvement and a sense of attachment to one's surroundings. In addition to that, a structural model that analyses the predictive correlations between the dimensions of engagement and place attachment was constructed and validated as part of this study. Researchers made an effort to establish a connection between the attitudes of tourists and destination marketing. The responses of tourists were used as the primary data source for this study, and it focused on Malaysia and Australia's Northern Territory. Scientist have conducted an investigation on the significance of transport infrastructure as a factor in destination development, showing that it is part of the traditional demand for international tourism functions. Their findings demonstrated that it is important for destinations to have a variety of transportation options (2007). The infrastructure base of a country has also been mentioned as a potential predictor of the attractiveness of a location by the authors of the study. In an online poll, a method for content analysis based on neural networks was employed to measure the image of the destination from a phenomenographic post-positivist point of view researchers. Researchers have provided a case study that identifies the elements that influence the tourist's choice of destination. This information was published in their paper. In order to evaluate and rank the locations, the authors devised a model based on a 4-level Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), and they utilised fuzzy set theory.

Literature on Tourism Is Divided In to the Following Categories:

The vast majority of the publications in the field of tourist studies are geographically specific (case study based). There are still many facets of the region that need to be investigated in more detail. Many authors have provided in-depth assessments of tourist literature and categorised it from a variety of points of view. There are only a few examples of usual categories, as recorded by a variety of authors.

Eccles has provided a summary of a variety of articles that were published in the "Journal of Tourism Management" between the years 1989 and 1994 that focused on five primary topics (1995). The author has made an effort to determine the tendencies that are developing in the tourism industry, and as a result, the research on tourism has been categorised into five major themes. These themes are as follows: destination planning; marketing and promotion; new products; sustainable tourism; and transport.

Tourism research has addressed five main areas. Based on a four-year assessment of material in the "Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing," these five main themes—economic psychology, market segmentation and travel patterns, strategic marketing, technology breakthroughs, and travel and tourism communications—have been categorised. The review was conducted in order to categorise travel and tourism communications, strategic marketing, technological advances, and market segmentation.

In an analysis of 174 research articles that were published in the issues of "Travel and Tourism Analyst" published during the period from 1989–1994, researchers identified four main themes based on their significance and recurrence during the period that was being analysed. These themes were identified based on the fact that the articles were published during the time period that was being analysed. The following topics will be covered: (a) studies of the airline business; (b) studies of the hotel sector; (c) studies of outbound travel; and (d) studies of the tourism industry. The author has also brought attention to the problems that need to be investigated further in these areas.

Literatures that were published in three major tourism journals in the Asia Pacific region, namely the "Journal of Tourism Studies," "Tourism Recreation Research," and the "Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research," between the years 1989 and 1996, including both of those years, were categorised by researchers as falling into one of five major categories. These categories include: The following topics will be discussed: tourist markets; tourist flows; tourism development; sustainable tourism development; and the social, economic, and cultural repercussions of tourism.

The tourism business has been undergoing extraordinary developments in conjunction with the changes that have been taking place in the social structure. This has been reflected in the kinds of study that have been conducted as well as publications that are related to them. The industry has developed into such a vast area that, today, even trips related to health care and religious travels, among other types of travel, are seen as being among the most promising tourist sectors. In light of this, the categorization of the studies done on tourism is a process that is fraught with difficulty. This classification can be made while taking into consideration the traditional methods, as well as with the intention of accommodating the developing areas of tourism.

Over the course of the past two decades, the travel and tourism sector has experienced significant expansion. The growing interest and number of tourists in a variety of activities that were not traditionally thought of as being related with tourism were beneficial to the tourism industry as a whole. Although the practise of individuals from all over the world travelling for the purpose of pilgrimage and/or other spiritual activities dates back more than a century, it has only been within the last few decades that these pursuits have been acknowledged as a part of the tourism business. People have been travelling more frequently in recent years for a variety of reasons, including seeking medical treatment elsewhere, getting married in the location of their choice, and travelling for the goal of experiencing the thrills connected with various types of adventures. These kinds of sector-based activities are experiencing significant growth.

Evidently, these types of activities generate commercial chances in the area where the occurrences take place and have proven to be substantial cash makers. As a consequence of this, several study works and analyses of various facets (including infrastructure, marketing, economics, and so on) related with such activities have also been documented. As a consequence of this, there are a few extremely promising subfields in tourist research. These types of tourism include, but are not limited to, adventure tourism, cruise tourism, eco-tourism, event tourism, medical tourism, sex tourism, special interest tourism, volunteer tourism, wedding tourism, and rural tourism, to Nevertheless, research in these fields is still at its early stage.

Studies on Different Types of Tourism:

The customary idea that "the harder the journey, the better the reward" has been expanded by spiritual tourism into a broader concept that encompasses a desire for a change, escape from the monotony of daily life, as well as enthusiasm and heavenly nature for the average person. In light of this, there has been a growing desire in the academic community to investigate the various facets of spiritual tourism as a growing market area. Research in the fields of social science, medicine, and commerce are all beginning to pay an increasing amount of attention to spirituality. In recent years, there has been a startling spike in the number of people going on vacations to religious sites. Belief in spirituality has long been a driving force behind people's desire to travel, even in places with limited transportation and communication options. However, there hasn't been a lot of research done in a scientific setting on the marketing aspects of spiritual tourism. The vast majority of these research are either case-based or demographic in nature. The following subsection presents a brief review of the literature that has been published in 5 popular magazines.

The emergence of travel with a spiritual focus:

An notable increase in surge in the amount of published material over the second half of this decade, which indicates the establishment of a possible topic of research. As studied in review articles, the early research directions focused primarily on developing conceptual frameworks relating to "spirituality," "spiritual travel," "pilgrimage," and "religious travel." This can be deduced from the increased number of publications that occurred during the period of 1992-1995. Over the course of the past several years, the primary focus of study has changed towards the development of marketing strategies, the drivers of spiritual tourism, the development of typology models, and the analysis of the viewpoints and attitudes of tourists. It has been observed that the term "spiritual tourism," which encompasses a broad range of activities, frequently include "religious tourism" as well as "pilgrimage." Researchers offers some musings on the development of spirituality and makes some suggestions for expanding our comprehension in these areas. The author also places a strong emphasis on the importance of continued progress. In their research, researchers investigated the significance of the Hajj, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, from a marketing strategy viewpoint. They also investigated the perspectives of Muslims who participated in this crucial spiritual journey. The writers also made a contribution to the theory on spiritual tourism and the marketing of spiritual tourism by concentrating on Hajj as both an exceptional spiritual journey and a product or service. This allowed the authors to make a contribution to both of these fields. The research also found that using contemporary marketing ideas and tools was highly beneficial in offering a better perspective on the massive commercial components of Hajj. These concepts and tools were identified as having been used.

It has been found that the literatures analysed in this work can further be categorised into 4 groups depending on the topic of the publications. This finding was made possible by the fact that the literatures were analysed across a twenty year period. As indicated in Figure I, these categories include literatures on topics such as conceptualization, marketing, destinations for spiritual tourists, and sociocultural concerns. There has been a considerable amount of interest in the marketing of different facets of spiritual tourism. However, research into the sociocultural components of spiritual and pilgrimage tourism reveals a diversity of research interests, but research into the destinations themselves is quite few.

Prospective areas of investigation:

It is well acknowledged that the tourism industry is one of the most important economic drivers in many nations. It is well acknowledged that one of the most significant contributors to the revenue of a state is spiritual tourism. A great number of nations are famous for the spiritual heritages that they preserve. On the other hand, there has not been any structured research done in this area as of yet. Therefore, although there has been a positive trend in recent years, not enough written material on spiritual tourism has yet to be produced. This is despite the fact that the trend has been encouraging. There is a vast amount of untapped potential for research in this field.

It is necessary to conduct thorough research on the classification of inbound and outbound tourists. According to the recommendations made by researchers, segmentation should take place at the level of tourism stakeholders rather than at the level of destinations. Tourism marketers throughout the world agree that marketing a destination well is one of the most significant components of their profession. A comprehensive examination is required for a number of factors, including the segmentation and marketing features of spiritual destinations, the appeal of spiritual destinations, and the sustainability of spiritual destinations. Aspects of marketing strategies with reference to spiritual tourism have been reported in recent literatures. Each spiritual location may require a unique marketing strategy due to geological, cultural, and economic uniqueness. In light of this, structured research addressing quantification of strategic opportunity areas can be carried out with reference to Ansoff's matrix.

These researchers can study market penetration, creation, design and development, or diversification. Another intriguing research topic is spiritual visitors' perceptions of different spiritual locales. This phenomenon's impact on spiritual places' visitor numbers and economy needs to be examined. Because spiritual sites are located worldwide, this type of research may need to be done case-by-case. Spiritual destinations may attract tourists during holidays, unlike most general tourist destinations. For example, a pilgrim undertaking the Hajj in the Sea of Saudi Arabia would have different requirements and feelings than one performing the Nath Yatra in the Mountains (in the Indian Himalayas). This type of investigation could improve tourism offerings and infrastructure. Marketing spiritual tourism requires research. Marketing methods might be national, state, or local. Each strategy requires data analysis.

Conclusion:

Spiritual trips have skyrocketed in recent years due to significant transformations in people's views of spirituality. This shift has also affected academic research. Religious tourism, along with other sorts of sector-based tourism including adventure, eco, medical, wedding, and others, has seen an increase in written material. Reporting case-based studies (geo-specific, shrine-specific, etc.) has increased. Case-studies [geo-specific, shrine-specific, etc.] The most important tourist study categorical categories from various writers were examined. A new model for tourist reading, including spiritual tourism, has been proposed. Religious and pilgrimage tourism literature can be split into four basic categories based on research and writing subjects. Spiritual tourism has been deemed a promising research area in the literature. This field offers research opportunities. This study's key findings are:

- Tourism subfield studies have increased substantially in recent years.

- Religious and pilgrimage tourism research has grown significantly in the past decade. New literature is being published roughly four times faster in the last half of the current decade than in the first five.
- Spiritual or pilgrimage tourism literature has four thematic categories. Idea, marketing, economic, and socio-cultural.
- Spiritual tourism is a young academic field. Infrastructure development, destination analysis, destination segmentation, and visitor demographic segmentation are still unexplored.

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