



Prospects of Religious Tourism in India

Dr. Tulika Sharma, Guest Lecturer,
SoS in Social Work, Bastar Vishwavidyalaya, Jagdalpur, Dist-Bastar,
Chhattisgarh India

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Corresponding Author :

Dr. Tulika Sharma,
Guest Lecturer,
SoS in Social Work, Bastar
Vishwavidyalaya, Jagdalpur, Dist-Bastar,
Chhattisgarh India

shodhsamagam1@gmail.com

Received on : 14/11/2019
Revised on : -----
Accepted on : 20/11/2019
Plagiarism : 09% on 15/11/2019



Plagiarism Checker X Originality Report
Similarity Found: 9%

Date: Friday, November 15, 2019
Statistics: 316 words Plagiarized / 3513 Total words
Remarks: Low Plagiarism Detected - Your Document needs Optional Improvement

Prospects of Religious Tourism in India Abstract Religious Tourism is regarded as planning visits to other towns, cities or countries for religious purposes. Religious tourism is increasing now days. India is widely known for exotic religious places. Religious tourism has been one of the reasons of developing India. Many places like Kedarnath, Mahakaleswar, Jagannath puri, Tirupati, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath, Omkareshwar, Kashi Vishwanath, etc are most visited religious places in India. Even Foreigners also come to India to visit these places.

Abstract :-

Religious Tourism is regarded as planning visits to other towns, cities or countries for religious purposes. Religious tourism is increasing now days. India is widely known for exotic religious places. Religious tourism has been one of the reasons of developing India. Many places like Kedarnath, Mahakaleswar, Jagannath puri, Tirupati, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath, Omkareshwar, Kashi Vishwanath, etc are most visited religious places in India. Even Foreigners also come to India to visit these places. The Government is very much aware of the importance of religious tourism not only as an economic enabler, but also a tool to make sure community consensus. Religious tourism is one of the strongest implement to develop India. Tourism acts as a prominent empower in facilitating development of basic infrastructural facilities, generates income for the local community as well as the government, balances regional development strategies through 'umbrella' effect and stimulate tranquility and socio-cultural cooperation. But there are some challenges in front of government to develop religious tourism. Some issues or negative impact faced in the development of Religious Tourism in the Country. There some places suffer from the short, but exceptional seasons that change the dynamics of the region for the rest of the year. The char dham yatra in Uttarakhand is one of the best example. Squander Management, Air Pollution, Monetizing Religion, Lack of inspection of religious trusts are also negative impact. But apart from that can to fend or to allay all negative impact of

Religious Tourism through good management and policy farming and developing appropriate Institutional framework to stimulate the growth of Religious Tourism.

Keywords :-

Religious Tourism, local community, policy, Institutional framework.

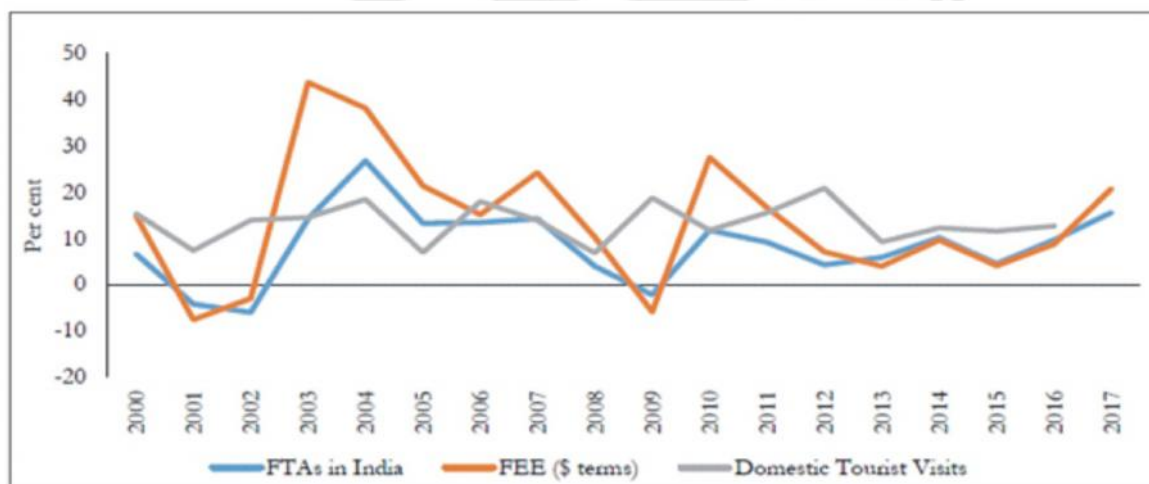
Introduction :-

Religious Tourism has exponential growth in the modern years in India. According to World Economic Forum, Travel and Tourism accounts for 5% of India's employment. It is also having huge potential for further growth is made visible by comparing the country's 7 million international visitors to China's 55 million. India having diverse resources be it cultural, or natural or intangible heritage or even sports events, plays very significant role in socio-economic development of the Nation. India's relevance as business travel destination is increasing along with its economic growth, it remains a price-competitive destination (8th) and recent changes in its visa regime: not yet reflected in the data rankings—have the potential to boost international arrivals.

However, longstanding infrastructure gaps remain, especially in tourism-specific infrastructure (109th) and the quality of roads. Despite some uneven progress, India also lags on health and hygiene (106th) and ICT readiness (114th). The safety and security situation is unsettling, with a perceived increase in the impact of crime and violence (97th), and India ranks only 139th for environmental sustainability.

According to the ECONOMIC SURVEY 2017-18 OF INDIA tourism has great potential. United Nation's world Tourism Organization International tourist arrivals reached a total of 12 billion in 2016, Domestic Tourism visits grew by 12.7 percent to 1,614 million in 2016 from 1,432 million in 2015.

Figure 1: Growth of FTAs, FEEs and Domestic Tourist Visits



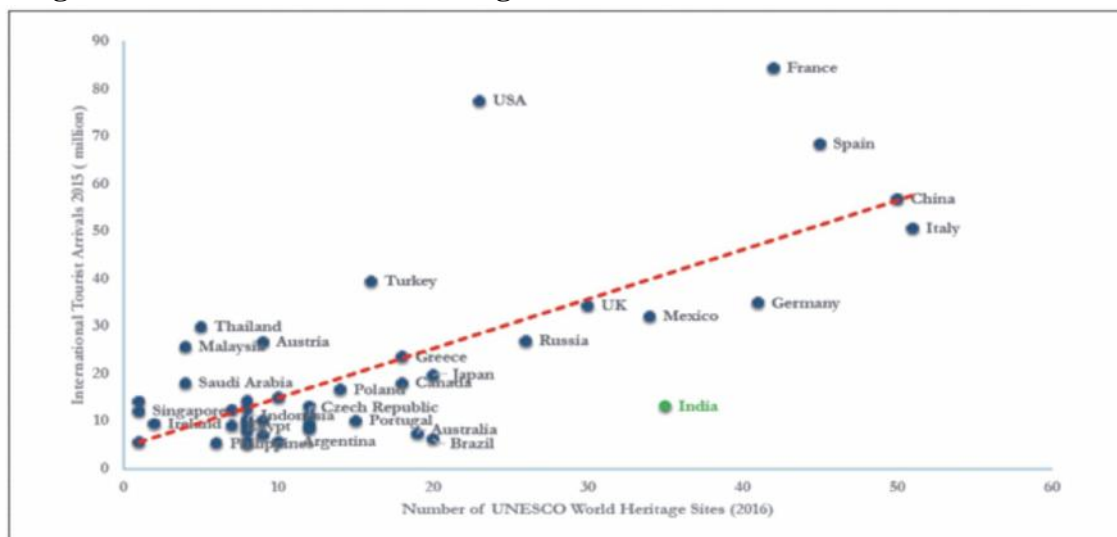
Source: Based on data from Ministry of Tourism data.

According to the Economic Survey 2016-17 of India International Tourist Arrivals to India, (Including NRI) was 13.3 million in 2015 with a growth of 1.4 percent, while as per the ministry of Tourism data foreign, Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) (excluding NRIs) during 2015 and 2016 were 8.0 million and 8.8 million with growth of 4.5 percent in 2015 and 9.7 percent in 2016.

Table 1: Foreign Tourism Arrivals (FTA) & Foreign Exchange Earnings in India

S.No.	Source	2009-10	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1	Tourism Foreign Tourist Arrivals (Million)	5.2	7.0	7.7	8.0	8.8
2	Foreign exchange earnings from tourism (Billion)	11.1	18.4	20.2	21.1	22.9

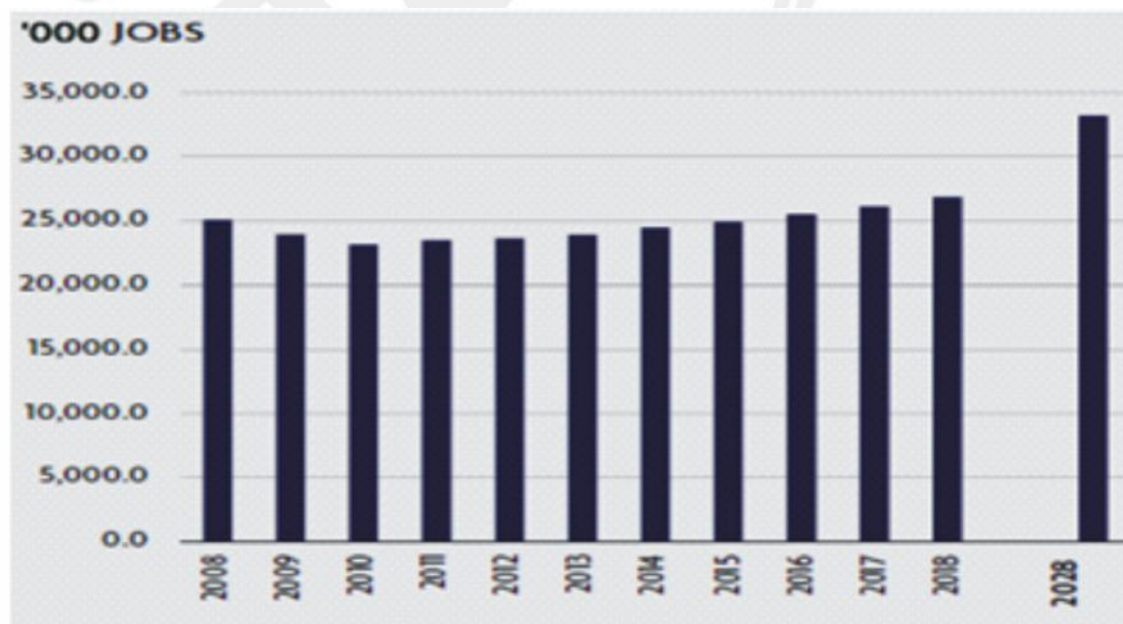
Figure 2: Number of World Heritage sites & International Tourist Arrivals 2015



Source: Based on UNWTO and UNESCO data.

According to Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2018 India of World Travel and Tourism Council As one of the world's largest economic sectors, Travel & Tourism creates jobs, drives exports, and generates prosperity across the world. in our annual analysis of the global economic impact of Travel & Tourism the sector is shown to account for 10.4% of global GDP and 313 million jobs, or 9.9% of total employment in 2017. Travel & Tourism generated 26,148,000 jobs directly in 2017 and this is forecast to grow by 2.8% in 2018 to 26,883,000 and rise by 2.1% pa to 33,197,000 jobs in 2028.

Figure 3: Direct Contribution of Travel & Tourism to Employment



India is one of the most favored destinations for Religious Tourism both foreign and domestic travelers. Tourism enables the International traveler to understand the miscellany of India's cultural. 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 truth in Religious tourism in India is the enormous progress made by the Indian economy. However, an infrastructure is still a curb. To expand the current growth of religious tourism, the government should invest for providing better facility like transport, accommodation, better roads, health and hygiene etc. India is really a distinctive country that has plenty to offer to the tourists. Rich culture, heritage, beauty and history of India mesmerize a lot of tourists to travel India each year. India is a big country with sufficient destinations to travel.

Religious Tourism is the substructure of society in India and order of Religious culture, heritage, and principles supports to policy, management and development objectives. India each Pilgrimage is also a popular attribute of Indian historic culture with a long history. Indian religious tourism capabilities have been one of the foremost fountainheads for country development especially due to the presence of many religious tourism places in India Economic, environment and social development of local resources. 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.

There are two distinct facet to Religious Tourism in India; one, the belief of the domestic tourist, who has a spiritual attachment to the divinity/religious beliefs; the other is the 'foreign' tourist, someone belonging to a different religion, place or country, for whom the destination and the religious practices have the aspect of 'newness', a spiritual experience different from their own, nonetheless the moral values being delivered remaining the same. For creation of tourism infrastructure, two major schemes have been implemented - Swadesh Darshan (Integrated Development of Theme-Based Tourist Circuits) and PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive).

Table 2: Religious Tourism in India

S.No.	State	Place
1	Chhattisgarh	Shri Rajiv Lochan Temple, Danteshwari Temple, Maa Bamleshwari Temple, Mama-Bhanja Temple, Mahamaya Temple, Dudhadari Temple, Somnath Temple
2	Madhya Pradesh	Mahakaleshwar Temple, Narmadakund, Kapil dhara, Omkareshwar Jyothirlinga Temple, kedareshwar Temple, Mandleshwar,
3	Utter Pradsh	Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Vrindavan, Mathura Shri Krishna Janmbhoomi Temple, Gupt Godavari, Ayodhya Ramjanma Bhoomi, Jambudweep Jain Tirth, Kumbh Mela, Trivwni Sangam, Vindhayavasini Devi Temple,
4	Bihar	Bodhgaya, Mahbodhi Temple, Great Buddha Statue, Venuvana, Japanese stupa,
5	Rajasthan	Shrinathji Temple, Pushkar Brahma Temple, Ajmer Shrif, Dilwara Temple, karni Mata Temple, Sachiya Mata Temple, Rani Sati Temple, Dholi Sati Dadi Mandir,

Objective of the study :-

- To find out opportunities and challenges of Religious Tourism in India.

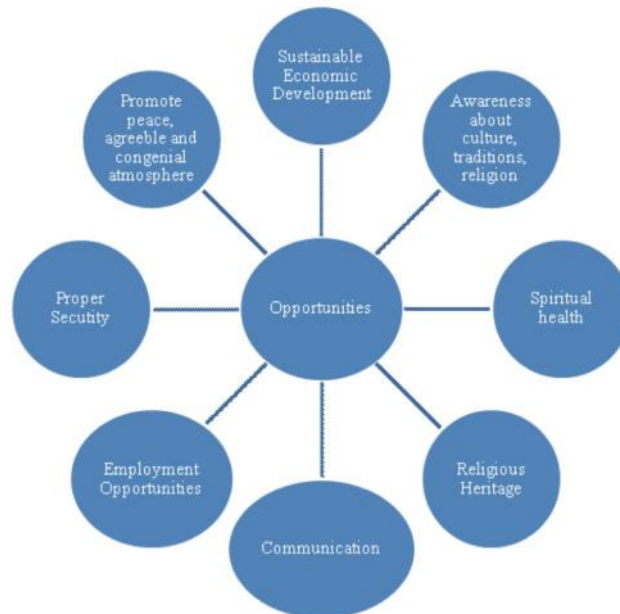
Review of Literature :-

J.K.Sharma (2000) in his book entitled, "Tourism Planning and Development: A New Perspective" has emphasized 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 organization are the basic components for planning and developing tourism in a particular region. He has made an attempt to present an alternative plan and development process which is sustainable, for tourism and also suggested for conceptualizing sustainable development the importance of forming concepts. 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 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 development. The authors have also viewed that rural tourism provides income and employment opportunities to local people in rural areas utilizing huge natural resources. 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 organization 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 tourism. 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 India tourism. O.P. Kandari and Ashish Chandra (2004) in their book entitled, "Tourism Development Principle 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, ethic and environment 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 areas.

Opportunities of Religious Tourism in India :-

Further opportunities for religious tourism in India can be understood from the below diagram-1.

Figure 4: Opportunity of Religious Tourism in India



Religious Tourism will promote Indian economic revenue and will pave the path of sustainable economic development. Religious Tourism will improve people's spiritual health because now a day's people are being more materialistic which is leading them towards stress, anxiety, and crime. This sort of tourism will be helpful in this way. Religious Tourism will be wonderful opportunity for our highly technical gazette friendly new generation to know about our own culture, traditions, religion. Religious Tourism will make India a global icon for its rich cultural and religious heritage. Religious Tourism involves a great deal of communication with the individuals, within as well as outside the places of worship. The communication normally takes places with the religious leaders as well as the individuals, who possess strong viewpoints and perspectives regarding faith. There are some religious places within the country, where individuals feel that all their needs and desires would get fulfilled. Hence, for this purpose, they are involved into effective communication with religious leaders and another aspect of communication is enhancement of knowledge.

The religious tourism generates employment opportunities. The development of tourism would act as stimulate in building entrepreneurship, small business enterprises and economy diversity. The individuals, who are interested in working in this area, are provided with the opportunities to develop their capability, skills and abilities, so that they are able to important contribution in improving the socio-economic benefits.

There are numerous religious places in India that have been established since ancient times. These religious places have their significance. Hence, what is of utmost significance on the part of the individuals is to ensure that their authenticity and original character is maintained. In most cases, when the devotees make an entry into the religious place, then there is a security check. They are required to keep their valuables outside and then are permitted to go inside to offer their prayers. It is vital to ensure that their authenticity and original character is maintained. The religious authorities ensure that proper rules and policies are formulated and individuals follow them appropriately.

In India, individuals normally possess the viewpoints that religious tourism would be beneficial to them in the promotion of peace and harmony and resolution of conflicts and disputes. In every household, among the family members or in their employment, individuals

do sometimes get involved into occurrence of conflicts and disputes. This in most cases in unfavorable and disappointing. Therefore, in order to promote peace, agreeable and congenial atmosphere and relationships among the individuals, one plans religious tourism. Therefore, it can be stated that promoting of peace and harmony is also one of the important characteristics of religious tourism.

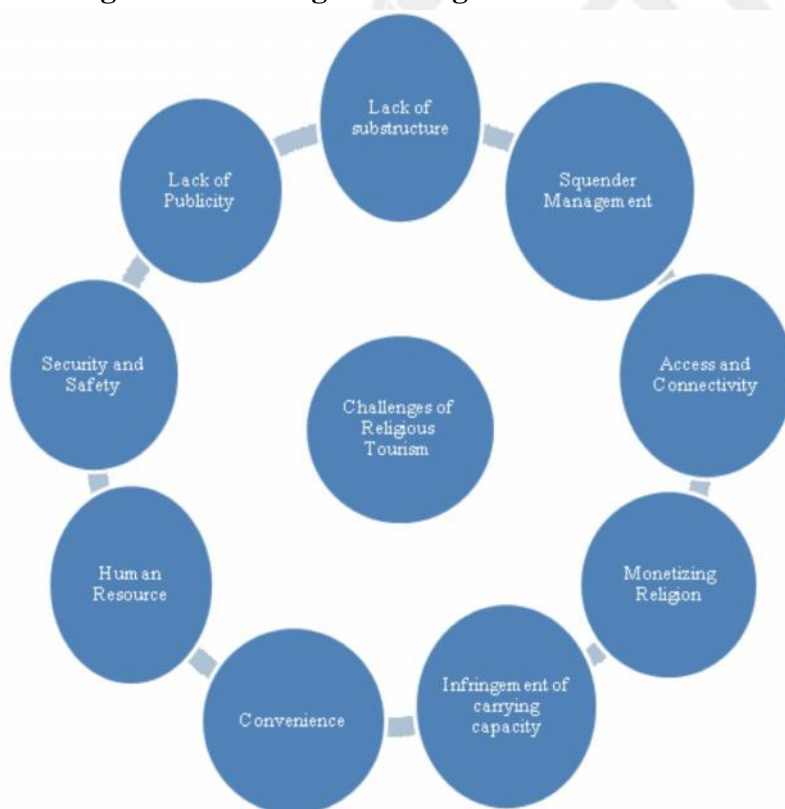
Challenges of Religious tourism in India :-

Deficiency of proper substructure :- A big challenge in front of government to fulfill the deficiency of proper substructure. Substructure needs for the travel and tourism range from corporeal substructure such as roads, electricity, water supply, telecommunications etc. Because of the poor infrastructure the international tourist hesitate to come. It has been a vital cause why the international tourist has been skipping the country. Squander Management – In part a derivative of the problem of carrying capacity, the squander management problem has aggravated as science and technology grew to usher us into the ‘Plastic era’.

Access and connectivity :- To harness India’s tourism efficacy, various endeavor are being taken for opening new destination and exploring alcove section. However basic facilities such as air, road connectivity and hospitality services at these destination and the connecting cities are insufficient. This is utmost obstacle for the development of tourism.

Monetizing Religion :- In the race for developing as many niches as possible, there is oftentimes the issues of religion being ‘monetized’, as the host community gets increasingly driven by the ‘profit motive.’

Figure 5: Challenges of Religious Tourism in India



Infringement of Carrying Capacity :- Most of the religious places within the country, major or minor, experience short term, but intense seasons that modify the dynamic forces and the changing aspects of the region for the rest of the year. The Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand is one such example. It begins from May until November and puts a severe pressure upon the

transport infrastructure of the Garhwal region. When there is occurrence of monsoons and a lot of road construction is still under progress, then the region also experiences landslides. Hence, environmental issues, such as occurrence of landslides impose detrimental effects within the course of development of religious tourism (Shanthakumari, 2017).

Convenience :- Convenience at various tourist locations and route need to be improved basic convenience such as drinking water, well maintained and clean waiting rooms and toilets, first aid etc.

Human Resource :- Availability of skilled manpower is a utmost challenge faced by the travel and tourism industry, to blemish growth in the travel and tourism industry, trained manpower or workforce is required. If manpower increased, travel and tourism industry will defiantly improve.

Security and safety :- In India there is lack of security and safety. The major reasons being the internal community riots and also the terrorist attacks faced from time to time. The country is highly unsafe for females and there is poor discipline as well as political instability in the country.

Lack of publicity :- Lack of publicity for good tourist destinations among the travelers and also lack of good education to the locals on receiving guests and hosting them. Also, lack of publicity on cuisines and cultures.

The way for the development of Religious Tourism in the country :-

India has affluence of religious centers in the country. In India Religious tourism can provide a special experience to the anxious observer of faith and culture. The identification of basic insufficiency, necessity of facilitating products and some issues which is later overcoming are necessary for paving the way for development of this niche sector of India in a way so that India can become very attractive place for tourist.

Developing Infrastructure :- Infrastructure sector is a key driver for the Religious Tourism. The sector is highly responsible for propelling India's overall development for initiating policies that would ensure time-bound creation of world class infrastructure in the country. State Government is required to streamline the development of the entire religious tourism circuit existing in a given region/area. Developed infrastructure will definitely increase the religious tourism.

Maintain the ecological balance :- The most important point being that the natural balance in an ecosystem is maintained. Inappropriate ecological balance put negative impact on tourists. In this scenario training of the local population obtaining it is a source of livelihood from tourism in the field of environment management can be the model approach.

Inspection of religious trusts :- Religious trust is very important part of religious tourism. There needs to be a practice for evaluating the financial status and regulation of religious trusts as it will reduce global anxieties about money laundering and terrorist financing activities. Such a law will also pave the way to make public names of organization that claim tax release to make sure greater transparency. This is especially pivotal in a scenario when some of India's religious trusts are among the richest in the world.

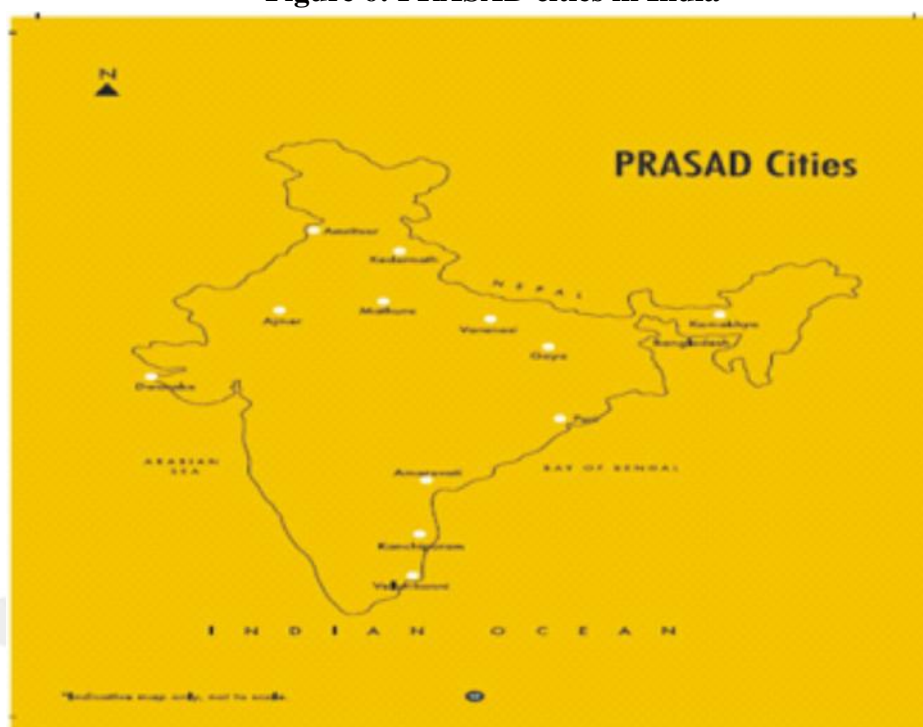
Maintain the impact of globalization :- Now a days India has effected with globalization. Religious+ Tourism is based on the values, norms, customs, practices, traditions, and beliefs of a particular region, this have to be maintained. It is only by conserving these local values, traditions and customs that one can provide a actual and original religious tourism product. India is known for its values, traditions, norms, and tradition.

Ameliorate Connectivity :- Attracting tourist to remote religious areas will need to ameliorate the connectivity to these regions to develop these into commercially feasible tourism sites. The Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India has developed specialized infrastructure for the development of Buddhist Tourism Circuit by developing an international airport near Gaya and provided a strong impetus to the development of Buddhist Tourism Circuit. The airport operates flights directly from key SAARC countries such as China, Japan, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, etc.

Government Intervention towards promotion of Religious Tourism in India :-

- I. **PRASAD :-** Pilgrimage tourism is a matter of trust, beliefs, and devotion. PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and spiritual Augmentation Drive) Scheme's missions to develop pilgrimage tourism, generate employment, economic development, provide facilities & good services to tourist and developed infrastructure. This scheme is proposed to be implemented as a central sector scheme during the 12th Five-year plan and beyond.

Figure 6: PRASAD cities in India



- II. **SWADESH :-** This Scheme is based on development of circuits in the country. The Government of India, Ministry of Tourism (MOT) launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme (Central Sector Scheme) – for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits in the country in 2014-15. This scheme's objectives are economic growth, job creation, aware to local communities about importance of tourism and development of tourist facilitation services for their satisfaction.
- III. **Adopt a Heritage Scheme :-** The “Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchan” Scheme is a step of the ministry of tourism. It was launched in September 2017 on World Tourism Day by president ‘Ram Nath Kovind’. The main objectives of this scheme is to develop the tourist sites, maintaining basic facilities, like drinking water, cleanliness, travel information and guidance, proper sanitation etc. “under the scheme the government has put up a list of over 93 ASI monuments. ASI protects 3,686 ancient monuments and archaeological sites, including 36 World heritage sites. So far 31 agencies or monument mitras have been approved to adopt 95 monuments/tourist sites.

Conclusion :-

Religious Tourism plays very significant role in socio-economic development of a State. It promotes cultural diversity, spirituality; bringing foreign exchange provides employment opportunities and encourages masses to mutually exchange their values, cultures, traditions and way of living. Further it helps in managing soft power of the countries in maintaining foreign relationships. Religious Tourism in India has been diverse and culturally rich. The most visited religious tourism destinations in India are the states of Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Government of India has taken several initiatives to encourage, promote and develop tourism. Further, in order to promote tourism in India celebration of 'Paryatan Parv' which have three components namely 'Dekho Apna Desh' i.e. to encourage Indians to visit their own country, "Tourism for All" i.e. promoting tourism related activities across all states in the country and "Tourism & Governance" i.e. focusing on the governance of tourism through considering stakeholders in inclusive way are significant steps. Thus it may be concluded that religious tourism can be considered as a key driver of inclusive socio-economic development of a state. Further emphasis on this sector through proper policy interventions is also expected to play crucial role in integrating regions having diversity in multiple facets of life.

Reference :-

1. Cevallos, M.C.R. (2016). *Religious Tourism, National Tourism Guide*, Retrieved October 07/2018 from <http://190.95.226.74/bitstream/45000/199/1/RELIGIOUS>.
2. Shanthakumari, R. (2017). *Challenges and Opportunities of Spiritual Tourism in India*. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(1), 737-740. Retrieved October, 2018 from <http://www.allresearchjournal.com/archives/2017/vol3issue1/partj/3-4-173-131.pdf>.
3. *Diverse Beliefs*, (April 2012). *Tourism of Faith Religious tourism gains ground*, Strategic Initiatives & Government Advisory (SIGA) Team, .
4. Sharma, J.K., (2000). "Tourism Planning and Development", Kansishka Publisher, New Delhi, p.17.
5. Wilson H. and Venes J., (2001). "Factors for Success in Rural Promotion and Development, Deep and Deep Publications Private Limited, New Delhi, pp. 132-138.
6. Mishra R., (2000). "Pilgrimage Tourism – Case Study of Brajmandal", Ph.D. Thesis Submitted to Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.
7. Batra, G.S. and Dangwal R.C. (Eds.), (2001). *Tourism Promotion and Development*, Deep and Deep Publications Private Limited, New Delhi, pp. 51-52.
8. Kandari O.P. and Chandra Ashish, (2004). "Tourism Development Principles and Practices", Shree Publishers, New Delhi, p.124.
9. http://reports.weforum.org/travel-and-tourism-competitiveness-report-2015/index-results-the-travel-tourism-competitiveness-index-ranking-2015/?doing_wp_cron=1548830624.5680680274963378906250
10. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/what-is-adopt-a-heritage-scheme/article23866697.ece>
11. http://www.adoptaheritage.in/pdf/indicative_list.pdf
