

Chapter 18

Types of Religious Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Religious tourism is considered as one of the interesting and oldest areas of research in the field of tourism. The process of observing and practicing the religious activity during the visit of any sacred place combined with the zeal of faith in the heart of practitioner is categorized as religious tourism. Many of the researchers have explained its different types in their own perspectives. Within the boundaries of modern scientific society, modern religious tourism can be classified into two major types. One is pilgrimage and the other one is intellectual learning excursions. The second main category has two branches. These intellectual learning excursions are based on two mottos of the tourists. One is regarding the scientific know-how, and the second one is regarding attending the religious-cultist events.

Objectives of the Study

Religious tourism is gaining attention in today's globalized world rapidly. Though it is practiced for a long time as the Pilgrimage. But over time, it has been merged into various types, which are still to be explored. So, this study will investigate new types of religious tourism. The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To put attention towards the significance and recognition of religious tourism in the field of tourism.
2. To define the types of religious tourism within the modern scientific society.
3. To explore how these other types of religious tourism were realized in the modern world.

INTRODUCTION

Religion and tourism are linked with each other closely. Many of the travelers execute religious voyages, including domestic and international tours. According to UNWTO (2011), almost six hundred religious tours take place every year, comprising domestic and international religious tours. Religious tourism

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has been characterized in the following words: “It is a special tourist activity oriented by religious culture, with the help of specific eco-cultural environment, and it refers to such special tourist activities as worship, research, sightseeing and culture carried out by religious followers and lay tourists”(Raj et al., 2013). Religious voyage is a unique type of the tourism industry, which is totally or seriously roused for religious reasons.

One of the pioneer types of religious tourism is Pilgrimage. Religious tourism often referred the spiritual tourism (Tala & Padurean (2019); Smith et.al. (2010)), is the process of observing and practicing religious activity during the visit of any sacred place combined with the zeal of faith in the heart of the practitioner. Religious tourism is one of the ancient types of tourism, which is practiced by the faith keepers since the rise of religion. According to CBI¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Religious tourism is a type of tourism exclusively or strongly motivated by religious reasons. This is one of the oldest forms of tourism. It can also be referred to as faith tourism or spiritual tourism”.

With time, the increase in globalization has given a force to push forward the phenomena of religious tourism (Mustafa 2010). Many tourists go out for tourism just for the sake of love for their God, or in search of knowledge of reality, or attend religious events as an obligatory part of their religion or just for innovation and knowledge gaining activity. Reasons behind the religious tourism can be many, as, to pray for their physical or spiritual motive, to pray for their selves or relatives, to gain peace and spiritual benefits, to visit the places just for the sake of curiosity, to visit the shrines or temples or sacred places to increase their knowledge.

By traveling towards the centers, mainly considered as prestigious, flawless, and pure, many travelers in modern societies expect to go through a pure and religious reality in which their shattered individuals gathered again (Allcock 1988; Cohen 1986, 1988 & 2006). Their attachment and scattered bounds may be explained as a diaspora of responsiveness – a dynamic or religious, despite physical, scattered in which individuals don’t entirely present in the here and now; they are broken into groups, in the past and future (Cohen 1986; Cohen 2006). Travelers usually make these journeys in search of peace, serenity, and change their selves and “personal authenticity”. (Desforges 1998; Noy 2004; Cohen 2006). Like the ancient way of pilgrims, the traveler wished to be altered in a more useful and better form. In the words of MacCannell (1976, 1992), tourism has been considered as “cognitive activity”, but it affects the individual’s behaviors and sentiments (Cohen 2006).

If we look some years back, religious tourism has become a widely used research area. Mukherjee et.al. (2020), investigated the importance of religious tourism and also posed a need to do more work in this field. Many of the researchers have explained the importance of religious tourism and its relation and impacts on other variables but its types are still needed to be understood, as no such research work has been done in this regard. By living in a more dynamic world and more scientific society, it is important to also throw some light on the types of religious tourism.

Religious Tourism can be categorized into two major types, one is Pilgrimage, and the other one is intellectual learning excursions. Pilgrimage is one of the oldest types and some researchers have also given the name of pilgrimage as religious tourism (Pusacasu 2015), it is one of the oldest types practiced by people of many ages. It is offered by faith keepers of many religions, to derive the sense of peace, serenity, forgiveness and to fulfill obligatory duties. The later one, intellectual learning excursions have emerged as a modern and more important type of religious tourism. With a more globalized world, this modern type has gained much value. These intellectual learning excursions may be further categorized into two more types. These excursions may be performed to seek scientific knowledge. The scientific

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