

Pilgrimage Tourism in Kerala – An Evaluative Study in Kasargod District

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All religions have advocated the cause of pilgrimage tourism. Holy places are glorified in literature and other historical sources to create an interest in the people about them. Pilgrimage tourism has made significant contributions to: (i). National Integration, (ii). Development of moral and spiritual values, (iii). Religious harmony and (iv). multi-dimensional activities of pilgrim centers. The institution of pilgrimage tourism (Tirtha-Yatra) acted as one of the most potent forces in fostering the territorial and cultural unity of India. Pilgrimages tended to level up all men by bringing them together to the same holy rivers or shrines. The atmosphere and environment at tirthas make it easy for pilgrims to remain at a high spiritual level and inculcate in them a mood of reverence that last long even after their return from the pilgrimage. Some of the pilgrim centers reveal a synthesis of all the ancient religious movements of India viz., Saivism, Vaisnavism, Jainism and Buddhism. The pilgrim centers have exercised an enormous influence on our social life. They provided employment to the architects, artisans, sculptors, dancers etc. besides helping to feed the hungry.

Even in ancient times when people had to travel over great distances on foot, with the aid of animals or carts, or both, pilgrimage sites have always been a significant part of Indian culture and custom. Indians travelled long distances, covering all regions in the country, to go on pilgrimage. Not only Saints, Sanyasis but also ordinary people performed these pilgrimages. Pilgrimage to religious places all Yatras in India are marked with 'geo-piety' and reverence for the environment. With this long and religiously embedded tradition, the flow of people to places of religious importance in India has been increasing. The number of people visiting the country's pilgrim centres has significantly expanded thanks to contemporary transportation methods like air travel, train travel, and road travel. While in those days, when the transport facilities were not available, visit to pilgrim places was planned only at the end of the life, now with all the modern means of conveyance, travel to pilgrim centers is planned and performed several times in one's life.

Pilgrimage tourism refers to travel that actively or strongly encourages tourists to acquire a religious perspective and behaviour. It is one of the oldest types of tourist attractions and a historical phenomenon of spiritual development that can be divided into numerous varieties. The temporary religious sightseeing is well known to occur during excursions to neighboring pilgrimage sites or religious gatherings. visits to conferences or major domestic and international pilgrimage sites that last many days or even weeks are referred to be "durable" visits. This essay examines the issues and challenges related to pilgrimage travel. The amount of the socioeconomic growth brought on by pilgrimage tourism, as well as an analysis of the communication issues

Tourism, which is ultimately a form of economic activity, has developed as a booming global industry. Today, tourism is a widespread activity that provides millions of people with jobs and a means of subsistence. It also generates foreign exchange, fosters national integration and balanced regional development, revitalises art and culture, dispels inter-national prejudices and mistrust, and advances world peace. One of the tourism sectors with the strongest growth rates worldwide is pilgrimage. By promising the reward of soul purification and the accomplishment of goals relating to daily life difficulties, the religious dimension of pilgrim tourism serves as the foundation of tourism. India's tourism industry is growing more quickly for a variety of reasons.

Intercultural understanding is promoted by pilgrimage tourism, which also helps local handicrafts and cultural endeavours. In terms of its contribution to foreign exchange profits, the creation of new income, and the opening up of job prospects, it plays a key role in the economy of the country. This means that a sizable chunk of tourism's potential is currently untapped. Tourism is currently regarded as an industry in all industrialised countries as a result of the rapid advancement of science and technology. Certain economic production and distribution activities are in great demand due to the huge volume of international tourists visiting the area. In the services sector, the industry of pilgrimage tourism has grown to be second only to that of information technology in importance. The contribution of domestic pilgrimage tourism is crucial to attaining the goals of the country.

TOURISM IN KERALA

Kerala was ranked in the categories of "God's own country," "Ten Paradises of the World," and "50 must-see places of a lifetime" in National Geographic Traveller magazine. Since the beginning of time, the state has drawn visitors from all over the world due to its seaside location, abundance of vegetation, and distinctive culture. Kerala is a popular tourist destination for many different reasons. India's state of Kerala has significant tourism potential. The state that speaks Malayalam provides different kinds of

tourism to different kinds of travellers. Different religious and spiritual pilgrims travel to Kerala to carry out religious rites at significant pilgrimage sites. Kozhikode, Mavelikkara, Karumadi, Karunagapally, and Maruthukulangara all have Buddha sculptures, which suggests that Theravada Buddhism first arrived in Kerala in the third century. Shri Vasupujya Swami, the Jain Temple in Jainimedu,

KERALA HILL STATION TOURISM

Kerala tourism is growing at an alarmingly rapid rate. Every year, thousands of tourists arrive in Kerala. Kerala tourism, which is well-known for its scenic beauty, natural beauty, and other attractions, has never had to look back in its development. The Western Ghats, a group of heavily forested mountain ranges in Kerala, are home to some uncommon, exotic plant and animal species as well as tropical evergreen, deciduous, and semi-deciduous jungles. Nature and animal lovers love to visit these hill towns and high mountain regions. Huge expanses of coffee, tea, rubber, and fragrant spices like cardamom, pepper, and clove are grown on these high slopes.

KERALA BACKWATER TOURISM

The most well-known attraction for tourists in Kerala is its backwaters, which significantly boosts the state's tourism industry. The hubs of backwater tourism include Alappuzha, Kollam, and Kumarakom. Boat races done during festival seasons are another popular tourist attraction that greatly helps Kerala's tourism industry. Mirror-still lagoons, picture-perfect lakeshores, palm-fringed canals, and coastlines bustling with views of village life are all abundant in Kerala. Kerala beaches are well-known for their spectacular beauty all over the world. The backwaters have proven to be a benefit for the tourism sector, providing guests with exquisite houseboat rides and bringing in sizable sums of money for Kerala tourism. As one observes the locals engaging, scenes from rural life are revealed.

HOME STAY TOURISM IN KERALA

The home stays are without a doubt one of Kerala's many unique experiences. Homestays in Kerala are Keralites' homes that have been rented out to tourists and travellers for use while they visit the state's tourist attractions. These accommodations are truly a home away from home because they let you develop close ties with the host family and the local community. Tourists can get a first-hand taste of rural living, ethnic cuisine, and regional culture by staying in a homestay.

MEDICAL TOURISM IN KERALA

Kerala has a substantial medical tourism market. Kerala has a great deal of potential to expand the country's health tourism industry. Potential health tourists may make it their hub and one of their top travel locations worldwide. Due to its Allopathy, Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Dental packages, Kerala is frequently touted as a health destination. Due to its reputation for both ancient and modern forms of medicine, including Ayurveda, yoga, meditation, and homoeopathy, as well as its affordability, Kerala has developed a strong brand name for itself in the healthcare industry.

Objectives:

To determine the socio-cultural, economic, and positive and negative effects of pilgrimage tourism.

To study the potential and employment opportunities of pilgrimage tourism in Kasaragod district

To analyze leading pilgrimage tourist destinations in Kasaragod district by number of tourists, income, and resources

To find major challenges and problems in pilgrimage tourism in Kasaragod district

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

By analyzing the relevance and applicability of the pilgrimage tourism in Kasaragod can suggest suitable methods to make new policies for the enforcement of tourism programs in the region. It can give additional earnings to the local communities. Heritages and monuments would be more protected, and tourism of the place would be enhanced in total. Along with that, the local people can find out parallel methods to find more money by arranging better facilities. Therefore, the present study has a wide scope in the current scenario.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

E. B. Khedkar and Yogesh Hole According to Snehal Pawar, pilgrimage tourism significantly affects India's environment and natural ecosystem. It has been established that while pilgrimage tourism contributes to economic growth and revenue for a nation, its negative effects on the environment need to be examined and addressed by the relevant parties. (hole et al. 2019, #). K. Ravindran and J. Prabhu (2020) They discovered in their research that the great nation of India is regarded as the centre of religious and spiritual tourism. People of various religious beliefs live there. As a result, the nation is home to a wide variety of

sites of worship, including mosques, gurudwaras, churches, and temples. The experience of visiting those pilgrimage places in India is very wonderful (J

DATA COLLECTION

Data collecting uses both primary and secondary sources of information.

PRIMARY DATA AND SECONDARY DATA

The core of the study is built on primary data that was gathered via Google form questionnaires from residents, visitors, and panchayath officials. The processing of primary data was little complicated because of various challenges including limited time and no direct contact etc. The major tool used to get the opinions of respondents through questionnaires by Google form.

To learn about theoretical and reported concerns in the destinations, secondary data was gathered from a variety of sources, including newspapers, magazines, brochures, social media, and electronic media. The secondary data mainly used to formulate theoretical aspects of the research. The data help to find the opportunities and gaps within the research framework.

SAMPLING

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE

Locals from the Kasaragod district as well as tourists who have travelled there make up the study's demographic. The study's sample size is 100.

Method of sampling:

The sampling method used for data collection is simple random sampling method used to collect from local people and tourists.

TOOLS FOR THE DATA ANALYSIS

Tables, percentage, pie diagram and field notes are the major qualitative method used to analyse the data. For the observation data collection techniques and field notes will be very useful for the research.

CULTURE OF KASARAGOD

Kasaragod, the northernmost state of Kerala, is rich in hills, forts, temples, and backwaters. The area is known for its ceremonial dance Theyyam, a form of performance art that combines dance, myth, drama, music, art, and theatrics. Kasaragod is frequently described as the country of gods, forts, hills, and rivers. As many as nine rivers flow through this little district, giving Kasaragod its distinctive beauty of coconut palms swinging over rows of tiny hills and streams rushing to the sea. Since seven languages, including Malayalam, Tulu, Kannada, Marathi, Konkani, Byari, and Urdu, are spoken there as opposed to the other districts of Kerala, Kasaragod is often referred to as Saptha Bhasha Sangama Bhoomi (The Land of Seven Languages).

The region is renowned for its ceremonial dance Theyyam, an art form that combines dance, myth, drama, music, art, and theatrics. It is frequently referred to as the country of forts and gods. The cultures of Kasaragod are compatible with those of Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. Kasaragod is home to numerous festivals, visual arts, and folk art forms. Yakshaganam, Theyyam, Oppana, Mappilapattu, Duffimuttu, and other prominent art forms can be found in Kasaragod. The buffalo race is held here as a special occasion. It has to do with the locals' agrarian lifestyle. The freshly ploughed fields are where the buffalo race is held, and it is a popular tourist attraction. The cultural legacy of Tulunadu includes this celebration.

OTHER TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN KASARAGOD

Kasaragod, Kerala's most northern district, is home to stunning forts and beaches. It is a location with significant historical and archaeological value. Kasaragod served as the Arabs' commercial hub for a very long time. The Bekal fort, also known as Kasaragod's most well-known tourist destination, is a fort located in Bekal. The Chandragiri fort is yet another fort that exists. In Kasaragod, there are backwaters near Chandragiri and Valiyaparamba. Bekal Beach, Kapil Beach, and Pallikere Beach are Kasaragod's primary beaches. The following list includes Kasaragod's main pilgrimage sites.

ANANTHAPURA LAKE TEMPLE

The Padmansbhaswamy, the residing and ruling god of the town of Tirvanthapuram, is honoured in the Ananthapura temple. It is thought that the Padmanabhaswamy temple originated at this charming and intriguingly designed temple in the middle of a lake in Ananthapura village, in the South Indian coastal state of Kerala, even though Thiruvananthapuram has a separate, much more elaborate and detailed temple with a vast campus devoted solely to the deity form of Lord Vishnu, the creator and preserver

in the Hindu pantheon of Gods. This temple in the Ananthapura village is called the Anantha Padmanabha Swamy Temple because it is thought to be the moolasthan, or the original installation venue, of the god Padmanabhaswamy.

An interesting fact about the waters around the shrine of the god Anantha Padmanabha Swamy is that they are home to a solitary vegetarian crocodile that is thought to be protecting the temple's wealth and jewels as well as the welfare of the deity. The temple crocodile, a vegetarian resident of these waters for more than 20 years, has grown to be a popular attraction. Both tourists and temple personnel call the crocodile affectionately Babia. The Ananthapura Lake Temple, as it is well known, is located in the Kasaragod District of Kerala, deep within the little village of Ananthapura. On October 9, 2022, Babiya (the Crocodile) went away. A cave to the right is a noteworthy location to keep in mind while touring the temple.

MADHURA TEMPLE

The Sri Madanantheshwara Siddhivinayaka Temple in Kerala's Kasaragod district is one of the most well-known pilgrimage sites. Lord Shiva is the temple's presiding god, although Lord Ganapathy is its most well-known deity. The temple draws followers because of its distinctive and beautiful architectural appeal. It is located along the Madhuvahini River's banks. Masjid al-Dinar. The Persian scholar and traveller Malik Ibn Dinar, who is credited with spreading Islam in Kerala, is thought to have erected the Malik Dinar Mosque at Thalankara in the Kasaragod district in 642 CE. The two-story mosque, which was constructed in the Keralan architectural style, contains beautiful Arabic carvings etched into the wooden pillars and beams.

PALAKUNNU SREE BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

The most well-known temple in Northern Kerala, Palakkunnu Shree Bhagavathi Temple, is a well-known spiritual and cultural hub of the area and is located in Kasaragod District. Only 50 metres separate the temple from the Kottikulam railway station and 3 kilometres separate it from Bekal Fort, the main international tourist attraction. The temple is situated alongside the state highway that runs between Kasaragod and Kanhangad and serves as a diversion around the NH.17. The primary deity is "Bhagavathi" or the Mother Goddess (Devi). Both Mootha Bhagavathi (Kaali) and Elaya Bhagavathi (Saraswathi) are revered as forms of Bhagavathi. The other deities include "Vishnumoorthi," "Ghantakaran," and "Dhandan Devan" in addition to these two Goddesses.

SREE MADIYAN KOOLOM TEMPLE

A 500-year-old temple called Sree Madiyan Koolom may be found in Kerala's Kasaragod district close to Kanhangad. One of the most well-known Hindu temples in the area, it is dedicated to Kalarathri Amma (Bhadrakali) and the primary goddess "Kshetrapalakan." Shri Madiyan Kulam, one of Kerala's oldest temples, is a historic site. The Allada Swaroopam Mookatham Nadu's headquarters are in Sri Madiyan Kulam. The temple, noted for its antique wooden carvings, is also well-known for its epic poetry that show the harmony of all castes and religions. The temple is spread out over 6 acres of land, of which 3 acres are made up of monuments constructed in the traditional Kerala style of construction. It is particularly renowned for its sculptures and amazing wooden carvings that depict mythological figures.

MALLIKARJUNA TEMPLE

Lord Shiva is honoured during one of Kasargod's most significant festivals. March is when the temple celebrates its yearly celebration, which always draws sizable crowds. The duration of this celebration is five days. According to mythology, Arjuna decorated the idol of Lord Shiva.

BELA CHURCH

One of the earliest parishes in the Diocese of Mangalore is Bela Catholic Parish. It is located about 50 kilometres from Mangalore in the Kasaragod District. The Kasaragod district's oldest parish is this one. Konkani is the mother tongue of Catholics. There are 448 families and 17 wards in the Parish.

MALIK DINAR MOSQUE UROOS

Bela Catholic Parish is one of the diocese of Mangalore's older parishes. About 50 kilometres from Mangalore, it is located in the Kasaragod District. In the Kasaragod district, this parish is the oldest. Konkani is the native language of the Catholics. There are 448 families in the Parish's 17 wards.

ANANDASHRAM

All people are welcome to visit a location in Kanhangad, Kasaragod district, where they can look for serenity and redemption. Caste or religious affiliation are irrelevant in the stunning Anandashram. This well-known spiritual centre, founded in 1931 by Swami Ramdas, has been offering consolation to visitors for close to a century. The Ashram continues to be a shining beacon, disseminating the Swami's message of unconditional love and service via its activities and involvement in the neighbourhood.

Temple of Thrikkannad The Thrikkanad temple, often referred to as Dakshina Kashi, is situated on the Arabian Sea shoreline about 1 kilometre from Bekal. The temple, which honours Lord Shiva, is well-known for its many traditions and rituals.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

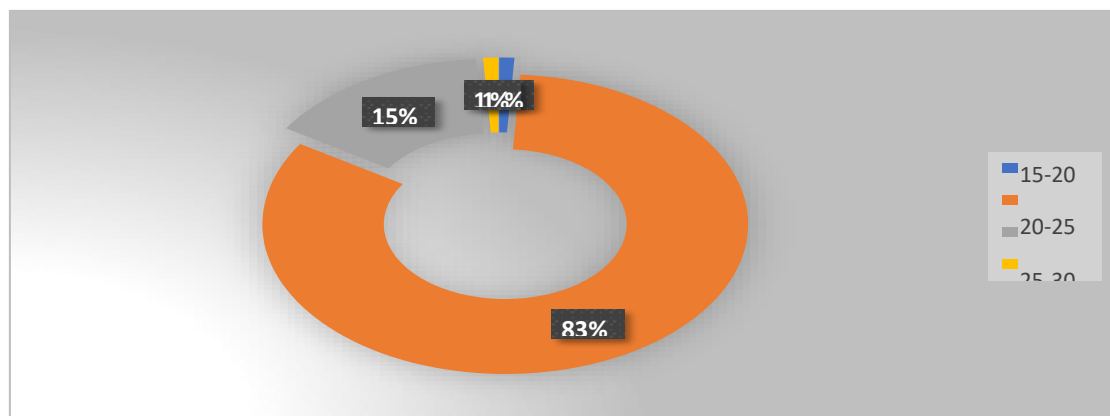
The research paper that discusses the analysis of the information gathered by the researcher from each respondent is titled "Analysis and Interpretation." The researcher used cross analysis to interpret the data. The analysis and interpretation of primary data gathered from visitors, locals, and tourism intermediaries are provided in this research piece. The study's subject matter is tourists visiting Kasaragod and the city's tourism intermediaries. Using a handy Google form, 100 responses were gathered from travellers, locals, and tourism intermediaries. This research article is appropriately categorised for its methodical presentation of obtained data and statistical analysis of those data. The interpretation of the data and a discussion of the results follow. Various statistical methods were used to tabulate and analyse the data collected through the questionnaire. The following objectives have been covered in this research paper:

Table 5.1 Distribution of Respondents According to Age

AGE	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
15-20	1	1%
20-25	83	83%
25-30	15	15%
30-35	1	1%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO AGE



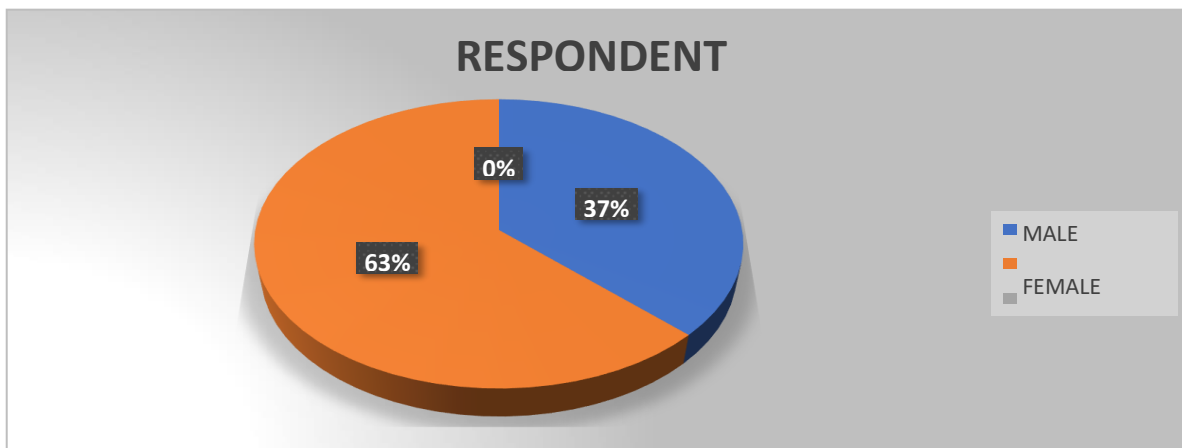
Interpretation: Show how the age distribution of tourists is distributed. One percent of the respondents (100) were between the ages of 15 and 20. The age range for 83% was 20 to 25. 15% of the population was 25 to 30 years old. 1% of the population was 30-35 years old. The results are shown in the table above.

Table 5.2 Distribution of Respondents According to Gender

GENDER	RESPONES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	37	37%
Female	63	63%
Transgender	0	0
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO GENDER



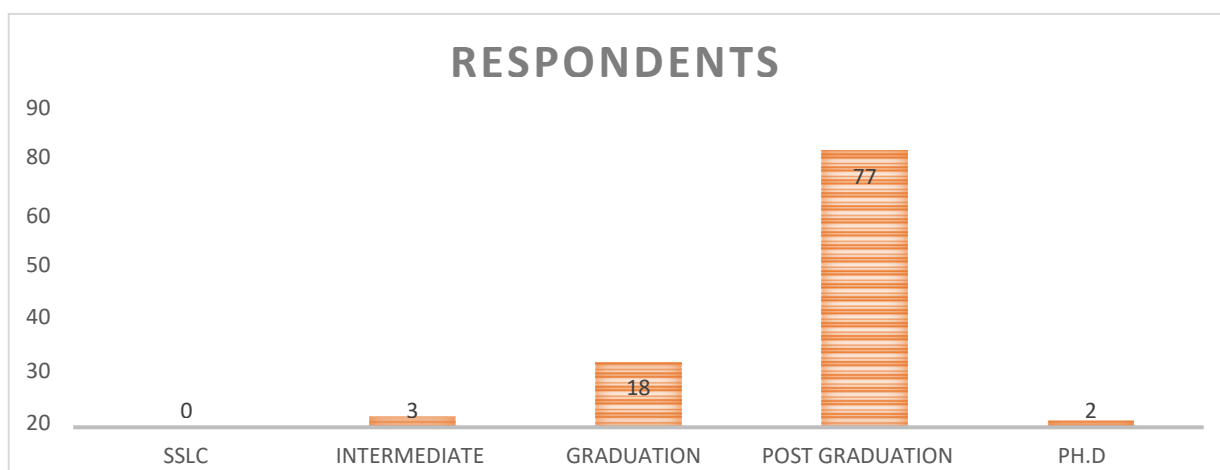
INTERPRETATION: Distribution of visitors by gender is shown. 100 individuals were surveyed, of which 37% were men, 63% were women, and 0% were transgender. In the table up top, the information has been presented.

Table 5.3 Distributions of Respondents According to Education

EDUCATION	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
SSLC	0	0%
+2	3	3%
GRADUATION	18	18%
POST GRADUATION	77	77%
PH. D	2	2%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: primary data

CHART 5.3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO EDUCATION



Interpretation: Distribution of visitors by educational level is shown. Out of 100 responders, 2% had doctorates. 77% had advanced degrees, 18% had degrees, and 3% had intermediate degrees.

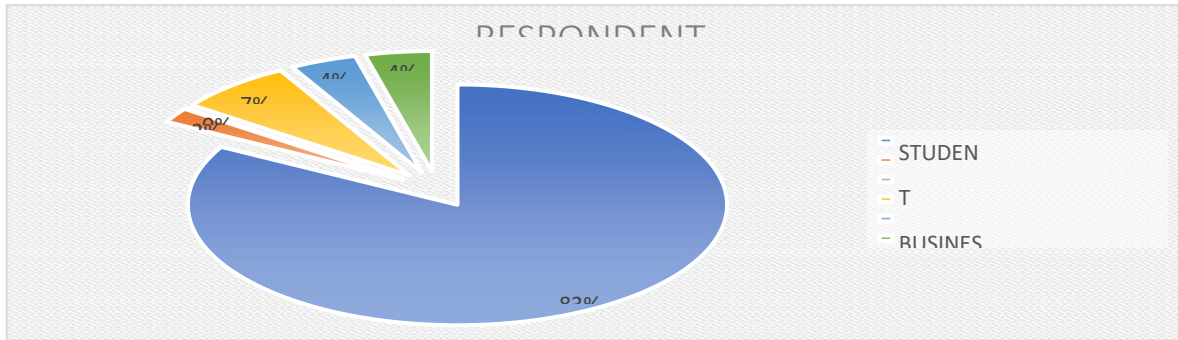
Table 5.4 Distribution of Respondents According to Occupation

OCCUPATION	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Students	83	83%
Business	2	2%

Government Employee	0	0%
Private Employee	7	7%
Unemployed	4	4%
Other	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.4 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION



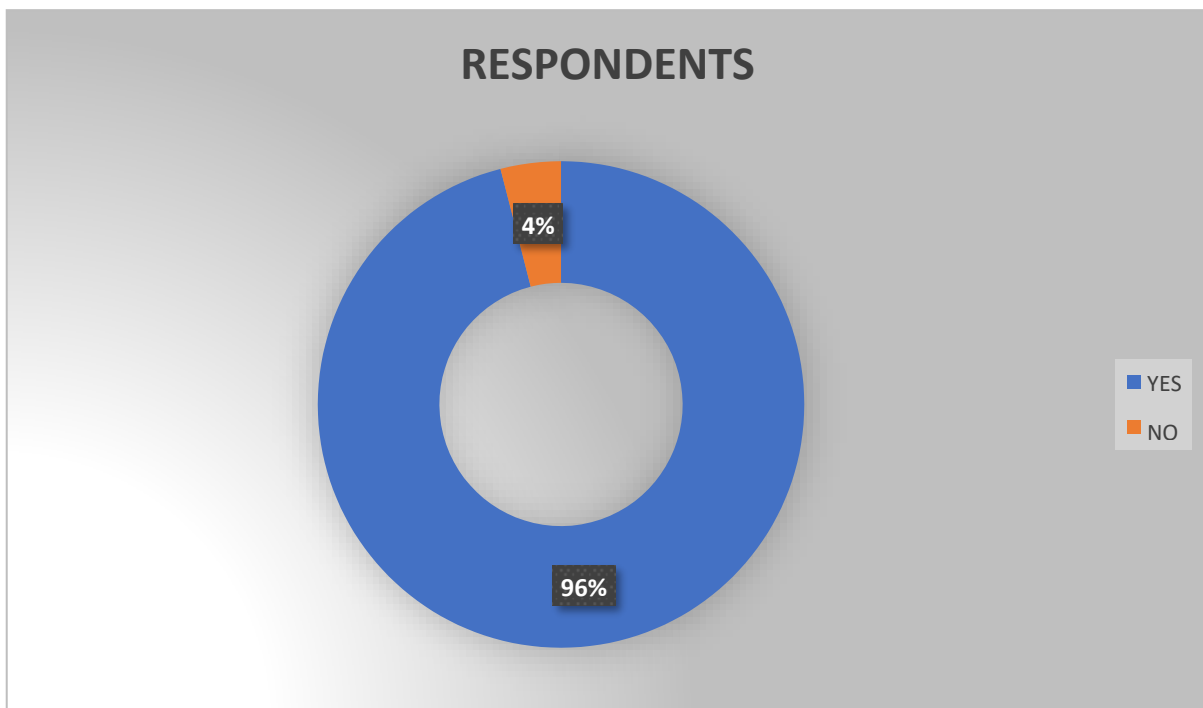
Interpretation: illustrates the distribution of visitors by occupation. Of the 100 people surveyed, 83% were students. 7% of people employed privately. 2% were entrepreneurs. 4% were others, and 4% were jobless.

Table 5.6: Have You Visited Kasaragod

RESPONSE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	96	96%
No	4	4%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: primary data

CHART 5.6: RESPONDENTS VISITED KASARAGOD



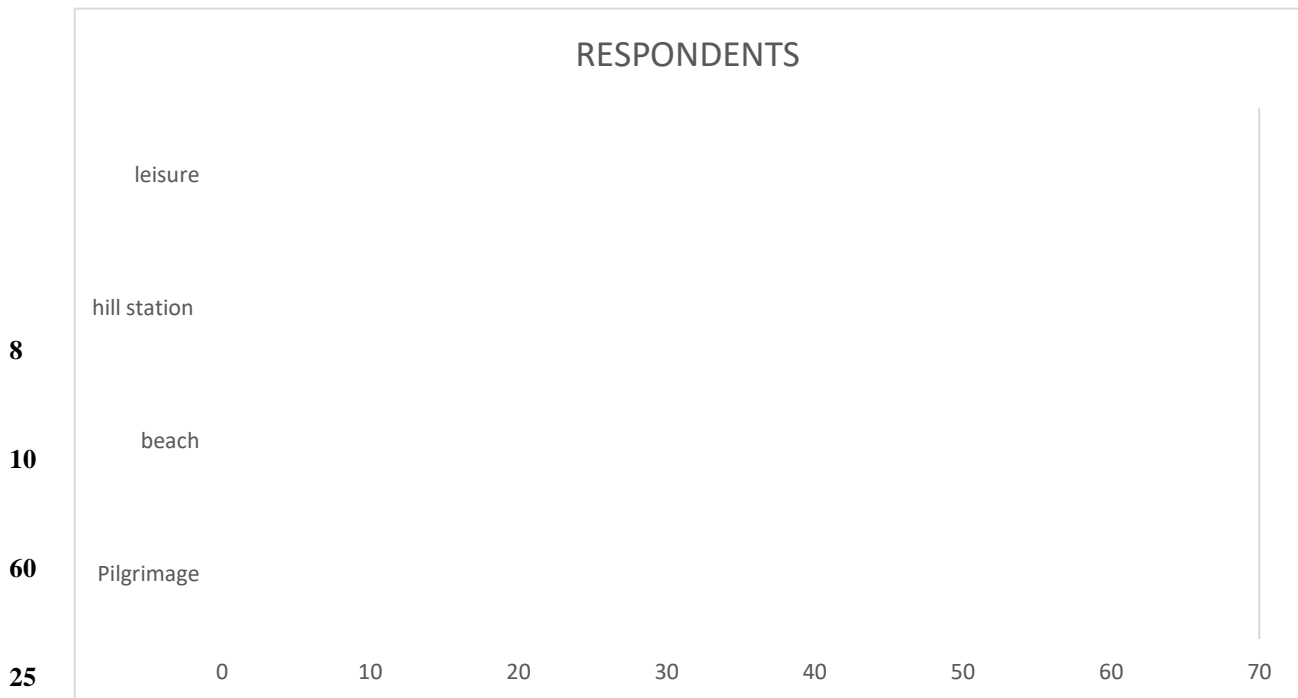
Interpretation: Shows the locations frequented by tourists in Kasaragod. Out of 100 respondents, 96% have been to a Kasaragod tourism attraction. At Kasaragod, 4% of the tourist spots weren't visited.

Table 5.7 Places visited in Kasaragod

TYPE OF DESTINATION	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Pilgrimage	25	25%
Beach	60	60%
Hill station	10	10%
Leisure	8	8%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

CHART 5.7: PLACES VISITED IN KASARGOD



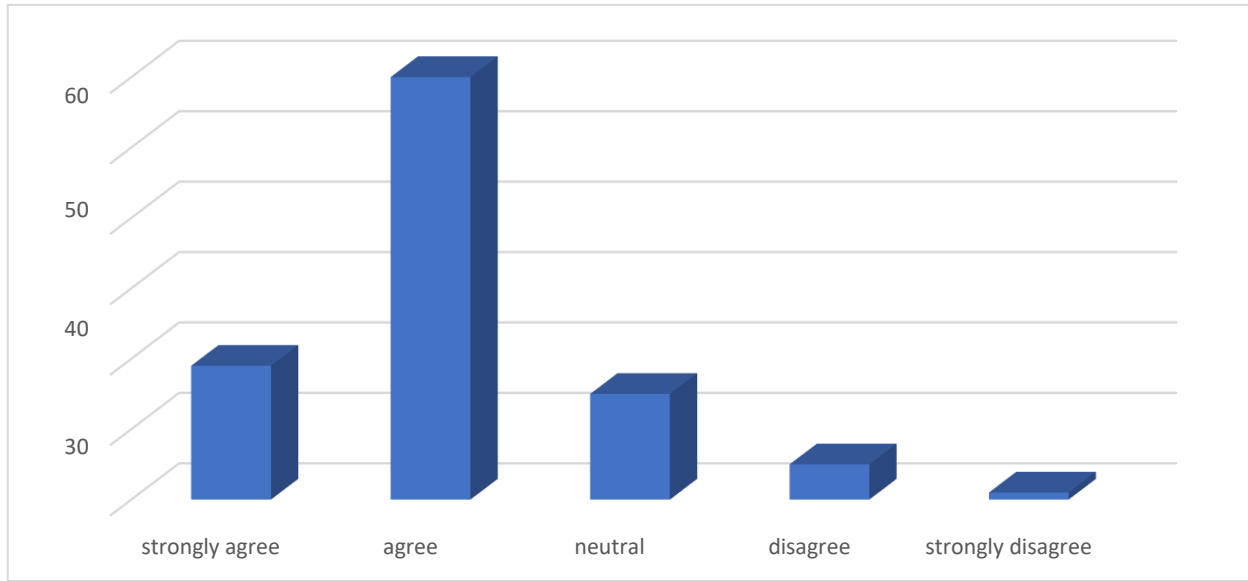
Interpretation: Describes the kind of place the tourist is visiting. 60 percent of the 100 responders visited the beach. 25% of visitors were pilgrims. 10% went to a mountain resort. 8% of visitors came for fun.

Table 5.8: Pilgrimage Tourism in Kasaragod District encourages Tourists to Visit Kerala

RESPONSE	RESPONES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly Agree	19	19%
Agree	60	60%
Neutral	15	15%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.8: PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN KASARGOD DISTRICT ENCOURAGES TOURISTS TO VISIT KERALA



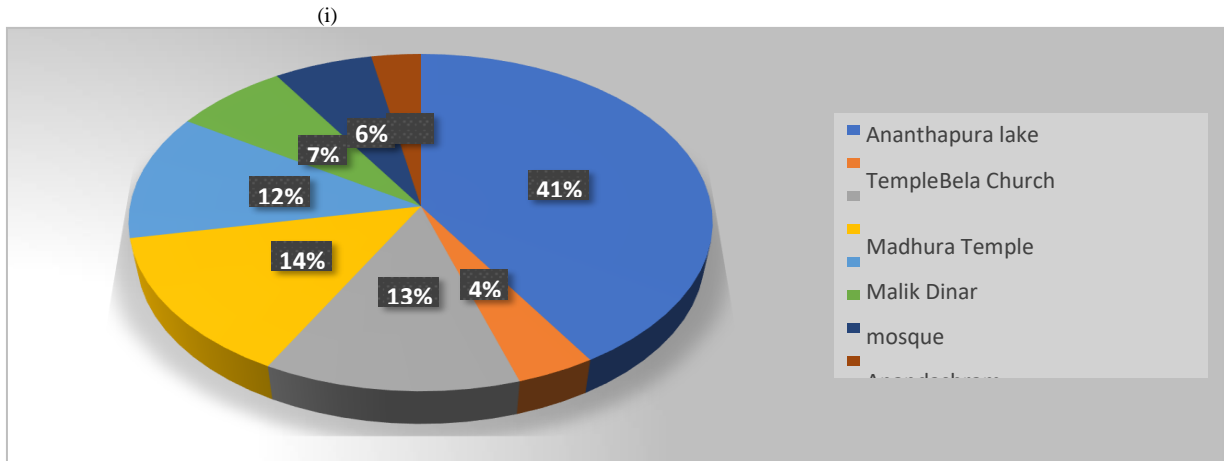
Interpretation: 19% of the respondents (out of 100) strongly agree.60% of people agree. 15% say neutral. 10% disagree. 1% is in sharp disagreement.

Table 5.9: Distribution of Respondents according to the most common Pilgrimage places visited in Kasaragod District

ATTRACTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Ananthapura lake Temple	41	41
Bela Church	4	4
Madhura Temple	13	13
Malik Dinar mosque	14	14
Anandashram	12	12
Thrikkannad Temple	7	7
Palakunnu sree Bhagavathy Temple	6	6
Sree Madiyan Koolom Temple	3	3
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.9: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THE MOST COMMON PILGRIMAGE PLACES VISITED IN KASARAGOD DISTRICT



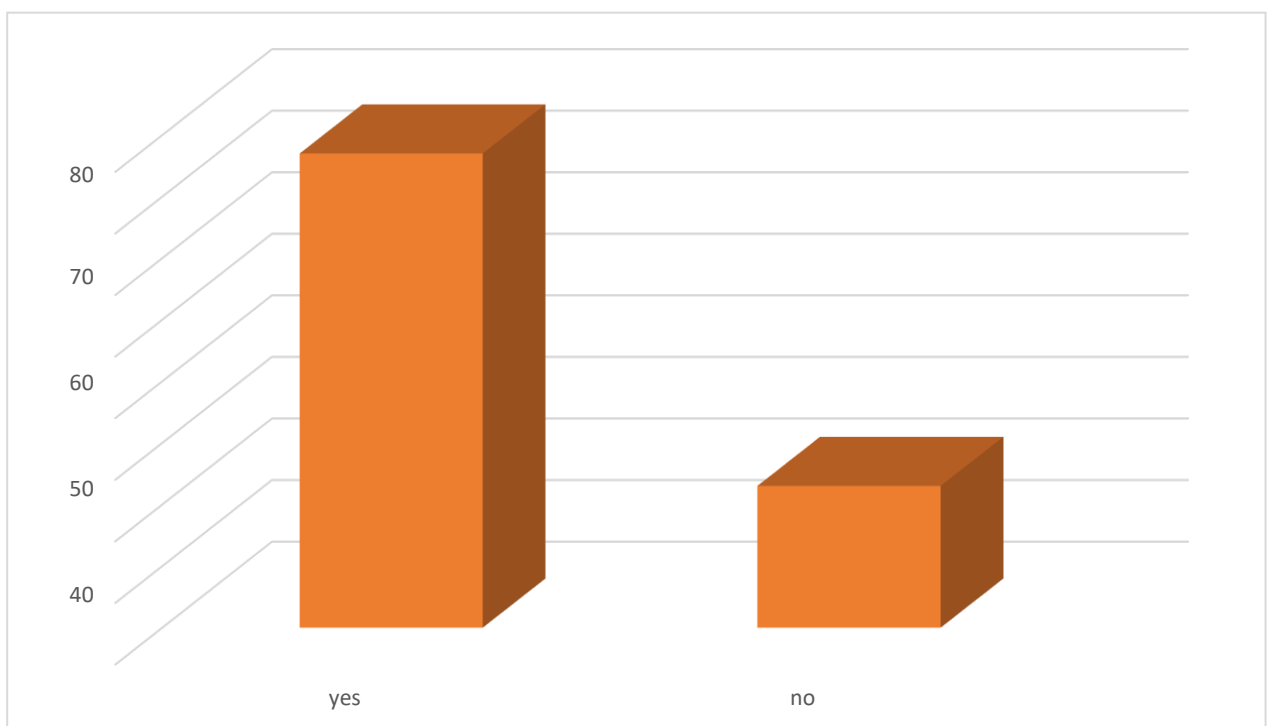
Interpretation: Out of 100 answers, 41% of persons said they have visited the temple at Ananthapura Lake. Malik Dinar Mosque represents 14%.13.3% Madhura Temple.Only 12% are Anandashrams.7 percent Thrikkannad Temple.Palakunnu sree Bhagavathy Temple accounts for 6%.Bela Church comprise 4%.Sree Madiyan Koolom Temple accounts for 3%.

Table 5.10: Pilgrimage Tourism in KasaragodDistrict creating Job Opportunities

Response	Responses	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	77	77%
NO	23	23%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.10: PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN KASARAGOD DISTRICT CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES



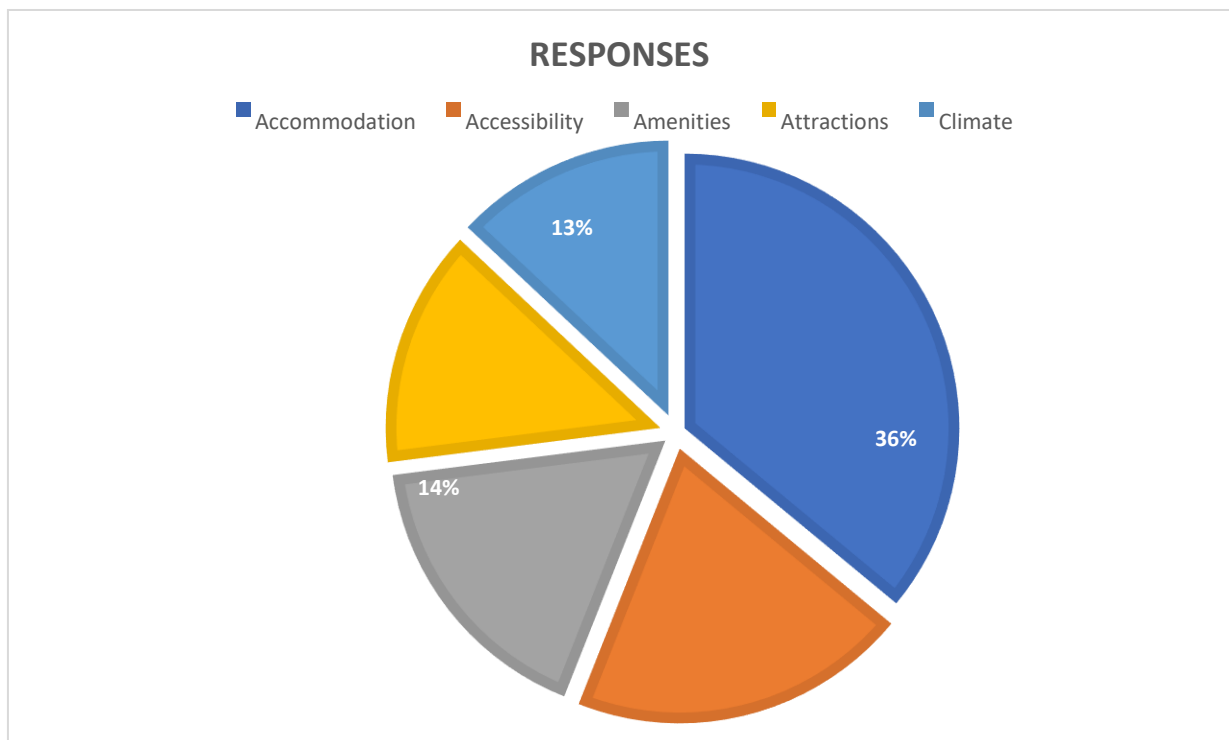
Interpretation: Illustrates the job opportunities in Kasaragod district. Out of 100 respondents, 77% were said Yes. 23% were said No. The data has been stated in the above table.

TABLE 5.11: Distribution Of Respondents According to The MajorChallenge in Pilgrimage Tourism

RESPONSE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Accommodation	36	36%
Accessibility	20	20%
Amenities	17	17%
Attractions	14	14%
Climate	13	13%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.11: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THE MAJOR CHALLENGE IN PILGRIMAGE TOURISM



Interpretation: Out of 100 respondents, 36% of people were said accommodation. 20% are accessibility. 17% is amenities. 14% is attractions. 13% climate. The data has been stated in the above table.

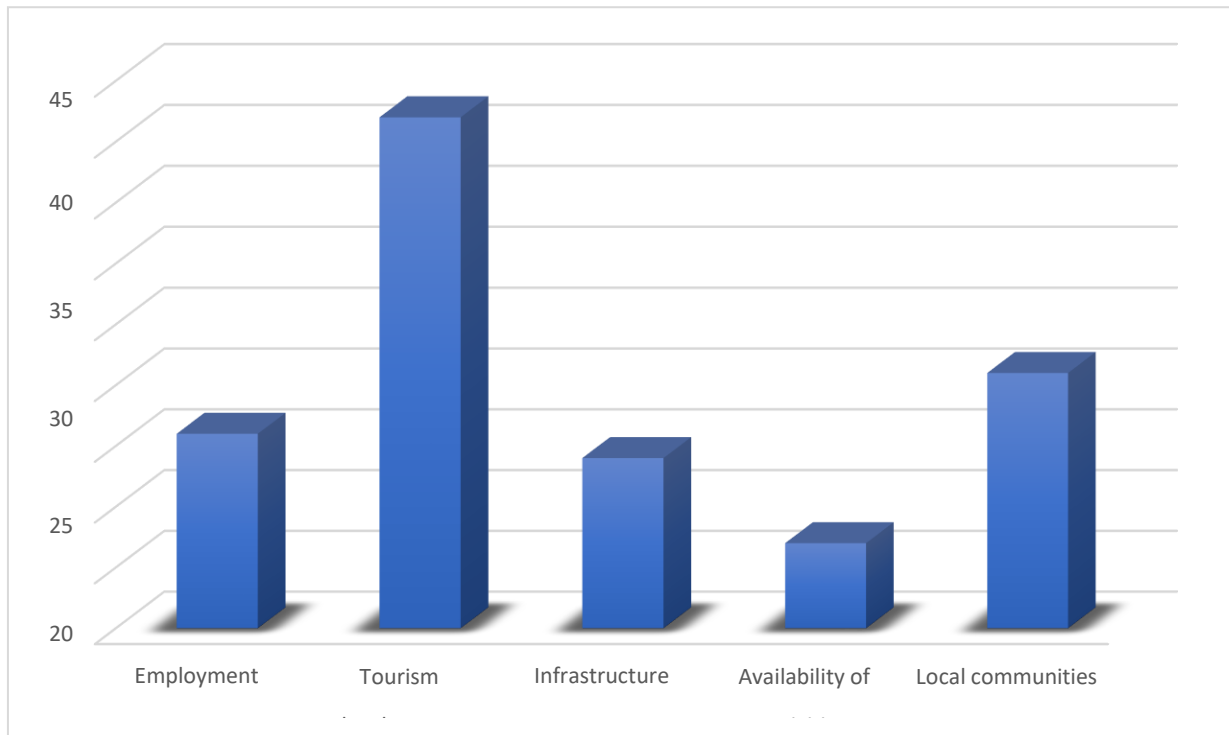
Table 5.12: Distribution of Respondents According To What Is the Best Factor That Contribute To Pilgrimage Tourism

RESPONSE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Employment	16	16%
Tourism development	42	42%

Infrastructure	14	14%
Availability of activities	7	7%
Local communities	21	21%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CHART 5.12: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO WHAT IS THE BEST FACTOR THAT CONTRIBUTE TO PILGRIMAGE TOURISM



Interpretation: Out of 100 respondents, 46% of people were said tourism development. 21% are local communities.16% are employment .14% infrastructure.7% availability of activities. The data has been stated in the above table.

Table 5.13: What is the Negative Impact of Pilgrimage Tourism

RESPONSE	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
Over crowding	27	27%
Pollution and environmental degradation	34	34%
Inappropriate development	29	29%
Disrespecting local people culture, Norms and Belifes	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Primary data

CONCLUSION

Tourism, which is ultimately a form of economic activity, has developed as a booming global industry. Today, tourism is not a solitary activity but rather a group of enterprises that work in harmony with one another and are present in many facets of society. Millions of people find work and a livelihood thanks to tourism, which also generates foreign exchange, encourages

national integration and balanced regional development, revitalises art and culture, dispels inter-national prejudices and mistrust, and advances world peace.

Because of a number of factors, Indian tourism is growing more quickly. India, a nation gifted with a long history of rich civilization and culture, is a place of geographical diversity. A prospective tourist haven, it offers a wide range of attractions, including stunning beaches, hill towns, forts, monuments, works of art, festivals, forests, and religious sites. Geographical diversity, cultural legacy, social security, and tranquilly are responsible for Kerala tourism's rise to prominence in the world market. In the tourism industry, Kerala, often known as "God's Own Country," has been successful in carving out a niche for itself. Sabarimala, Malayattoor, Cheraman Masjid, and a number of other well-known pilgrimage sites that are a source of great spiritual inspiration are among the world-famous pilgrimage sites that Kerala is endowed with.

The number of visitors visiting these places has grown over time due to the significant advancements in the transportation and communication industries, an increase in disposable incomes, and a variety of other factors. However, the infrastructure, other amenities, and services that are offered to visitors at these locations are rarely satisfactory. Plans, policies, and strategies must be developed at the administrative level in order to fully benefit from pilgrim tourism. The issues that pilgrim tourists and the host community face, as well as the future of pilgrim tourism in the state of Kerala, are the main topics of this study, "Pilgrim Tourism in Kerala - An Evaluative Study." The study highlights the elements that draw potential visitors to Kerala's pilgrimage sites and evaluates the facilities and services there.

The economic liberalisation of India and the resulting prospects for international investment, the construction of tourism amenities, including an expansion of airline services, etc., have sparked a surge in travel to South Asian countries. In order to achieve the national goals of encouraging social and cultural cohesion and national integration, domestic pilgrimage tourism is essential. It generates a significant amount of jobs. The potential for domestic pilgrimage tourism has significantly increased over the past few years with the rise in income levels and the creation of a strong middle class. As a result of realising the significance of pilgrimage tourism, the Keralan government has made it a top priority to promote it and has taken steps to repair or develop infrastructure in tourist hotspots.

Thus, the state of Kerala with its multiple resources of pilgrimage, heritage, cultural, tribal, wildlife, eco, health tourism centers can be developed in to a great tourist zone. Its potentiality as tourist destinations is enormous. But the Government has to improve infrastructural facilities and these facilities would not only contribute for the development of tourism industry but also help generate employment opportunities to the people of this State. Tourism can be treated as an engine for rural transformation and economic development. The number of tourists visiting these locations has increased over time due to numerous factors, including the enormous advancements in the transportation and communication industries, an increase in disposable incomes, and numerous others. But the amenities and services offered to visitors at these locations, including the infrastructure and other facilities, are rarely satisfactory. Plans, policies, and strategies need to be developed at the administrative level if pilgrim tourism is to fully profit from it. The need for a research that assesses the current conditions in pilgrim centres around the state, the challenges pilgrim tourists and the host community confront, as well as the future potential of pilgrim tourism in the state of Kerala, becomes necessary.

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