

# Challenges for Entrepreneurs of 'Religious Tourism Circuits': A Study of 'Holy City' Kurukshetra

SMS Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation  
5 (2) 90 - 100  
<https://doi.org/10.21844/smsjei.v5i02.15899>

Reeti Gupta\*

## Abstract

Government of India launched a 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' in January 2015 that pinpoints 13 designated circuits including Ramayana circuit, Krishna Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, and Spiritual Circuit to promote religious and cultural tourism in the country. Kurukshetra is a 'Holy City' of State of Haryana that is recently been added in 'Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit'. 'Krishna Circuit' embraces inherent mythology and beliefs pertaining to Lord Krishna and includes different place of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujrat, and Odisha for tourism facilitation. This scheme is alleged to contribute significantly in increasing the attractiveness of certain religious tourist destinations. Tourism entrepreneurs like hoteliers, restaurant owners, tour operators, travel agencies as well as religious entrepreneurs (Shinde, 2010) such as religious gurus, priests and managers of temples and ashrams are expected to get benefited from the initiatives proposed in the scheme in varied ways. Given the significant role of this scheme for growth of entrepreneurs, the present study aims to highlight the challenges faced by entrepreneurs that deserve attention of policy makers.

**Keywords:** Religious Tourism, Travel & Tourism Industry, Krishna Circuit, Strategic Concerns, Sustainable Tourism. Challenges for Entrepreneurs of 'Religious Tourism Circuits': A Study of 'Holy City' Kurukshetra

## Introduction:

India is a birthplace of four great religions i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and a prime attraction for spiritual tourists worldwide. It has become a preferred religious tourism destination for domestic and international tourists. One of the reasons of this preference is rich heritage of the country in terms of its temples, majestic forts, pleasure gardens, religious monuments, museums, and art galleries (IBEF report, 2017). Indian Government has taken various initiatives to promote religious tourism in the country such as,

- National Tourism Policy 2015' was formulated to encourage inbound as well as outbound tourism.
- Two schemes entitled 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)' and 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' were launched by government in January 2015.
- In 2015, a 'Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY)' was launched with a focus on holistic development of heritage cities.
- An 'Incredible India 2.0' initiative was announced to develop the country's hospitality sector through augmentation of investments in tourism infrastructure i.e. railway lines,

\*Assistant Professor of Commerce, Government College Israna (Panipat), Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (Haryana), E Mail : [rs.reeti@gmail.com](mailto:rs.reeti@gmail.com)

airports, special trains, etc.

- A new train named “Aastha Tourist Circuit Train” was launched by Indian railways to promote pilgrimage tourism across the eastern part of India.
- Government has approved religious tourism growth related projects worth USD229.14 million till December 2014 (IBEF report, 2017).

'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' was launched in January 2015 considering the fact that the number of tourists on religious places is increasing in India. This scheme is planned to create tourist circuits around specific themes throughout the country to attract the national as well as international tourists. A study depicting challenges for tourism entrepreneurs is necessary to facilitate the implementation of this scheme and to promote religious tourism. The present study is aimed to assist the policy makers as well as tourism entrepreneurs. It is also expected to inform the readers about recent issues, problems and prospects of religious tourism in India.

### **Profile of the Study Area**

Kurukshetra is a place of great historical and religious importance in India. It is among the oldest cities of the country and one of the most popular districts of the State of Haryana. It is the place where the battle of Mahabharat was fought and Lord Krishna preached the Holy treatise 'Bhagvad-Gita'. It is also recognized by many names like Dharamkshetra (Region of righteousness), Brahmakshetra (Land of Brahma), and Thanesar or

Sthaneswar (Place of God). Recently, the Government of Haryana has officially declared 'Kurukshetra' as a 'holy city'. The city has many great temples and monuments such as Bharmasarovar, Jyotisar, Bhadrakali temple, Kos Minars, Sheikh Chilli's Tomb, Saint Paul's Church, etc.

### **Review of Literature**

There are many challenges for religious tourism in India such as recognition and regulation of religious entrepreneurs i.e. religious gurus, priests and managers of temples and ashrams, etc (Shinde, 2010). There are varied problems in the development of the religious tourism in India such as infringement of carrying capacity, waste management, air pollution, monetizing religion, lack of scrutiny of religious trust (FICCI and YES Bank, 2012). According to Khajuria & Khanna (2014) the biggest challenges at religious destinations are crime and harassment. The authors categorize the tourism risks in six segments such as health risk, natural risk, anti-social risk, over-charging or consumer pricing risk, false practices, and socio-political risk. Many initiatives can be taken to mitigate these risks such as regulation of food points, traffic management, complaint mechanism, law enforcement authorities, Marketing campaigns, and awareness programs. Dam (2016) highlights some challenges for tourism circuit development such as poor road, rail and air connectivity, inadequate promotion, and lack of an integrated government policy. Kumar & Rana (2017) discuss the problems faced in pilgrimage tourism such as

**Table1: Problems Associated with Tourism Industry**

Problems	Authors
High Hotel Tariffs	R Bhardwaj (2010); A Kandoria (2010); H.S. Virk (2000); N Sharma
Transportation Issues	Y Bhel (2012); T.V. Singh (1989); V. Cole (2002)
Safety and Security	SfSonmez(1998); Y Mansfeld, A Pizam (2006); CM Hall, DJ Timothy, Dt. Duval (2012); T.V. Singh (1989) (Rana & Kumar, Prospects and Problems Industry in Uttarakhand, 2016)
Tourist Management Centre	SP. Osborne (2002); E: Smith (2008); M. Regan, J. Smith and P. love (2011)
Solid waste Management	JkPuar (2002); KA Shinde (2010); N rao, Kt Suresh, K Ghimire (2001)
Environment Concern	V Cole, AJ Sinclair (2002); AJ Sinclair, AP Diduck (2000); RN Batta (2000)(Rana & Kumar, Prospects and Problems of Tourism Uttarakhand, 2016)

*Source: Adapted from Kumar, Suneel and Rana, Gaurav (2017).*

The authors suggest many strategic steps for the promotion of pilgrimage tourism such as enhancing parking and toilet facility, adopting green practices, extend and reposition brand, expend core competencies, solid waste management, and disaster management system etc. In a study on Buddhist tourism circuit by World Bank (2017), the authors pinpoint the challenges like, lack of quality visitor facilities, entry restrictions, shortage of museum docent, inadequate visitor information and signage, pollution, inadequate on-site excursion facilities, excessive control of government institutions and management trusts, inconsistent quality and authenticity of tourism souvenirs, personal safety, and poor accessibility and infrastructure.

### Research Gap

The forgoing appraisal of related studies pinpoints the varied dimensions of religious tourism and its problems as well as challenges. However, most of these studies were carried out in other states and regions in different aspects and apparently no study was found in capturing the challenges faced by tourism entrepreneurs in context of Haryana or specifically for 'Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit'. The scheme is launched in 2015 and limited studies have been conducted to

conceptually evaluate the progress of the scheme. Thus, a research gap exists in the form of exploring the challenge for tourism entrepreneurs in context of 'Krishna Circuit'.

### Research Objectives and Methodology

#### Research Objectives:

RO1: To conceptually evaluate the 'Religious Tourism Circuit' strategy.

RO2: To pinpoint the challenges faced by tourism entrepreneurs of 'Krishna Circuit'.

- **Study Design:** This study is of descriptive in nature. The tourism entrepreneurs of 'holy city' Kurukshetra has been considered among the tourism entrepreneurs of 'Krishna Circuit' for the present study. Convenient and Judgement Sampling method has been followed to collect the data from the targeted respondents.
- **Research Data:** The present study employs both primary and secondary data according to the requirement of the research objectives. The primary data has been collected during April-May 2018 by conducting a survey through a set of self-administered structured questionnaire based on variables extracting from the

literature reviewed. A five-point Likert scale is used to gauge the degree of agreement and disagreement. Secondary data has been gathered from sources like annual reports and press releases of Ministry of Tourism, Media Reports, and Web resources.

- **Research Instrument:** To pinpoint the challenges faced by tourism entrepreneurs of 'Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit' a self administered questionnaire has been developed and validated. Thirty statements were selected from a detailed review of related studies to frame the draft of the questionnaire. Ten items were deleted from the draft in the due course and twenty statements were included in the final questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 or strongly disagree to strongly agree has been used for mapping of varied variables.
- **Test Administration:** The tool was distributed among 100 tourism entrepreneurs from diverse fields such as hotel owners, restaurants owners, travel agent, tour operators etc. Out of the questionnaires received, 04 questionnaires were found inaccurate and excluded from further analysis. The remaining 96 responses formed the basis of this study. The collected responses were scored and reliability check was performed. A Cronbach' alpha value of all 0.783, which is above the commonly accepted

threshold of 0.60 (Hair et al., 1998), depicted that all variables are reliable and can be used for subsequent analysis.

- **Statistical Analysis:** Descriptive analyses i.e. mean score analysis followed by Multi-dimensional Scaling has been used with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 17 to fulfil the research objectives.

#### 4. 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' and Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit

Government of India launched a scheme entitled as '**Swadesh Darshan Scheme**' in January 2015 to harness the tourism potential of the country. This scheme envisages the development of world class infrastructure on the selected sites such as audio visual and projection show, site illumination, solar lighting and street lighting, construction of tourist facilitation centers, *yatri* sheds, infrastructural development of way-side amenities, parking, public convenience, construction of open air theatre, culture interpretation centre, fountains and landscaping (The Times of India, July 20, 2016). It focuses on increasing better connectivity, tourism specific skill development, and sufficient safety measures for tourists. It pinpoints 13 designated theme based tourism circuits to promote religious and cultural tourism in the country.

**Table 2: Division/Circuit of 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme'**

Religion Centric Theme	Nature Centric Theme	Culture Centric Theme
Krishna Circuit	Coastal Circuit	Tribal Circuit
Ramayana Circuit	Desert Circuit	Rural Circuit
Buddhist Circuit	Himalaya Circuit	Heritage Circuit
Spiritual Circuit	Wildlife Circuit	
	Ecological Circuit	
	North-East Circuit	

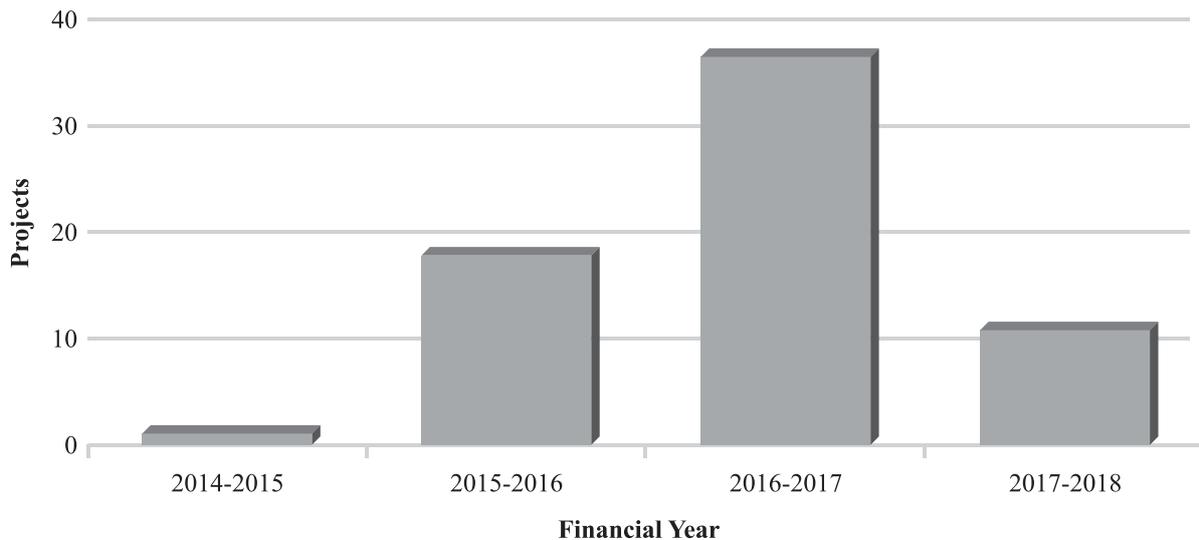
*Source: Author's Compilation.*

The central government has sanctioned 67 projects of INR 5648.70 crore for this scheme till the date of its launching. Recently, under budget 2018-19, the government allotted Rs. 1,250 crore (US\$193.08

million) for integrated development of tourist circuits under 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' and 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD).

**Figure 1: Sanctioned Amount under 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme'**

**Total Amount Sanctioned (INR Crores) : 5,648.70**



Source: Adapted from <http://swadeshdarshan.gov.in>

**The 'Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit'**

'Krishna Circuit' is one among the thirteen tourism circuits of *Swadesh Darshan Scheme*'. The Krishna Circuit is a religion centric theme based tourist circuit that aims to connect and develop all the religious places associated with the legends of Lord Krishna in different states. The Krishna Circuit combines the places associated with the legends of Lord Krishna, the propounder of Holy treatise 'Gita', in various states i.e. Haryana, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, etc. Twelve destinations have been sanctioned under 'Krishna Circuit' namely Dwarka (Gujrat), Nathhwara, jaipur and Sikar (Rajasthan), kurukshetra (Haryana), Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, Barsana, Nandgaon, and Govardhan (Uttar Pradesh) and Puri (Odisha) (PIB, July 24 2017). The government has allocated INR 97.35 crores on 09-09-2016 for development

of Braham Sarover, Jyotisar, Narkatari, and Sanhit Sarover; development of City Infrastructure; and expansion of CCTV, Wi-Fi & Security System. Out of the total sanctioned amount a sum of Rs 32 crore had been spent on the development of tourism infrastructures at places related to Mahabharata and beautification of the Kurukshetra city.

**5. Analysis and Discussion**

**Descriptive Analysis:** The analysis of data reveals that lack of skilled manpower and lack of finances offer the biggest challenge among tourism entrepreneurs of Krishna religious tourism circuit as these two variables claims the highest agreement. The next challenges in the line with the highest agreement are high rates of taxes, lack of incentives by government, and lack of training for human resources.

**Table 3: Challenges for Tourism Entrepreneur in Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit**

Sr. No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sr. No.	Mean	Std. Deviation
V1	4.34	.477	V11	4.02	.502
V2	4.25	.435	V12	3.20	.866
V3	4.21	.408	V13	3.64	.618
V4	3.09	.895	V14	3.25	.808
V5	2.71	.820	V15	3.47	.648
V6	3.42	.777	V16	2.76	.830
V7	3.27	.912	V17	3.76	.628
V8	2.72	.842	V18	3.21	.832
V9	3.99	.271	V19	3.60	.732
V10	4.40	.492	V20	3.34	.806

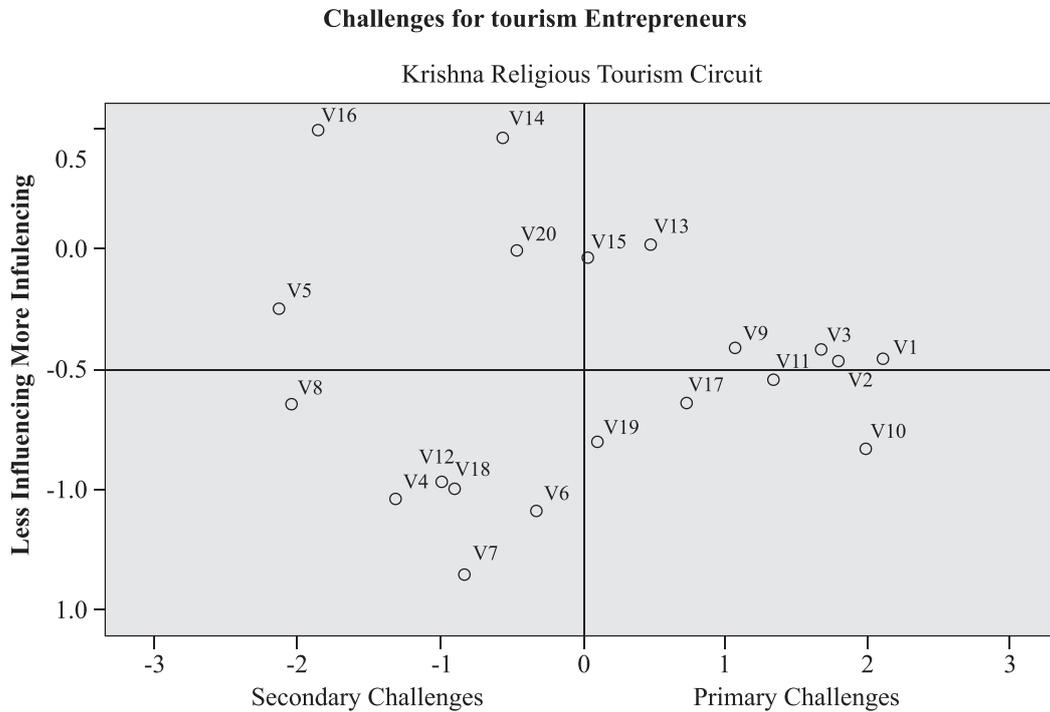
The low mean score is found for the variables like 'lack of coordination among tourism related policies, underdeveloped e-governance system of government, and inactive community involvement in tourism development in the region. Interestingly, the lowest score is reported with the variable 'insufficient accommodation facility' but agreement is more than 80%, indicating a positive response of tourism entrepreneurs towards this variable.

#### **Multidimensional Scaling and Discussion:**

The higher value of RSQ (0.87628) with a low value of residual stress (0.07461) indicates a reasonably good fit for multidimensional scaling model of challenges for tourism entrepreneur. It is evident from the mapping of **(Figure 4.1)**

challenges faced by tourism entrepreneurs' that *shortage of finance, high rate of taxes, and lack of incentives by government* are the three most challenging variables for the tourism entrepreneurs. These variables affect the ease of doing business and provide motivation to the entrepreneurs. A number of studies (Shinde, 2010; Gupta & Bukhari 2016; Aukland, 2017; Kumar & Rana, 2017) have presented the argument that these three challenges are the most influential reasons that are influencing the business of tourism entrepreneurs. Tourism is a service industry and in this technological era, it is a capital intensive industry. Lack of adequate finance at cheaper cost, lack of a single tax rate and insufficiency of incentives are the major hindrance affecting the growth and development of tourism business.

**Figure 2: Mapping of Challenges for Tourism Entrepreneurs.**



It is also discovered that *insufficient transport facilities and improper arrangements for differently-able and old age persons* are the two primary challenges impeding tourism growth. Lack of sufficient parking place, poor roads, non-abidance of traffic rules, etc. causes inconvenience among tourists. Unavailability of quality public transport and insufficiency of economical as well as efficient private transport is also a cause of concern. Old age persons and differently able persons can become a prospective tourist at religious tourism places given that the necessary facilities are provided to them in tandem with international standards. *Lack of skilled manpower for tourism business and lack of training for human resource* are observed as another most challenging but less influencing challenges confronted by the tourism entrepreneurs.

A closer examination of the results further reveals that *lack of civic amenities, underdeveloped e-governance system of Government, chances of corruption i.e. bribery, red-tapism, etc.* are

secondary but high influencing challenges for tourism business suggested by tourism entrepreneurs. The Government of India is taking various initiatives like promotion of simple, digital, transparent and time-bound procedures, and compliances as well as adoption of Goods and Service Tax (GST) with the aim to improve the 'Ease of Doing Business'. Notwithstanding this, the slow pace of these initiatives poses a big challenge for the tourism entrepreneurs. The inferences reveals that the tourism entrepreneurs are concerned about the *insufficiency of accommodation facilities* for existing and potential tourists in the religious tourist destinations.

*Lack of coordination among various tourism departments, lack of specific tourism policy guidelines, and lack of coordination among various policies* such as investment, tourism, taxes, etc. are discovered as secondary and less influencing in explaining the challenges confronting by tourism entrepreneurs. *Poor law*

*and order concerns, inactive community involvement, and lack of tourism attractions* are having very weak connection with the challenges faced by tourism entrepreneurs.

### Major Policy Implications

**'Krishna Circuit' is not for 'Hindus' devotees only:** Krishna is a popular and highly revered deity in Hinduism. The name of the circuit set boundaries for this highly potential tourism destination. The circuit needs to be promoted as a place for meditation, peace and learning the principles of 'Bhagwat Gita' for expanding its horizons.

#### Lack of Private Investment and FDI

Tourism is a capital intensive activity. The investment for developing the tourism attractions and infrastructure can be generated via Public private partnership and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). But given the lack of facility and incentives, hotel and tourism sector attracted US\$ 10.90 billion only or 3.06 per cent of the total FDI equity inflow in India during 2000-2017.

**Lack of Government regulation on religious trusts:** According to FICCI report 2012, India's religious trusts are rich and influential but less regulated. These trusts should be regulated to curb on tax evasion and to ensure transparency in financial transactions. Given their ample financial resources, they can also bound to contribute in developing and maintaining tourism infrastructure

**Health and Hygiene Issues:** According to TTCR 2015, India's rank of health and hygiene standards (112th) and the country's human resource base (96th) is high as compare to other countries. Hygiene and sanitation issue is more prominent in the religious places given the lack of waste management policy.

#### Disintegrated tourism policy at local level:

Tourists are the best ambassador of a tourist place. Unfair trade practices and hostile behavior of local entrepreneurs discourage the tourist and defame the tourist place. This is especially true for religious tourist as faith and believes are the reason of visiting the place. Thus lack of a value based integrated policy at local level is a pertinent issue to resolve.

#### Insufficiency of tourism Infrastructure:

Lack of airports in most of the cities falling under the religious circuit is an infrastructural concern. Insufficient accommodation facilities at religious tourist destinations are another cause of concern.

#### Inappropriate Institutional Framework:

'Krishna circuit' has the prospects of becoming a significant part of religious tourism industry in India. However, there is no separate specialized institute or department to strategically plan in this direction and to facilitate the growth of this circuit.

#### Globalization vis-à-vis localization:

A religious tourism product is primarily an amalgam of traditional local values, rituals, practices, and beliefs. On the other hand, technology and modern resources enhances the travel experience of tourists. Trade-off between the conventional and contemporary practices is a significant issue.

#### Absence of disaster management policy:

Most religious places in the country constantly face security challenges both natural and human. Natural calamities such as land sliding, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods etc. pose sudden challenges to the tourists whereas thieves and terrorists also threaten the safety of tourists. Despite of frequent incidences of these disasters, there is lack of any integrated policy to solve this issue.

### High and Multiple Tax Structure

Indian tourism and hospitality sector has been suffered from a high Indirect tax rate of 18-25 percent for many years. Even after the implementation of Goods and Service Tax (GST) five different slabs i.e. 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% are applicable on tourism related services.

**Rapidly Increasing Pollution levels:** Religious ceremonies are generally held responsible for water pollution as pilgrim often performs rituals at the bank of the river. Tourist transportation causes air pollution that damages the air quality and environment. Furthermore, high-decibel loudspeakers are used in the course of chanting prayers that result in noise pollution.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

India is multi religion, multi culture and ethnically diverse society. The prospects of religious tourism growth are very high in India. Indian government should adopt and implement integrated and holistic policies, strategies, and marketing programs to increase the religious tourists flow to the region.

**Bhadwad Gita' as a 'unique selling proposition' of 'Krishna Circuit':** Krishna is not just a Hindu lord but a 'life management guru' who preached an eternal treatise of self-help called 'Bhagwad Gita' which is being acknowledged worldwide as a 'philosophy for management'. Therefore, the 'Krishna Circuit' should not be limited only to devotees of a Hindu lord. *The target audience of this circuit should be all learners of management along with seekers of sanctity and serenity.*

### Ease of Doing Business' for Tourism Entrepreneurs

Easy bank loan on nominal interest rates, tax holidays, tax incentives and other incentives should be provided to tourism entrepreneurs. Simplified tax administration system and

streamlining of tax structure is necessary for growth of organised tourism enterprises. *Government should provide guidelines, facilities such as Single Window System, and performance based incentives to attract private and foreign investments in the tourism sector.*

**Adoption of 'Spiritual Marketing':** Spiritual Marketing or mood marketing is a branding strategy for destinations that aims to craft and distinguish a particular destination. Public Relation and advertising campaigns need to be augmented based on market intelligence to establish 'krishna circuit' as a "tourist destination for learning life management". *Some creative initiatives such as 'Fashion shows inspired by Krishna' or 'Painting Exhibition on life of Krishna' campaign should be launched nationwide to promote 'Krishna Circuit'.*

**Participation of Local Tourism Entrepreneurs:** Tourists are the best ambassadors of any product. For a strong brand image, local tourism entrepreneurs need to establish honest trade practices and healthy competition in their market area. *Awareness programs should be initiated to enhance the knowledge and understanding of religious tourism in the region.* Local communities should be involved in religious tourism.

**Innovative Religious Tour Packages:** Tour packages pertaining to 'krishna circuit' must be a mixture of religious practices, cultural visualization, health benefits as well as heritage travel. There are varied opportunities and challenges pertaining to fairs and festivals of India and the huge cultural and economic potential of these events can be leveraged in context of tourism (Jauhari & Munjal, 2015). *The circuit should be developed as a blend of religious, cultural, ethnic and pilgrimage tourism destination.*

**Employing E-Commerce and digital marketing:** In this era of technological revolution,

digital presence of tourism products is inevitable. *Mobile advertising and social media advertising should be deployed in marketing the tour packages related to 'krishna circuit'.* Along with it, online travel agents should provide value added services related to religious tour products such as rail/airplane ticket booking, hotel booking, cab booking, travel guide booking, etc.

**Skilled human resource:** Firstly, there is an additional requirement of 2.7 million skilled employees for the tourism sector by 2022 (NSDC, 2015). Secondly, present tourism personnel are dealing with several employment practices like prominence of informal recruitment methods, unstructured career paths, unequal wages, uneven working hours, seasonal employment, etc. Considering this, government should frame a policy to cater the demand of employable human resource and to impart the required skills and knowledge among the employees working in the tourism sector.

**Adequate Accommodation Facilities:** Tourist accommodation can be of varied types such as five star hotels, heritage hotels, non-star hotels, resorts and lodges, tented camps, guest houses etc. *The policy makers of 'Krishna Circuit must ensure the adequacy of clean, hygiene and comfortable accommodation facility for different class of tourists.* Foreign tourists generally prefer five star hotels due to security and comfort but this category of hotels are not available in most of the cities of 'Krishna Circuit'. To overcome this problem, tax benefits and incentives can be extended to hoteliers in order to attract investment in the 'Krishna Circuit'.

**Improvement in Transportation services:** A tourist always aspires for safe, comfortable, economical and convenient mode of transport. Adequate and efficient public transport services, air travel facility, pedestrian oriented road services

ensure a pleasant and memorable tourism experience. Considering it, *a connectivity policy should be framed for the cities forming 'krishna circuit' with the aim to enhance road, rail and air transport services.*

**Sustainability Oriented Government Policies:** Indian government should frame sustainability guidelines for the development of religious tourism in the region. Specific and targeted policies and strategies must be adopted to overcome the seasonality and congestion problems in certain destinations. *Administrative barriers should be streamlined and behavioral guidelines or civic charter should be carved out for administrators, entrepreneurs as well as tourists* (World Tourism Organisation).

**Effective implementation of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan':** Religious tourism sites often condemn for the filth and clutter. *An effective 'waste management policy' should be employed for disposal of litter, removal of garbage, debris, and horticulture waste.* Along with it, sanitation and cleanliness awareness programs or drives should be launched to invoke a sense of responsibility among citizens of the 'krishna circuit'.

### Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Firstly, the study is confined to only 100 tourism entrepreneurs of 'holy city' Kurukshetra district. The study employs primary data whose accuracy is depended upon the authenticity of the information provided by the respondents. Thus, generalisation of research findings to tourism entrepreneurs across the Indian religious tourism entrepreneurs as whole requires due caution. A similar study can be done on a larger sample selected from all the districts covered under the 'Krishna Religious Tourism Circuit' strategy. Secondly the present study employs only twelve variables and analyzes

the collected data with descriptive research techniques. A new study involving a large set of variable and more robust research techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling can be adopted. Another study can be taken up to gauge the attitude and intentions of entrepreneurs towards religious tourism.

*Note: The authors are grateful to the anonymous referees of the journal for their suggestions to improve the overall quality of the paper. Usual disclaimers are applicable.*

### References

- Aukland, Knut (2017). Pilgrimage expansion through tourism in contemporary India: the development and promotion of a Hindu pilgrimage circuit. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 32(2), 283-298.
- Dam, Supriya (2016). Tourism Circuit Development in Peripheral Destinations: Case of Tripura India. *Atna, Journal of Tourism Studies*, 11(2), 1-15, ISSN 0975-3281.
- Gupta, Meenakshi and Bukhari, Syeda Shazia (2016). Religious Tourism in Katra- A Gap Analysis of Skill Requirements of Human Resources Operating At Various Levels. *International Journal of Core Engineering & Management*, 3(5), 46-54.
- Hair, J.F. Jr. et. al. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, (5<sup>th</sup> Edition), Prentice Hall.
- Haq, Farooq and Medhekar, Anita (2015). Spiritual Tourism between India and Pakistan: A Framework for Business Opportunities and Threats. *World Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(2), 190-200.
- Jauhari, Vinnie and Munjal, Sandeep (2015). Fairs and festivals in India: the cultural and economic potential. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 7(4), 324-330.
- Pritchard, Annette and Morgan, Nigel (1998). 'Mood marketing'-The new destination branding strategy: A case study of 'Wales' The Brand. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 4 ( 3 ) , 2 1 5 - 2 2 9 , Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/135676679800400302>.
- Reader, Ian (2007). Pilgrimage growth in the modern world: meanings and implications. *Religion*, 37, 210-229
- Shinde, Kiran A. (2010). Entrepreneurship and Indigenous Entrepreneurs in Religious Tourism in India. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12, 523-535.
- Shinde, Kiran A. (2017) Planning for urbanization in religious tourism destinations: insights from Shirdi, India, *Planning Practice & Research*, 32(2), 132-151.
- Singh, Rana P.B. and Haigh, Martin J. (2015). Hindu Pilgrimages: The Contemporary Scene. in Brunn, Stanley D. (ed.), *The Changing World Religion Map, CWRM: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics*. Springer, Vol. II, Chapter IV, 783-802. ISBN Book: 978-94-017-9375-9.
- Kumar, Suneel and Rana, Gaurav (2017). Formulation of Flexible Strategy for Pilgrimage Tourism in Himachal Pradesh, India. *Inspira-Journal of Commerce, Economics & Computer Science*, 3(2), 289-297.
- Khajuria, Sandeva and Khanna, Suvridha (2014). Tourism Risks and Crimes at Pilgrimage Destinations- A Case Study of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 8(1), 77-93.
- Singh, Upinder (2010). Exile and Return: The Reinvention of Buddhism and Buddhist sites in modern India. *South Asian Studies*, 26(2), 193-217.
- Strategic Initiatives & Government Advisory (2012). *Diverse Beliefs: Tourism of Faith Religious tourism gains ground*. FICCI and YES bank report.
- International Finance Corporation (2017). *Investing in the Buddhist Circuit: Enhancing the Spiritual, Environmental, Social, and Economic Value of the Places Visited by the Buddha in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India*. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26096>
- World Tourism Organization (2011). *Religious Tourism in Asia and the Pacific*.
- NSDC (2015). *National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship*. Retrieved from <https://www.skilldevelopment.gov.in>
- <https://www.ibef.org/industry/indian-tourism-and-hospitality-industry-analysis-presentation>
- <http://haryanatourism.gov.in/Kurukshetra-at-a-glance>
- <http://swadeshdarshan.gov.in>
- <http://www.unwto.org>
- <http://www.tourism.gov.in>