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**SOCIO- CULTURAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS
IN PILGRIMAGE TOURISM**

S.VIJAYANAND*

*Ph.D Scholar, Department of Tourism Studies,
School of Management, Pondicherry University,
Kalapet, Pondicherry – 605014.

ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage, whether religious or secular, is experiencing resurgence around the world. This includes the motives for pilgrimage, activities during the pilgrimage, and the influence of tourism on it. The findings show that the visitor population ranged widely from very religious orthodox pilgrims, through "traditional" pilgrim-tourists to secular tourists. The features of present-day pilgrims can be represented on a scale that may be described as secular versus spiritual, and tourism versus pilgrimage. This typology also offers a model for the development of the pilgrimage sites. The findings highlight the increasing convergence of old-fashioned pilgrimage and current tourism, which have much in common. Additionally, this research emphasizes the expanding nexus of holy sites, society, politics, ideology, and culture. This article explains and supports the idea that the socio-cultural economic impacts of religious tourism should not be neglected or underestimated, although religious institutions have traditionally attempted to downplay this in the past. Additionally, the paper argues that religion and tourism have much in common. In the modern world it is hard to ignore the impression that in most places of pilgrimage the profane impacts of tourism are just as important if not more so than the religious. This paper lends theoretical support to this argument.

KEYWORDS: *religious tourism, economic impacts, pilgrimages.*