

TOURISM RISKS AND CRIMES AT PILGRIMAGE DESTINATIONS- A CASE STUDY OF SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI

Sandeva Khajuria

Suvidha Khanna

University of Jammu, India

ABSTRACT

Tourism demand is very sensitive to safety concerns. The protection of tourists from threats of crime and harassment is critical for an industry which has frequently been a target of unethical practices, crimes and scams. The risks to tourists arising from exposure to safety and security concerns may have serious repercussions on any tourism destination, particularly on a pilgrimage destination, as pilgrims are motivated by the push forces of faith and beliefs. Pilgrimage destinations attract mass tourism and many remain crowded and therefore are prone to increased risks and crimes. The high tolerance of many pilgrims to discomfort and their tolerance for spending time and money in the name of their deity make them highly vulnerable to compromises, unethical practices and frauds. Many pilgrimage destinations are located in places with tough physical and climatic conditions and few sanitation and health facilities adding to the risks of natural calamities and health problems. Therefore, assuring the safety of the pilgrims and minimizing the exposure of any tourist to risk or crime is a prerequisite for any pilgrimage destination. This paper is a case study of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, India, which attracts about 10 million pilgrims every year. It is an empirical study of 120 pilgrims and records their experiences as to how they feel while they travel to this particular destination vis-à-vis various safety concerns in the terms of tourist risks and crimes. The result shows that the studied destination is considered safe among the pilgrims and suggests some measures for further improvement.

KEYWORDS

Pilgrimage; Vaishno Devi; Risks; Crimes

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world but tourism is just not a modern world activity. The earliest forms of leisure tourism date back to the Babylonian and Egyptian empires. The major reasons for travelling were trade and business. After business and trade, the next motivation for travelling was pilgrimage. Egyptians used to organize many religious festivals which attracted not only the devotees but also the visitors, interested in art, culture, and attractions. Travelling for religious purpose is an essential part in the evolution of tourism and thus pilgrimage remains among the most practised forms of tourism.

One factor which is inseparable from tourism is tourist security. Security is a concept that is, at present, central not just to tourism but to the wider world (Hall, Timothy & Duvual, 2009). Safety and security issues in travel and tourism came to the fore the beginning of the 1950s (Kövári & Zimányi, 2011). A tourist is exposed to the risks and threats prevailing in his environment and the fear of or experience of encountering those risks and threats affect his choice of destination or revisiting a destination; in real terms it harms the destination image and reputation. Many destinations have seen a decline in tourist traffic because of unfavourable conditions for the tourists in terms of safety and security such as South Africa. Despite the steady increase in popularity with the international community between 1994-2002 South Africa developed a reputation for being an unsafe place to visit (George, 2003). India also forms a rather negative image to many travellers. There have been a few studies conducted on the destination image and marketing of India and the overall destination image of India as identified in these studies has been negative (Kale & Weir, 1986; Ahmed & Krohn, 1992; Chaudhary, 2000; Rajmohan, 2006). Though the number of foreign tourist arrivals has risen from 2,537,282 in 2001 to 3,014,924 in 2011 (Tourism Department of India), India still projects an image of an unsafe tourism destination.

Faith tourism is relatively recession proof (Dewan, 2012). The issue of safety and security however, holds a crucial place in the case of Pilgrimage tourism. Risk is inherent in every sphere of life and, no matter the size of the risk, it will have a detrimental effect and cause damage in some way (Shaw 2010). As a country of racial, cultural and religious diversity India has many of pilgrimage sites. These religious sites attract many domestic and foreign visitors. Being specific to Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, approximately one million core devotees visited the holy cave in the year 2012. These sites attract mass tourism and are usually crowded. Many of the pilgrimage sites are located at more isolated locations. Every year, many pilgrims to Amarnath with a known history of ailment, make the journey and die because of being unhealthy and unfit to travel (NDTV). They are seen to stay in tents, camps and inns providing shared accommodation and comparatively low standards of services. They are likely to compromise with comforts and hygiene, but are quite willing to spend money in the name of religion.

Such situational and location factors and traits of the pilgrims make them vulnerable to many types of risks viz: Natural Risks, Health Risks, Social / Anti-social Risks, Risks of false and unethical practices and risks of illegal Indulgences and crimes therefore vulnerable to exploitation and crimes, Socio Political Risks, etc. The present research is a case study of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, a holy cave located at an altitude of 5,300 feet in the Trikuta hills of Shivalik range, and is the second most visited religious shrine in India. Despite being a very popular destination among the pilgrims, research on their safety is lacking. The paper involves research conducted via interviewing 120 pilgrims, asking them some questions regarding perceived or experienced risks during their journey. They were approached at the Jammu railway station; at Katra, the base camp for the Yatra and at Raghunath Bazar, a market most tourists visits. Many issues such as facilities and security at the railway stations, bus stands, taxi stands, behaviour of the local drivers, local service providers, local shopkeepers, and local community towards the tourist are considered. The journey from Jammu to base camp Katra is through hills, and thus carries the risk of road accidents. The walking track from Katra to Devi Bhawan is a 13 km steep track. Pilgrims, ponies, and palkis use the same track and it is thus necessary to maintain and take proper care of the track. Altitude sickness is common, so health care facilities and dispensaries, and emergency

medications must be established and made available to the pilgrims on the track. Hills also attract the risk of landslides, weather changes and other natural risks. Consequently, disaster management programs must be formulated, implemented and communicated to the pilgrims. The state is famous over world for its handicrafts and Kashmiri art work. Tourists are fond of these handicrafts and many fall prey to false deals, overcharging or cheating. Tourist are easy targets of crime. They may get cheated, kidnapped, tortured or harassed. Many tourists are unaware of the laws and rules of the host destination and unintentionally violate them, or sometimes may intentionally violate the rules or indulge in unlawful activity as their stay at the destination is short and they are least concerned about the destination itself. Along with the above mentioned risks, many other tourism related risks are covered in present paper. In essence, the paper aims to gain pilgrim's perception, understanding, opinions, and finally give various suggestions about travel risks and crimes while they visit Mata Vaishno Devi shrine.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Risk

The word risk has its roots in the old French word 'risqué, which means "danger, in which there is an element of chance" (Littré, 1863). This term was never new to humanity. Risk has multiple forms. The UNISDR (United Nation International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2009) defines it as 'the probability that a hazard will turn into a disaster', and goes on to say that 'Vulnerability and hazards are not dangerous, taken separately. But, if they come together, they become a risk or, in other words, the probability that a disaster will happen (UNISDR, 2009). Risk involves lack of knowledge of future events, especially those events that have a negative impact on the business, also referred to as unfavourable events (Kerzner, 2001). It can be seen as the potential for loss or harm to an entity, where such an entity could be a person, a group, an organization a system or a resource (Raval & Fichadia, 2007).

Historically, tourism has always been accompanied by risk. The earliest activities of tourism involved the search for food, business or trade. At that time the risks were limited to certain factors like nature, physical environment, interpersonal or social set up etc. But as tourism grew and evolved, the risks associated with it also grew. It was due to the realized risks to the tourist that Greeks used to suspend all warfare at the times of Olympics. According to Kôvári and Zimányi (2011) the concept came into the lime light in 1950s when tourism shifted from and activity of the social elite of developed countries and widened the engagement to encompass Middle class people from more and more countries leading to mass tourism.

Crime

Crime is the breaking of rules or laws for which some governing authority (via mechanisms such as legal systems) can ultimately prescribe a conviction. Some religious communities also regard sin as a crime. Current research on crime, interrelationship between the community, environment and crime were among the earliest topics to be studied in criminology (Michalko, 2009). Pizam and Mansfeld (1996) cite that only a small number of empirical studies have explained the relationship between tourism and crime. Schiebler et al. (1996) suggested two theories regarding crime and tourism: the routine activities theory and the hot spot theory. Ryan & Kinder (1996) refer to hotspots as "crimogenic" places containing bars, nightclubs, and strip joints catering to tourists. Tourists visiting these areas are more likely to be victimized by crime (De Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999). Prideaux (1996) presented "The Tourism Crime Cycle",

according to which, crime is related to the image created and the type of marketing undertaken. Also it is well proved that crimes have negative effects on the willingness to visit. (Brunt et al., 2000; Dimanche & Leptic, 1999; Pizam et al., 1997; Ellis, 1995; Garcia & Nicholls, 1995; Hall et al., 1995; Moore & Berno, 1995).

Tourism Risks and Crimes - Pilgrimage Destination

Though risks and crimes certainly influence travel and tourism patterns and the industry, little research has been conducted into this area. It is the last few decades that researchers gained interest in this area. Some of the work on tourism risk is contributed by Sönmez and Graefel (1998); Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) and that on tourism crime by Dimanche and Lepetic (1999) and Pizam (1999). More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on guaranteeing a safe and secure environment for visitors (UNWTO, 1996). George (2003) carried out research on the tourist perception of safety and security while visiting South Africa. Tourists represent easy and lucrative prey to local criminals (George, 2003). Saayman and Snyman (2005) divide risks in the tourism industry into two categories: those that influence domestic travel and those that influence international travel (Shaw, Syamaan & Syamaan, 2012). They have also suggested some risk categories associated with tourism and tourism industry. Tynon and Chavez (2006) suggested a Tourism Crime Typology, classifying outdoor recreational crimes. Crime, terrorism, food safety, health issues and natural disasters are the main areas of concern (Breda & Costa, 2006). Safety and security in tourism industry has been identified as one of the forces causing changes in the tourism sector in the new millennium (Hall et al., 2003; Breda & Costa, 2006; Freyer & Schroder, 2007; Edgell et al., 2008; Tarlow, 2009). Kôvári and Zimányi (2011) presented a work on the changing concept of safety and security in the tourism (from 1950 to 2010). India is considered as a risky tourism destination because of its mysticism, political instability, grinding poverty, illiteracy, terrorism, unemployment, communal discord, lack of social services, and corruption (Sarkar, 1997; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2005). In 2011, Shu-Pin & Shih-Yen researched risk perceptions for international tourists in India. According to the perception of international tourists, key risks identified included harassment, fraud and robbery in India (Shu-Pin & Shih-Yen, 2011). The research on this issue related with pilgrimage destinations is lacking. Limiting the present paper to a case study of Shri Mata Vaisnho Devi, the shrine experiences an average visitation growth of 10-12 % pilgrims per year (Gupta & Raina, 2008). Home ministry's security report (2010) revealed Jammu and Kashmir as the state with second highest crime record in India, posing a threat to the tourists. Thus with this background, the present research aims at knowing the perception of tourist pilgrims vis-à-vis risks and crimes.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the present research is to study the various tourist risks and crimes at Pilgrimage destinations. Also, the study evaluates the perception of tourists about various risks and crimes on the basis of their demographics. A final objective is to suggest ways and means to reduce the risks perceived and crimes for the safety of the tourists at pilgrimage destinations.

HYPOTHESES

Demographics are an important variable in studying perceptions and experiences of the tourists regarding risks, crimes and safety - security. There is generally a disparity of views, perceptions and experiences between different demographic profiles. This also applies to the issue of travel

risk and safety. Kwon and Park (2002) mentioned two case studies which analysed safety factors of concern to people visiting the '99 Hanam International Environmental Exposition (Park, 2000b) or the '99Kangwon International Travel Exposition (Kwon & Park, 2000a) in Korea. The results of Park (2000a) showed that the male group was significantly more satisfied with all factors like Safety facility, Hygiene status, Emergency facility, and facilities for the elderly or disabled travellers, overall satisfaction than the female group. Whereas the results of Kwon & Park (2000b) showed that the female group was significantly more satisfied with all factors than the male group. Also, it was suggested that there is significantly different levels of satisfaction with safety among various age groups. The youngest group (29 or under) is the most satisfied with every safety factor. It has also been pointed out by Shu-Pin & Shih-Yen (2011) that age is an important demographic profile in assessing the risks categories associated with tourism industry, which earlier was suggested by Krippendorf (1987) too. Barker et al.(2003) studied safety perception of visitors of international sport competition in New Zealand and found that the visitors' safety perception depended mainly on nationality, age, accommodation choice, communication skills and numbers of travel companions (Wichasin & Dounghummes, 2012). Their sample also included respondents belonging to different age groups, marital status and number of companions while travelling. Popescu (2011) while studying safety and security of tourists in Romania also practised the same for demographic profile. Shu-Pin and Shih-Yen (2011) in their research on risk perceptions of international tourists in India discovered that females are more likely to be victims than males. Barker et al. (2003) studied safety perception of visitors of international sport competition in New Zealand and found that the visitors' safety perception depended mainly on nationality, age, accommodation choice, communication skill and numbers of travel companions. Thus, we conclude that there exists a variance between demographic attributes and levels of risks perceived by the tourists at a destination. Hence, based upon the same, the hypothesis framed is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in the perception of pilgrims vis-à-vis tourism risks and crimes at Pilgrimage sites on the basis of their demographics.

H1 (a): There is a significant difference in the perception of pilgrims vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at pilgrimage sites on the basis of their gender.

H1 (b): The levels of the risks perceived by a pilgrim at a pilgrimage destination vary with age.

H1(c): There is a significant difference in the perception of a pilgrim vis-à-vis various risks and crimes at Pilgrimage according to their marital status.

H1 (d): There is a significant difference in the perception of pilgrims vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at pilgrimage sites on the basis of their choice to travel individually or with companions.

In an era where violence, terrorism and intolerance have become the norm, it is not strange that visitors are cautious when travelling to unknown destinations (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2008). Tourists to Egypt, Florida, Kenya, Spain, Lebanon and Yemen for example have been affected by reports that tourists have either been held hostage, accidental victims or targets of crime or terrorism resulting in injury, rape, torture, and sometimes even death (George, 2003). Tourists are vulnerable because they are temporary visitors to communities with which they are not familiar (Som & Amir, 2009). Events in the tense global political environment of the past few years, however confirm that brutal terrorism has extended to areas frequented by tourists as

well (Hall, 1994 & Wall, 1996). Shooting and bombing attack at Taj Hotel in Mumbai, India (2008) is one such example. British tourist robbed and held hostage in Brazil in 2009, 5 tourists attacked by shark in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in 2010, 2011 Bomb attack in Morocco Tourist Café, Tourists repeatedly being murdered in Mexico during the year 2012 and Argentina Mass muggings of Chinese tourists in Paris in 2013 are incidences speaking of risks and crimes experienced by the tourists at foreign lands. Fires and Disease outbreaks at Mecca during Hajj; Stampedes in Kumbh Mela; Flood in Kedarnath and Serial bomb blast in Bodh Gaya (2013) indicate risks associated with pilgrimage destinations. Wongleedee (2013) carried out a study on food safety Management, concerning EU Tourists in Thailand which revealed up to 46 percent of respondents were sick at least one time or more due to eating food during their trip in Thailand, which indicates that the international tourists are very susceptible to the risks of food safety in Thailand. Mawby (2000) proposed that tourists should be informed of the risks of visiting tourist areas in order to reduce fear of criminal incidences while holidaying (George, 2003). Hence on the backdrop of these studies we can predict that the tourists are quite susceptible to safety risks and crimes at pilgrimage destinations. Hence, *Hypothesis 2: There is a high risk and crime at pilgrimage destinations.*

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected using a questionnaire titled "Tourism Risks and Crimes at Pilgrimage Destinations- A Case Study of Mata Vaishno Devi". The questionnaire was self-structured and consists of nine major sections. The first section contained questions about demographic profile of the respondents including gender, age; marital status and companionship while their journey. The second section comprised various Health Risks, a pilgrim is prone to. The third section comprised Natural Risks followed by Social/Antisocial risks, Overcharging Practices, False Practices, Safety Facilities, Socio-Political Risks and Illegal Indulgences of the pilgrims respectively. All these risks are based on previous studies (Shaw, Saayman & Saayman, 2012; Wichasin & Doungphummes 2012 ; Wongleedee 2013, Som & Amir, 2009 ; Tynon & Chavez, 2006). A five point Likert scale is used in the study, representing a range of attitudes from 1 being very low to 5 being very high.

Sampling and Data Collection

After a thorough review of literature, a self-structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed among 145 pilgrims, approached at Railway station, Raghunath Bazar and Katra. The respondents were chosen by random sampling. The respondents, out of 140, only 120 questionnaires turned out to be useful.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents
N=120

S.No.	Demographic Variables	N	Percentage %
1	Gender		
	a) Male	73	60.833
	b) Female	47	39.166
2	Age		
	a) Below 20	3	2.5
	b) 20-40	85	70.83
	c) 40-60	27	22.5
	d) Above 60	5	4.166
3	Marital Status		
	a) Single	28	23.34
	b) Married	92	76.66
4	Travelling with		
	a) Alone	2	1.66
	b) With spouse	9	7.5
	c) With family	84	70
	d) With friends	25	20.83

In Table 1, the demographic profile of the respondents is given. It is found that approx. 61% of respondents are males and the rest 39% are females. Almost 2.5 % of respondents were below the age of 20 years, while approx. 71 % were from the age group 20-40 years and 22.5% and 4 % from age group 40 -60 years and above 60 years respectively. Approx. 23% of the respondents were single and 77% were married. Maximum of the respondents were travelling with their families and approx. 21% with their friends.

Table 2 provides the information about the levels of different types of risks perceived and experienced at Vaishno Devi Shrine. In case of health risks, the risk of unhygienic food, water etc. at rail/ bus station was highest (mean 2.725) whereas other risks like acclimatization are lowest (mean 1.166667). Amongst the natural risks, the risk of Road /Rail /Air accidents is the highest (mean 1.491667) while other risks such as pollution, rain, snowfalls are lowest (mean 1.141667). The risk of beggary is the maximum with mean 3.03333 while that of prostitution etc. with mean 1.058333 scored minimum among the social/antisocial risks.

Where overcharging of entry tickets and permits (mean1.016667) is seen least among overcharging practices, while taxi/auto drivers are highest involved in overcharging (mean 2.108333). Being issued with the fake currency (mean 1.016807) is the least among false practices where as being offered extended rides and being compelled by the guide to shop at local markets is highest (mean 1.591667). As far as socio-political risks are concerned, the risk of

stampede (mean 1.175) is the minimal risk perceived by the pilgrims while risk of terror attack (mean 1.275) is the maximal risk perceived. Sometimes tourist at the destination themselves, intentionally or unintentionally get involved in Illegal Indulgences. Their indulgence in purchase of tickets in black (mean 1.475) is highest whereas indulging in breaking lines for Mata darshan (mean 1.083333) is the lowest.

Table 2: Tourist Risk Index N=120

Risk	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
A. Health Risks	1. Risk of Unhygienic food, water	2.725	1.517198
	2. Risk of Unhygienic food, water	2.383333	1.342163
	3. Risk of Unhygienic surroundings at public places	2.666667	1.324198
	4. Risk of Ill hygiene and cleanliness at hotels	1.733333	0.985042
	5. Risk of Infectious Diseases	1.408333	0.715916
	6. Risk of Wrong Medication	1.241667	0.621679
	7. Any other (acclimatization)	1.166667	0.539737
B. Natural Risk	1. Risk of Road/Rail/Air accidents	1.491667	0.91666
	2. Risk of Earthquakes	1.20	0.616305
	3. Risk of Landslide	1.283333	0.768971
	4. Any other (Pollution, Rain, snowfalls)	1.141667	0.490169
C. Anti-social Risk	1. Risk of Being asked for financial sympathy	2.428571	1.211327
	2. Risk of Beggary	3.03333	1.500327
	3. Risk of Pick pocketing	1.466667	1.044661
	4. Risk of theft in public places	1.391667	0.937508
	5. Risk of theft/loss of property in hotel	1.258333	0.715916
	6. Risk of Being Threatened	1.075	0.294558
	7. Risk of Eve teasing	1.168067	0.557223
	8. Risk of Sexual Harassment/Rape	1.191667	0.63901
	9. Risk of Kidnapping	1.158333	0.534457
	10 Risk of Murder	1.117647	0.454292
	11. Risk of Consuming tainted food	1.193277	0.667367
	12. Any other	1.058333	0.325288
D. Over Charging	1. Overcharging by Service Booking agents	1.6	1.183926
	2. Overcharging by Taxi/Auto Drivers	2.108333	1.418935
	3. Overcharging by Guide	1.283333	0.790525
	4. Overcharging by Local Shopkeepers	1.975	1.286403
	5. Overcharging by Restaurants	1.641667	1.106101
	6. Overcharging by Hotels	1.658333	1.273491
	7. Overcharging by Pony/ Pithoo/Palkiwalas	1.333333	0.901291
	8. Overcharging by Prasad shops	1.458333	1.011662
	9. Overcharging by any other service providers	1.133333	0.672801
	10. Any other	1.016667	0.182574
E. False Practices	1. Being offered unwanted tours	1.252101	0.772608
	2. Given extended rides	1.591667	1.233263
	3. Being demanded money by Pujaris	1.45	1.002937
	4. Being sold under quality, pirated. duplicate product	1.383333	1.014047
	5. Being misled by false advertisements	1.408333	1.024866
	6. Compelled by the guide to shop at local market	1.591667	1.246817
	7. Being issued fake currency	1.016807	0.18334
	8. Any other	1.025	0.203437
F. Socio-Political Risks	1. Risks of Religious riots	1.183333	0.647988

	2. Risks of Stampedes	1.175	0.513065
	3. Risks of Strikes	1.241667	0.766919
	4. Risks of Curfews	1.241667	0.721761
	5. Risks of Local Violence	1.241667	0.721761
	6. Risks of Terror attack	1.275	0.809217
Illegal Indulgences	1. Buying illegal/stolen products	1.383333	0.801085
	2. Gambling	1.283333	0.735457
	3. Consumption or possession of drugs	1.291667	0.823967
	4. Smuggling	1.233333	0.69492
	5. Breaking laws of the host country	1.191667	0.539153
	6. Getting fake medication to claim medical insurances	1.183333	0.467127
	7. Entering the restricted sites without permission	1.341667	0.845113
	8. Buying tickets in black	1.475	1.296164
	9. Any other	1.083333	0.379813

The safety facilities index in Table 3 shows that the highest observed safety facility among the above mentioned is the facility of manual checking at the station and the lowest observed is disaster management at Mata Vaishno Devi (mean 2.225).

Table 3: Safety and Facilities Index

Safety Facilities	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Facilities of Public Sheds/ benches	2.85	0.866268
2. Facilities of Cloak rooms at station / Bhawan	2.625	0.970684
3. Facilities of Waiting halls at stations	2.866667	0.620833
4. Facilities of Security guards at the Bus stand /Railway station /Air Port	2.958333	0.929406
5. Facilities of Manual checking at stations	3.016667	0.978623
6. Facilities of Scanning Machines at stations	2.991667	0.974428
7. Facilities of Disaster / Crisis management at stations	2.516667	0.849946
8. Facilities of Maintenance of the Mata Vaishno Devi track	2.525	1.340779
9. Facilities of Health Centers on the track	2.433333	0.837497
10. Facilities of Disaster management at Mata Vaishno Devi	2.225	0.920928

Table 4 provides the mean of various risks categorized in this paper. Though socio-political risks (mean 1.226389) is the lowest observed by the respondents followed by illegal indulgences (mean 1.274074), natural risks (mean 1.279167), false practices (mean 1.339863), social/ antisocial risks (mean 1.461741), overcharging practices (mean 1.520833) and health risks (mean 1.903571) respectively. From the means of the various risks studied we can conclude that none of these risks score high on Likert scale. All the negative parameters are low. The mean for safety facility is 2.700833, which is just above the average score on Five point Likert scale (2.5). Thus, the hypothesis that there is a high risk and crime at pilgrimage destinations is rejected.

Table 4: Tourism Risks and Crime Dimensions

A) Health Risks	1.903571
B) Natural Risks	1.279167
C) Social / Anti-Social Risks	1.461741
D) Overcharging practices	1.520833
E) False Practices	1.339863
F) Socio–Political Risks	1.226389
G) Illegal Indulgences	1.274074
H) Safety facilities	2.700833

Table 5 is the ANOVA for the age of the respondents. The calculated value of F i.e. 0.2625 for $v_1 = 3$ and $v_2=116$ at 5% level of significance is less than the table value =2.604, thus hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the perception of tourists vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at Pilgrimage on the basis of their age is accepted.

Table 5: Significance Difference in Various Risks and Crimes on the Basis of Age

Source of Variation	SS	Df	Mean sequence	F- value
Between group	0.1466	3	0.0488	0.2625
Within groups	21.597	116	0.1816	
Total	21.774	119		

Table 6 is the ANOVA for the number of companions. The calculated value of F i.e. 9.7923 for $v_1 = 3$ and $v_2=116$ at 5% level of significance is greater than the table value = 2.604, thus hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the perception of tourists vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at pilgrimage destination on the basis of number of companions is rejected.

Table 6: ANOVA for Companionship

Source of Variation	SS	Df	Mean sequence	F. value
Between groups	4.394	3	1.4646	9.7923
Within groups	17.350	116	0.1495	
Total	21.744	119		

Table 7 represents the t-test for gender and the marital status of the respondents. Since the calculated value of t (0.4008) for gender is less than the table value (1.96), the hypotheses that there is a significant difference in the perception of tourists vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at Pilgrimage on the basis of their gender is accepted. Similarly, the calculated value of t (4.043) for marital status is greater than the table value (1.96), so the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the perception of tourist vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at Pilgrimage on the basis of their marital status is rejected. Table 8 offers a summary of the accepted and rejected hypotheses.

Table 7: t - test for Gender and Marital Status

Risks	Gender			Marital Status		
	Male	Female	t- test	Single	Married	t – test
	1.6204	1.6526	-0.4008	1.902	1.551	4.043

Table 8: Acceptance/ Rejection of Hypotheses for the Study

Hypotheses	Accepted / Rejected
Hypothesis 1: <i>There is a significant difference in the perception of pilgrims vis-à-vis tourism risks and crimes at Pilgrimage on the basis of their demographic</i>	
H1 (a): There is a significant difference in the perception of pilgrims vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at Pilgrimage on the basis of their gender.	Accepted
H1 (b): The levels of the risks perceived by a pilgrim at as pilgrimage destination vary with age.	Accepted
H1(c): There is a significant difference in the perception of a pilgrim vis-à-vis various risks and crimes at Pilgrimage according to their marital status.	Rejected
H1 (d): There is a significant difference in the perception of pilgrim's vis-à-vis tourist risks and crimes at Pilgrimage on the basis of their companionship.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2: <i>There is a high risk and crime at pilgrimage destinations.</i>	Rejected

CONCLUSION

From the research, it can be concluded that Vaishno Devi is a safe pilgrimage Destination. The respondents did not feel or experience much risk and crime while travelling to Vaishno Devi. Some of the risks which emerged in the research are: risk of unhygienic food, water etc. at rail/ bus station, risk of road/rail/air accidents, risk of beggary, overcharging by taxi/auto drivers, risk of extended rides. Other risks included; being compelled by tour guide to shop at specific market, terror attack, buying illegal/stolen products, which were not too high. The respondents were also satisfied with the safety facilities provided. The safety of Facilities scored an average score of 2.7 on Likert scale indicating that they were of moderate levels and pilgrims were satisfied but these facilities can of course be improved in future. The research also indicates that there is not much difference in the perception of the pilgrims on the basis of marital status and companionship. The major difference in perception among the pilgrims is on the basis of their age. This study reveals that the tourism risks at pilgrimage destinations are low. This may be because the mindset of the pilgrims is different from that of a leisure tourist. The same person when going for pilgrimage may have higher tolerance to inconvenience and risks. Tourist at a particular destination may not seek much comfort and luxury while travelling for pilgrimage than when travelling for at the very

same destination for leisure. When it comes to pilgrimage, the behaviour of the pilgrims is derived by their faith and beliefs, which makes them more likely to adjust with the lacking services and facilities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research study has a number of limitations. The case study area is limited to Mata Vaishno Devi only and the results may not be same for other pilgrimage destinations. Also the number of respondents was less than 200. A larger sample may affect the results of the research. The demographic attributes considered were gender, age, marital status and companionship while other attributes like nationality, state they belong to, and educational background of the pilgrims could be added. The research is a study of perception of the pilgrims in context to, and of the prevailing Tourism risks and crimes at Vaishno Devi. The study also lacks the assessment of intention to revisit and other such variables related to false practices, illegal indulgences, safety facilities can be added in the future research.

RECOMMENDATION ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

Though the studied destination overall emerged as a safe one, safety and the experience of the pilgrims can be enhanced. The risk of infection resulting from poor hygiene appeared in the research. Measures should be taken to make public places like railway stations, bus stands, and market areas cleaner and hygienic. The food and water served to tourist at these places should be tested and kept at optimal hygiene levels. Food and Water management at these places is required. Some pilgrims also feared the risk of road accidents. And their fear is supported by many previous incidents. Improved and safer road links should be developed with more effective traffic management. Authorities should also keep a check on fares charged by the rickshaw/taxi drivers and should make sure that the fares fixed by the government are being implemented. Research showed that the destination suffers from Beggary. Beggary is now proven to be a highly organized business and is a social taboo. Thus, it needs to be removed. In case the tourist encounters trouble, he should be able to call someone for help. There should be direct dial numbers, Complaint numbers, complaint boxes, Tourist helpline numbers, which should be well informed to the tourists. These numbers can be displayed at various transport stations and other tourist places. There should be swift response by law enforcement authorities if a tourist seeks help or make complaints to the relevant authorities. The Shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi is located in a relatively safe region of the state. People from many parts of the world are not much aware of the real security ground in the state. Therefore, more advertising and promotion of the destination is needed in order to promote a realistic picture of Jammu and Mata Vaishno Devi shrine. Marketing campaigns and awareness programs can help project a much safer destination image.

FUTURE RELEVANCE

This paper studies the levels of risks, crimes, and facilities at pilgrimage destinations, particularly in case of Mata Vaishno Devi. The linkage of demographics of the pilgrims with their perceptions will help in identifying the variance in the perception at other pilgrimage destinations as well. The study can help in the assessment of risks to pilgrims visiting other pilgrim sites. The results of the study can help in suggesting ways to manage, reduce or overcome the risks. It can also help in knowing the revisiting intentions of the tourists. There have been studies regarding risks, crime, safety and security in tourism in general but not in the context of pilgrimage destinations. The

present case study of Mata Vaishno Devi, a pilgrimage site, thus can extend genuine support to researchers willing to work on other parameters and destination's risks, crime, safety, security and pilgrimage both in general, and in context to pilgrimage.

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AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Sandeva Khajuria
University of Jammu
sandeva_khajuria@yahoo.co.in

Dr. Suvidha Khanna
University of Jammu
urs_suvidha@rediffmail.com

JOURNAL CONTACT DETAILS

Special Edition Editor
David Beirman
David.Beirman-2@uts.edu.au

Executive Editor
Charles Arcodia
c.arcodia@griffith.edu.au

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