

Governance and Management of Religious Tourism:

A Case Study of Vaishno Devi (Katra, J&K)

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Abstract

Tourism sector is one of the important tools for economic development as well as it strengthens bonds of fraternity among people. Due to covid19 Foreign Tourists Arrivals during last 2/3 year gradually decreased but still domestic tourism and tourism sector have significant impact on Indian Economy. There are various tourist destinations but among them few are very important from tourist point of view. In this paper researcher took Vaishno Devi as case study for discussing management of Shrine Board Activity. Vaishno Devi Shrine Board is one of the most important places due to various aspects such as spiritual important, economic impact, livelihood of many people. The growing tourism industry has significant impact on every sphere of a state and Shrine Board also provide various kind of service to better serve tourists in response to growing tourist inflow but time to time incident put a question mark on security management of shrine board. This paper aims to address this security management issue in details. Security and Governance system is the most important factor for any tourist place and in this paper researcher discuss about tourists perception regarding shrine board management and some common issues.

Keyword: Management, Governance Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Satisfaction, Security

Introduction:

Spirituality and Religion are the most important motivated factor for Tour & Travel and it also plays a crucial role to generate employment as well as it served as a source of revenue generation. As per Ministry of Tourism Annual Report data tourism sector contributed approx 5% in GDP and it also provided 12.95% which was constituted 88.72 Million jobs in India (Ministry of Tourism, 2021).

In India tourism is mainly religious tourism, people mostly prefer temple and religious

sites while choosing their tourist destination. First survey of National Council of Applied Economic Research in 2003 regarding ranking of pilgrimage sites, top 5 destination are Hindu Pilgrimage Site such as Tirupati Tirumala, Puri Jagannath Temple, Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Haridwar and Mathura(Shinde, 2015). In this paper Researcher focus on the Governance system of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple of Katra, Jammu & Kashmir is a most popular destination among in India. Since establishment of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi

Shrine Board every year more than 5 Million pilgrims visited the Shrine (Shrine Board). A pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi is considered to be one of the holiest pilgrimages in India. It is situated in the three peaked mountain named Trikuta, 5200 ft altitude, Katra district of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory. The holy shrine is totally managed by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board since 1986, the Board has undertaken a series of developmental measures in order to provide the Yatri with a comfortable and enjoyable experience. The Board of Directors continues to reinvest the offers and donations received in improving various Yatri facilities (Shrine Board).

Methodology:

A detailed questionnaire was created to gather information about the Shri Mata

Vaishno Devi Shrine Board's management. A total of 100 samples were obtained at random from visitors to Vaishno Devi Shrine for this study. Each respondent was individually interviewed, and the questionnaire's questions were presented to them in the simplest manner possible. For the purpose of analyse the paper's objective, the researcher analyzed both primary and secondary data sources.

Study Area:

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra town, the base camp for pilgrimage to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan, which receives over 5 million visitors yearly owing to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, has been the subject of this study.

Picture 1: Bhawan Area of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board



Source: Primary Study

It is located at an elevation of 5200 metres above sea level in the J&K state of northern India, near the foothills of the sub-Himalayan Shivalik highlands. A holy Banganga flows north and northwest of this

town, while the Bhoomica rivulet flows south and southwest. Katra is around 50 kilometres from Jammu, and is located 635 kilometres northwest of New Delhi on national route 1A.

Literature of Review:

Arunmozhi, T. & Panneerselvam, A (2013) address the many forms of tourism in their study. They divide tourism into 12 categories in their research. They also said that all types of tourism had a major influence on a country's economic growth, particularly in terms of GDP and job creation & due to national importance or strategic role of it the Ministry of Tourist also emphasizes national policies for tourism development and promotion.

Chauhan, A (2010) discusses the popularity of Mata Mata Shrine in her paper. Vaishno Devi's popularity has expanded year after year, overcoming religious, class, caste, gender, and religious barriers. The holiest of holy Pindis, manifesting Mata in her three forms of Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, and Matasaraswati, is a unique feature of the Shrine. Her research focuses on the spiritual significance of shrines, as well as why people have been attracted to them in recent decades.

Shinde, K. (2015) in his work, he discusses how religious tourism entails a multilayered journey and how tolerance must be developed in a larger socio-cultural and religious context. The focus of this paper has been on Hindu sites, but for a cross-sectional analysis of tolerance, it is prudent to look at a wide range of combinations where different religious faiths co-exist in pilgrimage sites, such as Hindu-Sikh, Christian-Hindus, Muslim-Hindus, and foreigners in any of these combinations.

Sharma, A, K. (2016) in his paper, he discusses the development of Katra as one of the world's most important pilgrimage cities. It is safe, secure, and decentralized in its planning and design.

Because of its strategic position and spiritual significance, the area's economy and infrastructure are rapidly expanding.

Singh, S & Bahadur, R. (2018) in their work, highlighted the importance of pilgrimage tourism in achieving sustainable development in their work. It also benefits the economy since Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine attracts a significant number of tourists, it can generate job opportunities, community participation, infrastructure development, and socioeconomic growth in the district as well as for country.

Sharma, R. (2021) in his paper, he discusses the rise of religious tourism in Katra, Jammu and Kashmir's Vaishno Devi Shrine. He suggested that increased air, rail, and road connectivity are significant aspects that contribute to the rise of tourism. He also highlighted that the Shrine Board's many amenities are an important component in favor of tourist's increasing number.

The above mentioned literatures are discussing about the economic impact, sustainable development and connectivity issues briefly. But there is a research gap between management body of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and Economic Impact, Connectivity and Satisfaction level of tourists. Governance of Religious Institutions and tourism is updating day by day which shaped by demand and availability of resources but it need to modernized. This paper aims to discuss about management mechanism and pilgrimages perspective regarding it.

About Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board was set up in August, 1986 under the provisions of "Jammu and Kashmir Shri

Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Act, 1988 (Act No.XVII of 1988)", an act to provide for the better management, administration and governance of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and its endowments including the lands buildings attached, or appurtenant, to the Shrine, beginning from Katra up to the holy Cave and the adjoining hillocks. This Act deemed to have come into force w.e.f. 30th August, 1986 (Shrine Board).

The governance and management of the shrine board managed by a Board upto ten members with the Chairman. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir hold the position of Ex-officio Chairman of the Board, there is a provision that is Governor of Jammu & Kashmir not belong to Hindu community, they need to nominate an eminent person of Hindu Community as a member of the Board. Apart from that there are nine other member out of them two are distinguished person in the Hind religion or culture service. Two members must be women who must be related with Hindu Cultural work, Social worker. Three people who have good knowledge of administration and legal affairs or financial affairs and two eminent Hindu persons who must be belong from the

Jammu & Kashmir. Before the formation of the Board it was managed by Dharmarth Trust then the Bridars but due to absence of infrastructural development it handed over to Shrine Board.

Now it was managed by Chairman of Shrine Board, a Chief Executive Officer also appointed to help and inform him regarding important matter of the Board. To assist Chief Executive Office there are two additional Chief Executive Office named Additional Chief Executive Officer (I) and Additional Chief Executive Officer (II). To assist Addl. CEO (I) there are one Chief Account Office and two Deputy Chief Executive officer are appointed, one who managed regarding Purchase and other one deals with Project Activities. There are three Deputy Chief Executive Officers appointed to assist Addl. CEO(II) in various activities such as Development Department, Administration and Operation Department and other department. There are Senior Manager and other officer also appointed to manage various field activities they need to report their respective Deputy CEOs (Shrine Board, 2018).

Table No.1: Total Income of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in Last 5 Years

Sl.No	Income during Financial year	Amount in Billion
1	2016-17	3.8
2	2017-18	4.18
3	2018-19	4.16
4	2019-20	4.42
5	2020-21	2.2

Source: Administrative Report of Shrine Board

Income Sources of Shrine Board is mainly categorized into 5 categories: Offerings/ Donations, Interest of Deposits & dividends, Sales, Rental Income and Misc

Receipts and 3.75 Billion is average income of the Board in Last 5 year.

Human Resources management is important factor of every sector in Shri Mata

Vaishno Devi Shrine Board total 2889 people are working this man power divided into 5 categories these are on deputation, graded Employees, Team Employees, MRWs/MR-SKCs and on Honorarium. Board also emphasis on the capacity building programme by three types of training programme these are (a) Core Skill Set, (b) Supplementary skill Set and (c) Employee welfare and well being.

Tourist Management & Facilities

Before starting the Yatra, all pilgrims must register themselves. The Shrine Board has only Statutory & Legal authority for the purpose, is in charge of registration. The Yatra slip cannot be issued by any other organization, private or public. The signup process is completely free and automated. This procedure is carried out at the Yatra Registration Counter (YRC), which is located at the Katra Bus Stand. Each yatri is photographed on the spot after registering his or her name and basic information, and he or she is given a Yatra Parchi, which is the legal authorization to travel to the main Shrine. The entire Yatra Registration procedure is totally digitized, making it simple, quick, and easy.

A new Yatra counter has been built near the second bus terminal to help minimize the waiting period at the primary YRC. It is named YRC-II and is placed roughly one kilometre from the primary Yatra station on Udhampur route. Because the area near the YRC-II is used for idle parking of travel and luxury coaches, it is more convenient for pilgrims arriving by these coaches to get the Parchi from the YRC-II.

Reservations for all Shrine Board guest homes/dormitories may be made at the guest houses' reception desks or at the Niharika complex's Enquiry and Reservation counter. This website also allows for online reservations. Devotees are recommended to make essential arrangements well in advance to increase their chances of receiving confirmed accommodation reservations at various places. In addition, because weekends and holidays see a lot of traffic, pilgrims are recommended to arrange their Yatra on weekdays. There are several places for Accommodation such as Kalka Dham, Vaishnavi Dham, Spiritual Growth Centre, Niharika Bhawan, Sharda Bhawan, Mangala Bhawan, Gouri Bhawan apart from that there are many private hotels.

Shelter structures have been built by the Shrine Board at various points along the track. These shelter sheds cover practically the whole route on select parts of the alternate track and the original track from Sanjichhat to Bhawan. However, the sheds have been placed at a distance of around 500 metres apart in other parts of the track. These shelter structures are critical in protecting visiting devotees from shooting stones, rain, sun, snow, and other inclement weather. The comfortable seating amenities offered beneath the shelters encourage worshippers to take a break. As a result, they are also known as Vishram Sthals. For the pilgrims' convenience, toilet facilities and refreshment units have been placed near to the majority of the shelter structures.

Biscuits, cold beverages (tea, coffee, milk, mineral water, etc.) are accessible at the Shrine Board's refreshment units along the way. Nearly every one of these units is situated in a well chosen location with a

panoramic view of the valley. As a result, they're also called View Points. There are a total of 12 different viewpoints to choose from. Nine of these refreshment units are on the original track, while three are on the other route leading to Bhawan.

While no special medical certificate is required to participate in the Yatra, people with heart, breathing, or other such diseases are recommended to do so only after a thorough medical examination and guidance. The rigorous ascent is known to worsen cardiac, asthmatic, and orthopaedic disorders. In any event, the use of the stairs is severely discouraged for these individuals. There is a block hospital in Katra, as well as a 24-hour charitable dispensary managed by the Shrine Board, to meet the medical requirements of the yatries. Basic medical facilities in Banganga, Adkuwari, Sanjichhat, and Bhawan can cater to emergency requirements. There are also oxygen cylinders and emergency medications accessible. There is also a dispensary and a 24-hour ICU at Bhawan.

At a height of 5200 feet above sea level, the Holy Cave is located. Even in the summer, the nights are chilly, and Yatries would ordinarily need to sleep with blankets. The Shrine Board has set up free blanket distribution centres at several places. Yatries are given blankets for the night in exchange for a small, refundable security deposit. Blanket stores may be found in a variety of handy places, and as previously said, the service is completely free. Once the blanket is returned, the security acquired from the yatri is repaid. Pilgrims should get a valid receipt for every financial transaction they make.

Because many yatries choose to store their surplus luggage in Katra before embarking on the Yatra, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board has set up free cloakrooms for all visitors. For security concerns, video cameras and cell phones, as well as other electronic devices, are not permitted on the track. Before departing on the yatra, yatries must make proper arrangements for the safe storage of such material. There are also free cloakrooms provided at the main Bhawan complex. There are at least two cloak rooms that are open 24 hours a day. A cloakroom is placed just across from the main queuing complex (gate No.1). This cloak room may be used to store shoes, belts, combs, and any other objects that are prohibited from entering the Holy cave. In addition, Sridhar Bhawan has another cloakroom that is operational. Before going to Darshans, Yatries can leave their full luggage here. Cash, Jewellery, valuables, and electronic devices should not be kept among the deposited bags, according to Yatries. All cloakroom services are completely free of charge.

The State government has made complex measures to manage the yatra and improve security in the region, including the deployment of sufficient local police and paramilitary personnel. The security exercise includes regular patrols of the track, monitoring, alertness, and taking required measures in the event of suspicious components. The SMVDSB (Shrine Board) security team is used to regulate the Yatra and add to the overall surveillance of the region. X-Ray Baggage Inspection Systems and Door Frame Metal Detectors have also been installed to safeguard the pilgrims' and

Shrine's safety. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) is placed at all critical sites.

Police Stations/Police Posts may be found at Katra, Banganga, Adkuwari, Sanjichatt, and Bhawan, where local police can be contacted. At Katra and Bhawan, senior personnel with the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP) are available. Officers of the paramilitary forces with the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (Dy SP) or above are also available in both Katra and Bhawan. The police can also be contacted in the event of theft, pickpocketing, or any other type of mishap. At Katra's main bus station, there is also a police aid booth.

Travel Medium (Palkis, Ponis, Pithoos, Helicopter and Battery Car)

For individuals who are not used to walking for 12-13 kilometres, it might be difficult and exhausting. Many pilgrims still opt to walk the entire route. It aids in the cleaning of their thoughts before to entering the Holy Shrine. The trek's fatigue and weariness act as penances, and their minds become calm, meditative, and full of devotion and thanks for the Mother. The devotees are influenced by the tranquilly of the atmosphere, and a magical calm begins to encompass them. Many pilgrims, however, are overweight or otherwise unable to walk for lengthy periods of time. Many followers suffer from respiratory issues or other illnesses, as well as being elderly or physically handicapped. Ponies and palanquins may be required by all or some of them.

Many pilgrims walk all the way to the Holy Shrine out of faith and devotion,

but many get so exhausted after the Darshans that they must rent horses for the return trek. While there is nothing wrong with it, a downhill pony ride might be more demanding and stressful for the entire body than an uphill one. The local/under a municipal committee managing local municipal matters manages the Pony, Porter, and Palanquin services. All of these porters, pony owners, and palanquin (palki) owners are registered with the municipal committee and have a token number. Every year, their cards/permits are renewed, and new cards with a new validity date are issued. Visitors can hire them for their travel. Battery Car is another good option for visitor they can use battery car for their travel for this facilities they need to register themselves with require payment.

Apart from all these, Shrine Board also provide Helicopter Service to the tourists, Helipad is approx 2 km far from Bus Stand of Katra. This is very convenient way to reach at Bhawan, it took only 8 min to reach at the destination place. These services totally depend upon weather condition when weather is not suitable this service suspended time to time. In this way Shrine Board provide various facilities to tourists.

Discussion

As per shrine Board site showing Yatra figure regularly, it is very easy to calculate total number of visitors in a calendar year. Researcher also prepared the table through the Shrine Board data, it cover 20 years visitors record.

Table No.2: No. of Tourists in a Calendar Year

Year	No. of Tourists	Year	No. of Tourists
2000	5217715	2011	10115647
2001	5056919	2012	10495269
2002	4432178	2013	9323647
2003	5400296	2014	7803193
2004	6109895	2015	7776604
2005	6251998	2016	7723721
2006	6950573	2017	8178318
2007	7417619	2018	8586541
2008	6792223	2019	7940064
2009	8234896	2020	1720357
2010	8749326	2021	4949967

Source: Shrine Board Website

Vaishno Devi Shrine Board is a popular destination among tourists and approximately more than Seven Millions tourist visits the Holy Shrine in a year and approximately twenty thousand people visit per day as per Shrine Board Data. Due to this large number of tourists like to visit this place it becoming very important to manage it properly and effectively. Apart from that Tourist perspective Vaishno Devi Temple also important for workers who directly involved in Shrine Board Activities and there are thousand people who depend upon

Vaishno Devi temple such as people who related with Palkis, Ponies and Pithoos, Thousand of shops whom business depend upon tourists, several hotels and many more. Due to various causes Vaishno Devi Temple played a crucial role in life of thousand peoples. To analyzing management of this temple, Researcher collecting information regarding tourists view on management of Vaishno Devi Shrine Board. For collecting information regarding people perception researcher conducted a survey with 100 pilgrims at the Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

Table No. 3: Profile of Respondents

State	Percentage	Gender	Percentage
Bihar	10%	Male	54%
Chhattisgarh	4%	Female	46%
Haryana	12%		
Himachal Pradesh	10%		
Jharkhand	4%		
		Age Group	Percentage
Madhya Pradesh	1%	18-25 Years	36%
Maharashtra	1%	26-40 Years	18%
Odisha	6%	41-60 Years	46%
Punjab	19%		
Uttar Pradesh	6%		
Uttarakhand	3%		
		Educational Qualification	Percentage
Chandigarh	2%	Matriculation	13%
Delhi	17%	Graduation	31%
Jammu and Kashmir	3%	Post Graduation	28%
Ladakh	2%	Technical Degree	28%

Source: Primary Study

n=100

For this paper researcher took 100 visitors of Vaishnodevi Shrine Board as respondent, they are belongs from different part of country. Out of them 54% is Male while 46% are female. Researcher categorized age of respondent into 3 different groups i.e. 18-25 Year age group which consisting 36%, second group is 26-40 Year age group which

consisting 18% of total respondents and 3rd group is 41-60 year age group which consisting 46% respectively. Educational Qualification of respondent categorized into 4 groups namely Matriculation, Graduation, Post Graduation and Technical Degree which consisting 13%, 31%, 28% and 28% respectively.

Table No.4: Satisfied with Management of Shrine Board

Category	Response in Number	Response in Percentage
No	15	15%
Somewhat	24	24%
Yes	61	61%

Source: Primary Study

n=100

The Table No.4 presented that, majority of visitors satisfied with the service and management of Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, it is almost 3/5th of the total respondent. Very few visitors are not satisfied with the management of the shrine

board and 1/4th of the total respondents are somewhat satisfied with the management. Majority visitors have don't have any problem and enjoyed the service that are provided by Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

Table No.5: Cross tabulation between Satisfaction level and reason for not satisfied

Are you satisfied with the management of this Temple? * If no, what are the problems that you faced?							
	What are the problems that you faced?						Total
Are you satisfied with the management of this Temple?	Yatra Parchi not checked	Battery Car not available from starting time	Rush in Accommodation	No Queue Management	No Shed in main waiting Area	Not Applicable	
No	0	0	7	6	2	0	15
Somewhat	2	1	3	13	5	0	24
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	61	61

Source: Primary Study

n=100

Almost 2/5th of total population is not satisfied or somewhat satisfied in this table this number is not significant but while we consider this percentage out of total visitors, this number is too large. There are several problem identified by visitors such as, Yatra Parchi Not Checked visitors yatra parchi not checked anywhere while visiting shrine Board, Battery Car not available from stating time after covering more than 6 Kilometer Battery Car Available but this facility can provided from starting point it can provide relief to old age people, Rush in

Accommodation in Shrine Board's Bhawan so many people need to stay in private hotels of Katra, another issue is no shed in main waiting area. Majority of part covered by shed but in main waiting area where people need to wait several times some part of it does not have shed. At the top of the hill it is very cold in winter area, rainy at rain season, so it needs to cover through shed for protection of visitors. Finally most important issue is No Queue management at waiting area, almost 1/5th of respondent argued for this issue.

Table No.6: Chi-Square Tests of Crosstabulation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	117.300 ^a	10	.000
Likelihood Ratio	141.427	10	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	82.363	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 13 cells (72.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .15.

Researcher focus on the issue and satisfaction level, therefore it is necessary to check whether argument is statistical

significant or not. Table No.6 supported argument that relationship between two variables i.e. whether you satisfied with management and what are the reasons for

dissatisfaction is strongly related to each other and have significant relationship.

The opinion shown above the table is that security is a very critical issue in this place, and security mishandling can be linked back to events such as the stampede that happened about 2.30 a.m. on January 1, 2022, in which at least 12 people perished and over a dozen were injured. The stampede was prompted by a sudden rush of pilgrims at the Vaishno Devi temple here to mark the start of the New Year, according to several survivors, who blamed "mismanagement" for the catastrophe. According to an eyewitness to the incident, the situation may have been avoided if the trip had been better regulated by the authorities. Minutes previously, a similar occurrence occurred, but no one was hurt, and the issue was immediately addressed. Another guy, Arun Pratab Singh (30), who lost his friend, said that the bhawan was overcrowded and that the tragedy was caused by a lack of queue management (PTI, 2022)

There isn't just one accident that happened here; there have been a number of major incidents at the holy site, which are detailed here. First 6th of August, 2016: A landslide near Ardhwari temple on the road to Shri Vaishno Devi's holy cave shrine in Katra killed at least four persons and wounded seven more in the early hours of Saturday. Second 23 November 2015: When a helicopter crashed near the bus station in Katra, six pilgrims including a lady pilot were died. Third 31 December 2012: Five Vaishno Devi pilgrims were hurt, as well as the pilot of a Pawan Hans helicopter. Fourth On November 6, 2007, a Himalayan Airlines helicopter crashed in the Trikuta highlands in Reasi district, injuring five pilgrims and the pilot. Fifth In July 1988, a Westland helicopter crashed while attempting to land near the Vaishno Devi temple, killing all five passengers and two crew members. These are some major incident which can be traced time to time. Due to all this accident security and management become very important for Shrine Board(Khajuria, 2022).

Table No.7: Most Important factor for choosing a destination

Category	Response in Percentage
Quality of Services	3%
Safety	52%
Communication	45%

Source: Primary Study

n=100

While visitors choose their destination they strongly stresses on the safety factor while communications also have a strong factor while choose destination place. In this table communication represents easier access to and communication facilities available to the specific place. The number of pilgrims visiting the shrine has risen year after year,

especially to adequate road connection offered by NH 44 and NH 144A. In addition, the location is also connected by railway line, with regular train services to various areas of the country, making it convenient for visitors. Apart from enhanced connection, the quality and quantity of lodging has improved, as have the numbers of hotels, restaurants, and stores, as well as

other amenities like as ATMs, helicopter service, health care facilities, and improved security. Better pilgrim roads from Katra town to Bhawan, as well as a variety of conveniences along the way, such as electric auto-rickshaws, ponies, Pithoos, and Palkis services, offer travelers with greater comfort and convenience (Sharma, 2021).

The Shrine Board is involved in certain development initiatives. First the whole section of track from Banganga to Bhawan, which is approximately 12 kilometres long, has been tiled. An alternative 5.5-kilometer route has been built for pilgrims' convenience; it begins at Inderprastha (just below Adhkuwari) and continues all the way to Bhawan. Over 70 shelter structures have been built over a span of roughly 4 kilometres. These Shelter Sheds have been built on both the Main and Alternate Tracks, with 52 on the Main Track and 18 on the Alternate Track. At these Shelter Sheds, popularly known as Vishram Sthals, pilgrims may relax and recuperate. Second, around 1200 High Power Sodium Vapour (HPSV) lights have been used to illuminate the whole track. Along the railway, approximately 100 toilet facilities with over 600 seats, including European type chairs, have been built at regular intervals. On the route, a total of 125 Water Points and 50 Water Coolers have been erected to provide pilgrims with safe drinking water. Third, at Banganga, Adhkuwari, and Bhawan, well-equipped medical centres staffed by experts have been established. At Katra/Himkoti, there is a 24-hour charitable dispensary; at Sanjichhat, there is a 24-bed full-service hospital with all amenities; and at Bhawan, there are

round-the-clock medical services, including an ICU.

The following are some of SMVDSB's ongoing projects:

1. The construction of Durga Bhawan at Bhawan to accommodate more Yatris.
2. SMVDSB track Multipurpose Audio-Video System
3. SMVDSB Track Underground Cabling Project
4. SMVDCoN's Administrative and Faculty Blocks are being built.
5. SMVDSB monitors CCTV Surveillance Project
6. Bhojanalayas on the SMVDSB track will be redesigned.
7. SMVDSB track slope stabilization project to guarantee a safe yatra route
8. Extension of the exit track at Bhawan.
9. Widening of the track between the X-Ray point at Gate No. 3 and the Army Gate.
10. Yatra rerouting near Bhairon Ji Mandir.

It is executing its work smoothly and attempting to complete these current projects as soon as possible due to effective coordination between the Government and the Shrine Board.(Shrine Board, n.d.)

Shrine-related tourism has a large direct impact on the economies of both Katra and Jammu & Kashmir. As a result, every social event, no matter how insignificant, creates some revenue and jobs in the economy. To put it another way, the employment generation and revenue generation for very modest events may be in the single digits of the currency, to say the least. As the event's significance and intensity grow, the amount of money generated might approach billions of currency units, with hundreds of

thousands of people employed. When we consider that seven million people visit Vaishno Devi each year, the magnitude of the transportation, lodging, and restaurant requirements becomes clear. Facilitating and satisfying such demands of visitors or devotees obviously provides a large amount of work and revenue for the people, therefore it is logical that a large amount of employment and income is produced in Jammu and Katra. Despite the fact that the hereditary occupation system is slipping away in the new society, the less educated individuals continue to pursue their old vocations. As a result of the increased economic activity brought on by devotees seeking Mata Darshans, specialised employment is being created in the construction business, the hospitality industry, and even assisting devotees by providing horses and Pithoo services for their journey up to the Shrine. Because the indigenous population of Jammu and Katra is insufficient to fulfill the specialised job demands of the developing tourist sector, this attracts individuals from all across the state of J&K. As a result, the Shrine might be described as "A Journey of Faith," with huge socio-economic advantages to the local populace in particular, as well as the

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militancy-affected J&K state in general (Gupta & Raina, 2007).

Conclusion

The Holy Shrine attracted millions of people from all over the world, and the number of visitors has steadily increased over time. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board is in charge of maintaining the whole site, as well as providing facilities, communication, transportation, and media. Not only for facilities tourists' number increased, tourists have their own religious belief and desire to visit the shrine. Without a doubt, it is clear from this paper that the majority of the respondents are pleased, but a few are dissatisfied for various reasons. Of course, this is a small percentage, but it is necessary to address difficulties that tourists experience. The most critical concern that the Shrine Board must address is security and management, and it must take appropriate efforts to solve these challenges. The Banganga Checkpost has already verified everything that a tourist carried, but the authorities must thoroughly inspect each tourist's yatra parchi, and the security management board can deploy its security staff at the major access point to prevent any accidents.

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