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## The Importance of Religions in Political Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

Currently, tourism has numerous types that represent a specific purpose for traveling. And so some of them are effecting the economy of countries by being developed successfully. One of them is religious tourism that gathers millions of people to one place for different reasons. So, this article will discuss religious tourism, pilgrimage and its impacts on the economy of countries.

**Keywords:** religions, religious tourism, pilgrimage, hajj, tourism, muslims, christianity, buddhism, islam.

Tourism is an integral type of economic activity that has developed extensively over the years. Besides, it is currently the fastest growing major industry around the world. In general terms, tourism is the movement of people from one place to another to enjoy and admire the beauty of that place or for recreation. So, humanity may understand the culture, civilization, and religious factors of a country with the help of tourism. However, tourism is divided into various types and some of them are well-known. The main species of tourism are dark, mass, rural, ecotourism and religious tourism. In this century, religious tourism is forming a fundamental part of tourism. Therefore, religions play an elementary role in tourism.

Human migration has been associated with religion since earliest times in the past, and religious tourism is widely recognized as one of the oldest kinds of travel. What is religious tourism? Religious tourism can be said as one form of tourism where people travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage or leisure purposes. In addition, religious tourism is in basic phrases religious or strongly prompted and which includes the visit of spiritual ceremonies, all the visits of local, international religious centers. Collins Kreiner states “Religion has played a key role in the development of leisure over the centuries and has influenced how people utilize their leisure time” (2018). According to the World Tourism Organization, religious tourism can be one of the best tools to foster inclusive and sustainable development.

In so doing three major advantages of religious tourism identified:

1. Religious tourism raises awareness of humanity’s common heritage and gives resources for preservation.
2. It can make contributions to local improvement.

### 3. It builds cultural understanding (Griffin.A.K., & Raj.R. 2017).

That's why religious tourism is forming a vital part of tourism.

Religious tourism distinguishes itself, as do all other types of tourism, by a dynamic element-movement in space, a journey-as well as by a static element-a temporary stay at a place other than the place of residence. Both the aim and the purpose of the journey are a change in environment, at least for a limited period of time, which for the tourist is of personal, not professional, interest ( Rinschede, G .1992).

Religious tourism isn't just for religious people.. Some people who engage in religious tourism are actually of no religion themselves. By visiting religious monuments and places, they can learn more about the history of different religions, which makes religious tourism a great form of educational tourism. On the other hand , many people mostly spend their time going to a mosque, church or temple, especially those who regard religion as one of the most important circumstances of their life. There are various activities which can come under the arm of religious tourism. One major one is a pilgrimage. In some religions, people should go to special religious locations of those religions. So, this activity is called a "pilgrimage" and just as religious tourism is an important part of tourism, pilgrimage is also a main part of religious tourism. As well as, pilgrimage is a long journey that has a special role for your religion. As an illustration of this is Muslims traveling to Mecca or Catholics traveling to Lourdes. Furthermore , it also gives humanity a way to upkeep our common heritage. All religions are practiced in different parts of the world as mankind has spread throughout the ages. In particular, pilgrimage can be a useful aid to increasing visitor levels in many international locations. Moreover, it allows people to connect to their religion in a way they might not otherwise be able to - for example, a Muslim living in a predominantly Christian country or area may have little opportunity to visit a mosque. They also may not have the opportunity to meet other Muslims very often. By visiting a place where Islam is the main religion, they can better connect with their own religion. Religious tourism is an institutional feature that has its own meaning, primarily pilgrimage in the higher religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Most of the world's great religious centers once and present have been destinations for pilgrimages: the Vatican, Mecca, Jerusalem, Bodh Gaya or Cahokia. Rome and Mecca are distinct transnational passage centers. The list of such pilgrim places has grown down the centuries. In addition, according to UNESCO about 60% of the world population is religious, the figures of the world's major persuasions have been estimated. Such a large number of religious religionists are indeed an inconceivable driving force to the development of religious tourism (Raj.R., & Morpith.N.D. 2007).

The globally – known example of pilgrimage is Hajj. Hajj is pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia, which constitutes the fifth and last of the acts of worship prescribed by Islam. The Hajj constitutes a form of worship involving the whole of the Muslim's being: body, mind and soul, involving time. The person should assume for a few days the condition of a pilgrim, all of God's service and worship, and it is the fifth pillar of Islam that Allah sent Muhammad. Muslim should make the Hajj to the Holy City of Makkah once in his or her lifetime. For Muslim pilgrims the Hajj is the peak of religious life and it is the most powerful expression of the most important principle of the umma. Similarly huge numbers of Muslim's visit Mecca every year. Worldwide notes the importance of the Hajj for example, to the economy of Saudi Arabia. This is worth around \$ 1,5 billion, with 40% being spent on rental of rooms to pilgrims ( Peter Stenford. 2021).

Overall, it may be said pilgrimage or religious tourism can help to raise the number of visitors and to increase the economy in many countries. According to Collins Kreiner "it is impossible to understand the development of tourism without studying religion and understanding the pilgrimage phenomenon" of bygone eras (2018). Until today, religious tourism has been growing , and now it has even become one of the important sectors of the international tourism market. The continuous growth of this market segment is expected in the future, but research areas in

religious tourism are understudied than other tourism sectors. On a final note, religions help the development of tourism in all aspects, that is, they facilitate the study of tourism in the scientific, political, and historical fields. Therefore, religions are of magnitude in tourism.

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