

PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN GODAVARI DHAM KAILALI



A Thesis

Submitted to

APF Command and Staff College

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University

in Partial Fulfillment of Master Degree in

Security, Development and Peace Studies

Submitted by

Suresh Gaire

Sixth Batch (2077-2079)

Roll No. 4010

TU Registration No: 6-1-49-405-97

APF Command and Staff College

Sanogaucharan, Kathmandu, Nepal

August 2022

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research paper entitled "**Pilgrimage Tourism in Godavari Dham Kailali**", submitted to the APF Command and Staff College is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of Prof. Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar. I have made due acknowledgement to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in course of preparing this research paper. The result of this research paper has not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or of any other purposes. I assure that no part of the content of this research paper has been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my research paper.

Signature:

Name: Suresh Gaire

Date: September 4, 2022

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

I certify that this thesis entitled “**Pilgrimage Tourism in Godavari Dham Kailali**” was prepared by Mr. Suresh Gaire under my supervision. The researcher has fulfilled the criteria prescribed by the Department of Humanities and Social Science, Tribhuvan University. I hereby recommend this thesis for the final evaluation and approval.

.....

Prof. Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar

Supervisor

Date: September 4, 2022



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LETTER OF APPROVAL

The thesis entitled **Pilgrimage Tourism in Godavari Dham Kailali** submitted by Mr. Suresh Gaire for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master Degree in Security, Development and Peace Studies in Armed Police Force Command and Staff College has been approved by the evaluation committee.

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ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage is a religious journey with non-economic motive based on religious objectives. Pilgrimage and tourism share same components like mobility, finance and acceptances for travel that make those two term same alike. Pilgrimage tourism denotes the outward journey towards a sacred and holy goal and inward journey towards greater humanity from self. This field has gained its importance after 1990s and has soon occupied a major space in academic studies due to its multi sectoral and multi-dimensional characters. The socio-economic significance has highlighted pilgrimage tourism among other fields. Godavari Dham of Kailali is one of the major pilgrimage destinations which has a huge potentials of advancement due to its religious sanctity and historical faith of the people. The Hindu texts provide evidences of its importance and the local population's faith makes it one of the final religious destinations in Nepal's far west region.

No academic studies so far has been done despite of such huge potentialities of Godavari Dham. This thesis aims to explore the religious importance of this place and intends to discover the possibilities of pilgrimage tourism in this site. The researcher has visited the field and used a qualitative method to carry out this research. The lack of motivations, inadequate focus on environmental issues, lapses on management of the site, less attention in diversification, and diversion from sustainability were key issues in sustaining the pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham. Still, the Dham has huge potentials and bright future if those issues are timely addressed. The religious purity and geographical beauty after all, is the only components for this place to highlight its image.

Keywords: pilgrimage tourism, Godavari Dham, Religion, Hindu God, Destination

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

There are debates about the proper definition of a tourist and a pilgrim. In a simpler form, a person going on a journey for the entertainment purpose is a tourist and a person in a journey from a religious motive is called a pilgrim. Both of these contribute in religion and in tourism. Additionally, the available literatures claim that tourists and pilgrims bear two distinct perspectives- one with no differences, second one claims to have differences when the role is defined (Graburn, 1983, pp. 9–13). ‘Pilgrimage’ was first used in 1100s and the word ‘tourist’ derived its name from Latin. The debate of tourist and pilgrim is viewed through anthropological and economic lenses and it is usually proclaimed that there is no clear distinction at the base level as both of these have same components .i.e. traveling to a certain place with an objective. To coin, those are two types of travellers who seek different objectives such as religious and self-satisfaction. Even a tourist in some case is a religious traveller. Pilgrim originates from community and is linked by societal brotherhood.

While distinguishing between a tourist and a pilgrim, a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist (Turner & Turner, 1978a). In present context, pilgrimage has same patterns as of a tourist like organized mobility, use of transportation and bureaucratized travel plans. Both the tourist and pilgrim need time, money/income and social acceptance and permission of travel that make those two same alike (Smith, 1989).The distinction is the societal approval and rejection where society is more inclined towards pilgrimage approval and tends to reject any tourist’s travel in most cases (Smith, 1992a). Similarly, pilgrims need to have two things; a distant religious site and religious association with that site. A pilgrim relies on religious desires and a tourist is guided by secular interest. Visiting a highly valued tourist destination and high worshipped religious sites are the by-product of marketing policies.

A pilgrim is defined as a person who goes on a journey seeking religious attainment who is free from family life, and goes on for the salvation or the blessings of the God (French, 1992, pp. 1–2). The difference between a tourist and a pilgrim is the former aims to achieve the glory of physical presence of god and transform himself/herself with an exercise of humility dedication and faith. The prime objective of a pilgrim is to have the blessings of the God

(Bremer, 2017) whereas a tourist travels with an opinion of entertainment, though he/she can be a religious too. A tourist focuses on being a consumer of a market economy whereas a pilgrim devotes himself/herself to the holy God. Thus, a pilgrim seeks a self-worth of the experience, a tourist seeks experiences worthy of the self (Bremer, 2017).

Pilgrimage has now become an important phenomenon of religious, cognitive, cultural, and socio-economic nature. Religious tourism undergoes continuous transformations. Places visited by tourists, the method of travel to these places, or standards of accommodation facilities all are changing. From economic point of view, tourism occupies a higher position in market than the pilgrimage tourism, but the value of pilgrimage tourism in terms of economic contributions is huge for income, profit and employment generation (Graave et al., 2017, p. 39). This is due to the economic advantages for local economy as pilgrimage tourism generates the unparalleled economic transaction through the development of businesses and infrastructure development. Such incentives in pilgrimage tourism has attracts business sectors for the higher economic expansion and growth.

To conclude, while distinguishing between a tourist and pilgrimage through their motives, the scholars have identified other cross sectoral impacts of pilgrimage tourism making it more vibrant.

1.2 Pilgrimage Tourism

Pilgrimage tourism is a journey that creates opportunities to visit sacred places and is a feature common to almost all societies. The key elements of pilgrimage are motivation, destination and journey. In a traditional religious pilgrimage, it is a journey on foot that is reinforced by a sense of renunciation of worldly matters. Once at the sacred site temples or sacred objects, the pilgrim generally performs rituals in fulfilling the purpose for which such travel is undertaken. He/she wants seeing and being seen by the God. Though pilgrimage is primarily an individually motivated journey informed by personal faith, it also is a mass movement when viewed in terms of magnitude and frequency (Bremer, 2017; Collins Kreiner, 2019).

Pilgrimage tourism, also called by other terms like religious tourism, spiritual tourism occupies a major role in the world of tourism. This the concept of tourism has emerged from the initiation of religious travel in the history of mankind. But there are controversies regarding religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism as both of these term have slightly different aspects. The argument is that though those two terms are interchangeably used they have different meanings. The religious tourism is considered as a tourist journey, in which, apart from the typical motives

for going for a journey, there are religious motives such as the desire to know the centres of worship, relics, participate in religious celebrations and ceremonies to learn more (Tala, 2008).

Pilgrimage tourism is a part of religious tourism, which is an act of moving from one place to another. A journey to the holy places is a pilgrimage with a religious motives to experience new places all over the world. Now, it has other dimensions in social, cultural and economic platform. It continues to grow with the increased interest of people for the prospects of knowledge, expansion of religious influence and for economic connections (Tala, 2008, pp. 1–2).

Pilgrimage in modern time, is experiencing a wider expansion in population mobility that have a powerful impacts on political, economic, social, and cultural implications, and also affects global trade and health. Due to its influential characteristics in movements of people and its direct connections on multi-sectors, pilgrimage invites a larger attention in domestic, national and international sphere. Many countries around the globe have undertaken pilgrimage as an economic tool as pilgrimage contribute in trade, economic exchange and expansion, cultural connections, political movements and also spread of religious activities (Barber, 1991; Vukonić, 1996).

Pilgrimage tourism is an outward and inward journey towards a sacred goal which is common in all the religions which has faith and religious obligation and concerns for blessings (Barber, 1991, pp. 1–5).’ It is linked with the spirituality rather than religious motivation (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021, p. 1). The term outward journey in the pilgrimage tourism is associated with the travel to a new, strange, dangerous places and the term inward journey is linked with the spirituality, self-knowledge, penance for past life sins and desire to resolve mundane problems and curing any physical and mental illness. It is also a strong belief that drives a mankind towards his/her holy site where the God stays and satisfies the spiritual vacuum through any type of miracles. It is deep attachment of a person with the religious place and asserts that only those people visit religious sites who have faith in their religion. The idea of pilgrimage emerged when people decided a religious place to be holy and believed Gods living there could get rid of their sins(Barber, 1991, pp. 1–5).

The larger numbers of religious sites around the world have contributed in attracting a huge number of devotees and gaining major attentions of the scholars. Now, it is linked to tourism and has multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional connections.

Pilgrimage tourism is linked with the religious faith known as non-economic journey. The motivation behind such journey is always religion and spirituality. Data prove that religious and pilgrimage tourism contribute most to the whole tourism sector than any other segments (Timothy & Olsen, 2006b). Estimated number of 240 million people travel to their pilgrimage sites per year and such pilgrims belong to the major religions of the world such as Hindu, Islam, Christian, Buddhism (Timothy & Olsen, 2006b). Such journey has economic and social benefits and generates multiple opportunities to the people in economic terms. The main driving factor behind religious tourism is the rejection of worldly physical affairs and achieving the ultimate abode of redemption. Interesting part is that, it is an individual motivation that results in a mass travel guided by the faith and also bears the touristic characteristics.

This academia started lately as a distinct research concept after 1990s (Collins Kreiner, 2019, p. 1). Previously, this phenomenon was studied under tourism sector focusing on the experience and psychosocial aspects of the tourists.

Later, there emerged the ideas of liminality, *communitas*, pilgrim as a quest for the authentic tourism as a sacred journey, and five main modes of tourist experience based on the location and significance of the given experience within the tourist's overall worldview (Cohen, 1998; Graburn, 1977; Maccannell, 1973; Turner & Turner, 1978a). The new ideas in pilgrimage research are-pilgrim as a religious traveller to tourist as a vacationer (Smith, 1989) and diversity of pilgrimage on religious and secular issues, classification of pilgrimage centres into a formal and a popular one, similarities and differences of a tourist and a pilgrim (Cohen, 1998; Digance, 2006; Eade & Sallnow, 1992; Shinde, 2012). Also, there emerged the studies on relationship among religion, pilgrimage, and tourism (Timothy & Olsen, 2006b), and differentiation (Collins Kreiner, 2019; Collins-Kreiner & Klot, 2000). By 2000s, pilgrimage accommodated traditional religious and modern secular concepts besides the religious motivations and actions. Currently, this academia is based on a holistic approach linking multi-sectors from religious and secular angles (Collins Kreiner, 2016).

Thus, the concept of pilgrimage is highlighted after 1990s and there are academic attempts to link the emergence of pilgrimage tourism in terms of its lifecycle connecting it to the economic profitability and social impacts.

1.3 Religious Tourism

Pilgrimage tourism is again a concept defined as a segment of religious tourism. Pilgrimage tourism is synonymous to religious tourism along with other branches of tourism like spiritual,

cultural and cultural heritage tourism characterized by the peoples' activities such as performances of cultural activities, visiting of religious sites and performing various religious activities during the journey (Kapur, 2018). In the realm of religious tourism there are various performances and events related to culture and religious norms. This type of visit to religious site is a practice from ancient time in Hindu religion that specifically aims at achieving the religious objectives or desires. It is a common practice in Hindu religion to ask blessings such as money, child and other material progress from God and also a practice visiting concerned godly places after or before the blessing is achieved (Kapur, 2018). Pilgrimage tourism has multiple components like an act of worship, expressing gratitude, confessing sin and performing a vow, asking for cultural and spiritual salvation, commemorating and celebrating religious events, expanding the understanding of religious knowledge, inner communication with God, developing interest in visiting religious places, generating employment or achieving socio-economic advantages, recognizing the authenticity and legitimacy of religious sites and finally expanding peace and harmony.

The religious sites carry social value, source of education along with identity and pride to the population. It is believed that the conservation of religious sites and expansion of pilgrimage tourism are also associated with the preservation of present culture for future generation. The various cultural and religious practices such as performances, events, fairs and festivals, expositions, feasts, religious healing practices, trade and purchase of religious artifacts form a certain culture and identity that must be passed to the next generation (Nega, 2019). So, pilgrimage tourism has a close tie with the preservation and expansion of culture too. Pilgrimage tourism is also supplementary to the exchange of cultures and strengthens the bond of connectivity among the people who follow the same religious practices. The spiritual connectivity through religion and pilgrimage tourism has a lasting effect on national unity which is a positive outcome for the local and other forms of government. We have examples of various countries like India, Middle East and European Countries that have high national opinion towards any issues that are based on religious bond.

1.4 Godavari Dham

Godavari dham is considered as one of the major pilgrimage sites in far western region of Nepal. The term '*Dham*' is the residence, abode or a seat of a diety in a place where God is supposed to reside. So, Godavari Dham is a holy place where Hindu Gods are supposed to live. As Padamraj Joshi claims, the real Godavari described in Hindu holy books is the Godavari of Kailai (Joshi, 2014) According to him, the religious importance of Godavari is mentioned in

the section-*Manash Khanda of Skanda Purana*. *Manash Khanda* describes this place as a favorite place of Lord Shiva and also describes that Lord Krishna took bath in this place. This place is described as having seven holy taps for bath that are Bridda Gautami, Gautami, Bhargabi, Bashishtha, Aatreya and Tulya. All the origins of those taps meet at Godavari at the end. The word Godavari is believed to be formed from Bridda Gautami. There is a long description of how those holy taps turned into famous rivers like Attariya River, Machheli River, Bhasu River, Manohara River Kalakhola River and so on. Hindu Gods like Shree Ram, Sita, Hanuman, and Sugriva also visited this place during their 14 years stay in forest (forest exile). There are some strong religious faith & believes regarding Godavari. According to ancient Hindu Holy Books, Pancha Pandav performed their “Sadhana”- Meditation in Godavari while they were in exile in forest. Mahabharat, a Great Epic of ancient India & "Skandan Puran" have also mentioned about Godavari. The reference of bathing & meditating "Snan Dhyam" performed by Shreekrishna in Dwapar Yug is also mentioned on Manas Khand of "Skandan Puran". According to myths & religious saying:

“Each Individual achieves great holiness & destines to Devalok (heaven) if s/he takes food after taking bath in Godavari Dham.”

“People get rid of sins, attain peace of mind & eternal knowledge after visiting Godavari Dham.”

“People get rid of skin disease after taking bath in Godavari River.”

On those aforementioned facts, the Godavari Dham is considered as one of the prime “Tirthas” in Nepal. Hindus also believe The word “tirtha” refers to a ‘ford’ or river-crossing and, by extension, these are places that allow passage between the mundane and spiritual realms (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021). Gautam (2014) has mentioned about 137 pilgrimage sites in Nepal where Godavari is not listed but Bhattarai (2014) has mentioned this place as one of the pilgrimage site in his book (Bhattarai, 2014; Gautam, 2014a). Thus, Godavari Dham is also one of the major pilgrimage site in Nepal, though it has not received necessary attentions and promotions. This place is also called a Shiva Dham where lord Shiva resides. It is the pilgrimage destination for all the Hindu people across Nepal India border. As a main Hindu Pilgrimage site, Hindus from Nepal & India visit this place each year for religious purpose.

Geographically, Godavari Dham lies in western part approx. 650 km far from Kathmandu and is located at Godavari Municipality, ward number 4 in Kailali of Nepal. It is 22 km far from Dhangadhi, the district headquarters of Kailali. The area of Godavari Dham ranges from Machheli Khola in the East, Kalakhola in the West, Mohana River in the North & in the south

Faladri Parbat within Kailali. This area in ancient time was larger than of now- up to Trishuli River in the East, Gadawal of India to the west, Maan Sarobar to the North & Lucknow of India to the South was regarded as the geographical area of this holy place. The lap of Godavari Dhaam is the cradle of Godavari River too, which is regarded as an ancient holy river.

The social composition of Godavari area also bears an importance on the religious attraction of this place. According to data (Door Survey, 2076) of the Local Municipality, Godavari Dham is surrounded by the local population of 93,368. Among them, 97.87% the people follow Hinduism, 1.35% of them follow Christianity & rest 0.78% people follow other religions. This place has multiple Hindu temples of Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Kabailyanath Temple, Shiva Temple, Durga Temple, Godavari Mata Temple, Nepal Mata Temple, Hanuman Temple and Banadevi Temple in the core location. Around 50-60 saints have settled in these temples permanently. Those saints are there for all the rest of their lives. Renowned Nepali saint 'Byagrabad' Prabanjan Bahadur Singh, the son of former Inspector General Hem Bdr Singh has also his own Gorakhadhuna - a fire that lights forever, as a branch of Gorakchhanath. He frequently visits Godavari Dham & stays over there. Former Prince Paras Shah also time and again visits Gorakhadhuna located in Godavari Dham. Hindu Pilgrims from Nepal & India have their deep religious devotion towards this sacred landscape.

Religiously, Godavari Dham is famous for many festivals and Hindu events. Every year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrimage tourists from Nepal & India visit Godavari Dham to pay respect to their deities, to participate in religious fairs and to conduct various religious rituals especially in Maghe Sankranti (Barha Rashi Darshan Makar Mela for 12 days) each year.

The prime purpose of visiting Godavari Dham is to attain the religious merits. Like in other pilgrimage sites, rituals like *Shraddha* (post-death rituals) , *Bratabandha* (sacred thread wearing ceremony), *Bibaha* (marriage), *Hawan*, *Pinda Daan* (offering rice to deceased souls), *Snan* (sacred bath) and other Hindu worshipping practices and activities are regular phenomenon in this area (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021). The Aaryaghat (cremation area) is also located in Godavari Dham for the funeral activities. Similarly, events like Shivaratri, Period of Sorha Sraddha, each Monday and each Aaunshi are the notable days of events, people visit Godavari Dham to perform and express their religious faiths.

Recently, the importance of pilgrimage in Godavari Dham has heightened by the new tradition of celebrating Kumbhamela since 2015 AD. This event was observed and inaugurated by the Right Honorable President of GoN Bidhya Devi Bhandari along with former prime ministers,

cabinet ministers, high level government officials. The local administration has also planned to initiate the celebration of a Ardhakumbha Mela in each six years in Godavari Dham. In addition, people visit Godavari Dham for refreshment, natural sightseeing, and personal reasons for the peace of mind as this landscape is naturally beautiful. Another key fact of purpose of visitors is refreshment, sightseeing & observing the nature of Godavari Dham. As it is surrounded by small hills from three sides, the landscape seems very beautiful. Godavari Dham is also an entrance point for seven hilly regions of far west of Nepal.

1.5 Statement of the problem

There is a proven data that claims pilgrimage tourism as one of the oldest forms of planned travel and to this day remains a huge industry too. As posit by the scholars, about 300 million to 330 million tourists visit the world's key religious sites every year and around 600 million national and international religious trips are made around the world, generating around \$18 billion in global revenues (Ali & Cobanoglu, 2020). Every country has religious and socio-economic aspects pilgrimage tourisms and each of them aim to bolster it. Neighboring India has record of 44.5% contribution of pilgrimage tourism of the total export incomes of Indian tourists (Manhas, 2020), but Nepal remains a lot behind in utilization and preservation of such religious sites. There is no official data how much it contributes in national economy whereas all the countries are highly utilizing their religious sites for the religious purpose and economic gains. Nepal is the home of Hindus where more than 80 percent of people follow Hinduism and Nepal itself a centre of attraction for Hindus. Besides, neighbouring India has more than a billion of population of Hindu tradition that can directly contribute in Nepal's development if we undertake a rigorous policy in strengthening pilgrimage tourism.

Having an immense potentiality of pilgrimage tourism, no academic works are carried out in this regard. Godavari Dham remains still a virgin destination for Nepalese people and it harbours a huge potentials religiously and in terms of socio-economic aspects. As no studies have been carried out so far on the status and potentiality of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham, the prospect of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham is immense and has a direct bearing on the preservation of the religious and cultural heritages as well as the economic condition of the residents therein. A coordinated approach initiated at the highest level of governance as well as in local level is required to study, promote and sustain pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham. For above mentioned purpose, this research study will focus to answer the three important research questions as mentioned below:

- 1.5.1. What is the religious importance of Godavari Dham?
- 1.5.2 What is the scope of Pilgrimage Tourism of Godavari Dham?
- 1.5.3 What are the possibilities to promote Godavari Dham as a Pilgrimage destination?

1.6 Objectives of the study

The overall objectives of the study will be to assess the concept of pilgrimage tourism of Godavari Dham. Godavari Dham has possibilities to attract masses of pilgrims and can contribute in socio-economic development of the area and to the regions. To access fostered and sustainable pilgrimage Tourism in Godavari Dham, the specific objectives of this research study are:

- 1.6.1 To find out the religious importance of Godavari Dham.
- 1.6.2 To assess the scope of pilgrimage tourism of Godavari Dham.
- 1.6.3 To explore the potentialities of promoting Godavari Dham as a pilgrimage destination.

1.7 Significance of the study

Though pilgrimage is not a new term, it remains a new area for Nepalese arena. The globalization of religious advantages and expansion of travel and tourism has also highlighted the importance of religious places like Godavari in Nepal. In a country like Nepal, religious tourism or pilgrimage tourism remains a seasonal business, but it can be a perennial source of income especially in Nepal because Nepal is home to some of the world's most important sacred Hindu pilgrimage destinations. It is noteworthy also that more than 90 percent of the residents follow Hinduism (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012, p.4) and Nepal shares a free border with India, the country with the largest number of Hindu residents, in absolute terms, in the entire world. Godavari Dham located in Kailali in Nepal is as important as other pilgrimage destinations in Nepal. However, no studies have been carried out so far on the status and potential of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham. The prospect of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham is immense and it has the scope that can contribute in religious and social harmony as well as in economic advancement of the people living there.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The area of the study will be limited within the Godavari Dham of Kailali district of Nepal. The study will discuss the concept & possibilities of Pilgrimage Tourism correlating with Godavari Dham with different stake holders. The availability of time and the fiscal requirements will be the major limitation of the research. This study will focus on discussion & interaction with eminent figures concerned with Godavari Dham. The study will treat primary data as information gained from the literature and in-depth interactions from participants.

The short time duration for the study and analysis was a limitation for detail study has constraints on effective data collection and analysis. So the main Focus in this study is rather directed towards this paper, since this is a short study, in-depth organization comparisons are not pursued. As this research is based on the secondary data collection and minimum primary data, only available facts are analysed. This researcher collected the available facts regarding the topic. As the resource is limited, this study focused on the available online and physical secondary resources.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, dissertations, conference proceedings and other resources which are relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory and provides context for a dissertation by identifying past research. Research tells a story and the existing literature helps us identify where we are in the story currently. It is up to those writing a dissertation to continue that story with new research and new perspectives but they must first be familiar with the story before they can move forward. The word “literature review” can refer to two related things that are part of the broader literature review process. The first is the task of reviewing the literature – i.e. sourcing and reading through the existing research relating to any research topic. The second is the actual chapter to write up in the dissertation, thesis or research project.

The purpose of a literature review is to identify gaps in current knowledge and to avoid reinventing the wheel by discovering the research already conducted on a topic. This sets the background on what has been explored on a topic so far and increases breadth of knowledge in the area of research as well as helps to identify seminal works in the chosen area. Review of literature also allows a researcher to provide the intellectual context for his/her work and position the research with other, related research. It, further provides opposing viewpoints in discovering research methods which may be applicable to the research work.

Scholars have their own opinion regarding the definition of pilgrimage tourism along with their studies and researches. Every one of them have their understanding and propositions and attempt to define pilgrim tourism , but they have a similarity of understanding that pilgrimage is a religiously motivated travel that has its traces back to human civilization.. This section attempts to explore some of those established definitions of the topic.

Kunwar and Thapaliya (2021) and Jongmeewasin (2016) argue that pilgrimage tourism is one of the oldest form of travel that aimed at achieving spiritual insight and dedication and also a journey of religious motivation towards a holy place and towards meeting the sacred (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021; Jongmeewasin, 2016). It is the participation in a journey towards sacred places to practice a spiritual and delightful experience. The destination points—holy confluences, lakes, caves, and summits—are the abodes and birthplaces of deities, places of

awakening, and burial grounds of the relics of holy beings (Allen, 2000; Slusser, 1982). Kiran Shinde (2007) claims pilgrimage as a form of travel with opportunities to visit sacred places with key elements like motivation, destination and journey. He further goes on stating that the pilgrimage tourism is a strong religious or spiritual motivation travelled on foot in a long journey that is reinforced by a sense of abandonment of worldly matters. The prime intention of a pilgrim is ‘seeing and being seen’ by the God. Pilgrimage being an individual motivation for personal faith, there is a mass movement when combined with magnitude and frequency (Shinde, 2007, p. 343). S. Vijayananda (2015) differentiates a pilgrim from a tourist through the nature of travel. He claims that a tourist has a stop point but a pilgrim has an end (Vijayanand, 2015).

Estrada-Gonzalez (2005) and Dahal (2020) define pilgrimage refers to common phenomena found in religious culture, and also an ordered march of a group of people, usually with religious connotation to a sacred place as an act of devotion (Dahal, n.d.; Estrada-González, 2005, p. 156). Defining why pilgrimage is popular among Hindus, P.B. Singh asserts that Pilgrimage is a sacred act and practice with its ancient and divorce origins as well as its description and different references in the sacred texts and other allied literature, continued to be popular among the Hindus (Singh, 1997). Thus, the crux of pilgrimage tourism is a journey of a person or a group that is motivated by religious reasons and is a travel towards the sacred place.

While comparing tourism and pilgrimage, Shinde & Olsen (2020) assert that both are considered same due to their components such as beliefs, needs, motivations, behavior, and sought-after outcomes (Shinde & Ols, 2020, p. 4). Scholars are from the field of history, theology, sociology, psychology, anthropology, economy, and geography how tourism evolved over time. Much studies on the product life cycle and the changes in pilgrimage tourism are part of such studies. As Barber claims pilgrim is “a journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding (Barber, 1991),” which is a major concept in pilgrimage tourism. There are now multiple academicians engaged and researching on pilgrimage tourism. Those. The large number of academic focus on books and publication prove the wide influence and importance of this field in modern day.

Internationally, it was Noga Collins Kreiner defined pilgrimage tourism from the point of view of product cycle and this cycle passes through four stages- introduction, growth, maturity and

decline or rejuvenation (Collins Kreiner, 2019, p. 2). This model clearly shows how the pilgrimage tourism grew to this wider stage today. To detail those stages, Kreiner goes on stating that before 1990 the market of pilgrimage tourism almost did not exist though the sociologist and anthropologist discussed religious issues in tourism literature. Those literatures dealt with the visitors' experiences and psychological dynamics. This stage is defined as introduction stage. There were ideas of Victor Turner in 1969 who directed the studies towards this field. Turner's concept was related with the idea of liminality, "resembling that in which novices find themselves in the transitory stage between two established social statuses(Collins Kreiner, 2016, p. 3)." Again in 1973, it was MacCannell who linked tourism with pilgrimage and stated it as quest for the authenticity and added that the characteristics of tourism were similar to that of pilgrims (Maccannell, 1973). There emerged arguments that since tourism and pilgrimage had similar processes tourism could be termed as sacred journeys termed as self-transformation and attainment of knowledge through contacting with sacred deity (Graburn, 1977). Turner and Turner (1978) presented idea of 'communitas' referring to a group identity as of pilgrims who set on a journey to return back to home (Turner & Turner, 1978b). Having limited academic discussions, the basic time-line of pilgrim research was from 1960s to 1980s.

The second stage of pilgrimage tourism is known from 1990s when scholars paid their prime attention in this field. The academia in pilgrimage tourism started getting wider and took a turning point in 1992, when *Annals of Special Tourism Research* published its special issue about pilgrimage tourism proclaiming existence of a blur line of identity between tourist and pilgrim (Smith, 1992b). Again scholars like Eade and Sallnow invented new approaches and levels as political, cultural, behavioral, and touristic (Eade & Sallnow, 1992). Adding on this, there emerged the idea of two types of pilgrimages such as formal and popular where the former related with serious and sublime religious activities in orthodox manner and the later meant less formalized with little local traditions (Cohen, 1992, pp. 33–50). The end of 1990 marked to have a potential definition of pilgrimage when Stoddard (1977) offered some criteria: "the length of the journey, the pilgrims' route, and their frequency of pilgrimage. Other criteria include the pilgrims' destination, the importance of the pilgrimage site in question, and the motivation of the pilgrims (Stoddard, 1997, pp. 41–60)." He further added qualities like destination, value of site and motivation of the pilgrims in this criteria. Thus the decade of 1990 is known as the time of growth in pilgrimage literature.

The third stage of pilgrimage tourism after 2000s, when the similarities and differences between the pilgrims and tourism, relationship among three sectors- religion, tourism and pilgrimage were in prime focus (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000; Digance, 2003; “The Tourist behind the Pilgrim in the Holy Land,” 2000; Vukonić, 1996). The research in pilgrimage continued to grow in this stage focusing on the discussion over the elements of pilgrimage and aspects of pilgrimage. Issues of spirituality became new issue that motivation and action incorporating the ideas of traditional religious and modern secular journeys. Scholars also started exploring the secular sites and aspects of pilgrimage research. Now the pilgrimages meant a holistic entity emerged out of religious and secular context (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, pp. 440–456).

The fourth stage of pilgrimage is known as rejuvenation or transformation/upgrading that marks the expansion of pilgrimage as spiritual travel for pilgrimage, self-development and modern practices with religious component along with extensive research in the field of pilgrimage. The subject of graves, religious site, funeral site and secularity are now emerging as new components in pilgrimage studies (Collins Kreiner, 2016, p. 9). Pilgrims now expect sudden mystical change and transformation from mundane everyday life to a sacred state that is termed as life-changing, enlightenment or transformation. In this stage, as scholars claim that pilgrimage is upgrading, transforming and thinning out of its some of the attributes with newer identities and concepts like dark and spiritual tourism. There are growing academic concerns for death, disaster and horror tourism (Biran et al., 2011, pp. 191–198; Stone, 2013, pp. 318–322). Such a greater and wider expansion marks a significant growth of pilgrimage in modern age.

In Hindu religion, L.P. Vidyarthi (1961) was the person who came up with the idea of sacred complex through his book *Sacred Complex of Gaya, India* in 1979 introducing the idea of ‘sacred complex’. This extension framework theory was followed by Jha (1971) and Vidyarthi, Saraswati and Jha (1979). The development of theory and method of the sacred complex, those scholars highlighted the components like sacred geography, sacred performances, and sacred specialists as one of the most important tools to understand Hindu civilization. Several other Indian scholars were immensely influenced by these studies and they commenced their research under the same topic- sacred complex. Authors like Kiran Shinde (2010) and Sinha (2014) are some of the scholars to name who carries academic studies using the concept of ‘sacred landscape (Pandey, 2000) .’.

Clarifying the concept of sacred complex, Ram Niwas Pandey (2000) writes—anthropological study of the sacred centers began in the early in the decades of the twentieth century from the Chicago School of Anthropology(Pandey, 2000). It was useful in understanding the cultural role of the traditional city in the context of the complexity of various dimensions of civilization. This anthropological approach and model was later adopted by L.P. Vidyarthi in his book *Sacred Complex of Gaya* and by Makhan Jha in his book *Sacred Complex of Kashi*, forwarded by studied the sacred complex of Janakpur. They followed Robert Redfield and Milton Singer and laid particular emphasis on the concepts of cultural specialties, cultural performances and cultural stages (Redfield & Singer, 1954).

Through the study of sacred complex, L.P. Vidyarthi (1961) suggested certain modifications in Redfield and Singer's approach which Jha in his work has precisely put as follows:

- i. That the sacred complex-the sacred centers, the sacred performances and the sacred specialists-of a Hindu place of pilgrimage reflects the level of continuity, compromise and combination between the great and the little traditions,
- ii. That the sacred specialists of a place of pilgrimage maintain a distinct style of life and transmit certain elements of the great tradition to the rural population by popularizing certain texts, by organizing pilgrimage and by officiating as the ritual and temple priests.
- iii. That the sacred complex in general and the sacred specialists in particular have been in the process of modernization and transformation as a result of general development in the larger universe of Hindu civilization of which they are a part (Pandey, 2000, p. 5)."

This concept is based on the trichotomy of inter-related phenomena- the sacred geography, the sacred performances and the sacred specialists(Pandey, 2000).

In Nepal, it was Makhan Jha who wrote a book *The Sacred Complex of Janakpur* in 1971, where he has discussed the linkage of primary civilization and the cultural continuity with the past and argued that there is not a linear social and cultural exchange even if even if there is modern and ideological advancement happens, but it will have modern innovations with traditional rising. A most significant theoretical hypothesis was that boundary of a nation is not

always the boundary of a civilization (Jha, 1971). Jha points out the centrality of nationalism and political awareness, civilization crosses the political territory of a country.

It was Donald A. Messerschmidt in 1989 who carried out a study entitled *The Hindu Pilgrimage to Muktinath, Nepal- Natural and Supernatural Attributes of the Sacred Field*, where he examines multiple characteristics of Muktinath and vicinity. He has termed them as - its contributions towards the universal and mystical concepts, natural elements, prevailing historic tradition, ongoing development, approaches, location of the site as physical ascent, location, secular associations, and the distinct features in comparison with other sites in Himalayan region. He has identified the sanctity and mysteriousness of the place through the analysis of attributes, its associations and elements like water, fire, and ammonite fossil stones (Messerschmidt, 1989, p. 1).

Pandey (2000) wrote a book *Sacred Complex of Rurukshetra* where he has clearly mentioned the sacred complex, specialties and performances that make a place sacred and explored the traditions that have contributed in development of the Rurukshetra. He has covered a brand gamut of the sacred complexes, the prevailing monuments, development of tourism and also the need for conservation of ancient-historic monuments in the area (Pandey, 2000). Following the concept of Vidhyarthi (1961), Jha (1989) and Pandey (2000), Gita Giri wrote a book *Sacred Complex of Lumbini* in 2008 where she has presented again, the ideas of sacred complex, sacred specialist, civilization, modernization and consumers of sacred and analyzed various aspects of changes, development, evolution of traditions proving Lumbini one of the sacred Buddhist site (Giri, 2021, pp. 205–213).

Regarding the Godavari Dham Kailali, there are no any formal academic studies carried out till date. Only a few local magazines and books have described it as a holy place of Hindus. Gautam (2014) has identified total 137 pilgrimage sites in Nepal in his book but has not discussed about Godavari Dham Kailali, whereas Ghataraj Bhattai has listed this site as one of the pilgrimage site of Nepal describing the discovery of the *Shivalinga* when a fisher man went for a fishing in Godavari but has the monument of *Shivalinga* every time he threw the fish-net in the river (Bhattarai, 2014, pp. 71–72; Gautam, 2014b). Similarly, in the same year, a book named *Godavari Mahatmya* by Maniraj Joshi had a wider description of this holy place, justifying the religious and historical significance of this place and enlisted all the religious texts and evidences that prove this place as an original Godavari (M. Joshi, 2014, pp. 6–32). During the *Kumbha Mela* 2015, a special magazine publication named Godavari also had multiple articles

that detail the importance of this holy place. In that magazine, Nirmal Kumar Bhandari writes that the Godavari turned into a holy place as a Hindu saint Gautami did *tapasya* (meditation) in this place. He identified the need of separate places for separate rituals in Godavari (Bhandari, 2014, pp. 36–38). The geographical location of Godavari Dham is clarified based on the religious texts by Man Bahadur Chand in his article *Godavari- A River and a Pilgrimage Site*, where he has cited *Skanda Purana*, *Manas Khanda* and justified the arrival of Gods like Shiva, Krishna and the killing of Hindu demon Jarasandha by Lord Krishna (Chand, 2015, p. 47). The construction of temples in individual efforts are well described in article Godavari by Bhojraj Bhatta(2015) where he mentions his dedication in establishing Nepal Mata Temple in memory of his relatives. Similarly, the detail dialogues of Hindu saint Vyas regarding the Godavari's importance is documented by Basudev pandeya (2015) where he has described how all the temples and monastery came into existence in his article (Pandeya, 2015, pp. 68–72).

Other than the Godavari Dham of Kailali, there are studies of Nasik Godavari India and Lalitpur Nepal which have shed light on their significance. Dahake (2018) and Rajeev & Chandrashekhar (2015) studied about the Godavari Dham in Nasik highlighting the glorious history of organizing Kumbha Mela where the worship of the river is main attraction and this place is ongoing through a rapid changes due to advancement of pilgrimage tourism coupled with modernist developmental agendas (Dahake, 2018, p. 1; Rajeev & Chandrashekhar, 2015, p. 2). The Nasik Godavari resembles an extra example of how a pilgrimage site can be a center of socio-economic development through investment, and management of the pilgrimage destination. In the same line Tamang (2015) studied about the Godavari in Lalitpur arguing resemblances of the holy place for Hindus and Buddhist. As per Tamang, the Buddhist king Brisha Deva of Nepal before 8th century B.C. had made monastery there and that links Buddhist to visit this place (Tamang, 2015).

The following section deals with the literatures that highlight the issues related to pilgrimage tourism such as management, commercialization, branding the sites, environment, socio-economic impacts of pilgrimage tourism, traditions, pilgrims experience, host guest interactions, actors, culture of donations and conflicting issues. The aim behind this is to shed light how academicians have identified those issues.

Pilgrimage tourism occupies a major role in socio-economic development and many nations around the globe depend highly on pilgrimage tourism as it has larger contributions in their overall tourism sector while measured in terms of gross domestic product and export economy

cite. The competitive, advantages of earning foreign currencies have greater contributions in in local and national economy. The needy interventions occupies a role in raising the standard of living and in reducing poverty in local communities if adopted necessary policies to exploit potential benefits of pilgrimage tourism.

Bimonte & Punzo (2016) have studied the relationship issues between the local population, and the pilgrims. The acceptance of pilgrims and by the local community and linkages of perceptions and receptions between those two actors determines the future of the pilgrimage tourism. The chain of changes brought by the pilgrims need to be carefully analyzed by the host population that in long turn contributes in development of the site (Bimonte & Punzo, 2016, p. 2). Valene L. Smith (1989) contends that creation of jobs and increase in cash flow is a positive part but it has physical and social burden issues to consider on host side (Smith, 1989, p. 12).

According to Shinde & Olsen (2020), pilgrimage tourism has effects on basic services, increases pollution and leads to degradation of natural resources. There is close relationship among religion, tourism and environment as the pilgrimage site is used for “religious, educational, and leisure purposes... has impacts on ritual practice and economy, is not untouched from the broader socioeconomic and political changes and is therefore likely to change and so, transforms the religious environment too (Shinde & Ols, 2020, p. 18).” Likewise Vishwambhar Sati (2015) has highlighted the possibility of exploitation of natural resources due to overflow of the pilgrims in the destination and suggested to undertake necessary steps in protecting the resources (Sati, 2015, p. 172). In this prospect, Khadka (2018) has identified lapses in developing and promoting tourism activities of Santaneshwor Mahadev Temple of Lalitpur Nepal (Khadka, 2018). Khadka has outlined issues like lack of basic tourist facilities like; tourist center, modern toilets, clean drinking water, restaurants, accommodation facilities, foreign exchange as hindrances of pilgrimage tourism in that temple.

Timothy & Olsen (2006) defined rituals as means of displaying emotional dimensions of mankind that link humans to one another and dimensions of reality – “the political order, nature’s seasonal cycles, and the cosmos itself (Timothy & Olsen, 2006b, p. 123)” Those rituals are the unwritten laws in a religious destinations that regulate human behavior where compassion is generated out of rituals. Those rituals range from birth to death ceremony and worship to animal sacrifices to the God.

Brooks (2012) and Shinde (2012) have connected pilgrimage tourism with religious entrepreneurship that has economic linkage to the local population debating those entrepreneurship has cultivated innovations and ideas in attracting the elites and wealthy population to the pilgrimage destinations(Brooks, 1992; Shinde, 2012). Those innovations and ideas are the foundations of financial development of the destinations.

Olsen (2006) and Shackley (2002) have highlighted the authenticity and sanctity of a pilgrimage destinations in their studies where they have identified the elements to be kept away from commercialization and drawing a line where pilgrims do not feel that they have to pay for praying(Olsen, 2006; Shackley, 2002). The purity and peaceful atmosphere are combined the geography, spaces, temples and rituals that make a pilgrimage destination authentic and pure.

Scholars like Nolana and Nolan (1992)and Kunwar & Thapaliya (2021) have studied about the motivation of the pilgrims and come up with the idea of motivation that attract the pilgrims towards any destinations where the focus has been laid on the service delivery, pilgrims experiences and the objectives of the pilgrims who aim to attain their religious desires (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021; Nolan & Nolan, 1992). Vroom (1994) argued that the internal and external actions undertaken by the stakeholders result in rewards and motivations(Brooks, 1992). Hughes et al. claim that due to motivations, pilgrimage destinations have more external visitors that actual pilgrims nowadays due to recreational, historic and cultural motivations of the people (Hughes et al., 2013).

Progano et al. (2012) and Di Giovine & Choe (2019) have studied about the diversification of a pilgrimage tourism arguing that it is diversification of a pilgrimage destination that attracts the pilgrimages in mass who have new meanings, values and behaviors and focus on relaxation, nostalgia and cultural exchange as well as needs, interest and expectations of the pilgrims results in the diversification of any pilgrimage destination (Di Giovine & Choe, 2019; Progano et al., 2021). They have argued on the numbers of pilgrims and devotees that resulting in the diversification of the destination.

Hiiemae (2017) claims that the visiting pilgrims and place itself create the identity along with the geography, landscape, sculptures, any historic religious signs or prints, festivals, deities, traditions, mythology and customs of the site (Hiiemäe, 2017). Damari and Mansfeld (2016) have also asserted that pilgrims and tourism have similar identity and characteristics and

contribute in creation of an identity where parallel efforts must be laid on the promotion of both aspects of a place (Damari & Mansfeld, 2016).

Pandey (2000) and Stoddard (1970) studied the composition and classification of pilgrims as other aspects of pilgrimage tourism in academic level claiming the frequency of visit, stay, length of journey, routes, profession and ethnicity are some of the indicators to classify the pilgrims and suggested to take necessary steps in attracting more pilgrims (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021; Pandey, 2000; Stoddard, 1997).

To conclude, there are unprecedented studies in pilgrimage tourism and they attempted to explore every corner of it through their studies and have come up with practical ideas which can directly and indirectly contribute to the expansion of pilgrimage tourism. Those efforts and studies that have been done in a short span of time after 1990s mark a significant change in this field which have turned it a separate and distinct area of study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to how a research paper or thesis is designed, what a researcher observes or measures, and how he/she collects and analyzes data. The methods a researcher chooses must be appropriate for the field and for the specific research questions he/she is setting out to answer. A strong understanding of methodology will help to apply appropriate research techniques, design effective data collection instruments, analyze and interpret the data.

No previous studies have been conducted in Godavari Dham from a pilgrimage tourism perspective. Therefore, an exploratory research has been carried out. The researcher has used phenomenology as methodological approach to present original views, perspectives and experiences of the respondents: both the hosts (service providers) and the beneficiaries (the pilgrims). The area of the research is broader as the no fix area is entitled to Godavari Dham but the concentration area of religious temples and monastery are the delimitation of this research as a case study. The researcher has used the emic perspectives to gain the insider's point of view in exploring out the validated findings. The researcher visited the area for 10 days in person from July 4th 2022 to 15th July 2022. More than 60 people were interviewed and they included priests, saints, pilgrims, devotees, visitors like students, tourists, local people, hoteliers, shopkeepers, journalists, travel agency owners, participants of marriage ceremony, various religious rituals etc. Apart from that many follow up calls were made to verify the data. The data collected through audio records, video records observation, notes, pictures were used to reach to the conclusion.

This chapter deals with the methodology of the study focusing on how a thesis is designed for the in-depth study of identified problem. The hypothetical research question is proved by the qualitative data followed. The primary and secondary data sources are used for the justification of the study. For the qualitative data interpretation, qualitative content analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis are entertained as the technique then collect a data through interview. Basically, this section deals with following sub-chapter in the study.

3.1 Research Approach

For this research, a qualitative approach with a critical stance was employed to analyze the pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham Kailali. The interpretive paradigm is used to investigate the context. The researcher sought to understand the prospects of the subject and attempted to explore findings. The composition of the local community, situation of opportunities for development, motivations, views and experiences of visitors were key observations in the study. Based on the nature of study, the researcher has applied qualitative method. The data collected through qualitative methods such as interview, observation, key informant interview and focused group discussions are used in the study. When we find a research problem which can't be handled by single approach we should use both the approaches in combination we call it as mixed methods approach. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, multimodal and mixed model researches are examples of mixed methods approach.

3.2 Study area

The study area of the research is Godavari Dham which is located in Godavari Municipality of Kailali District Nepal in the far western region of Nepal. The historical essence and religious importance of this place marks its significance as a pilgrimage destination. The total population of Godavari Municipality is 78,018 and it has total 12 wards, which are scattered across 309 square kilometers of geographical area. The Godavari Dham is located in ward no 5 of the municipality.

Figure: 1

Godavari municipality Kailai and population

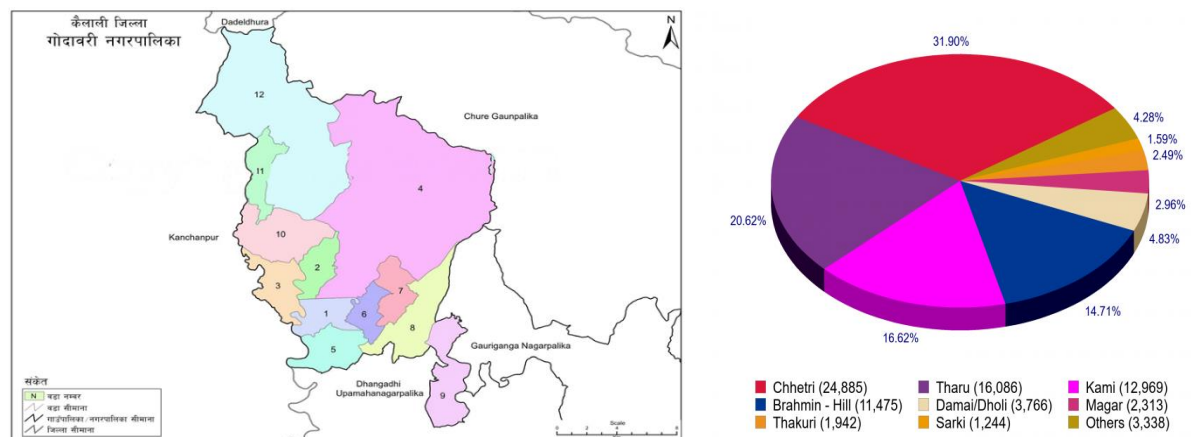


Figure: 2*Map of Godavari Dham*

The Godavari Dham covers almost 24 km² and bears an ecological importance too. The Godavari Dham has immense potentiality of pilgrimage tourism and this is mostly neglected topic till date. The presence of multiple god in a single area of Dham makes this place a religious destination. Since many years back, the people around the area have been visiting this place for the religious purpose and they understand this place as one of the holy place due to its religious history. The recent tradition of Kumbha Mela has highlighted its significance more than before. The people of this place and of the far western region visit this place for their faith and to fulfill their desires.

3.3 Research sample

Sample size for the study is taken from the method of systematic sample and took the information on pilgrimage tourism. To collect the data and information, research visited the study areas, met to community people and collect quantitative and qualitative data. For the qualitative data, focused group discussions and key informant interview was conducted and will analyze the finding of the study.

3.4 Sources of data

Mostly data in this study is taken primary data followed by the secondary data. For the primary data, the researcher visited the study area and consulted with priests, saints, religious and community people, government stakeholders, concerned officials, visitors, local business people and ward representatives for the area. The mentioned people were provided questions

and it was documented by the researcher. The previous study of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari in other part of Nepal along with policies related with religious studies is taken as the literature review of the study.

3.5 Primary data

The primary data for the study was based on the interview questions for the religious entities and organizations, visitors, hoteliers, priests and saints, community people of Godavari municipality, District Administration Office and Municipal Officials as the key informant interview and focused group discussion. The primary data was collected in person visit and telephone interview using questions by the researcher and Focused Group Discussions. The researcher also collected primary data from the study area observation. The researcher designed the questions well to understand easily by the respondents and asked questions effectively and clearly. The questions are listed in appendices 'A', 'B' 'C' and 'D' of this thesis. The researcher briefed about the purpose of the study to the respondents. The researcher had questions for pilgrims, business sector people, for saints and priests and for the normal visitors.

Collected data was checked and verified at the end of work. Any inaccuracy and inconsistency was corrected accordingly. To control the data quality, researcher regularly verified the data during the data collection time.

3.6 Secondary data

The secondary data was taken from journal articles, books, government and intergovernmental organization's reports, research papers, websites etc. Likewise, relevant works, studies/publications, the laws and regulations promulgated by the government on pilgrimage tourism also was the sources of secondary data. The report on previous pilgrimage tourism also was considered.

3.7 Method of analysis of data

The data collected from the primary sources and secondary data collected from different online and physical mediums were analyzed and possessed with peculiar presentation and concluded for appropriate findings. Unnecessary information beyond the objectives were eliminated and concise editing was done through detail analysis.

3.8 Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration in research are critical. It distinguishes between right and wrong and assist in determining the differences between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. An ethical consideration in research refers the norms and standards for conduct. Norms and values, ethics and discipline, honesty and integrity, carefulness and confidentiality, respect for international property rights, openness and honor, legality and valued to respondents are consider as ethical consideration. During this research, code of ethics of American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition is followed strictly. Full consent was obtained from the participants prior to the study. The dignity, privacy, and autonomy of the respondent was respected and autonomy of them was insured.

The research is purely academic and there is no sponsorship for the research purpose. Acknowledgement and intellectual property rights are reserved as per the law of the research during the entire process. This study promised to protect the confidentiality of the individuals and organizations respectively. The sources and data were kept confidential as per the ethics of the research and everything was done with honesty and transparency. Therefore, this research is conducted by adopting the general principals of ethics as responsibility, justice, and the respect for the intellectual property rights, conscious on multiple roles, rule of consent, confidentiality and privacy.

Researcher acknowledged and cited for the guidance and intellectuality for their credit to carry out this research during entire research period. The identity is kept anonymous if necessary the pseudonym is use to protect the identity in qualitative parts.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The emergence of pilgrimage in human history traces back the ancient time since when mankind started their travel. Though it is a new topic in academic arena, there has been multiple efforts in defining the term. Scholars have attempted to define pilgrimage as ‘a journey resulting from religious causes, externally and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding’ (Barber, 1991, p. 1). In either means, whether it is traditional or historical, the term pilgrimage denotes the journey of a person or a group in quest of truth, salvation, sacredness or holiness (Vukonić, 1996, p. 80). People tend to go on a religious travel not only in religious motivation but also driven by the sense of spirituality. Again there is a notion that clarifies pilgrimage as ‘a journey to a holy place, undertaken for religious reason or a journey to a place with special significance(Sati, 2015, p. 1).’ It defines pilgrimage tourism as a provider of deep feelings, sense of faithfulness, beliefs for spirituality and respect for the divine deities and above all the pure sincerity of devotee(s) towards their religious affirmation.

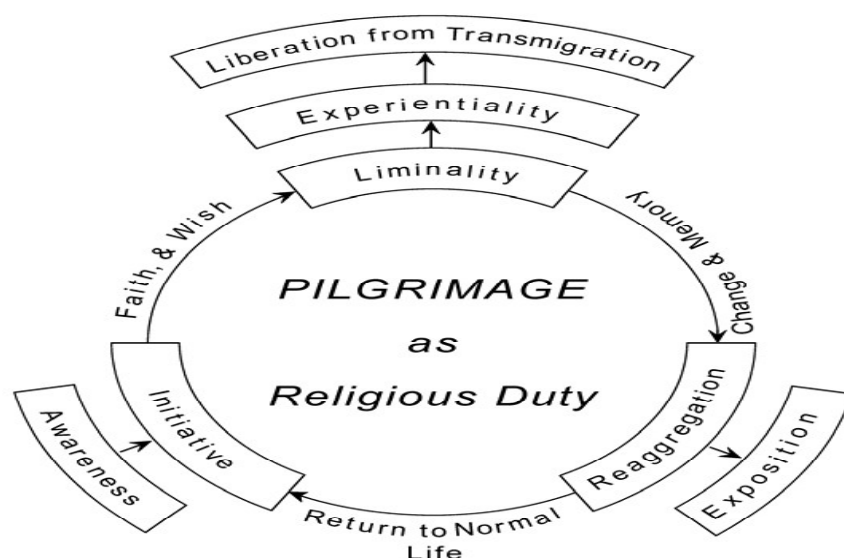
It is claimed that the first mobility of mankind was a pilgrimage tour. The emergence of pilgrimage concept is new but it has its root in the age-old practice of pilgrimage (Collins Kreiner, 2016; Timothy & Olsen, 2006a). It might be difficult to understand tourism if we separate the practice of pilgrimage from tourism since the old age time. There are now multiple aspects of pilgrimage incorporating the segments like spiritual tourism, heritage tourism, religious tourism, dark tourism, and secular pilgrimage – which are re-identified as pilgrimage: a mobility for the search for meaning that contains an element of transformation that is often deep and enduring. Pilgrimage Tourism and its connections of mobility has brought an enormous changes in recent days and it is still achieving its transformation(Collins Kreiner, 2016, pp. 1–2). Collins also believes that the pilgrimage concept has rapidly taken its roots after 1990 which hardly was in existence before that. Previously the literatures only included the visitor’s experience and psycho- dynamics that drove the people to travel from one place to another including religious pilgrimages (Cohen, 1998; Collins Kreiner, 2016). The increasing number of pilgrims has changed the dynamics of pilgrimage tourism in modern time. Scholars have now identified multiple layers and identities of pilgrimage tourism such as

pilgrimage, religious tourism, spiritual tourism, Church tourism, dark tourism and transformational tourism (Collins Kreiner, 2019, p. 146). Adding on this, there are discourses evolving that deal with death, disaster and horror tourism.

Hence, pilgrimage is a common practice in all the religion and also has cultural association in human life. Pilgrimage is an important activity of major religions of the world. Researchers and scholars have also claimed that pilgrims comprises two different aspects that are conventional religious pilgrimage and in modern time, it also encompasses the secular journeys of mankind (Barber, 1991). There are also academic approaches that define the terms like mobility, pilgrimages and tourism. Pilgrimage that emerged as a powerful academia after 1960, now constitutes a larger multi-disciplinary area of studies and bears strong political, social, cultural and economic implications which can affect the global trade and health. The spatial movement in pilgrimage also has primary economic importance along with ‘trade, cultural exchanges, political movements, and the less desirable spread of illnesses and epidemics’ (Barber, 1991; Hannam et al., 2006, acts 1–22; Ono & Baak, 2014). The recent trends in the increased number of visitors in the religious places have blurred the line between tourism and pilgrimage tourism.

Figure: 3

Pilgrimage as religious duty.



Source: Rana P.B. Singh

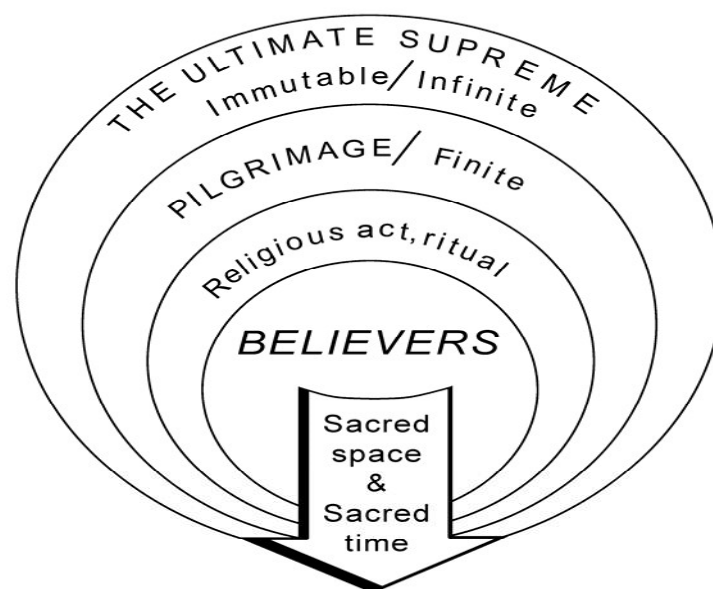
According to Rana P.B. Singh (2006), pilgrimage in Hindu religion is considered as one of the meritorious that involves three stages such as initiation of the pilgrimage journey, liminality

meaning the journey and experience and the re-aggregation or returning back to home(Singh, 2006, p. 221). The pilgrimage journey is associated with faith and desire to visit the sites along with the experiences from such journey. The home coming marks the return to a normal life and sharing of experiences with other social members adds the charm in journey. There is a cyclical frame that is known as *pilgrimage mandala*(Singh, 2006).

The following figure describes the four layers that are connected by sacred space and sacred time. A person's journey that starts from a home to meet the divine power of the god is empowered by the will of the person to interconnect to the ultimate and that in social context symbolizes transformation from self to universal humanity. Pilgrimages thus, is a journey that initiates from inner space to the outer space and at last returns to the self or home. The prime purpose of such journey is a means of healing the body and soul through walking as well as purifying the soul to meet with Mother Earth(Singh, 2006, p. 222).

Figure: 4

Hindu Outlook of Pilgrimage



Source: Rana P.B. Singh

Pilgrimage in Hindu religion means *tirtha* which has four components; i) a route to the religious site to attain the power from God; ii) river bank to take holy bath for purification; iii) the sacred religious site with divine power of manifestation and; iv) the place where divine

activities occurred turning the place as holy site. Like in other religion, place and space are paramount in Hindu pilgrimages too.

4.1.1 Importance of Godavari Dham

People mainly visit Godavari Dham for religious motives. They carry out various religious activities that range from birth to death. To mention some of them are *Shraddha* which is a post-death ritual, *Homa*, *Yajna* meaning religious sacrifice, *act of Bratabandha* meaning sacred thread wearing ceremony, marriage, *Rudripath* and *Purana* that is worship and recitation of Hindu sacred texts, and to participate in the various religious festivals and fairs organized in the different temples in the Godavari Dham. Furthermore, the importance of pilgrimage in Godavari is linked to the more recent *Kumbha* tradition there. The presence of various gods and their temple makes Godavari Dham a unique place for all the sects of Hindu religion who visit that place for their own reasons. The area of Godavari Dham occupies a larger area from the Hilly range in the North to plain area up to Dhangadhi (P. Joshi, 2022). Godavari Dham has a yearly calendar of various religious festivals and each and every festival celebrated there has peculiarities. Interestingly, all the visitors in the Dham claimed that if they bear the financial capacity to visit the place, the first choice is to perform any sacred activities in Godavari. The researcher found the pilgrims and visitors from all the nine districts of province no. 9 who came there for their concerned religious activities. In average the number of people visiting the Dham per day counted in 2000 and yearly it crosses more than 800000 people who pay their visit in Godavari Dham. The natural beauty, peaceful environment and religious importance makes this place a center of attraction for all the people in the region. One of the members who came in marriage ceremony stated:

“We visit here and do marriage ceremony because it is believed that the marriages conducted here are never broken and it is the only place where people prefer to come during marriage. Availability of various gods, cheap and affordable fees of Pandits and marriage place- Bibaha Mandap and easy location for all the relatives to attain makes this place more attractive for such activities.”

The place of Godavari Dham is famous for its religious and historical importance. It has not only religious aspects but also the economic and social dimensions as this area is the entry point to all the hilly district of far western region of Nepal. Only one road that links the hilly district passes from here. For every religious rituals and practices, the people around the area

visit this place and do their sacred performances. They visit the multiple temples and concerned religious places located here. One of the pilgrim stated:

“Once you visit this place you feel like you have received the blessing of God. There are almost all the temples that Hindus worship and also the Holy Godavari River which purifies our sin as well as cures any diseases we have.”

One of the Brazilian saint staying in Godavari also claimed that due to the geographical location, religious importance and immediate result this place is getting high priority among the local and regional devotees. He further said:

“I had a sense of curiosity on how to contribute to Dharma before I visited this place. Once I came here in 2018 AD, I decided to settle here and preach the Hinduism for the welfare of mankind. I have heard many people cured here after they took bath in the river. I do believe that the water of this river is holy and can cure the diseases. Further, anything you wish to get, God will will direct you towards the direction.”

Another pilgrim visiting Godavari described the major significance of this place as follows:

“It was the Indians who frequently visited Godavari before the locals knew the importance of the place. After that Nepalese people studied the value of Godavari in religious texts and came to know that among all the Godavaris, this place has the highest importance. Only after then people started visiting this place.”

The religious texts of *Skanda Purana* and other sections of it along with *Bhagwat Geeta* illustrate that this holy place was visited by Lord Shiv and he performed Tandav Dance at the top of Godavari Dham- Dogade. Similarly, Lord Krishna had also visited to take bath in Godavari River. Additionally, *Pancha Pandavas* (five Pandav brother) also came here during their 14 years *Banbaas* (Jungle stay). One of the academics of Kailali claimed as follows:

“The followers of Lord Shiv, Krishna, Ram, Bishnu or Bhagwati can visit this holy place and get the blessing from the god. A true worshipper is never denied of blessing when prayer is done purely. People hail this place due to its significant role in fulfilling their wishes. Even if anyone has forgotten to do any of the sacred rituals before, they can come over here and do it. By this all the previous sins will be cleared.”

People of Godavari and nearby districts visit this place since a long time back. The devotees at earlier perids were mostly Indians and gradually the local and regional population started

visiting this place. This place bears a significant position in religious text when one has to visit Ganges to take bath. He/She has to first visit here for bath and then only can go to Ganges. Indians are credited for recognizing this rituals in Godavari. One of residents who knew a lot about Godavari made the following statement:

“People visiting this places are mostly Hindu but Buddhist also come here as there is a monastery in Godavari. Mostly, Indians are the foreign nationals and sometimes we find devotees from other South Asian countries too. Besides, foreigners of different religions also pa visit here for their personal reason.”

Godavari is the center of attraction for all the people and societies. There are records of visits from multiple ethnic and religious groups like Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and other sects of followers. As Godavari has many temples and deities, devotees pay their homage to their concerned god and goddesses. Besides, other religious groups come here to acknowledge the purity and holiness of this place. Whoever comes here once is determined to visit again.

One of the member of Rudri Pooja ceremony from Kanchanpur district said:

“We are here to perform Rudri and we believe that this act will fulfill our wish. We will conduct Bhajan s 9Rreligious hymns) afterwards in the evening till the morning. In the morning, we will offer everything to the Godavari River and go back peacefully.”

All those statements clarify the importance of Godavari Dham in Kailali.

According to the data of Nepal Tourism Board, during the year of 2019, a total of 187,692 tourists visited Nepal for pilgrimage and spiritual reasons which grew to 197,786 in 2019. It was a deep low in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There were 173,083 Buddhist visitors in Lumbini which was 35 percent of total tourists in Nepal (Giri, 2021). Again, the sad part is that pilgrimage has never been a priority of government and Nepal lacks behind in exploring the socio-economic significance of this sector.

Regarding the number of visitors in Godavari, Tulasi Giri- the *Mahanta* of Godavari Dham claimed that at least 1000 devotees visit in daily basis in average. The number of pilgrims are quite high during the month of Aasadh, Shrawan, Bhadra, Ashoj and Magh as those months have major festivals in the Dham. During Bol Bam, Sankranti (first day of Nepali month), Ekadashi, Dashain and especially in Maghi and Kumbha Mela attract a large number of devotees. It was estimated that around 800000 pilgrims visited Godavari during Kumbha mela

of 2015 AD. The initiation of Kumbha Mela in Godavari has shed a spotlight on its importance. In addition the initiation of Ardha Kumbha Mela(celebrated in 6 years' time interval) is another attraction of Godavari Dham. High level dignitaries like Shankaracharya, Government officials and dignitaries of political and social domain visit this place during such festivals. Mahanta Tulasi Giri claimed that during last Kumbha Mela there were around one million visitors within the month of Magh and place was highly crowded upto 18 kilometers. Devotees had to walk on feet due to the high flow of pilgrims.

The common ritual practice conducted in Godavari include holy bath, vows, prayer, gift and charity, *pindadan* (offer of rice-balls in the name of past ancestors of both paternal and maternal sides), *tarpan* (offer of water to the past ancestor, gods, and rishis) etc. Devotees chant the religious rhymes in respective god's name, devote themselves to the god and carry out puja (worship) and do aarati (burn candles) to the god and goddesses. River bath, worship, burning candles, *pindadan*, *shradhdha*, *tarpan*, *dhyan* and recitation of holy rhymes are common practices in Godavari Dham. One of the devotee from Bajhang said the following:

“The Khumbha Mela was the biggest festival I saw in Godavari in my last 40 years of life. I never saw such flow of pilgrims in this place and I hardly could reach this place during the whole month. I had to walk more than 10 kilometer to reach there. The event was nationally and internationally observed.”

4.1.2 Management of Godavari Dham

There are studies on how a pilgrimage site must be managed. The management of any pilgrimage site is unaffected by the modern and there are situation which are managed as per the custom (Shackley, 2002, pp. 119–122). There are internal and external management issues in any pilgrimage sites. Such issues are listed as transportation, water supply, sanitation, management of solid wastes, infrastructure, access to shrines, services and facilities to stay in the site(Olsen, 2006, p. 105; Shackley, 2002, pp. 119–122). Thus, management of pilgrimage sites are one of the prime aspect of any holy places. As pilgrims visit the holy places for religious and spiritual beliefs, it is evident that the host site provides the pilgrims the benefits and assistance at the religious sites by the local management committee. The devotees must feel their attachment to the place and must garner religious attainment through hospitality of the religious sites. For that purpose, every religious sites must act accordingly in accordance with local administration or population to satisfy the visiting devotees. The quality of management during various festivals, arrangements of lodging and fooding, transportation and

other means of quality service are the bases of the future development of the concerned pilgrimage sites.

As per Roshi Lamichhane, the income from tourism in Nepal accounts three percent of total gross domestic product and also it covers the 15 percent of economic activities. This makes tourism an attractive sector for earning and pilgrimage tourism occupies a larger area in Nepal's tourism sector. If we analyze the data, most of the visitors are guided religiously and they spend their time in religious sites, especially from South Asian region. This has sparked an emphasis for the government to prioritize this sector for promotion. It's not only the government policy but the information dissemination about the destination as well as the management of the places that attracts the tourists or pilgrims (Lamichhane, 2021).

The management of Godavari Dham is done through a management committee and by the priest. There are separate heads and priest to handle the management as in either side of the river. The income, distribution of resources, human resource management are still to be transparent. One of the priest in the Dham claimed:

“For the effecting management of this Godavari Dham, there is a tradition to collect rice and wheat twice a year which generates a sufficient amount of food for the priests staying in the Dham and the donation received from the devotees also contributes in the management of lives of the priests and saints living in the Dham. There are mandaps where devotees pay fee to carry out their rituals which further add in income of the Dham. Still, the members have doubt about the proper utilization and management of resources and money collected there.”

4.1.3 Legends of Godavari Dham

The myths and legends make up huge importance of Godavari Dham as a sacred and holy place in far western Nepal. If we closely look over the ancient religious text, we can find numerous example of illustration of this place in Puranas and other religious texts. One of the famous Hindu mantra while taking bath in any river is as follows:

गङ्गे च यमुने चैव गोदावरि सरस्वति । नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरि जलेऽस्मिन् संनिधिं कुरु

The meaning of this is: Oh Holy Rivers Ganga and Yamuna, and also Godavari and Saraswati. If one takes bath enchanting this *mantra*, he/she is cleansed of any sins committed and will get blessed. It is also an offering of expression of gratitude for the gift of the water. Further, as mentioned before, there are multiple examples in *Puranas* like *Brahmanda Purana*, the

Manash Khanda of *Skanda Purana*, *BanParva* of *Mahabharat* and even in *Padma Purana* have multiple description of Godavari Dham that makes this place a religiously important place. While asking one of the priest in Godavari Dham about the myths and legends of this place, he detailed as follows:

Godavari is the best place to do any religious karma if anyone knows the religious history of this place. Gods like Shiva, Krishna Rama, and Bhisma Pitamaha have visited this place whenever they had to do any good deeds to the people of earth. Even Lord Shiva did *Tandav-nritya* (dance of Lord Shiva) in this place. Whoever knows this, comes here and makes his life blessed.

According to those religious texts, Godavari has another name ‘Gautami’ and this place is a holy place as it lies beside the Godavari river under the Chure Range in Kailali (Chand, 2015, p. 1). As Man Bahadur Chand claims, Gautam saint who was blamed of killing a holy cow, went through a difficult tapasya (long fasting prayer to god) of Lord Shiv and he was blessed by Lord Shiva. He then asked Lord Shiva to let river flow in this region which is the famous river Godavari now. In the same line, as per *Skanda Purana*, during the end of Dwapar Yuga (third of four age cycle in Hinduism: each cycle consists of 4320000 years or 12,000 divine years), Lord Krishna visited this place and took a holy bath after he killed the demon Jarasandh, which made this place holy (Bhatta et al., 2014). There is a foot print of Lord Krish in Faladri Parbat in the Chure range above the river. In addition, Lord Ram also visited this place and did Yagya (sacrifice, devotion, worship, offering) during his 14 year exile in jungle. Further, there are statues of gods which are supposed to be 5000 years old and they prove the essence of this place as an important religious place.

It is evident from the interviews with pilgrims that myths and legends related of different pilgrimage sites and temples in Barahachhetra attracts and mystifies many and transports them into the realm of imagination and reverence. The recently constructed BarahaKundain the Lord Baraha Temple area is one example of manmade symbolic representation of the related legend of Lord Baraha that leaves the pilgrims wondering.

4.1.4 The *Kumbha* Tradition

The dictionary meaning of Kumbha Mela is ‘Hindu festival occurring once every 12 years in one of four sacred sites where bathing for purification of sin is considered especially efficacious’ The term is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Kumbha’ meaning ‘urn’ and ‘Mela’

meaning 'fair' or 'gathering' (Verma & Sarangi, 2019) . By taking part in *Kumbha* , one can get rid of draught and excessive rain, makes the earth full of production and wealth, enables people to get right direction from saints, sages and religious leaders, enables one to garner religious merit and so forth (Khatiwada, 2009).

The Hindu text have illustration of Kumbha Mela traditions after four drops of nectar fell in Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik and Prayagraj during *Samudra Manthan* (churning of the Ocean) and those fairs are conducted after every three years making it 12 years fair in those respective places. In Nepal, this tradition is started in 2002 AD from Barakhhetra (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021, p. 143). The *Kumbha* tradition in Godavari Dham started from 2015. A local intellectual from Godavari said the following:

“The Kumbha tradition in Godavari Dham is initiated based on the religious text and their cition of this holy place. This tradition has contributed in the recognition of this holy place in the country and in the international level. The intellectuals collected the proofs from the Puranas and other texts and then decided to conduct this holy practice of Kumbha Mela. Further, Godavari Dham also has plan of conducting Ardha kUmbha Mela in six years of time interval.”

This tradition of organizing *Kumbha Mela* has positive impacts on the religious importance and validity of this holy place. Establishing Godavari as a legitimate religious site is also another importance of this huge tradition that helps in promoting the religious importance of whole Nepal too.

4.1.5 The Tradition of Priests

The hierarchy of priests in Godavari Dham is same as of Indian system in various Dham. In total, there are sixteen layers of hierarchy in priest system. They are *Jagat Guru Sankaracharya, Aadhya Shankaracharya, Shankaracharya, Mahamandaleshwor, Mandaleshwor, Mahamantri, Mantri, Shree Mahanta, Mahanta, Bhandari, Gothari, Pujari, Kotwal, Karobari, Mahatma and Adbhut Mahatma*. In Godavari the layers start from the ninth position that s *Mahanta*. Each of the temples are looked after by those priests and the overall management is handled by the *Mahanta* i.e. Tulasi Giri. All the priest after getting sanyas (leaving the physical world to enter religious world), they keep their surname as Giri. This is due to the tradition of adopting the surname of their Guru from whom they got education and

salvation. The current head of priests, *Mahanta* Tulasi Giri is the third head priest of his generation to serve in this Dham. Regarding this tradition, one of the priests stated:

“All the saints living here belong to one sect of sanyasi that is Giri and once we adopt that name we belong to that group. Here we look after all the temples and their management through our head priest i.e. Mahanta. Mahanta is the manager of everything in this Dham. He allocates duties, responsibilities and other tasks to every priests and we act as per his direction.”

Unlike this, one of the *Gumba* (monastery) in the Dham is looked after by a *Lama Guru* and the management of that monastery is fully given to him. Similarly there are multiple temples like Nepal Mata Temple that are built through personal assistance and funding and such temples are managed privately.

4.1.6 Practice of Healing

Godavari Dham also has some healing priests who treat the people suffering from various diseases. They claim to cure every disease but are equally careful in suggesting the medical treatment to the needy people. One of the locals described his experience as follows:

“People come to visit priest to heal themselves whenever they have problems regarding bad dreams, mental disturbances, lack of confidence and other spiritual impacts of dead ones. I have heard people saying that the priest solved their issues and they were free from the problems.”

Generally, the *Aghori – Sadhu* from Shiva sect, treat such diseases. But nowadays, other priests also practice the healing methods which has positive mental effect on local population.

4.1.7 Teaching Centers in Godavari Dham

There is one Gurukul Sanskrit *Vidhyapith* (school) in Godavari Dham which was established in 2073 B.S. The objective behind the establishment of this school, as per Padmaraj Joshi-Chair of the School Management Committee, is to expand the Sanskrit education system and increase the number of students who can later, contribute in religious performances. The financing of the schools is looked after by local Godavari Municipality that donates 250000 rupees yearly, provincial government provides 300000 rupees and Maharshi Vaidik Foundtaion in Kathmandu provides 55000 monthly. Besides, the regular income collected from donations also assist in the smooth functioning of the school. The school runs up to grade five with 30 students who undergo a rigorous timetable during their schooling period. There are total 4

teachers in the school. They have a routine that starts from six o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the evening. The morning and evening shift covers the practice and reading of religious texts focused on various ritual performance of Hindu tradition. The *Vedas*, *Purana*, *Upanishad* and other holy texts are taught with translation, according to the standard of the students. During day time that starts at ten o'clock, students follow the normal routine of school, where the government syllabus are taught. The students in this school also earn their spending by contributing their knowledge during religious activities in various religious performances held in Godavari during various religious occasions.

A group of student priests from the Gurukulum in Chatara who arrived in the Lord Baraha Temple area during the *Kartik Mela* informed:

“Our teacher decides on whose turn it is in a particular day. We take whatever the pilgrims or ritual organizers give us. We heard that today the ritual organizer is giving us NRs. 1500 each. High pilgrim presence in Baraha temple brings more opportunities to practice our knowledge and to earn too.”

4.1.8 Routine of Pilgrims in Godavari Dham

The devotees visiting Godavari follow a strict discipline during their visit. They refrain from consuming any food items before the worship is done and walk on bare foot in the area. Before entering the Dham, they clean their hands and feet with pure water from nearby tap and gather the essential offering items such as flower, sacred threads, red color for *Tika* (usually put in forehead), cow milk, coconut, metal *Trishul* (metal weapon of Lord Shiva), and *Dhaja* (long and thin piece of clean raw plain colored clothes) depending on which temple and shrines they are going to worship. Some of the devotees only carry coins, flowers and *Dhaja* if they are to take holy bath in Godavari River. Besides, the items depend on the rituals and practice done in the Dham. Those practices range from holy bath, vows, prayer, gift and charity, *pinda dan* (offering of rice-balls in the name of ancestors of both paternal and maternal sides), *tarpan* -offering of water to the ancestors, gods, and rishis etc (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021). Devotees worship and burn lamp and candles in Dham along with singing *Bhajan* (songs of god), chants and call out the names of deeds of God loudly. They hail the Holy God.

Every activities of the devotees and pilgrims are closely monitored by the local people, priest and management committee and due correction is made on any fault acts. One of the devotees from Bajura stated:

“People come here in their empty stomach and do not drink water until they have taken bath. They only take their food after they worship either the river or any of God’s temple in the Dham. During Maghi, Ekadashi and other special occasions, it is a ritual to stay awake whole night singing Bhajans, hymns and prayers. They take bath again and worship in the temple in the given auspicious time. Only after that, people take their food.”

During special occasion like Maghi, Bol Bam, Dashai and Ekadashi Mela, pilgrims visit the place in bare foot which is a symbol of austerity and devotion. Despite the huge area of Godavari, pilgrims enjoy their worship visiting from one temple to another. As a hindu, they do not confine to a single temple. The Indian devotees also follow the rituals while visiting this place.

4.1.9 Donations

In Hindu religion, there is a practice of *Daan* (Offering wealth) as a ritual. Literatures claim that it is an act of transferring property from one person to another for the ease and benefit of a group where the donor no longer aspects any return from that contribution (Agarwal, 2010, p. 23). There are many Hindu literatures that offer various explanations about *Daan*. With multiple nuances and layers of opinions. A basic and simple understanding about it can be that it is given without expecting any return. The worldly life is temporary and illusionistic, where wealth is a barrier for our salvation and giving away wealth can assist in paving the way to the heaven (Agarwal, 2010, p. 30). This *Daan* is called a donation.

Most of the Hindu Pilgrimage Sites depend on the donations offered by the pilgrimages to run the daily activities. Donation is an age old practice in Hindu religion that continues till date and provides a basis for generating expenses to conduct the religious practices in religious sites and it is an integral part of Hindu pilgrimage. Donations are offered in person to the management committee, to the priest or put in the donation box besides the temple in general practice.

In Godavari, two times a year, the priests set on a journey to local population from where they collect enough wheat and rice to feed the saints in the Dham. Besides, there are worship and marriage stalls, which generate certain fees for the usage. Anyone who uses those stalls for their rituals, pays predetermined fees to the head of the priests. A large sum of money is collected from those stalls. Apart from that, the management committee and priests call for donations during large festivals, especially, when the flow of pilgrims are high. In turn, devotees offer donations on their own during their visit in the Dham. Regarding the amount of

money collected on such occasions, the committee and the priests denied to disclose the amount they receive annually, but clarified that the income from the stalls and through donations other activities are the basics to fulfill the needs of the Dham. The construction and expansion of facilities in Godavari Dham is often done by the Dham itself and sources of such developmental works are those donations and incomes generated within the Dham.

4.1.10 Motivations of Pilgrims

While interviewing the devotees and visitors in Godavaridham, the researcher found that pilgrims had multiple motivations. Such motivations were physical and spiritual. They had similar experiences and were satisfied from their visits. They asked for the solution of their problem and later those problems were solved. Here are some of the statements made by the devotees and pilgrims who visited Godavari Dham.

“I had a skin disease for many years which lasted till last year. I visited multiple hospitals but it did not heal. Finally I came to Godavari Dham and asked my God to cure me and within six month I was fit and fine.”

(An old man visiting Godavari for holy bath)

“Every year during my family member’s birthday, I come here and organize a Pooja in Shiva Temple. It gives me a satisfaction and I believe Lord Shiva protects my family always.”

(A lady from Attariya Kailali during her worship in Shiva Temple)

“We are Tharu community and worship Lord Shiva. During Maghi, we come as a group and carry out a huge Pooja of Lord Shiva who takes care of our community.”

(A Tharu pilgrim in Godavari Dham)

There were multiple school children spotted visiting the Dham. According to the local hotel owner, Godavari Dham is the prime destination for every school in the neighboring area who bring their students for cultural and religious knowledge. One of the teacher in an educational tour to Godavari argued:

“To teach our students about the Hindu religion and God/Goddesses, this is the best place as here are almost all the temples as well as monastery of Gautam Buddha. Students get to know the first-hand knowledge our culture and it helps in preserving our religion.”

4.1.11 Pilgrim Experience

Scholars claim that the local behavior, safety, accessibility, transportation facility, environmental hygiene, number of visitors and available services are some of the issues in delivering positive experiences in pilgrimages in religious sites (Jyotsna & Prakash Sai, 2022, p. 1). Besides that, the expenditure environment, hospitality ambience of religious feel also contribute in lasting experience of the devotees. The management of temples and policy makers to run the religious sites have direct in relation to visitors' experience and addressing their needs. The overall system prevalent in the holy site can lead to the conducive and peaceful environment in the area.

In this regard, Godavari Dham lacks physical infrastructures that help in pleasant experience of the pilgrimages and other facilities like regular transportation, local hospitality and management also needs upgrading for better management in the site. The religious and spiritual satisfaction of the pilgrims are the basic measures to let the pilgrims lasting impacts of Godavari. Visitors have complaints about physical facilities but they are shadowed by the divinity of Godavari Dham. The solace, peace, feelings of bliss and positive mental feeling generated here are the common experiences of the visitors. A pilgrim of a group in Godavari said:

“The respect of local people and feel of heavenly power I get here are the main attraction of this place. I have been visiting this place since last 10 years and every time I come here it gives a pure spiritual feeling and I feel that I am getting God Bishnu’s blessings. When I visit other deities here, everywhere I see the presence of God and that turns me on for visiting again and again.”

Equally, there are concerns for the pilgrims who visit from far about the residential arrangement. One of the pilgrim questioned the proper management of pilgrims in Godavari Dham. He expressed his dilemma about it:

“I have a large group of friends who wish to come here and spend our night in the vicinity of Godavari Dham but this place lacks the accommodating facilities. We have to return back to our home when it gets dark. Though here are two business hotel, they are out of our financial reach, so I wish to have some affordable hotels in the area.”

Regarding the hospitality, one of the female pilgrim noticed:

“Once I reach here, there are people willing to support and even if I have to pay them for any rituals, it is very cheap comparing to other religious sites. This makes me to come here everytime for any religious events. Rituals here cost far less than at home.”

4.1.12 Hosts-guests interaction

Pilgrimage, as a form of tourism, involves the meeting of two people and population – pilgrims and local population. Any interactions and experiences between those two parts results in a lasting impact. The duration and frequency of visiting again depends on the quality of interaction that shapes the perception of the pilgrims. Any conflict between those two parties can lead to the decrease of pilgrims flow in the religious sites (Bimonte & Punzo, 2016, p. 2). This concept of host guest interaction was developed by Valene L. Smith in 1977 who proclaimed that any conflict between the host and guest population has reverse impact on the visitors and results in decrease in tourists. It applies in religious and pilgrimage tourism’s context too as this field is also closely connected with the flow of pilgrims and recurring visits for rituals and performances (Smith, 1989, pp. 1–5). The hospitality offered by the priests, local populations, business entities, and hotels play a major role in attracting the pilgrims for second-time visit. During the big festivals like Kumbha Mela and Makar Mela, Godavari Dham suffers from scarcity of accommodations and local population are compelled to limit their service to such larger pilgrims. Having a few hotels in the Dham area compels larger pilgrims to seek their stay outside of Godavari Dham area and it leads in losing the economic opportunity availed to the local population.

On the researcher’s query about the management of pilgrims during big festivals, one of the management committee member answered:

“We have enough area but there are less accommodations to let the pilgrims to stay here. Few hotels available in the Dham area can accommodate upto 200 pilgrims at a time and local population also provide their houses as guest houses. A larger group of the pilgrims also stay at temples awaking whole night. Other pilgrims carry their own tents and stay within the area. We are expanding our services in the coming days”.

The local management committee has provision to assist the pilgrims and there are due process in visiting the temples during busy days of large events. Local police acts on prohibiting the alcohol purchases and other illegal activities strictly. Hotels and other business entities focus

on easing the pilgrims at their best. Remembering such arrangements, one of the local respondent said:

“Last time during Maghi Mela, there were massive complaints regarding the proper management of this site, so there are now agreed arrangements on how to manage the pilgrims during large festivals. Every entities and organs are entitled for their tasks and responsibilities so that no complaints are received anymore.”

4.1.13 Local livelihoods

Pilgrimage tourism has socio-economic impact on local society creation of jobs and increase in income through economic activities of pilgrims are the bases of those changes. The economic impact and interdependence closely linked with the host society and population results in the change of region's economy. Generating new economic opportunities like employment and business enhance the unity among population, promotes brotherhood domestically and at large it contributes in regional development. It further depends on the kinds of pilgrimages that visit the religious sites, as they contribute in emergence of new business houses and facilities that generate employment opportunities to the host population. The creation of jobs, migration of people to the religious area and infrastructure development are other forms of socio-economic transformations.

In Godavari Dham, there are two business hotels, six small hotels to feed the pilgrims, few shops and ongoing other constructions of hotels, which forecasts the bright socio-economic future of Godavari Dham area. It was observed that minimum of 1000 to maximum of 100000 NRS was spent during the visit of pilgrims in this area. For the least developed countries, the significance of pilgrims' spending that generates incomes is important for local population.

On the other side it has parallel negative impacts too. Flow of thousands of pilgrims creates hurdles, lapses in management and also contributes in environmental pollution. In Godavari, no enough number of sanitation facilities, it creates reverse impacts. The increased cases of drug abuse cases, alcoholic incidents and prostitutions are alarming challenges in Godavari Dham. Local police personnel have raised their concerns about those growing challenges. Further, local travel agencies and hotels have no any firm plan in managing the pilgrims. Again, transforming local sites into national heritage is another challenge that demands a proper management of Godavari Dham. It needs preservation of local quality of sites as well as smooth flow of local devotee. As pilgrims tend to buy most of the things in the religious sites, it

provides opportunities for business men and also equal opportunities for local population to garner economic enhancements which is a prime source of income. Locally produced and manufactured products and their selling assists in balancing the economy. Thus, it has both positive and negative socio-economic impact on religious sites.

4.1.14 Key actors

There are normally four key actors in any religious sites that determine the functionality and daily conduct of activities in any religious site. Those four actors as “leaders of religious sects (*Mahanta* in Godavari), ritual priests, other servicemen, and devotees or the pilgrims (Shinde, 2012, p. 284).” The mutual relationship between those actors determines the harmony and peaceful environment in the site. Again there is a practice of *jajmani* (relationship between people and priest) that creates a kind of interdependence between those actors. Such *jajmani* relationship mainly involves between three groups such as: between religious leaders and their followers and devotees, religious leaders and ritual priests, and between ritual priests and visitors. In Godavari Dham, there are all those four actors and they perform their duties as per their appointments. The priests collect donations or fees in exchange of any sacred activities. Those priests have their hierarchy based on their visitors and their knowledge of religious texts and that determines their fees. In general, the fees or donation is predetermined by the committee which has been an accepted rate for all but pilgrims and devotees tend to pay extra money based on their perception and the satisfaction they receive there.

There is a crucial relationship between *Mahanata*, Priests and the followers and among them the *Mahanta* or the head of the priests is regarded as important mediators who help devotees to attain the desired blessings from the deity. Those priests and saints belong to different Vaishnava sects that have held the ownership of particular temples for several generations. The priests and saints spend their whole within Godavari Dham or they go on journey to other holy places to visit their followers. There are accommodation, temples and stall for worship purpose that are looked after by those priests and saints. According to the priests, the devotees are allowed to stay for three days and visiting saints are allowed to stay for two days without any charge in the religious establishments of Godavari Dham. If any devotee or saint wishes to stay for a longer period he has to do the works assigned by the head priests and follow the rules of the Dham. Those priests and saints ask their devotees for sponsorship to organize feasts, *kathas*, and *raslilas* performances. Such patronizing relationships consolidate and reinforce the centrality of priests and saints as facilitators in the business of pilgrimage.

Besides, there are independent Sadhus who live on their own and proclaim themselves to have charismatic power. They attract a large number of followers by their spiritual aura and power and such sadhus have deep influence in the businessmen, politicians and local elite people. Some of the Sadhus possess a wealthy life style and hold power in governance too.

For worship activities, those *Mahanta* or the leaders of religious sect appoint other priests and in return they collect fees. Other servicemen available in the Dham assist in logistical issues like cooking, managing visitors, and guiding the devotees to their concerned temple and river banks. The devotees also communicate to the needy leaders, priests or servicemen to conduct their religious performances.

There is a fixed order that devotees follow in Godavari Dham. The journey starts from the gate and every pilgrims at first go to the river and clean their body or take a holy bath. Then, the pilgrims visit the temple of Shiva in the northern part of the river. After that they visit other temples and come to the southern side of the river where the newly built temples are situated. At last the devotees again go to the river and complete their visit.

4.1.15 Rituals in Godavari Dham

Rituals are important part of every religion. Like other religion, Hinduism also has many rituals that are done for the personal expectations as well as for the world peace, for the sake of whole humanity and for environment. Hindu religion has divided human life in four stages: i) *Brahmacharya* - acquiring education and enhancing one's character, ii) *Grihastha* - Worldly pleasures and pursuits that include marriage and career, iii) *Vanaprastha* – Spirituality and, iv) *Sannyasa* - The life of contemplation (Srivastava & Barmola, 2013, pp. 90–92). Every stages has certain rituals to follow. Not all the rituals are followed by all but the major rituals are practiced by all the Hindus either in their homes or in religious sites. Some of those rituals are: *dhyana*, prayers, worship, *pranams*, *darshan*, *pancha snan*, sacrifices and offerings, *aarati puja*, offering coconut, putting tilak in forehead and so on. Besides there are practices of *samskara*: *Jatakarma* (birth ceremonies, *Upanayana*—initiation or the sacred-thread ceremony), *vivaha*—marriage and *antyeshti* (funeral rites or cremation) (Sharma, 1990, pp. 5–7).

The pilgrims had higher expectations from the priests in Godavari Dham and they were satisfied with the performances of those priests. During the field research, devotees praised the knowledge of the priests and their cordial behavior towards the visitors. One of the pilgrims who was a frequent visitor stated:

“Here I find the priests who are well educated and can perform rituals exactly it ought to be. Nowadays, the knowledgeable priests are rare, so, I come here for any rituals and that satisfies me. Further, the priests in Godavari Dham are fast in such practices and they complete all the necessary practices within a short time. From birth to death rituals, we visit this place.”

Regarding the service of the priests, one of the visitor said:

“The advancement of communication has now eased our job as we can book the priest and the stall beforehand and visit here in the given time. Everything is arranged by the booked priests and we simply pay the minimum charge of those items he bought. To feed the participants, there are hotels who offer food in an affordable price that gives us economic benefit.”

While asking about the rituals and practices, one of the female saint said:

“Here are all the temples from Lord Shiva to Hanuman, and the pilgrims can choose any of them for their rituals. The oldest temple of Shiva is mostly chosen for any rituals and besides, people tend to book stalls to do perform their religious practices.”

There are multiple temples and stalls where pilgrims can perform their rituals and this place also has open spaces if any of the pilgrims wishes to do it independently. In some cases, the visitors bring their family priests too, but hiring the local priest is cheaper for everyone as they don't have to pay extra for transportation and food.

4.1.16 Pilgrimage and the environment

Protection of environment is a key factor in any religious sites. The growing number of pilgrims, visitors and devotees lead the pilgrimage destination into a polluted area. The environment has multi-dimensional effect in the image, experience, economy and in the flow of future pilgrims. There are no academic research regarding this issue in Nepal though some of the scholars in India and other countries have highlighted the environmental factor in religious sites. As Kiran Shinde (2007) claims, flow of high number of pilgrimages impacts on all the four factors of a site, that are- a route, riverbank, sacred site and religious territory related to divine activities (Shinde, 2007, pp. 347–354). He has highlighted some of the key issues like visitor flow, urban growth, improper management of the religious destination, lack of basic services that impact the environment. Adding on the list are water supply, sewerage, solid waste management, increasing pollution, exploitation of local resources. These key issues have direct

relation with the environment. Security in the site is another psychological factor in determining the environment.

Godavari Dham remains fair in term of environment till date. The wider area and location of the site has availed opportunity to keep this site clean. Regarding the waste management, the pilgrims and groups of visitors are responsible to manage their own waste. The local population assists in collecting waste during crowded period. Further, the management committee also allocates people to manage the waste. The only concern in Godavari Dham is the lower level of water flow in the river. During winter time, the water is drained and the crematory area suffers as the waste and left overs remain there for days. The water in the river is not sufficient to wash those left overs in cremation area. There are voices to opt for a water reservoir that can mitigate this issue. One of the priests was serious about this issue of low water in the river who stated:

“Everything in this Dham is peaceful, the people are friendly, weather is cool, local agencies cooperate, but the water in the river is flowing under the soil or it is draining. As there is less water, we can observe the wastes along the banks of the river which remain there for months and it has impacted in the environment. The animals eat those left overs and get sick. Even the visitor experience stink smell from those Ghats (burial area).”

4.1.17 Conflicting issues

Since pilgrimage tourism is diversified sector for the national economy, it has local to regional connections too. Primarily, the economic upgrading in pilgrimage destinations are closely associated with local economy and if grown to national level they have larger contributions. It will be a wrong idea to expect any contributions without any proactive measures to deal the conflicting issues in such sites. The internal issues and external factor play a vital role in raising the issues of conflict in any religious place. The potentiality of expansion of such site in other region, developmental works, business set up and exploring areas and issues to attract more pilgrims can come under shadow if any conflicting issues arise in religious sites (Shanthi & Paranthaman, 2019, pp. 296–297).

In Godavari Dham there are some of the major issues which need an urgent addressing. One of prime issue is the division between the priests and saints. There are two groups of saints who claim their legitimacy over the Dham. Saints who are residing in the northern part of the river, where the ancient Shiva Temple is located, claim that they are the original saints living there

for years which backs up the claim. On the other side, the new saints who are living on the southern part of the river defend themselves claiming that the holy Godavari Dham is for all and they have equal rights to stay there. The management of daily lives on either side is done by the respective senior saints. While on the field, the saints on southern part demanded to remain united if the saints of other side agreed, while the northern side saints denounced any cooperation to remain under one umbrella.

Second, the saints complain about the construction works on the bank of the river as every year the river destroys such construction and further the banks in the northern part is continuously eroded by the flood which is overlooked by the authorities. The erosion of the bank has reached up to the temples and saints worry about any future disasters. The concern of the saints is to invest on the northern side as that is the place known as original Dham. Every year millions of budget is allocated but the safety of the Dham is not attained. The government official stated that the focus was on preventing the erosion of the flood in river side.

Third is the management of water in the river. There is huge concern on how to increase the level of water and maintain the smooth flow of water. The pollution on the burial sites have caused serious impact on the environment. Saints and the local people had concerns about alternative ways to create a reservoir and flow the water on the river.

Fourth, the lack of accommodation and *Dharmashala* has compelled the pilgrims to search for hotels in neighboring areas like Attariya and Kailali. The economic advantages are lapsing as the pilgrims spend their huge amount on fooding and lodging outside the Dham area. In addition, there are complaints about income generation by non-religious actors who run the business and the actual practioners like priests and saints do not hve any income. This is due to the lack of proper system in collection of donations and fees. There are seven separate management committees and their income, donations are managed individually which impacts on over all development of the Dham area.

Fifth, there seemed conflicts on the branding of the Godavari Dham. The local government, population and Dham management committee had their own views. No any efforts are seen for the publicity of the GodavariDham. The researcher found only one book which was a poetry, which had few description of the Dham and its importance. Neither the management committee, nor the head of the priest provided any of their future plan that could expand the religious significance of the site to the local and regional populations.

4.2 Discussion

The religious importance of Godavari Dham can be derived from the *Skanda Puran and Mahabharat* where it is clearly mentioned that the elder Gaumati made possible the origin of this river. Further, the visit of Lord Shiva, Rama, Laxman, Krishna highlight the essence of this Dham. The details in the *Manas Khanda* of *Skanda Puran*, *Ban Parba* of *Mahabharat* and in *Padma Puran* gives enough proof of Godavari Dham's historical importance. The extraordinary power of the soil, the efficacy of the water, and holy visits by the sages make the place auspicious for Hindu people. Pilgrims obtain a transformation of life, salvation just by visiting such powerful places and by performing sacred rites.

Through the combined processes of sacralization, ritualization and deeper interconnectedness, make such place distinct 'sacred places' or sacredscape that possesses the characteristic of a spiritual bond between the human psyche and the spirit of nature. Thus, pilgrimage is an act and process of spiritual crossing; to cross the sacred scape is to be transformed.

According to the *Brahma Purana* pilgrimage sites may be classified into four categories: divine sites related to the specific deities; demonic sites associated with the mythological demons who performed malevolent works and sacrifices there; sage-related sites associated with the lives of important spiritual leaders; and man-perceived sites, which are not believed to be "chosen" but merely discovered and revered by humans. This taxonomy is not watertight, as some places may overlap categorical lines, being important divine and sage-related sites, for example.

With respect to belief systems and practices as prescribed in the Sanskrit texts and as experienced by pilgrims, holy places may be classified into three groups: water-sites, associated primarily with sacred baths on auspicious occasions; shrine sites related to a particular deity and mostly visited by pilgrims who belong to, or are attached to a particular sect or deity; and circuit areas (kshetra), the navigation of which gives special merit based on some form or system of cosmic mandala as in case Pashupatinath, Barahkshetra or Muktinath.

4.2.1 Religious Entrepreneurship

There is a trend emerging as a religious entrepreneurship as the local population, priests and religious people around the pilgrimage destinations have identified the need to address the demands of religious experiences of pilgrims.

The entrepreneurship is most visible in the promotion of ashrams, cultural performances and festival celebrations. The priests, saints and the concerned stakeholders have created a situation for 'exclusive' and 'comfortable' rituals and performances to attract the wealthy population and devotees (Brooks, 1992). This emergence of religious entrepreneurship is also suggested by Shinde (2012) where he has given the examples of Indian pilgrimage destinations where such innovations and ideas have changed the market and flow of the pilgrims (Shinde, 2012).

In Godavari Dham, the local population and business man have come up with ideas that aim in attracting pilgrims to visit the Dham. Those plan include the publicity of the place, affordable expenses, and availability to come in a group in a fair payment. There are institutional promotions and media promotions that offer rewards and attraction for the pilgrims. One of the hotel presented its plan to waive a charge of one if pilgrims come in group of five. The local bus and taxis had a plan to transport the pilgrims in cheaper package to the Dham from Kailali. The local small hotels had discounts in food during big festivals. New resorts and hotel are under construction viewing the potentiality of growing business market in Godavari Dham. The idea of Kumbha Mela and Ardhha Kumbha Mela were also the part of this vision. Further the construction of various temples and monuments after 2015 also fall under this entrepreneurship.

In this regard, the local government has its plan to develop this site in terms of infrastructure so that pilgrims can enjoy the religious peace and local business can flourish without any disturbances. The travel agencies and local tourism committee also in their way to formulate strategies which are good signs. The coming years will have significant change in Godavari Dham. The government plan seemed focused specially in promoting the Dham as tourism destinations for both religiously inclined and cultural travelers interested in seeing historical monuments, and festivals; and to coordinate and cooperate with the travel agencies and private tourism operators to create religious hub. As Shinde claims, the places that are "religious, cultural, historical and full of natural beauty" need such promotion, the promotion of Godavari Dham will have positive impact in terms of business and expansion in pilgrim flow. The idea of the free-for-all market and emerging trends in religious tourism economy, Godavari Dham need to be careful about the unplanned urban development and any degradation in physical environment of the Dham.

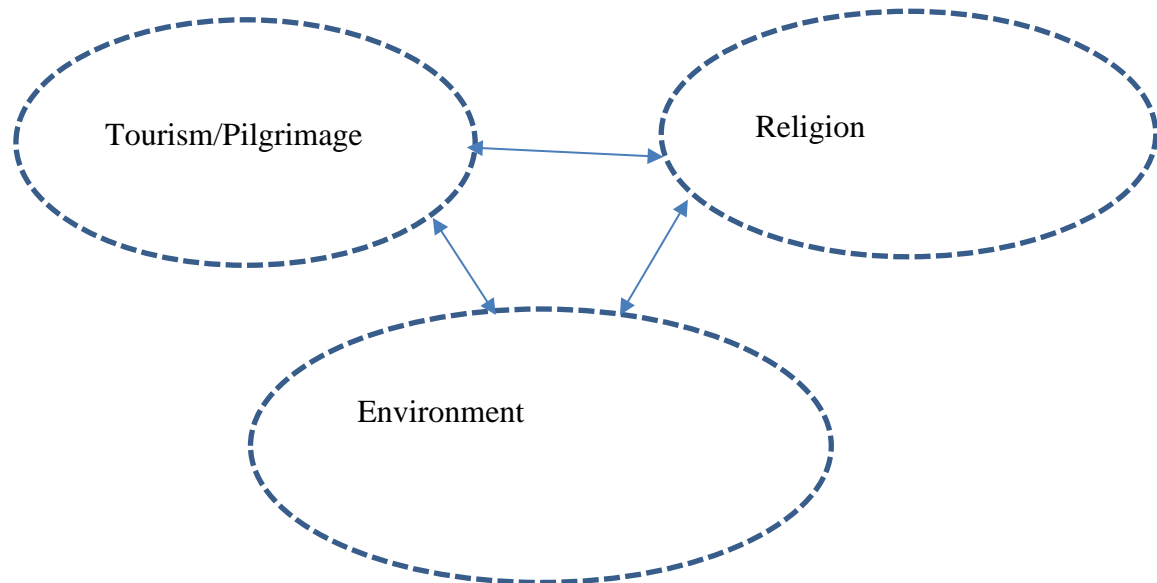
4.2.2 Environmental Issues

People travel to holy places for religious, educational, and leisure purposes and that creates extra burden in the site. Academicians have much discussed the relationship of pilgrimage sites and environment proposing several models to address this relationships better. As pilgrimage and tourism share same characteristics, one of major conceptual model of Cohen (1978) deals with four key ways that are—“the intensity of tourist site-use (i.e. the numbers of visitors, duration of stay; their activities and facilities at their disposal); the resiliency of the ecosystem (i.e. the capability of the place to absorb the impacts); the pace of development (i.e. of tourist infrastructure); and the transformational character of touristic developments (Cohen, 1978, p. 5).” This model also focuses on the impacts of urban growth, religious site’s commercialization, and diversification of functionalities on the original core areas. As the degradation in environment impacts not only the religious environment and sacred landscape, it also has lasting impact in the geography of the region (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021, p. 160), so, the environment issues are to be taken seriously in any religious sites like Godavari Dham.

The common environmental issues in the Godavri Dham, as notices are water supply, traffic load during major festivals, water supply, sewerage systems and solid waste management. No studies are conducted so far on those issues, but there are concerns in local populace and in media regarding the possible degradation of environment. There are heavy crowd in the weekend and it is hard to manage in local level. The waste generated from the crowd are being managed by the local population, but the coming days may pose a trouble to manage it locally. Given the large area, though, the impact is not imminent, certainly, it will have lasting effects in days to come. The only concern is of local government entities who need to play their role on managing those possible hazards. The water management is in poor condition which is locally managed in traditional way. The saints and local population rely on a water boring pump and a natural water source. There are no arrangements of water supplies from local government, local population find it difficult to manage water during rush hours of biggest festivals. The studies prove that, instead of other institution, people tend to believe the religious entities more in management of water issues (Maliva & Missimer, 2012, p. 871). So, the religious leaders, saints and priest, through their committee need to take necessary steps in making sure the protection of environment.

Figure: 5

The relationship between religion, environment and tourism



Source- (Cohen, 1978)

4.2.3 The Role of the State and Non State Actors

There are three tiered government in Nepal from local to central level who are directly responsible for the development of Godavari Dham. In this list, the local organizations, business entities and religious organizations also come under for their accountability in preserving and upgrading the Dham. Till date, the Kailali District local governance has come up with the paper work of Godavari Dham Development Plan in terms of infrastructure development only. Besides, the construction of river banks in Godavari River to stop the flood erosion are few other works done in government level. The poor infrastructure and deteriorating condition of the temples, monastery, *dharmashala*, exhibit the negligence of government in Godavari Dham. The financial constraints in investment and lack of proper management income of the Dham are reasons behind it. The government agencies' role is confined to the management of security and other temporary settlements during the major festivals in the Dham. Further the minimum responsibility of government to supply the drinking is also not implemented. The responsibilities of providing basic services like electricity, sewerage service, and waste management, income generation from the services in the Dham is also overlooked.

The religious organization in the area and leaders of those organization could not prove any efforts on developing the Dham. The head priests and saints complained about financial

problems and the business entities seemed focused on expanding their own business in the area rather than adopting a combine effort to upgrade the status of Dham.

In summary, a low involvement of the state and non-state actors in developing Godavari Dham indicates the degrading situation of Dham. Despite the fact that, the improvement of services, infrastructure and facilities benefits all sectors, no formal agencies seemed interesting on taking steps to develop the Dham.

4.2.4 Sanctity

The sanctity of Godavari Dham is a prime concern to preserve as it is about the maintenance of the Hindu religious sense and authenticity of this and it is commonly used interchangeably with authenticity in pilgrimage tourism. Sanctity and authenticity are two side of commercialization of any religious sites. The tem sanctity integrates some components in creating sanctity, such as ‘a closeness to God’ and ‘the gaining of spiritual merit.’ From a managerial lenses, Olsen (2006) was the first person to identify several elements to maintain sanctity (Olsen, 2006). Those elements include keeping distance from over commercialization, restricting some areas from visitors, introducing religious knowledge by specialized guides and controlling overcrowding. Charging entrance fees can damage the sanctity of believers who have to ‘pay to pray’ (Shackley, 2002, pp. 345–352). The physical effects of the overcrowding of pilgrims destroy purity and peaceful atmospheres of any religious sites (Olsen, 2006). Notably, sanctity, a heavenly religious experience that attracts both the sacred and secular visitors. The authenticity is combined with the “sacred geography, spaces, temples, rituals and fairs, specialists and rivers along with the religious sects and organizations, *dharmashalas*, *Sanskrit* education centers, local hospitality, authentic local products, and the other non-religious natural attractions (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021, p. 155)” in the periphery of Godavari Dham .

Godavari Dham till date remains a peaceful place but the managers and the concerned stake holders need to undertake measures that do not go against the prime characteristics of this holy place. The growing business entities must be according to a development plan and the area for business and actual area of pilgrimage site need to clearly demarcated. The center area of Dham must remain out of any commercial aspects. The holiness of the site can be preserve through the proper arrangement of afore mentioned steps such as arrangement of guides, minimal fees to manage the site, publicity of the Dham and regular interaction with the stakeholders.

4.2.5 Motivation

The attraction in any religious site is the wide variety of experiences including religious services, choir performances, music recitals, and civic and religious ceremonies (Nolan & Nolan, 1992, pp. 68–78). Many of the larger sites also have small museums and treasuries open to the public, and most are situated within beautiful historic buildings and landscapes. A visit to a religious heritage site is thus often an aesthetic experience, one that may engage visitors at emotional, physical, intellectual or spiritual levels. Vroom (1964) argued that motivations are external and internal rewards resulted by the actions undertaken by the pilgrimage site stakeholders and it is also justifying the actions (Vroom, 1994). Therefore, an assumption can be made that pilgrims and religious tourists expect that the journey will bring them religious, spiritual, touristic, cultural, leisure, social, and many more satisfying experiences. While the core activity of most religious sites is prayer and worship, studies of pilgrims in Godavari Dham suggest that spiritual motives are not the only reasons people visit these sites. Other factors motivating visitation include self-decision, family ritual connections with the holy place, famous people who were connected with the site like the elite’s routine visit to the place for their rituals; and personal interest in the historic and religious attraction of the place (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). People tend to visit religious heritage sites for recreational or educational interests, rather than spiritual reasons. Scholars have identified that about two thirds people visited holy sites for historic, architectural, and recreational reasons with less than one-quarter of visitors reported they were there as worshippers or pilgrims (Hughes et al., 2013). The primary motives of the pilgrims in any pilgrimage sites are “to request a favor, to offer thanks, to fulfill a vow, to express penitence, to meet an obligation, and to gain merit and salvation (Stoddard, 1997, p. 56).” Here, the first type of pilgrims- requests for favors – are those who ask blessing for the birth of a son, cure of a disease, gain wealth, successes, , a successful marriage, and a multitude of other human desires (Stoddard, 1997, p. 56). All those motives are further linked with the attributes attached to the site. The researcher found the similar portion of people visited in Godavari Dham. Thus the motivating factors to increase the pilgrims and visitors should be taken into account. Further people visit sacred sites because of both push and pull motivations. In push motivations, people are pushed by internal emotional factors such as gathering with family and friends, relaxation, sports, and enjoying nature. Pull motivations make people prefer one destination over the other when deciding to travel because of the destination’s attributes such as low travel costs or historical and religious attractions (Hassan et al., 2022). Godavari has both the components as it is a final destination for the recreational

purpose and from religious point of view it has pull factors that make it more attractive than other religious sites. The other factors in attracting the pilgrims in Godavari Dham were identified as religious beliefs, quality of service, and the history, architecture, and cultural aspects of this place, though there no any architected sites. Visitors also mentioned the importance of service quality in the site as it is the most important motive for those visitors to visit this Hindu sacred site. Studies have proven that pilgrims and devotees, like in other religious sites, are motivates by following issues such as to get rid of sins, to avoid being born as boar, to conduct *shraddha* rituals for liberating deceased ancestors, to conduct specific rituals like *Rudri* recitation and *Navagraha Shanti*, to fulfill the Vakil meaning any promise made to god, to get education, to fulfill elderly's wish for pilgrimage, to wish for better future of family members, to get rid of diseases and disability and to attain peace of mind (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021, p. 156).

4.2.6 Diversification

The mass movement as we know is now turning towards individual spirituality and has detached far from only religious motives. Pilgrimage sites like Godavari Dham, now can not only depend on the number of religious devotees and pilgrims for its development and needs further diversification and work on the related issues. Addressing the individual and private concerns of the visitors who visit the sites from diverse area and parts of the country as well from foreign countries is prime in diversification of pilgrimage sites. Studies have shown that the pilgrims and visitors now affect the sites through “multi-layered, diversified meanings and behaviors” and “new meanings, behaviors and values, even though they may have few or no cultural links to the sacred sites they visit (Provano et al., 2021, p. 17).” There must be arrangements of leisure, sports, intercultural exchange, nostalgia, escapism and relaxation that opens up the avenue for multiple opportunities in both expansion of visitors flow and academia. The pilgrimage site experiences the exchange of cultures, traditions and personal background demonstrating the needs, interests and expectations of visitors to a pilgrimage site which results into increasing diversification (Di Giovine & Choe, 2019). In Godavari Dham Kailali, there are areas to improve in addressing the aforementioned issues to turn it into a diversified site. The role mainly comes up on the financial managers and local governance to work on the needy areas. Particularly, the expansion of connectivity, availability of minimum basic facilities, management of entertainment facilities in the areas, establishment of museums, information

centers, management of tour guides for the areas nearby and production of local souvenir are the immediate urgencies of Godavari Dham.

4.2.7 Identity of Godavari

Constructing place identity of the religious site is a major concern of modern age. When arriving in a pilgrimage site, a person witnesses the actual surroundings, deities, temples and other recreational spots along with some service deliveries. Depending on those observation, a pilgrim makes an identity of the site. Two things determine the identity of a holy site- a place and a person to legitimize it as a sacred place (Hiimäe, 2017, p. 223). Further the geography, history of religious practices, settlements, the visuals like dramatic landscape, sculptures, statues and religious signs as foot prints or any marks of the sacred. To add on this, preservation of religious infrastructure, landscapes, monuments, festivals, deities, traditions, customs, and lifestyles depict identity of a pilgrimage site (Hiimäe, 2017, pp. 222–225). The mythology is another aspect in creation of the identity of a holy site.

There are also debates on the creation of identities as “pilgrimage can be regarded as tourism and vice versa (Damari & Mansfeld, 2016, p. 2).” If we closely analyze this notion, Godavari Dham has to undertake both the ways of promoting tourism and pilgrimage tourism in parallel ways. Since, this place is also natural destination with plenty of geographical and natural scenarios, the local authorities need to undertake necessary steps in either way. The main issue is to sustain the pilgrimage, its long term planning and its proper management.

Godavari Dham has already a religious identity and identity of natural destination. The flow of pilgrims in this place is remarkable and besides the pilgrims, the recreational flow of visitors outnumber the pilgrims. There needs a plan that can combine those people of religious faith and recreational objectives who can enjoy both the aspects in this site. Further there are enough areas to promote tourism and pilgrimage tourism in a parallel way. The traditions, customs and festivals need further publicity. Since all the people of the neighboring areas come there for all the rituals from birth to the death, a small effort of promotion and focus on the Dham’s peculiarities can enhance the attraction towards this destination and create a different identity as a major pilgrimage destination.

4.2.8 Pilgrims and Composition

A large number of pilgrims undertake the pilgrimage of the sacred tirthas located on the bank of the Godavri River with a view to procure virtues and dispel the sins committed in the life. Godavari, being the sacred river and places of multiple gods has its own religious merits. The *Skanda Purana* contains the description that God Shiva, Krishna and Gautami Rishi residing here. One who takes a bath in the Godavri River and worships, receives all the blessings. There is a saying that staying in Godavari and taking bath in the river makes a pilgrim fully pure of all the sins and he/she would be relieved even of the sins. Pilgrims have a feeling that, by taking a bath in the Godavari River, offering *shradhya* and *tarpana* to their dead ancestors and having the *darshana* of the deities, they would be relieved of all the three kinds of debts such as *Pitra-rina*, *Risi rina* and *Deva-rina*, and thereafter, the door of the heaven would open for them. In other words, they would receive salvation in the end. This is not all. By the pilgrimage of the Godavri, they shall receive all kinds of worldly pleasures, peace, progenies and exemption from different kinds of ailments and obstacles in the life.

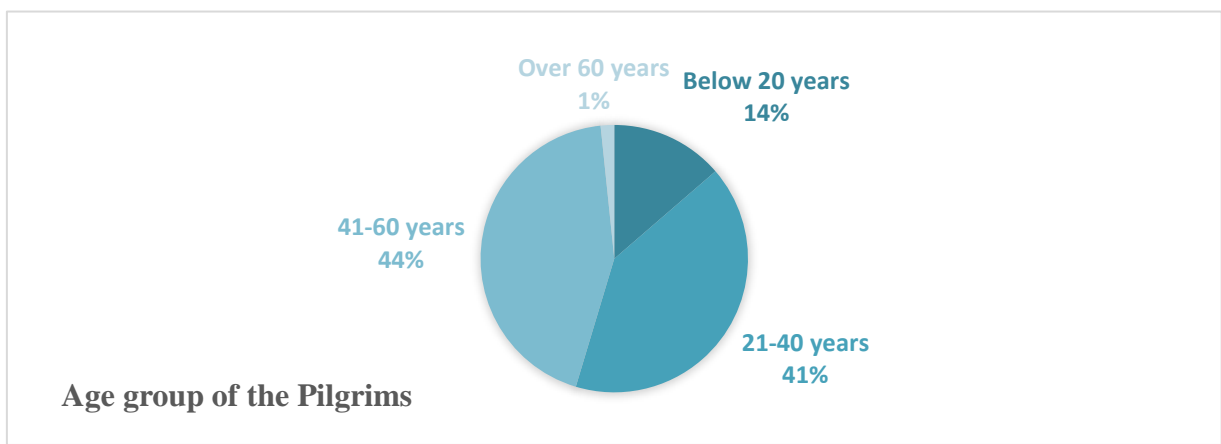
Regarding the classifications of pilgrims there are multiple studies carried out by the scholars. Based on the studies, there are frequent visitors, first timers, day trippers and overnight stayers as suggested by academicians (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021). Following this category, the frequent visitors in Godavari Dham occupy majority, then there comes first timers, day trippers and overnight stayers at last. There are other categories to classify the pilgrims and among the studies, Stoddard (1997) had suggested to classify as per the “length of journey, frequency of pilgrimage event, and the pilgrimage route which is still applicable. Further he has added other criteria like the “location of pilgrimage destination, importance of pilgrimage place, motivation of pilgrims, and characteristics of pilgrims (Stoddard, 1997, p. 57)” that eases in categorizing the pilgrimages. This research has attempted to classify the pilgrims.

The chart showing the composition of age-group reveals the highest number of pilgrims at Godavari are of the people between the years 41 and 60 and next in order come the pilgrims aged between 21 and 40. The third group consists of the pilgrims above 60 years, and the rest, i.e. the pilgrims below the range of 20 years constitute only 10%. In the last phase of life, many people leave their homes, come and reside in Godavari permanently for their spiritual course of life. Among the people who live permanently in the premises of such temples, the men outnumber the females. They constitute 95% whereas the females constitute 5%. The male residents of the premises of the temples do cleaning and assist the priest or the *mahanta* in his

duties and rituals while the female residents (amas) cook food, bring fire- wood for the kitchen and do other works suitable to them. Those who do not have any source of subsistence, are supported with the income of the temples. The pilgrims and the residents of the premises of the temples of Godavri have played a great role in the preservation of Hindu religion and cultural tradition of Godavari. The following charts displays the various portfolios of pilgrims in Godavari Dham.

Figure: 6

Age groups of the pilgrims

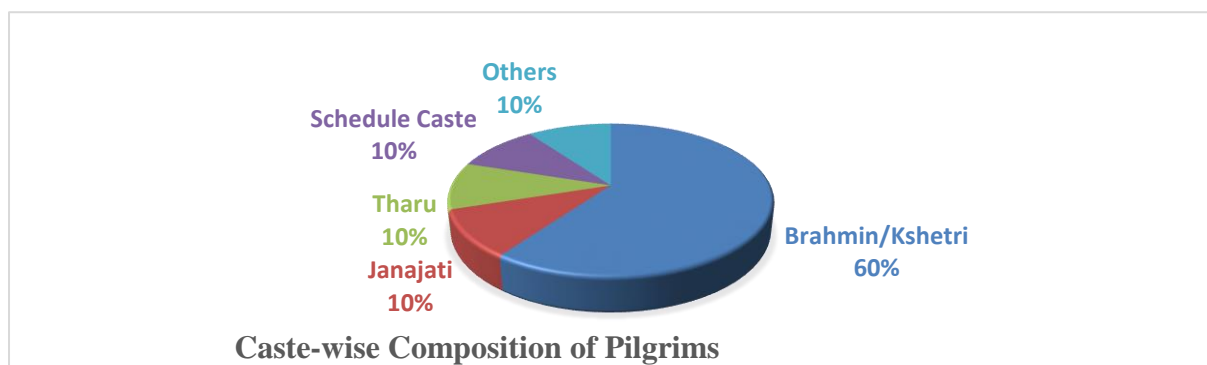


Source- Field study

Again the following chart shows the composition of the pilgrims in relation to caste where Brahmin caste occupy the higher position as their visit to the site is 60 percent while the remaining castes like Janajati, Tharu, schedule caste and other occupy 10 percent each.

Figure: 7

Caste-wise composition of pilgrims

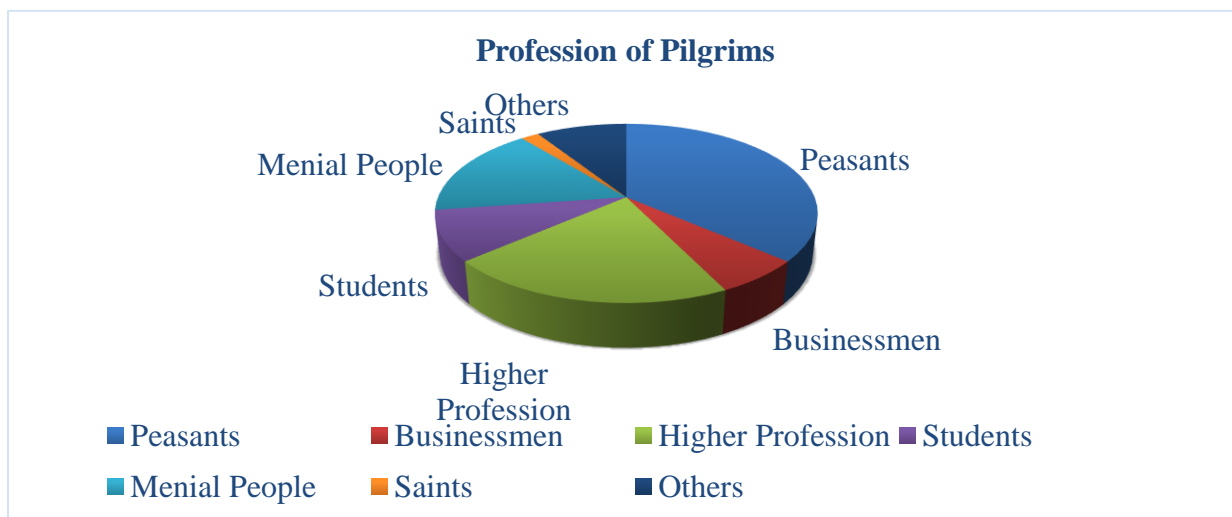


Source: Field Study

It reveals the fact that the Hindu pilgrimage destinations are mostly visited by the upper class-Bhrahmin and Kshetri caste group.

Figure: 8

Profession of Pilgrims

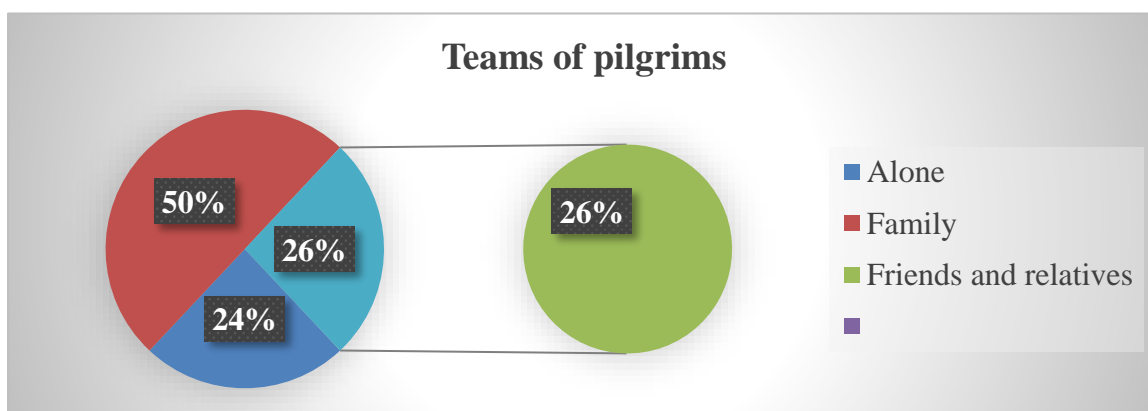


Source: Field Study

The following table shows the teams of pilgrims:

Figure: 9

Teams of Pilgrims



Source: Field Research

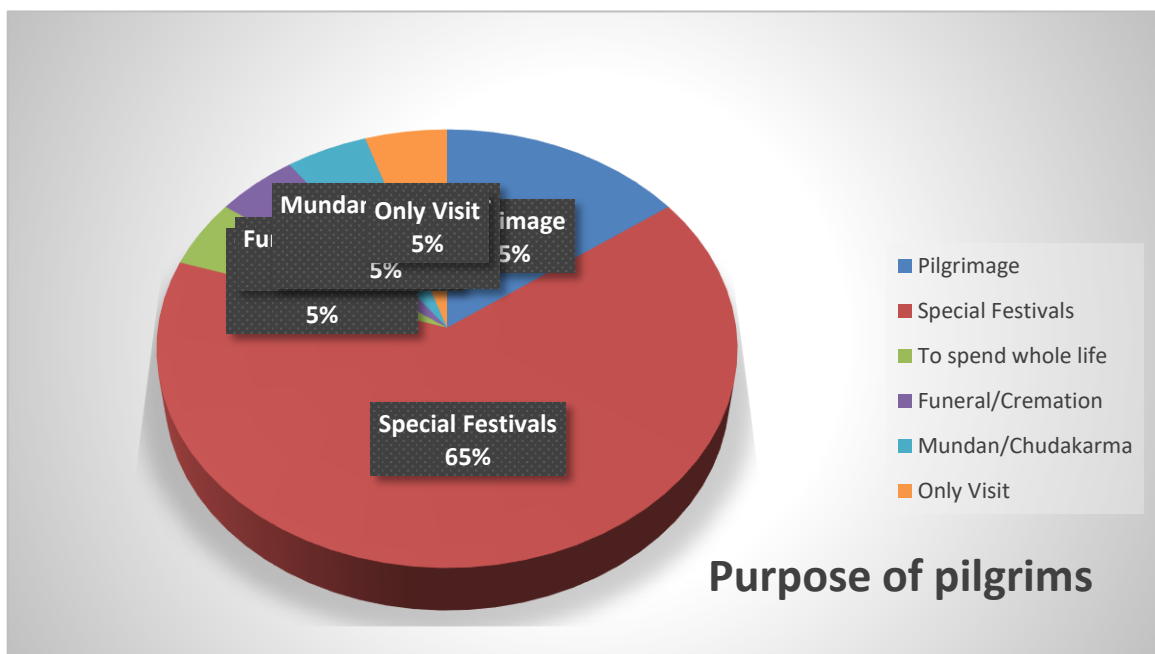
The pilgrims coming to Godavari with members of their family or with friends or alone irrespective of their age, sex, caste, education and profession follow the same daily routine. They remember Godavari River and Lord Shiva when they take a dip in the Godavari River in

the early hours of the day, perform some rituals at the place of confluence and then come to worship various temples. In the day time they take vegetarian food and in the evening join the evening worship of the deity in case they stay there at night. However, such cases are rare on account of the modern means of communications today. In the day time, the pilgrims perform the visit of other temples of the Dham, and join the *katha* and *kirtan* at various places. Thus, the daily routine of the devout pilgrims always remains crowded with many kinds of religious activities. The pilgrims of Godavari stay either in the local small hotels or nearby business hotels in neighboring areas.

Next, pilgrims visit Godavari Dham because of the ancient glory and sanctity of the Dham that the pilgrims of each age and caste-group flock here from the great distance of India and Nepal. Those pilgrims wish to have the *darshana* of the deities and offering of the *pinda* and *tarpana* to their manes, others witness various rituals and performances like *Satyanarayana Vrata* *katha*, *Svasthan Vrata* *katha* and *Bhagavatpurana*. The old people come for *chaturmasa-vasa* in Godavri and wish to die here so that they could get liberation to the pious individuals from the chains of transmigration of soul. The following table shows the main purpose of pilgrims:

Figure: 10

Purpose of the pilgrims

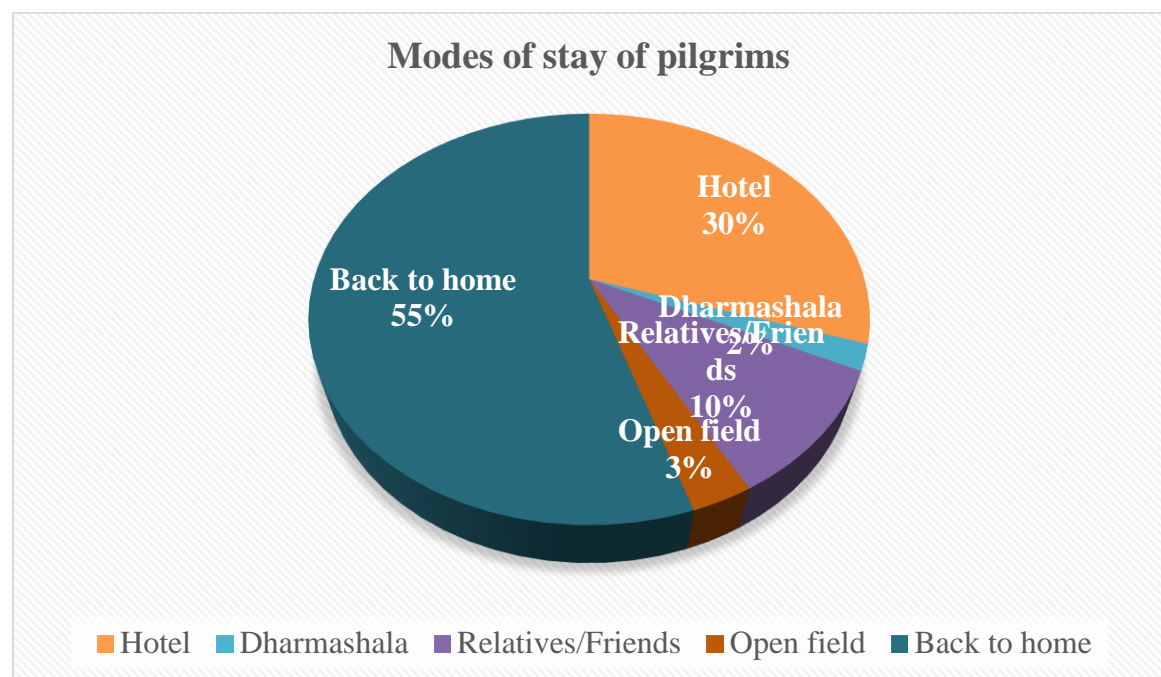


Source: Field Visit

A minute study of the table reveals that 65% of the pilgrims come to Godavari special day's visit and rituals while 15% people come on regular pilgrimage journey to visit the Dham. Rest 40% include the people who wish to spend their remaining life in Godavari, for funeral and cremation or *pinda Daan*, rituals like *Chudakarma*, *Mundan* and also people just visit the Dham due to its natural beauty and attractions.

Table: 11

The modes of stay in Godavari



Source: Field study

The above table shows that only 2% of the pilgrims stay in the *dharmasala* where they cook their food themselves in the rooms assigned to them or in the specified area of the *dharmasala*. In course of his field study, the researcher found that pilgrims mostly visited on their own and they knew that there is no special provisions of *Dharmashala* for the pilgrims. The *dharmasalas* are occupied by mostly the saints and priests as their accommodation. There is shortage of accommodations and the number of saints are growing day by day. Only 3% pilgrims used the open field as their stay and 30% pilgrims stayed in nearby hotels whereas the majority of the pilgrims returned back to their home without spending their days in the Dham. Only 10% of the pilgrims stayed in their relatives' home. The economic opportunities are missed in here as the pilgrims are compelled to return to their homes or they have to seek their lodging out of the Dham.

4.2.9 Sustainability of Pilgrimage Tourism

There are equal roles of religious tourism and pilgrimages that contributes to sustainable growth in terms of delivering a high level of pilgrimage satisfaction, alongside meaningful and unique experiences helps to preserve natural resources and cultural heritage, as well as the traditional values of communities, thus ensuring long-term economic and social benefits (Romanelli et al., 2021, p. 1). There are three main needs of the local population: meeting needs of host population, providing satisfaction of pilgrimages, and safeguarding the environment (Kunwar & Thapaliya, 2021). The economic potential of pilgrimage tourism is vital in sustaining the pilgrimage tourism. Further, pilgrimages should contribute to sustainable growth in terms of delivering a high level of tourist satisfaction, alongside meaningful and unique experiences and for that promoting effective practices and identifying new systems approaches are keys to such sustainability. Such sustainability relies on addressing critical thinking as a way to drive tourism towards sustainability and promotion of human–environment relationships within the tourism ecosystem Sustainable tourism relies on both the collaboration and cross sector involvement can lead to the long lasting sustainability (Beritelli & Laesser, 2011; Jackson, 2010; Lopez, 2014; Roxas et al., 2020).

In Godavari, Pilgrimages have contributed to generating emotions and recognizing the value of this site with the spiritual values in their experiences. The focus should be creating an environment to enable pilgrims to deal with emotional and spiritual knowledge for a transformative, iterative and interactive involvement that helps to expand the whole pilgrim’s experience, subsequently leading to new knowledge generation. As mentioned above, the management of services, attracting the pilgrims, packages and programs and due placement of measures in visiting the Godavari site can have positive impacts on the pilgrims, ensuring the expansion on pilgrimage tourism and contributes in the sustainability of the pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham. Lately, the concerned stakeholders have acknowledged the importance of the economic potential of religious tourists and its significance to the long lasting development of host population. As per the field study, the economic standard and the living standard of the Dham area has significantly change after the idea of promoting this Dham as a center of Kumbha Mela and a lot of business people were attracted to invest in this area. The increase in earning of the local population is remarkable. The arrangement of recreational tourism in the area can further this opportunity to cash the economic incentives.

4.2.10 Branding Godavari as a Destination

Destination branding is a set of market measures to avail the pilgrims a chance of relaxed and peaceful experience while letting the devotees to connect to the holiness in a well-managed environment. It is about a holistic impression generated in the destination that determines the choices of pilgrims. Any internal or external issues of conflicts in the pilgrimage site can have a negative impact in the branding of the pilgrimage site (Blain et al., 2005, pp. 328–338). It is about the assurances of quality, availability of affordable costs, managing the uniqueness, differentiating the site from others which are considered as the prime elements of destination branding. In other words, “identification, differentiation, experience, expectations, image, consolidation, and reinforcement (Blain et al., 2005, p. 336),” is what we understand as a destination branding.

One of the easy feature of Godavari Dham is that this site has no any climatic problem that hinders the pilgrims to go there. The weather remains fair almost all the time. The necessity there is the availability of transporting people who wish to visit the place. The business owners, hoteliers, travel agencies and other local stakeholders need to just have a plan so that the interested pilgrims can visit the Dham as their wish.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Pilgrim is a person in a journey from a religious motive where as a tourist is a person on an entertainment journey. Though there are no clear demarcations, the differences lie in the motive and objectives. Pilgrimage tourism was the concept first used in 1100 and this term is used and viewed mostly from anthropological and economic lenses. It is said that a tourist is a half pilgrim and a pilgrim is a half tourist. The elements like organized mobility, use of transportation and bureaucratized travel plans are the common characteristics of both tourist and a pilgrim. The basic attributes of a pilgrim is the setting off towards a religious site and religious association with that site.

Pilgrimage tourism a form of journey that provides opportunities for people to visit sacred places and is a feature common to almost all societies. A traditional religious pilgrimage, the pilgrim, driven by a strong religious or spiritual motivation accomplishes on foot, a long journey that is reinforced by a sense of renunciation of worldly matters. It is also called by religious tourism, spiritual tourism occupies a major role in the world of tourism as the concept of tourism has emerged from the initiation of religious travel in the history of mankind. Pilgrimage in modern time, is experiencing a wider expansion in population mobility that have a powerful impacts on political, economic, social, and cultural implications, and can even affect global trade and health. One of the most common factor in pilgrimage tourism is the outward activity towards religious place by faith and religious obligation with the prime concerns for blessings. It is related with liminality, *communitas* and authenticity. The concept of pilgrimage tourism has evolved in academic field especially after 1990.

Godavari dham is considered as one of the major pilgrimage sites in far western region of Nepal. Dham in Hindu religion is understood as the spiritual strength, light, power and place of pilgrimage. As per the people of Godavari Dham area, the original Godavari described in Hindu text is the Godavari of Kailali though it needs further clarification. The details in Skanda urana and its *Manas Khanda* section provide some proofs to validate that claim. The details of those religious texts provide how and where the God Shiva, Krishna, Ram and other visited

and how saint Gautam made the river flow in this area. Having a huge and significant root in religious texts, this place remains still unknown to many people in Nepal. Based on the importance of this religious site and to fulfill the academic research gap, this thesis aims in exploring the potentiality of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham Kailali.

Godavari Dham has gained a popularity after the tradition of Kumbha Mela was initiated in 2015 AD. After that, the flow of pilgrims have enormously increased. The people visiting that area claimed that for almost all the occasion that range from birth to death, they visit this site as they believe it has the purity and sanctity. The historical importance makes this Dham further significant for the local people and the other devotees. The average pilgrims visiting this site is 1000 in average on daily basis. Since this place has almost all the temples of Hindu gods and Goddesses, every Hindu and Buddhist visits this place at least once.

The rituals performed in Godavari Dham are holy bath, vows, prayer, gift and charity, pindadan (offer of rice-balls in the name of past ancestors of both paternal and maternal sides), tarpan (offer of water to the past ancestor, gods, and rishis), shradhdha, tarpan, dhyana and many more.

The management of Godavari Dham is done by a management committee and on a personal basis of the head priest called *mahanta* who play their role as per the need. There are found seven management committee on other temples displaying the lack of coherence in the management side. The, transportation, water supply, sanitation, management of solid wastes, infrastructure, access to shrines, services and facilities to stay in the site are some of the lacking issues in managing the Godavari Dham.

There had been traditions of Kumbha Mela in India but after 2002, Nepal also has this tradition that was initiated from Barahakshetra. Godavari Dham also has the tradition of Kumbha Mela to organize in every 12 years since 2015 AD, and another Ardhha Kumbha Mela is in plan that will be organized in every six years.

Regarding the priests, there are total 16 layers of priests in Hindu religion. But in Godavari it starts from the 9th position that is *Mahanta*, who is the head of the priests in the Dham. All the priests in Dham belong to 'Giri' sect as they have taken their education and *dikshya-sanyas* (graduation) from the priests of this sect in India. The priests and *Aghoris* in Godavari Dham practice the healing. People believe those priests and *Aghoris* can heal their mental illness and other sickness.

There is a Sanskrit school in Godavari Dham that has 30 students and four teachers which is funded by a Hindu organization, provincial government and local municipality. The establishment of such school marks the academic consciousness of local authority in preserving the Hindu culture and tradition. Pilgrims in Godavari Dham follow the normal routine of Hindu culture of offering flowers, roti, sweets, and various fruits and perform rituals like meditation and fasting while in the Dham area. Pilgrims walk on bare foot while visiting temples and special places inside the Dham but it not mandatory to walk on bare foot in the area. It was observed that minimum of 1000 to maximum of 100000 NRS was spent during the visit of pilgrims in this area. The key actors like government, local people, non- state actors like business elites and agencies are well aware of the economic potentiality of the Dham and its respective social impacts on developing the society as a whole.

Donation is a prime source of income in Godavari Dham which is collected in the interest of the devotees and pilgrims and they offer it on their own will. Sometimes, the Dham management committee asks for donations to run the Dham. Yearly, two times, the priests and the saints set out to the local people's home to collect food like wheat and rice. Besides, the fees collected from the rituals and religious activities also add in the donations. The motivations behind the pilgrims' visit to the Godavari Dham is physical and spiritual. Besides, expenditure environment, hospitality ambience of religious feel the motives of pilgrims' visit to this site. Where they experience eternal peace. Local population as a host and pilgrims as a guest were found having spiritual links in the Dham. The hospitality, service and behaviors were identified as crucial factors in motivating the pilgrims to visit this place. The pilgrimage tourism has direct socio-economic impact on the local population. Local people were oriented towards the business and income generation, new hotels are in process of opening and other service infrastructures were observed under construction which resembles the forthcoming economic development of the Dham.

Since pilgrimage tourism is diversified sector for the national economy, it has local to regional connections too. The internal issues and external factor play a vital role in raising the issues of conflict in any religious place. There were five major conflicting issues observed in Godavari Dham- ownership and legitimate saints and priests, discriminating constructions along the bank of the Godavari River, management of water, accommodation and facilities, and branding the Dham.

The researcher found out that the potentiality of religious entrepreneurship was lacking in the area despite of huge opportunity. Though newer ideas are emerging in business field, it is in slow pace and needs acceleration. Next, the environmental issues were neglected as this area soon will be a crowded site due to its immense significance. The issues like water supply, traffic load during major festivals, water supply, sewerage systems and solid waste management were some of the needy ones to deal at first. In this regard, the concerned stakeholders like government, public and local people need to work in close collaboration. To preserve the purity and the sanctity, the management committee and priests as well as religious organization need to place some of the measures like keeping distance from over commercialization, restricting some areas from visitors, introducing religious knowledge by specialized guides and controlling overcrowding that do not affect the prime characteristic of the Godavari Dham.

Further, this Godavari Dham need a diversification and for arrangements of leisure, sports, intercultural exchange, nostalgia, escapism and relaxation that opens up the avenue for multiple opportunities in both expansion of visitors flow and academia should be undertaken. The pilgrimage site can be turned into a place of the exchange of cultures, traditions and personal background demonstrating the needs, interests and expectations of visitors to a pilgrimage site which results into increasing diversification. Similarly, the making of identity distinct from other pilgrimage site is also a daunting challenge of this place. Since the pilgrims represent various groups, caste, ethnicity, occupation and background, it is a challenging job to manage the pilgrims. Such issues are still far away in the case of Godavari Dham. Again, the sustainability of the pilgrimage tourism is another key aspect of Godavari Dham as the economic potential of pilgrimage tourism is vital in sustaining the pilgrimage tourism here.

At last comes the branding of the pilgrimage site with its uniqueness that includes identification, differentiation, experience, expectations, image, consolidation, and reinforcement of religious cultures and activities. To make this Dham distinct from other pilgrimage site, only a small but visionary effort is enough as this site lies in a beautiful, peaceful and manageable geographical location.

5.2 Conclusion

Godavari Dham is one of the major pilgrimage site of Nepal which has its religious roots detailed in the Hindu religious texts like *Skanda Guran* and *Bhagwat Geeta*. The holiness of this Dham is further highlighted by the enormous flow and faith of the pilgrims who visit this

site. The various aspects of pilgrimage tourism in Godavari Dham has proven that this Dham is one of the holy place of Hindu that needs further attentions for its recognition in Nepal and abroad.

The studies on pilgrimage tourism throughout the history have suggested some the major issues like motivations, experiences, setting and protecting pilgrimage environment, diversification of pilgrimage destination and sustaining the pilgrimage tourism. Further there are academic concerns about the identity of pilgrimage tourism and sustainability of the pilgrimage site.

One of the prime theory of pilgrimage tourism is the pilgrims' motivations to visit the site. Here in Godavari, any pilgrims are motivated due to its religious history and existence of multiple gods in one place. Further, the motivation is added by the faith of the people in the area who believe this holy place as one of the major Hindu pilgrimage site in far west of Nepal. The motivations of pilgrims are related with the services and experiences in pilgrimage site. Those elements are religious services, performances, recitals, civic and religious ceremonies. In Godavari no formal arrangements were visible. The pilgrims used to visit the Dham and concerned temples but did not enjoy any of the motivating factors. There is huge gap on such motivating factors in Godavari. The history of the Dham, beliefs and religious identity were the prime factors for motivations as observed. The experience of pilgrims are closely related with those motivation factors, so, urgent need of action is observed. Further, according to the environment and management theory of pilgrimage tourism, pilgrims and visitors are attracted any pilgrimage destinations for religious, educational, recreational and leisure purposes. Godavari Dham fulfills only the religious purpose and rest of the aspect are still to be addressed. The environment of a pilgrimage site contributes in the duration of stay, pilgrims' activities, and acceptance of guests' behavior for transformation of developmental works which again lacks in Godavari Dham. The pilgrims rarely find a place to stay in Godavari, due to lack of accommodations, no arrangement are there for other recreational activities and local population is still waiting to transforming towards developmental activities. In such condition, as stated before, Godavari Dham has potential for all of those elements to be implemented.

There are also theories that deal greatly with religious entrepreneurship and diversification of pilgrimage destination. The entrepreneurship theory focuses on addressing the experiences of the pilgrims through promotion of religious accommodations, cultural performances and celebration of festivals. There are no efforts on expanding the religious accommodations that could avail the pilgrims to stay free of cost or at a lower cost. Cultural performances were held

during the festivals to celebrate the special days. In such condition, more plans with actions are needed to construct *dharmasalas*- religious accommodations. The diversity theory also somehow emphasizes on attracting range of pilgrims like religious, spiritual with their private concerns. If there can be arrangements for leisure, sports, cultural exchange and relaxation, not only pilgrims but every other visitors will visit Godavari Dham that will diversify this pilgrimage destination. While exploring those untouched areas, what we need to understand is that there are still multiple vacuums where any stakeholder can intervene and expand the service with immediate economic benefit.

The last theory that deals with the pilgrimage tourism is branding the destination and identity of the pilgrimage site. The branding theory has emphasized on linking the pilgrims' experience with the holiness of the place without any conflicts internally or externally. In Godavari, there are many conflicts, though not visible outside, which may have an adverse impact on the pilgrims in future. Any internal and external issues of priests, saints and local population must be managed and the environment must be welcoming for the pilgrims. The identity theory has its base on observation of pilgrims such as surroundings, deities, temples and recreational spots. The identity of a holy place and acknowledgement are two prime factors in it. Godavari Dham itself is a well know place, it does not need any further clarification, is an identity. Now the actions need to direct towards making a pilgrim feel that this pilgrimage destination has uniqueness and that will add an element in the identity. To conclude, Godavari Dham is a historic religious site with its immense potentiality of turning itself into a national pilgrimage site. The biggest fairs like *Kumbha Mela* and other efforts of the local population, government and other stake holders will soon turn this religious destination into a well-known pilgrimage destination. It certainly has immense possibilities in terms of socio-economic development and for the expansion of pilgrimage tourism in the area.

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APPENDICES

Appendix “A”

(Refers to page no 25)

Questions for Interview with Pilgrims

Name -

Address-

Age/Occupation-

Phone-

1. How do you introduce Godavari Dham in short? Please include following points if possible
2. How do you describe Godavari Dham in terms of geography?
 - a. Land – Neighbour area, rivers (as of Puran, Geeta, Bhagwat etc)
 - b. People – Caste, when they visit for what?
 - c. Religion
 - d. Mention in Puran?
 - e. Cultural value
 - f. Expansion in population and area?
 - g. Physical Appearance of Temples and monumnets
 - h. Sacred river zone and temple- zone – short
 - i. Which Gods are mainly worshipped there? Sects like Shiva, Bishnu
 - j. Who manages Godavari – Committee or Priest?
 - k. Spiritual power?
 - l. How Gods are represented? Shiva as linga?
 - m. What is the Puranic Geography of Godavari Dham?

3. What is the religious history of Godavari Dham? Which religious textbook talk about it?
4. What are the main Architecture (Gufa, Temples) in Godavari?
5. Do you notice any stone sculptures, marble sculptures, metal sculptures or wooden works in Godavari Dham?
6. Can you describe the condition of pilgrimage in Godavari? Caste, profession, education, age-group, team (alone, family, friends) and purpose of visit.
7. Is there any data available regarding the pilgrims visiting Godavari?
8. What type of pilgrims visit more here? Local, Regional or Indian/Foreign?
9. Where do pilgrims stay? How they are managed?
 - a. Hotel – 2 business hotel with lodging and 9 small hotels (not lodging)
 - b. Dharmashala- No
 - c. Relatives – Not a settlement
 - d. Open Place
 - e. Own House
10. What are the sacred performances performed in Godavari Dham? Under the supervision of committee or devotees themselves?
 - a. Morning Worship?
 - b. Mid-Day Worship?
 - c. Evening Worship?
11. What are the religious activities of devotees? Snan, Darshan, Pujan?
12. What are the behaviors of pilgrims? What they do after coming here in Godavari- from entering to exiting?
13. Can you describe the tradition of Samsaan Ghat?

14. How a dead body is cremated?
15. What are the fairs and festivals celebrated in Godavari ?
16. Who are the sacred specialists? Mahanta, Priests, Karmakandi, etc.
 - a. Types of Priests, Mahatma
 - b. Guthi and Income of Dham?
17. How the conservation and preservation of Godavari Dham is going on?
18. Status of cultural tourism in Godavari Dham?
19. What changes and modernization have you noticed in Godavari Dham? Lifestyle, Education, priest appointment, visit .t

Date and signature

Appendix “B”

(Refers to page no 25)

Questions for Hotel Business Sector

Name/Age:

Address:

Phone Number:

1. How is the business environment here in Godavari Dham?

2. Why do you intend to invest here?

3. What are the major business attractions here?

4. What measures do you suggest to adopt for business growth in Godavari Dham?

5. How do you interpret the local governance policy in promoting business here?

6. Any issues that hamper business plan in local level?

7. Any suggestions to concerned authority?

8. Final Remarks!

Appendix “C”

(Refers to page no 25)

Questions for Priests and Saints

Name/Age:

Address:

Phone Number:

1. How long have you been in this Dham?
2. Why did you choose this place?
3. What has attracted you to settle in this place?
4. How do you find this place?
5. How is the environment of this Dham?
6. Do you have any family legacy in becoming a saint/priest?
7. How do devotees treat you?
8. Are there any problems living in this Dham?
9. What are the needy things you think need to do here?
10. How is the living standard in this Dham?

Appendix “D”

(Refers to page no 25)

Questions for the Visitors

Name/Age:

Address:

Phone Number:

1. Why did you visit here?
2. How often you come here?
3. What are the attraction of this Dham?
4. Any special qualities of this Dham that drives you here?
5. Do you find any problems here?
6. What are your suggestions to improve this site?
7. Whom do you think need to take steps?
8. Any final comments?