

## **A Study on Creating Path from Religious Tourism to Secular Tourism : Proposed Model for Mathura and Vrindavan**

**Gazal Singh\* and Krishan Kumar Singh\*\***

*\* Mangalmy Institute of Management and Technology, Greater Noida, U.P.*

*\*\* AXA Life Insurance, Mathura, U.P.*

---

### **Abstract**

From very long time tourism is one of the sector which provide economic development to the country / state / region. From employment to maintenance of that country / state / region are related to how much tourism business is coming to that place. India is called a 'Country of Faith', There is spiritual environment all over the country. The presence of many Temples, Mosques, Gurudwaras, Churches, and Monasteries in India motivates travellers to come here. The twin cities of Uttar Pradesh from India: Mathura and Vrindavan, attract tourists from all over the world. There is a huge footfall of tourists but the same time facilitating this huge footfall is a big task and inspiration to this research. The objective of this research is to find out the factors affecting the religious tourism in Mathura and Vrindavan. The result would proposed a Causal Loop Diagram taken from System Dynamics to understand the relationship among various factors to enhance the Religious tourism and creating a path for secular tourism.

### **Key Words**

Religious Tourism, Secular Tourism, System Dynamics, Mathura, Vrindavan

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

For a long time, tourism has been one of the sectors that contribute to the economic development of any nation (Naseem,2021). As stated in its report the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC 2021) revealed that travel and tourism plays a vital role in the creation of jobs, both including its direct, indirect

and induced impacts; it estimated that 1 in 4 jobs created across the world, i.e., about 334 million or 10.6% of all jobs, accounted for USD 9.2 trillion, 10.4% of global GDP. From employment to the maintenance of that country / state / region depends on how much tourism business comes to that place. As per World Travel and Tourism Council, international visitor spending amounted to 6.8% of total exports and 27.4% of global services exports, contributing USD 1.7 trillion in 2019. Thus, tourism is considered a significant part of the trade in international services and has become a prominent and growing industry.

There are many types of tourism in India. According to one of the tourism website Holiday Story (2020), there are many types of tourism in India such as Adventure Tourism, Wildlife Tourism, Eco Tourism, Health Tourism, Medical Tourism, Cultural/Historical Tourism, Business Tourism, Cruise Tourism, Culinary Tourism, Dark Tourism, Film Tourism, Sports Tourism, Educational Tourism, Recreational Tourism, Religious Tourism etc.

With rich culture and heritage, India is a land of many pilgrimages and religious places. India is known as the "Land of Faith". There is a spiritual atmosphere in the country. The presence of numerous Temples, Mosques, Gurudwara, and Monasteries in India inspires travelers to come here. The most attractive places of worship are : Golden Temple / Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar, Kedarnath & Badrinathin in Uttarakhand, Velankanni Temple in Tamil Nadu, Kashi Vishwnath in Varanasi, Amarnath Cave in Jammu & Kashmir, Gurudwara Hemkunt Sahib in Uttarakhand, Konark Sun Temple in Odisha, Virupaksha Temple in Hampi-Karnatka, Bodh Gaya, Leh, Hazrat Khawaja Gharib Nawaz Dargah-Ajmer in Rajasthan, Vaishno Devi Temple in Jammu and Kashmir. With this kind of diversity in custom, religious places to visit, faith and religion, people live here in ultimate peace and prosperity. For this reason, secular tourism plays an important role in the development of tourism. Mathura and Vrindavan fell for this study because two important places of pilgrimage (Hindu and Muslim) are in the same place and these places are visited by many tourists.

### **Mathura and Vrindavan the twin tourist cities**

Mathura is a city in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is located 50 km (31 miles) north of Agra and 145 km (90 miles) southeast of Delhi; Vrindavan is 11 kilometers (6.8 miles) from the city and 22 kilometers (14 miles) from Govardhan. It is the capital of Mathura district in Uttar Pradesh. In ancient times, Mathura was a financial center at the crossroads of important caravans, taken from Wikipedia, 2020. According to Hindu scriptures, Mathura is the birthplace of Krishna. Vrindavan is a holy city located in the state of Uttar

Pradesh in northern India. The Hindu deity Krishna is said to have spent his childhood here. There are temples here, many of which are dedicated to Lord Krishna and his beloved deity Radha.

### **Cultural and Religious Heritage**

The culture of Mathura occupies a unique place in the history and culture of India. Mathura has been an active center for Brahmin, Buddhist and Jain religions in Uttar Pradesh for decades. Art, religion and festivals have a world-famous culture of melody. Mathura culture culminates in all major themes such as history, society, inscriptions, religion, archeology, iconography, art, and sculpture. Mathura has some cultural traditions, such as Sanji, the colorful art of decorating the earth with flowers. Raslila is one of the important form duet dance. The Bhagavad-gita states that Lord Krishna danced with the gopis(female friends) on the banks of the Yamuna River in Vrindavana. Another traditional folk dance of the braj is performed at Holi- the festival of colors. In another dance form, the dancer balances a series of lights on her head while dancing. Usually, the number of lights on each display is between 51 and 108. The Rasiya songs(traditional songs) are love songs of the divine couple Radha and Shri Krishna. These songs are to be sung during the festival of Holi. Mathura culture is popular in India, especially in places where Hinduism is considered the main religion. Their great tradition of folk songs is also popular abroad as well.

Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi is a Hindu temple located in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. The temple was built around the prison cell where Krishna was to be born. It is located next to the Keshav Deva Temple and the Shahi Eid Gah Mosque. The government has banned photography in the complex.

### **Tourism in Mathura and Vrindavan**

The holy places associated with Lord Krishna and the beloved Radha are visited by about 10 million people a year, including the holy hill of Govardhan, which Vishnu raised on his little finger. Thanks to the year-round series of festivals, there are no seasonal ups and downs as the area quickly becomes a favorite destination for bustling capitals who want to combine happiness with religion.

In recent years, the Braji track, which also includes Agra, has been very popular. Weekend tourism is booming and visitors are keen to mingle with the pilgrimage. Mathura's profile is ready for further change as it is listed as a city of heritage to be developed. "No other area in India attracts as many visitors - we call backpackers or backpackers - as the area around Mathura. The

pressure never goes away. The Yamuna Expressway is a favorite destination for those arriving from Haryana, Punjab and Delhi for festivals”, said the restaurant owner, Mahesh Kumar.

The Yamuna River ghats in Mathura and Vrindavan have become a major attraction for pilgrims, with the Mathura Museum, the Birla Mandir, dozens of ashrams in Vrindavan, the Bihariji Temple, the Rangji Temple, the newly built Brahma Kund and the newly built Prema Mandir. And the ISKCON temple occupies a prominent place in the list of tourists. Vrindavan, with more than 2500 small and large temples and extensive monasteries of old and modern gurus, is just 90 minutes away from Noida by the Yamuna Expressway. For vegetarians, Mathura and Vrindavan offer a wide variety of dishes and sweets made with milk. “No visitor will forget to buy the famous Mathura Peda,” said Panda Mangal Shukla from Vrindavan.

The state government has helped turn the area into a major tourist destination, implementing dozens of infrastructure projects in the area to provide better and more efficient connections, parking spaces, shelters and "hotspots" for local products. It includes costumes of Hindu deities, various garlands, copper idols and ritual objects. The Mathura silver industry has become a major source of income for the district. “The Mathura Vrindavan Development Authority has launched several projects to create conditions for local tourists. Mathura MP Hema Malini wants to use the tourism opportunities in the area for economic development. Improved road connectivity has increased tourist arrivals to Gokul, Mahawan, Govardhan, Bursan and Nandgaon,” said members of the Braj Bachao Samiti in Mathura.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

| S. No. | Author and year              | Paper   | Journal  | Findings of Research Paper  |
|--------|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1.     | K. Vidhya, V. Selvam<br>2019 | Factors affecting the perceptions of pilgrim tourists in selection of accommodation & transportation : a case study of Golden Temple, Vellore City, Tamil Nadu, India | Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews eISSN: 2395-6518, Vol 7, No 5, 2019, pp 1254-1261 | The findings of the study indicate that the income of the family doesn't relate to accommodation facilities and the age of the respondents was affected by the transport facilities in Vellore City. The findings of the study indicate that the income of the family doesn't relate to |

|    |  |  |   |   |
|----|--|--|---|---|
|    |  |  |   | accommodation facilities and the age of the respondents was affected by the transport facilities in Vellore City. The study has found that the tourists had sufficient maturity, education and good exposure about their destination. The study found that accommodation facilities such as comfort, peace, safety and security, attitude and behavior of staff, and sanitation and hygiene are not more satisfied. Transport facilities such as Signboard, street lights, traffic rules have to be improved. |
| 2. | Bhrigu Kumar Nath, Dr. Dipali Baruah                               | Problems and Prospects of Spiritual Tourism Development in and around Greater Guwahati | International Journal of Inter-disciplinary Research in Science Society and Culture (IJIRSSC) Vol: 3, Issue:1, (June Issue), 2017<br>ISSN: (P) 2395-4345, (O) 2455-2909 | The problem faced by tourist in Greater Guwahati are : Transportation facility and its affordability, Road conditions are poor, non availability of tourist guide, unsafe driving, inadequate infrastructure, beggary. Various solution are suggested by researcher.  |
| 3. | Strategic Initiatives & Government Advisory (SIGA) Team April 2012 | Diverse Beliefs : Tourism of Faith Religious tourism gains ground                      | A report by FICCI and YES Bank  | Issues being faced in the development of Religious Tourism in the Country : Infringement of Carrying Capacity, Waste Management, Air Pollution, Monetizing Religion, Lack of scrutiny of religious trusts.<br>YES BANK-FICCI 10 point roadmap to pave the way for the development of Religious Tourism sector in the country.   |

|    |                        |   |   |   |
|----|------------------------|---|---|---|
| 4. | Kiran A. Shinde 2018   | Governance and Management of Religious Tourism in India | International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage<br>ISSN : 2009-7379 | <p>The transformations of the religious tourism economy bring uneasy tensions.</p> <p>Religious tourism operates beyond the state-policy framework. The management of religious tourism is better explained using the formal-informal axis.</p> <p>Religious tourism has multi-faceted impacts that are not addressed due to an 'institutional vacuum'.</p>   |
| 5. | Dr. Tulika Sharma 2019 | Prospects of Religious Tourism in India                 | SHODH SAMAGAM<br>ISSN : 2581-6918 (Online), 2582-1792 (PRINT)                 | <p>The study has also highlighted the main problems regarding poor infrastructure and facilities such as accommodation, quality food, shopping areas, public convenience, and communication and cheating and misguiding etc. The author has suggested both operational measures like restructuring tourism in accordance with laws, need for systematic approach in managing tourism development, interacting with tourists in a healthy manner and supportive role of non-governmental organization and operative measures like strategy for tourism development, creation of a development Board and creation for the region on the line of Vatican City to increase the tempo of pilgrimage tourism. Religious Tourism will promote Indian economic revenue and will pave the path of sustainable economic development</p> |

|    |  |   |                                  |   |
|----|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| 6. | Lan, Feiya<br>Huang, Qijun<br>Zeng, Lijin<br>Guan,<br>Xiuming Xing,<br>Dan Cheng,<br>Ziyan, 2021 | Tourism<br>Experience and<br>Construction of<br>Personalized<br>Smart Tourism<br>Program Under<br>Tourist<br>Psychology | Frontiers in<br>Psychology       | Tourists' experiences are comprehensively analyzed in terms of dining, living, traveling, sightseeing, shopping, and entertaining as per their psychological changes using approaches including big data analysis, literature analysis, and field investigation. In this case, a model of tourism experience formation path is summarized, and a smart travel solution is proposed based on psychological experience.   |
| 7. | Walia, Jasleen<br>Kumar, Anuj,<br>2021   | Issues and<br>Strategies for<br>Development of<br>Buddhist Tourism<br>in India  | Studies in Indian<br>Place Names | Issues and Strategies for Development of Buddhist Tourism in India  |
| 8. | Abdillah, Yusri<br>Supriono,<br>Supriono<br>Supriyono,<br>Bambang,<br>2022                       | Change and<br>innovation in the<br>development of<br>Balinese dance in<br>the garb of special<br>interest tourism       | Cogent Social<br>Sciences        | The current study investigates the development process in the Balinese dance within the framework of Special Interest Tourism (SIT). In particular, it looks closer at the orientation of Balinese dance innovation in Ubud, a Bali's tourist spot that is praised as the Bali's art center. This trend is mostly prominent in Balinese cultural product, particularly Balinese arts. Whereas in the days before tourism came to the island arts develop following religious demand, current development takes place in the garb of tourism and evolves in a more complex and secular setting |
| 9. | Belliggiano,<br>Angelo Garcia,<br>Eugenio Cejudo<br>Labianca,<br>Marilena                        | The "eco-effective-<br>ness" of agritourism<br>dynamics in Italy<br>and Spain: A tool<br>for evaluating                 | Sustainability<br>(Switzerland)  | This study presents a new approach to assessing the "eco-effectiveness" of the evolutionary dynamics of agritourism, as applied in a study of NUTS-2  |

|     |  |   |  |  |
|-----|--|---|--|--|
|     | Valverde, Francisco Navarro De Rubertis, Stefano, 2020   | regional sustainability   |  | regions in two European countries (Spain and Italy) that have implemented similar rural development strategies. To this end, a synthetic sustainability index was developed using the Index Decomposition Analysis (IDA) technique.  |
| 10. | Garcí, Francisco Javier, 2022                            | Sustainability and Tourist Activities in Protected Natural Areas : The Case of Three Natural Parks of Andalusia (Spain) | Land, MDPI                                   | The research objective is to study the relationship between tourism and sustainability in the nature parks, selective interviews have been carried out with the stakeholders to establish their perception of sustainable tourism and the presence of dominant discourses.   |
| 11. | Metaxas, Theodore Juárez, Laura Andrinós, Meletios, 2022 | Measuring the Impact of Greece as a Safe Branding Tourist Destination: Evidence from Spain and Greece                   | Sustainability (Switzerland)                 | The main purpose of this paper is to examine and analyze the effect that the image of a place as a safe tourist destination (STD)-in our case, Greece-can have on the decision-making processes of tourists who were willing to take summer holidays in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.                           |
| 12. | Naseem, Sana, 2021                                       | The role of tourism in economic growth: Empirical evidence from Saudi Arabia  | Economies                                    | This research investigates the role of tourism in promoting economic growth in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by using annual time series data from 2003 to 2019.   |
| 13. | Mihalic, Tanja, 2014                                     | Tourism and Economic Development Issues   | Tourism and Development: Concepts and Issues | This research studies the economic dimension of tourism development only which refers to economic growth, structural changes as well as the equitable distribution of tourism benefits and the economic potential of environmental factors from the perspective of developed and developing countries and regions. |



|     |   |   |                         |  |
|-----|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| 14. | Rasool, Haroon Maqbool, Shafat Tarique, Md., 2021 | The relationship between tourism and economic growth among BRICS countries: a panel co-integration analysis | Future Business Journal | The study attempts to examine the relationship between inbound tourism, financial development and economic growth by using the panel data over the period 1995–2015 for five BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries |
|-----|---|---|-------------------------|--|

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

As Mathura is having religious and cultural heritage and history. There is a huge footfall of tourists. Various kinds of religious tourists like Pilgrimage tourist, Parikrama Tourists, Religious/History Scholar, Foreign Tourists (religious community like ISKON), Festival Tourists and Regular Religious Tourists (visit from NCR on weekends) visit mathura and near by areas. Before tourists visit any palce, they evaluate the visiting place on so many grounds like travelling option, staying & hospitality option, eating & restaurant option, affordability, reach, easy access of facility, safety & security etc. These options make a tourist visiting place popular or unpopular. For researchers these factors become the concern for study and travelling and hospitality industry can get benefits with these kind of researches. Enhancing these facilities make Mathura a more liked place to visit, thus bring more business and prosperity to its people and satisfaction among tourists.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The reserch will cover following objectives :

1. Building a conceptual model
2. To dicuss the various factors which lead to development of secular tourism.
3. Proposing CLD for factor affecting secular tourism

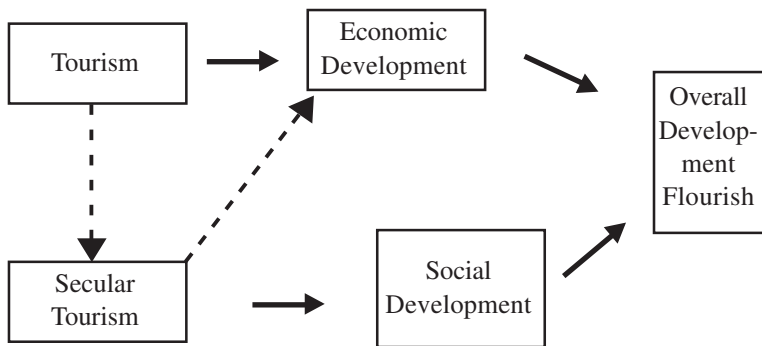
**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The proposed research discussed the religion tourism in Mathura and Vrindavan which can lead to secular tourism. The proposed geographical area for this study can be major famous temples and mosques of Mathura and Vrindavan. The following list was taken from the official website [www.mathura.nic.in](http://www.mathura.nic.in), from tourist section :

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Mathura   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Shri Krishan Janam Bhumi</li><li>2. Shahi-Edgah Mosque</li><li>3. Dwarkadhish Mandir</li><li>4. Vishram Ghat (Banks of River Yamuna)</li><li>5. Rangeswar Mandir</li><li>6. Bhuteshwar Mandir</li><li>7. Gatteshwar Mandir</li><li>8. Naam Yog Sadhna Mandir<br/>(Baba Ji Gurudev Temple)</li></ol> |
| Vrindavan | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Banken Bihari Mandir</li><li>2. Garun Govind Mandir</li><li>3. Prem Mandir</li><li>4. Vaishno Mata Mandir</li><li>5. Birla Mandir</li><li>6. Chandrodaya Mandir</li><li>7. ISKON Temple</li></ol>   |

### **CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

This research paper propose that- India being hub of so many religions and lot of religious places are there to visit, an intrinsic requirement is always there to develop religious tourism and because of that government put a lot of pressure to developing that place. So if there is development on religious tourism, it will develop that state as well. To develop a particular place to make it more attractive for tourists to visit, a lot of infrastructure will be needed. The good infrastructure in itself a factor of healthier place to live, do business and visit. So these developments will bring harmony to that place, which can then develop secular tourism supported with other factors of harmony. The conceptual model is depicted in Figure 1, which indicate that religious tourism will develop the state in terms of facility like infrastructure, awareness, basic facility, tourism factors etc. the development of that state will bring harmony to that place which can set the path for secular tourism.

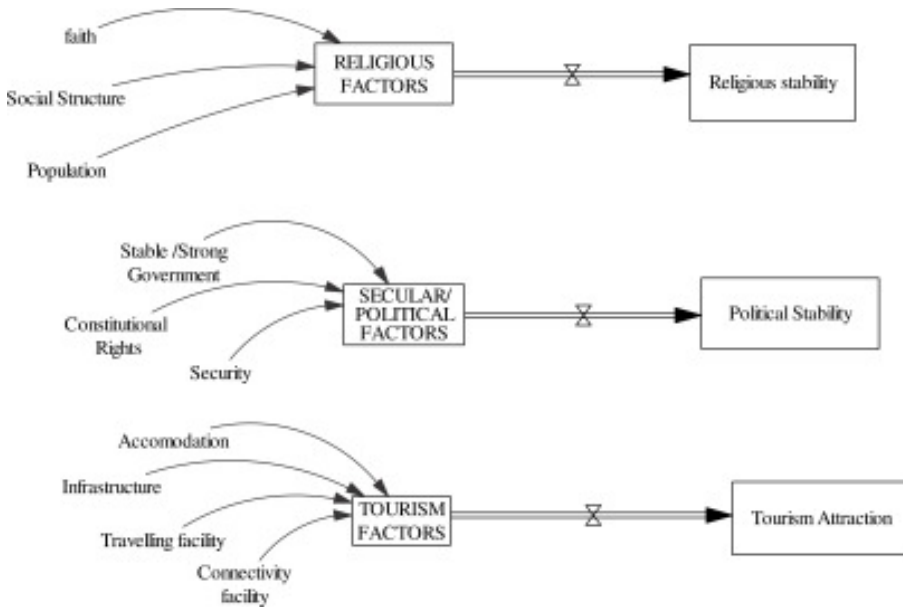


**Figure 1** : Conceptual Model - Steps Toward Developing Secular Tourism

## DISCUSSION

Religious tourism is very old domain of study and attracted lot of researchers to study various aspect related to it (Gopal & Chabbra, 2020) . India being the hub of lot of religions like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christians, Parsi and others celebrate all religions. Therefore, in India we easily find pilgrimage and religion related monuments, books, rituals and traditions. People had established lot of cultural activities around these religious constructions. So lot of people visit India for religious purpose. Also there are a lot of tourists who travel from one state of India to other because of religious tourism. These days, Indian Government and tourism department both are working on developing infrastructure and promotion of Indian tourism. (Sharma, 2019). There are a lot of researchs also going which is like boost to the development of tourism in India. Economic development is directly related to development of tourism as field of business. As far as Mathura and Vrindavan is concerned Film star Hema Malini is current Member of Parliament, had brought lot of changes in these districts. Recently Kumbi (gathering of people) in Vrindavan is one of the example, where Hindu people visited and lot of infrastructure were created from building proper ghats (bank of river), staying option, entertainment facility, holy bath facility, food arrangements etc. As stated in Jagran newspaper dated 20, December 2020 both in Mathura and Vrindavan lot of facilities are constructed to facilitate tourist to increase the foot fall. Banks of Yamuna River were reconstructed, few business houses are coming up to provide good staying and food arrangements, one of the major business house is Brijwasi Mithai Wala. Mathura is center for both Hindu and Muslim due to adjacent temple and mosque in Krishan Janam bhoomi complex. Lot of tourists come for religious reasons.

Based on all this discussion a Causal loop diagram is proposed to derive the hypothesis, see Figure e2.



**Figure 2 :** Proposed CLD to Develop Hypothesis.

Three factors are identified as per the literature review and associated items that affect are depicted in Figure 2. Faith in religion, population, social structure is responsible to build the stock, named Religious factors. Stable government, constitutional rights/duties, security are responsible to build the stock, named Political Factors. Accommodation, Infrastructure, travelling facility are responsible for building the stock, named Tourism factors. Religious factors will lead to religious stability. Political factors will lead to political stability. Tourism factors will lead to Tourism Attraction.

## FUTURE WORK

After the completion of the study, the researcher will identify the factors that affect the tourism of Mathura and Vrindavan. A modal can be developed and simulation can be run. The CLD will make us understand how each factor depends on the rest of the factor. This knowledge will make to understand what are the causes to problem are in religious tourism in this region and where to work more to remove that cause to take it to secular

tourism. The identification of factors will enhance our knowledge to find out areas where more effort should be made to increase the religious tourism in Mathura & Vrindavan.

## References

- Buragohain, H. (2019). Secularism in India : Its Cause and Effect, *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 8(9).
- G, P. S.; and Patel, H. R. (2020), Secularism in India : Present Scenario, *IJRAR - International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 7(1), 18-20.
- Ramgopal, Singh, M.; and Karla, S. (2020), Review of Religious Tourism in India, *An International Bilingual Peer Reviewed Refereed Research Journal*, 10(4).
- Richard Derham, P. C. (2011), Creating Value : Indian Tourism.
- Sharma, T. (2019), *Prospects of Religious Tourism in India*, Shodh Samagam, 358-367.
- Shinde, K. (2018), Governance and Management of Religious Tourism in India, *International Journal of Religious Tourism*, 6(1), 57-71.
- Vasanth Kiran, M. M. (2012), Innovative Marketing Strategies for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(2), 1059-1066.
- Lan, F.; Huang, Q.; Zeng, L.; Guan, X.; Xing, D.; and Cheng, Z. (2021), Tourism Experience and Construction of Personalized Smart Tourism Program Under Tourist Psychology, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12 (July), 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.691183>
- Walia, M. J.; and Kumar, A. (2021), *Issues and Strategies for Development of Buddhist Tourism in India*, June.
- Abdillah, Y.; Supriono, S.; and Supriyono, B. (2022), Change and Innovation in the Development of Balinese Dance in the Garb of Special Interest Tourism, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2076962>
- Belliggiano, A.; Garcia, E. C.; Labianca, M.; Valverde, F. N.; and De Rubertis, S. (2020), The "Eco-effectiveness" of Agritourism Dynamics in Italy and Spain : A Tool for Evaluating Regional Sustainability, *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(17), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177080>
- Garcí, F. J. (2022), Sustainability and Tourist Activities in Protected Natural Areas : The Case of Three Natural Parks of Andalusia (Spain).
- Metaxas, T.; Juarez, L.; and Andrinós, M. (2022), Measuring the Impact of Greece as a Safe Branding Tourist Destination: Evidence from Spain and Greece, *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(8), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14084440>

- Naseem, S. (2021), The Role of Tourism in Economic Growth : Empirical Evidence from Saudi Arabia, *Economies*, 9(3), <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9030117>
- Mihalic, T. (2014), Tourism and Economic Development Issues, In *Tourism and Development : Concepts and Issues* (Issue December 2014), <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845414740-005>
- Rasool, H.; Maqbool, S.; and Tarique, M. (2021), The Relationship Between Tourism and Economic Growth Among BRICS Countries : A Panel Cointegration Analysis, *Future Business Journal*, 7(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-020-00048-3>