

PILGRIMAGE AND THE EMERGING CHALLENGES IN INDIA:
*A Comparative Study of Vaishno Devi Shrine and Amarnath Shrine in
Jammu and Kashmir*

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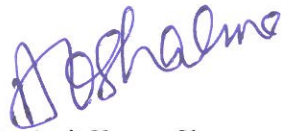
CERTIFICATE

This thesis titled '**PILGRIMAGE AND THE EMERGING CHALLENGES IN INDIA: A Comparative Study of Vaishno Devi Shrine and Amarnath Shrine in Jammu and Kashmir**' submitted for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** is my original work and has not been previously submitted to this or any other institution for any degree, diploma or other qualifications.



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To
My Teacher & Family

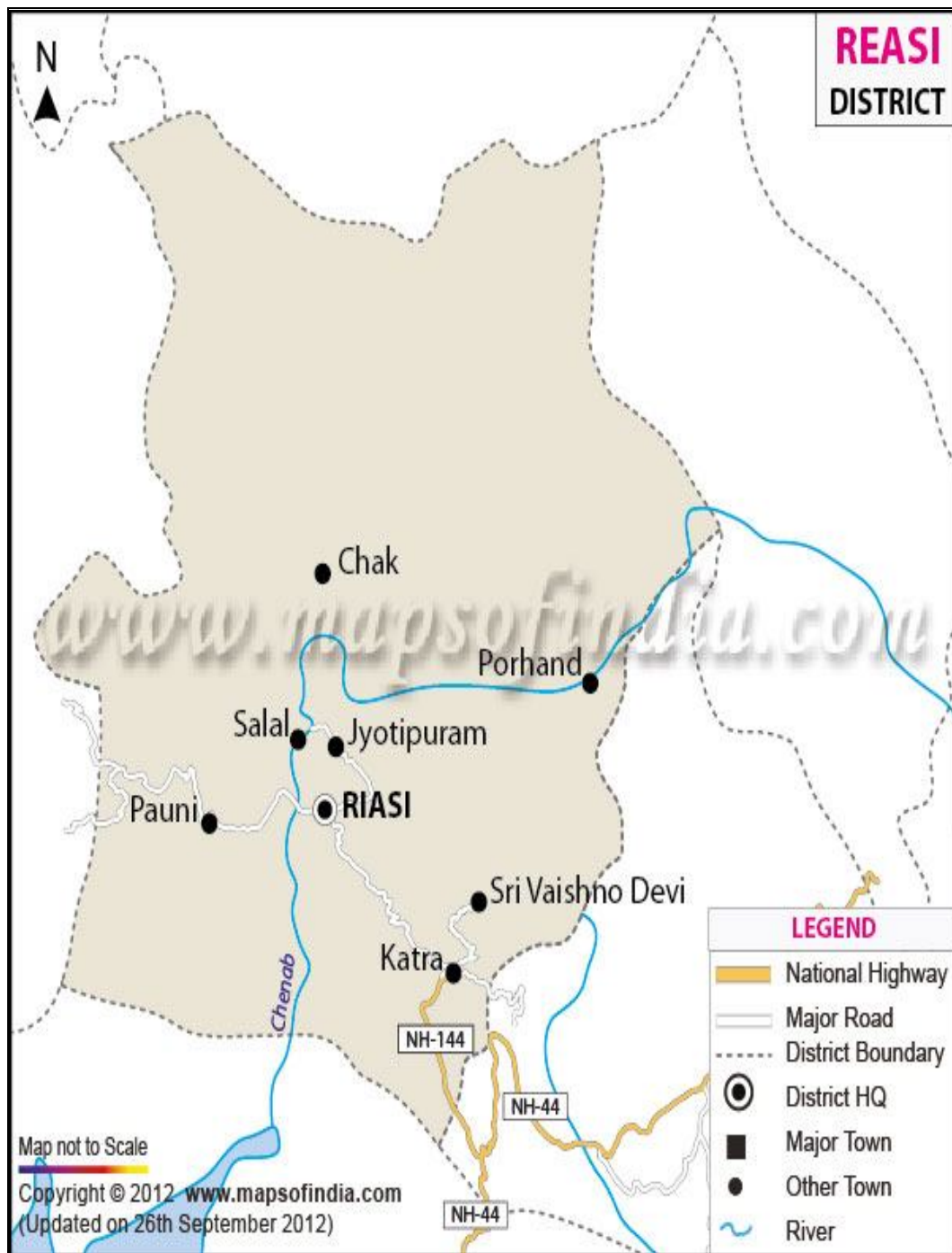
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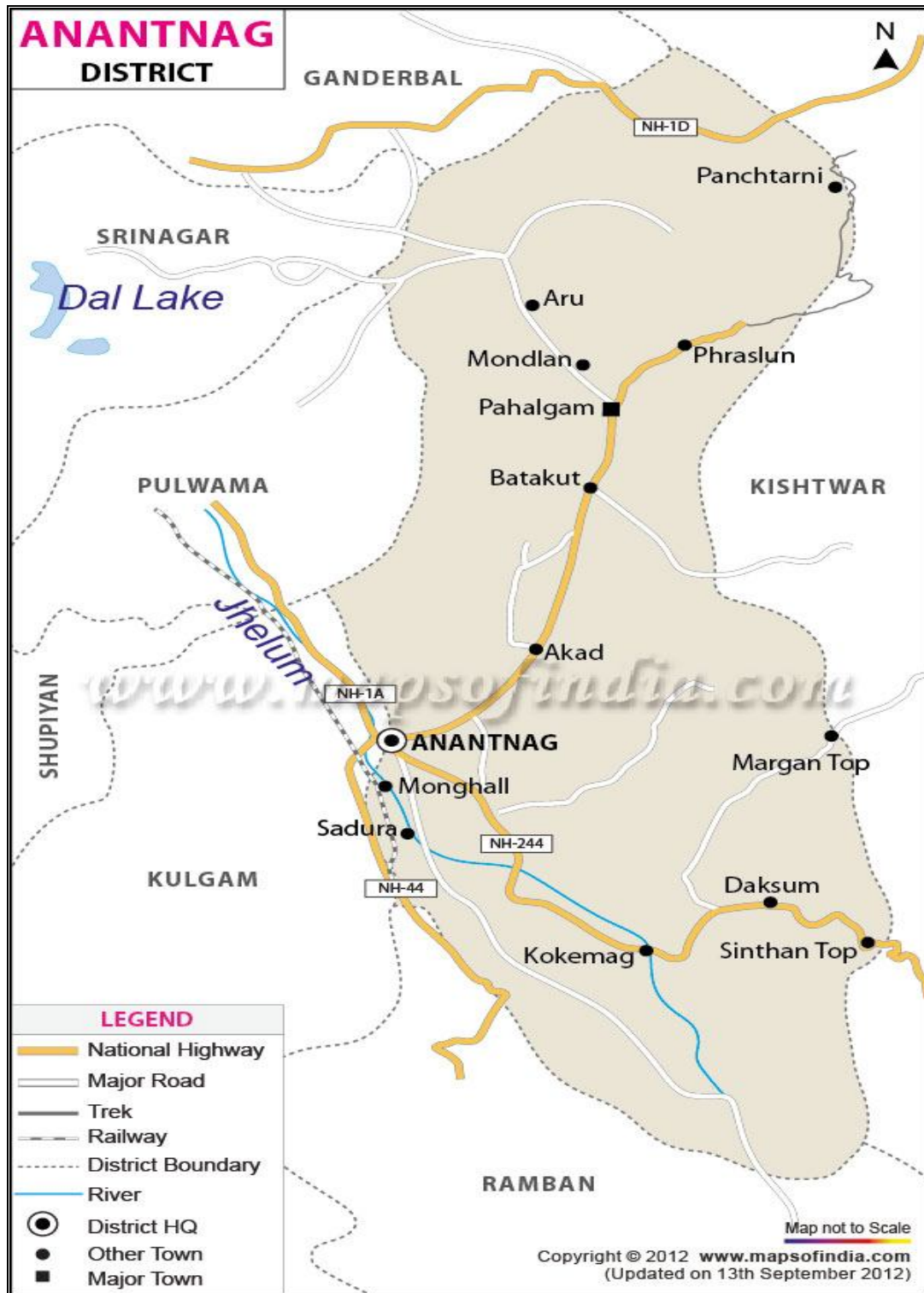
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Abbreviations

AFSPA	Armed Force Special Power Act
A.S	Amarnath Shrine
B.C.E	Before Common Era.
CE	Common Era.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer.
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
DAL	Deccan Aviation Limited.
DE	Daily Excelsior
DM	Devi-Mahatmya.
ET	Economic Times.
ICT	Information Communication
Technology.	
IVC	Indus Valley Civilization.
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir.
JKP	Jammu and Kashmir Police
SDM	Special District Magistrate
SASB	Shri Amarnath Shrine Board
SMVDSA	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Act.
SMVSDB	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine
Board.	
SMVDSBNI	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board
Assurance.	
SMVDSGC	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Spiritual
Growth Centre.	
SMVDU	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University.
HPSV	High Power Sodium Vapor.
RV	Rig-Veda.
TY	Treta Yuga.
VD	Vaishno Devi
YP	Yatra Parchi.
YRC	Yatra Registration Counter.

Glossary

<i>Arti</i>	Ritual Worship
<i>Atma</i>	Pure Soul
<i>Adviata</i>	No Dual Reality. God and soul is one
<i>Bhawan</i>	Building
<i>Boon</i>	Wish
<i>Chadhava</i>	Offerings
<i>Daan</i>	Donation
<i>Darbar</i>	Court
<i>Devi Sukta</i>	Hymen of the Rig-Veda
<i>Dharamshalas</i>	Innards
<i>Dogra</i>	Hindu Rajputs who ruled Jammu from 1846-1947.
<i>Durga</i>	Warrior Goddess
<i>Garab Joon</i>	Mother Womb
<i>Langar</i>	A religious secular meal
<i>Linga</i>	An oval stone symbolic of Bhagwan Shiva
<i>Mandir</i>	Temple
<i>Mata</i>	Mother
<i>Murti</i>	Statue
<i>Navratri</i>	<i>Nine Nights</i>

<i>Pavitr</i>	Sacred
<i>Pitha</i>	Seat
<i>Poojas</i>	Religious Rites
<i>Purohit</i>	Priest
<i>Purusharthas</i>	Four Ends
<i>Raakshas</i>	<i>Demon</i>
<i>Saraswati</i>	<i>The goddess of Knowledge</i>
<i>Shakti</i>	<i>Power</i>
<i>Sheravali</i>	Lion Rider
<i>Tantric</i>	<i>Man</i>
<i>Tirthyatra</i>	Pilgrimage Journey
<i>Trikuta</i>	Three Peaked mountain
<i>Yantra</i>	Symbolic Diagram
<i>Yatri</i>	Pilgrim

Introduction

The thesis on **‘Pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India: A Comparative Study of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* in Jammu and Kashmir’** particularly aims at conceptualizing and contextualizing the emerging challenges in the context of pilgrimage and society in contemporary India with special reference to *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India. In the recent past pilgrimages has become the matter of concern for policymakers, scholars, research organizations and government etc. It’s because of diverse challenges faced by pilgrimage in different places in India. It could be the management challenge in handling the pilgrimage, natural disaster, security concerns, the rise of faith-based tourism etc. The contemporary times have witnessed the rise in numbers of pilgrims at many pilgrimage places in India¹. The reason could be the rise of information technology era and the expansion of faith-based tourism. Nowadays it has been seen that tourism and pilgrimage are complementary to each other². Most of the famous pilgrimage places in India have been associated with the tourism boards for more business, economic and revenue generation. Jacobs (2010) relates religious tourism with the middle class sector and the increased mobility. He said pilgrimage and tourism are interrelated to each other because pilgrimage is based on religious need and tourism gives recreational enjoyment and most of the people travel with the objective to achieve both the religious and spiritual need (Jacobs, 2010:33). Raj and Morpeth (2007) argues that religious places are being developed for tourism purposes which are decreasing the religious significance but make them more famous. The traditional form of pilgrimage converted into spiritual motivation. Now the pilgrimage places are attracting more pilgrims as well as have become the place of worship (Raj and Morpeth, 2007:9). But the faith-based tourism also has greatly impacted the pilgrimage places due to its

¹ See the Tirupati Balaji Pilgrimage statistics, Char Dham Pilgrimage, Vaishno Devi and Amarnath pilgrimage in Jammu and Kashmir.

² The report is prepared by Santek (2012) submitted to the Tourism ministry, India, says that the Buddhist circuit in Ladakh, Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Shrine in Jammu and Kashmir could be the potential places for the growth of tourism in the state.

unlimited nature and scope. It also has put the question to the pilgrimage management board. Most of the pilgrimage places in India have set some limitations while managing the pilgrimage³. In June 2013 cloudburst at *Kedarnath* pilgrimage have raised various environmental/ecological concerns on the management of pilgrimage. Shinde (2008) argues that sewerage, urbanization, solid waste, increase in pollution and the exploitation of natural resources are the main factors influence the environment at *Tirupati* and *Tirumali* pilgrimage places. Navlakha (2006) argues that the rise of the numbers to the *Amarnath* Shrine could be a responsible factor for ecological imbalance. Shinde (2008) said north India a Sikh pilgrimage to the Hemkunt Sahib attracts 1.5 lacs, pilgrims, four months in a year. It has resulted in the imbalance of ecology due to huge gathering of pilgrims at one place. Second, the material pilgrims during the journey like the use of plastic, flora and fauna destruction (Shinde, 2008: 345).

The present study is somehow an extension of my M.Phil work. I had written my M.Phil on *Vaishno Devi* Shrine. I had explored the contemporary dimension of *Vaishno Devi* shrine like the political, cultural, economic, ecological and global in my M.Phil Dissertation. The Central research question was to understand the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* beyond the mythical and religious context. But the study was based on the secondary literature where I was unable to locate the field aspect to make the study more rational as well as scientific. In the present study, I had taken a new area the *Amarnath* shrine to have a comparative analysis and sociological investigation. The study is based on the primary data. It also critically evaluates the secondary literature to develop and makes the argument more theoretically significant, valid and reliable. Therefore the reason behind the selection of *Amarnath* Shrine and *Vaishno Devi* Shrine is to understand the *Shiva-Shakti*⁴; *Purusha-Prakriti*⁵ dynamics in a sociological sense. The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* belongs to the *Sakta* tradition which

³ For example the Vaishno Devi and Amarnath shrine pilgrimage management board have set some parameters for pilgrims. The board usually sends 15,000 to 20,000 in a day. Sometimes it could increase or decrease by 5,000 numbers of pilgrims.

⁴ Shiva is a major god in the Hindu Patheonon. Shakti has been associated with the mother goddess. In the present study, the Amarnath shrine and Vaishno Devi has been taken to understand the Shiva-Shakti dynamics more in the social reality.

⁵ Purusha means male and Prakriti means nature.

symbolizes the feminine character and energy. *Prakriti* is the manifestation of nature. *Amarnath* shrine represents the *Shaiva* tradition and denotes the consciousness. Both *Shiva-Shakti* is one divine consciousness. Both are significant to each other. The philosophy of *Shiva-Shakti* says the whole universe; the living, non-living beings have existence because of this dynamics of *Shiva-Shakti*. It's not just an imaginative idea but works more in reality. Avalon (1918) argues that *Shakti* is the mother of nature. This is one of the oldest sect in the Hinduism (Avalon, 1918: 77). On the other Coster (2012) said that *Shiva* is *Shakti*. In the Hindu Pantheon *Shiva* is the most powerful god, the destroyer. He is known by many names such as *Mahadev*, *Bhava*, *Vishwanath*, *Mayayogi*, *Nataraja*, *Bhairava*, *Lord Shiva*, *Bhole Nath*, *Bhole Shanker*, *Bhole Baba* etc. (Coster, 2012:2). Therefore to understand the *Shiva-Shakti* tradition in the contemporary times is the purpose of this study. Therefore the comparative analysis of *Vaishno Devi* shrine with the *Amarnath* Shrine has been taken to understand the *Shiva-Shakti* philosophy along with critical evaluation of the emerging challenges in the present context.

Vaishno Devi and *Amarnath* Shrine have been facing diverse issues and challenges in the present times. Many studies have been conducted to understand it⁶. But the depictions of these studies are limited in scope. Some have given a description of mythical and religious aspects⁷. Some of them have studied the beliefs and rituals. Therefore it becomes the important concern to understand and frame the present challenging aspects of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. It's just an attempt to explore various changes in the modern socio-religious and cultural spaces. Pilgrimage has been explored with reference to the changes in the beliefs and rituals, the notion of pilgrimage, the nature of the journey, the role of the state within the period of time and the impact of global changes on the local pilgrimages places. Post 90's most of the literature has been discussed about globalization⁸ and religion in India. The study has also given importance

⁶ Like the study conducted by Gupta and Raina (2008); Jain (2007); Virender (2012); Navlakha (2006); Shinde (2008) etc.

⁷ Erndl (1993), Wood (2002), Aggarwal (2007), Foster and Stoddard (2010) etc

⁸ Globalization is a very old concept. Many theorists all over the world have debated about it. But it came in India systematically only after 1990's.

to conceptualize the global changes in the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*.

Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine has drastically come under various global changes. It could be seen while understanding the pilgrimage management board, the role of political institutions and the state, the digital pilgrimage etc. Now both the shrine *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine could be located in the wider global religious context. The Information Communication Technology (ICT) has made the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine visible to the Indian communities abroad. Now they can visit the official websites of these shrines for online *Darshans* and donations. Somehow the global concept of pilgrimage has made a great impact on the local notion of pilgrimage places. Now the beliefs and rituals of any pilgrimage places are constantly changing due to mixing with the new religious concept. *Harder the journey, better the reward* has been changing due to space and time. Now the spiritual pilgrimage, effortless journey, and online *Darshans* are becoming the contemporary trends among most of people due to the internet technology. In the other way, the technology has created another alternative for those pilgrims who couldn't be able to visit the shrine due to various reasons now can have *Darshans* of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* by staying at home.

Religion has become a matter of global concerns in the contemporary times. With the movement of people from one place to another, interactions among diverse communities, to participate together in various rituals have changed the notion of religion. It said that due to the rise of globalization and the migration process, the local cultures interacted with the global culture. Societies are becoming multicultural and more religious interactions have been reported. Due to the rise in technological development, culture and religion are now global concepts. He has pointed towards the religious interactions at the global level (Juergensmeyer, 2003:5). With the globalization, the religious space has been widespread. There has been created more religious consciousness among the peoples of diverse faiths. Now the communities across the globe are creating an online platform to discuss their cultural beliefs and religious life. For that, they are forming the associations, organizations to reach towards their religious goals.

Therefore the Hindu communities living outside India are trying to connect with the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine with the help of internet/online sources.

Juergensmeyer (2003) argues that sociology or the social scientists understands the religion from the scientific way. Every religious concept is defined in a systematic manner. Juergensmeyer argument on religion is based on the scientific principles (Juergensmeyer, 2003:98). He also says that sociological inquiry of religion speaks about the rational and empirical investigation. He has mentioned Madan works on religion, said that religious institutions are organised in a systematic manner in its structure and function. The division of labour in these institutions are now more organised in a rational way (Ibid, 2003:104). Madan says that the contemporary form of religion is more complex, modern and complex. With the coming of the more advanced stage, the division of labor has been more specialized. Now both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has special management boards constituted by the state. Bureaucracy runs the entire management of both the shrine. There has been created different divisions to coordinate various activities of both the shrine.

Now pilgrimages is being managed in a more systematic and rational manner. There is proper maintenance of records of pilgrims who visit to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. The shrine board makes the pilgrims data online for more transparency and accountability. It can be said whatever is happening at the global level could be seen at the local place of pilgrimages. Therefore the global changes have affected the religious beliefs and rituals. Now the religious affairs are becoming more accountable. The global religions have created more awareness with the help of technology, media & global interactions etc. The diverse interactions and the connectedness have generated different economic as well business opportunities both at local and the global place. Due to the great impact of globalization, the local pilgrimage place has been changed in its structure and function. The impact of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage has impacted both the Jammu and the Kashmir regions. Till 2015 *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage had been started from the Jammu district. Most of the pilgrims stay in hostels, lodges, and *Dharamshala* before proceeds to the *Vaishno Devi* shrine. But post-2015 there has been rail connectivity between Jammu and *Katra*. Now many pilgrims prefer to stay in *Katra* than in the Jammu city. Because to stay

them in Jammu make them 45km away from the *Katra*-the gateway to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. But still, pilgrims on their return from the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* visits Jammu city to see the *Raghunath* Temple, the *Bag-e-Bahu fort*, *Maser Lake*, *Surnisar Lake*, *Patnitop* and the local markets of Jammu etc. This interaction of pilgrims exchange huge economy and it boosts the local economy of the Jammu region. With the introduction of the direct railway to the *Katra* the economic process has been increased. With the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*, the *Katra* town is developing day by day. It's creating various job opportunities for the local community. In the same way, the shrine of *Amarnath* gives opportunities to the local communities, the local markets to generate the revenue during the pilgrimage. The *Pehalgham* in *Anantnag* district and the *Baltal* in *Ganderbal* has become the hub of goods and services. Thousands of labors from the state are getting engaged at the time of *Amarnath* pilgrimage in various job opportunities.

The political economy of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has also become a matter of sociological investigation. The whole management of shrines as well as the various changes undertaken in the recent past has been understood. The day to day activities of the shrine management board⁹, structure of shrine donation, the local community participation in the division of labor¹⁰, shrine policy has been focused on the political economy of the shrine *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*.

Political economy understands production, trade, and their relations with public institutions. In the 18th century, the concept of political economy had been developed. Economics is related to production of goods and services included consumer goods, durable goods, non durable goods, etc. Polity is related to the governance of law and government in a society for to maintain the rules and regulation based society. Sociology is included all social rules, customs and economic interdependence in a social set up. Adam Smith¹¹, John Stuart Mill,

⁹ Board constituted by the state government to handle the shrine activities of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

¹⁰ The concept of 'Division of Labor' has been discussed by Emile Durkheim in his book 'The Division of Labor'

¹¹ 1784 book *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith.

David Ricardo, Henry George, and Karl Marx¹² were some of the scholar who had explained it thoroughly in their scholarly works.

In the contemporary period, the pilgrimages have come under various challenges like the issue of religious tourism, the faith-based tourism, the ecological issues, the shrine management and the external threats too many pilgrimage places have become a matter of great concern for the government. The pilgrimage places have become a great concern for social thinkers, religious scholars, policy makers, economists, philosophers, historians etc. The social thinkers have focused on religion and the secularism, the religious scholars have given accounts of beliefs and rituals, policy makers have discussed about the intervention of government bodies in the religious institutions, economists have given descriptions of the economic aspect of religious institutions, philosophers have explored the religious imagination, historians have given past accounts of religious places.

The social policy of shrine has become an important part in the sociology of religion in the recent times. Now, the studies have been shown focusing on the issue of temple management and the bureaucratic structure. With various changes in the socio-religious sphere, there has been constant changing in the contemporary studies. Now scholars or the policy makers seem more interested to understand the contemporary changes in the religious context. In this context, there is one focused study conducted by Selvam (2003) in the *Kumbeswarar* temple in the Tamil Nadu in South India. He has written a book titled 'Religion, State and Social Policy: Changing Social Organization of Hindu Temples' where he has analyzed the temple structure in the modern bureaucratic world. The work has given a description on the changing nature of temples in south India. The study argues that the universalization of religious institutions have weakened the beliefs and rituals relating to the temple purity and pollution (Selvam, 2003). The social policy explores the structure and function of the shrine management board of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. It understands both macro and micro aspect. It reviews the changes in a shrine in the contemporary times. It analyses the role of shrine board, the state, media and civil society in addressing various issues and challenges of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine.

¹² He understand the political economy in his book *Das Capital*

Thus the study is an effort to understand the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. The next part deals with the background of the research. It has located issues and challenges the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine is facing in the present times.

Background of the Study

In the contemporary period pilgrimages have come under various societal issues and Challenges. Scholars across the globe have pointed about various kinds of changes in the context of religion and culture. In the Indian context the globalization phenomenon and the big role by information communication technology, the pilgrimages places are becoming globally aware. Now the people from different communities seem to be the part of the pilgrimages, where culture becomes the main concern. Nanda (2009) argues that there has been a resurgence of religion. The world is becoming more religious in nature, where the religions have captured the political imagination because of the globalization process. Now the people across the globe are getting much more aware of their religions (Nanda, 2009:2). On the other Jain (2007) argues that the increasing flow of pilgrims has created different business opportunities and employment for thousands of people in Jammu and Kashmir.

The study at one side focuses on the understanding of pilgrimage, where it will focus on the religious beliefs and rituals. Because religion as a social institution has become one of the important factor in order to understand the context of pilgrimage. It will also focus on the pilgrimage related development in the economic aspect of the study. In the contemporary times, religion and development seem to be complementary to each other, because of their close associations. In the context of developmental issues, it understands the economic and political aspects. In state context, it understands the '*state role*', '*pilgrimage policy*' of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine*, the pilgrims which have become the central concerns in the contemporary times.

In Jammu and Kashmir, there are many pilgrimage places; some have collaborations with the state-run bodies while the others are run by the private trusts. In the contemporary times, in the context of religion, the religious pilgrimages have been associated with the tourism and the state. In one aspect

we can say that there are various interrelations between the religious pilgrimage, tourism, and the state. Now, tourism policies in various states have taken care of religious institutions. In Jammu and Kashmir, *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Shrine* etc has been specially focused by tourism for more business. In this context, it tries to understand and explore the connections, interrelations and the existing relationships between state and religious pilgrimage. **First;** it understands the role of the shrine in the society. Here it locates the case of *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath* shrine. In the context of shrine, it understands the sacred and profane debate, the beliefs and rituals and the changing role of shrine with reference to *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath* shrine. **Second;** It analyses the pilgrimage and society in *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Shrine*. **Third;** It specifically focuses on the emerging challenges in *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath*. It understands three things, the political economy of the shrine boards as a challenge, the rise of faith-based tourism; where it looks at the role of tourism industry in the global age, the rise of global religious markets, the emerging challenges, the interconnections between pilgrimage, shrine and the state and the public policy on it. The security concerns in the *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath* shrine. It examines the role of the state, civil society and NGO's and the emerging challenges in India. It also critically evaluates the government policy on shrine with special reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath* shrine.

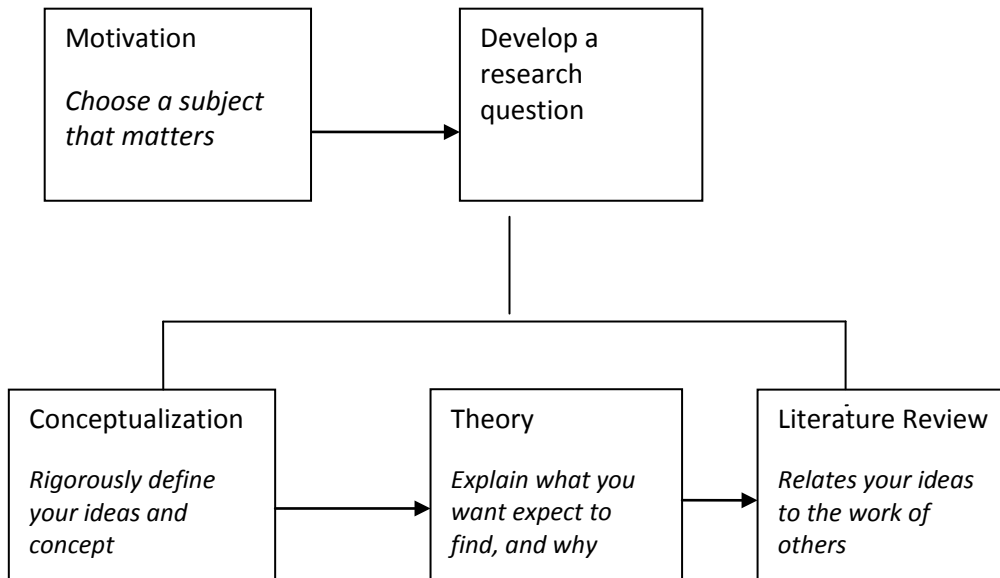
Thus, these four aspects in the above paragraph have been discussed to understand the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India.

Research Question

Zisser's have raised important questions while identifying and classifying American Pilgrimage sites. First; on historical development) **Second;** Then, size of sites and his popularity). **Third;** locations. **Fourth;** the cultural and religious affiliated groups (Campo, 1998:43). Lune, Pumar and Koppel (2010) in the book *Perspectives in social research methods and analysis* have given an outline for the research question. He argues that the research question is the central point of a research project. It should be clear, precise and unambiguous. He also argues

that most of the research starts with conceptualization (Lune, Pumar, and Koppel, 2010:3-4).

Fig: The Research Question Detail Map.



Source: Lune, Pumar and Koppel (2010) book on perspectives in social research methods and analysis, page No. 4.

Broadly the research questions have been prepared on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*, the contemporary context of pilgrimage and the emerging challenging towards pilgrimages with special reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Therefore taking the notion of how scholars across the world to understand the concept of pilgrimage. In the present study, I have raised some relevant questions and sub-questions in the context of *Amarnath Shrine* and *Vaishno Devi Shrine*.

1. How does a pilgrim understand *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine? Are the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine visited by other religious groups (non-Hindus)? How pilgrims categorize the sacred and profane with reference *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*?
2. Do pilgrims agree with the connotation “*Harder the journey better the reward*”? How does a pilgrim respond to the notion of pilgrimage? How do pilgrims understand the journey to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*? Whether he considers it as a religious or spiritual or recreational journey?

3. How the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* boost the local economy? In this context it looks at the role played by local communities. Is the shrine boards helps the local community? What are the challenges the local community faces? How the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* pilgrimage has captured the imagination of Tourism Industry and global religious markets? What are the challenges pilgrims faces during the journey to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*? How state, civil society organization, and Non-Governmental organizations handle the contemporary challenges in *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath* shrine?

Research Objectives

The objective of the study is systematically developed from the review of secondary literature in the area of sociology of religion and culture, contemporary challenges, and globalization. The study has analyzed the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India where pilgrimage and contemporary challenges have been studied in the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrines. To make it more explicable we have further classified the objectives as follows.

1. To understand the changing role of shrines in India with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.
2. After understanding the changing role of shrine, now it becomes important to conceptualize and contextualize the notion and the significance of pilgrimage in the Indian society. Therefore, the objective explores the socio-cultural context of pilgrimage and society in India with special emphasis on the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* pilgrimage.
3. To understand the pilgrimage, local economy and the emerging challenges in *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* to the role of tourism Industry, the global religious markets, the ecological and the security challenge and the role of state, civil society organizations, the role of Nongovernmental organizations in dealing with the various challenges in the context of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine*.

All the three objectives have been taken to understand the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India. These three objectives on the shrine,

pilgrimage, and the contemporary challenges have been studied separately to know broadly the theme emerging challenges before pilgrimages in India.

Significance of the Study

The study on the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges with special reference to the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* seem to be very much significant in the contemporary Indian society. It's because the study has explored the new dimensions in the context of pilgrimage and the society in India. The study has explored the philosophy of shrine and its relevance in the Indian society. It understands the debate on sacred and profane which constitutes the main basis of religion. The understanding of shrine means the study of *Sakta* and *Shaiva* tradition in the Hinduism. Because the present study has focused on two shrines one; the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* in Jammu region and another shrine of *Amarnath* in Kashmir. It also connects the present context with the past when it explores the concept of the shrine. The contemporary changes also have been contextualized with linking them to the mythical and historical notions. The study of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine also discussed Jammu and Kashmir, history in the wider context of South Asia. Therefore the study of the shrine itself is socio-cultural and historically relevant. The study also explores the pilgrimage and the society in the contemporary Indian context where it understands the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage process and management. The aspect on pilgrimage could be important because of its practical approach. It asks questions to the respondents on the notion of pilgrimage, the purpose of visiting the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* etc. The field approach gives us the clear picture of the pilgrimage and the society in India. It's also relevant because it discusses the field where the individual cases, various groups, and organizations experiences have been discussed. The study itself has given the field overview on the aspect of pilgrimage with reference to the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It also looks at the political economy of the shrine where it understands the role of shrine boards of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. It also understands the shrine contribution in the developmental activities of the pilgrimage. It could be significant because it discusses the case of the local

community, their perception towards the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. It also examines pilgrimage as a cultural industry where it explores the role of faith-based tourism, the pilgrimage tourism, the global and the local issues. It has been seen the limited research has been done in the area of pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in the contemporary India. But the present study understands the contemporary challenges in the context of religious tourism or pilgrimage industry in India with specifically focusing on the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. In this way, the present study is significant for policy formulation. It has critically evaluated the pilgrimage and society in the contemporary India. On the other, the sociological inquiry could be useful to understand the emerging challenges towards pilgrimage and society in the contemporary India. It also looks at the concept of pilgrimage in the constitutional framework. It speaks of democratization of religious space and the flexible religion where people from different faiths get united in a single belief. They perform the rituals together and make the society more inclusive in nature. Venugopal (2011) in his article on the '*Dialogical relationship between tribal and non- Tribal Religion*', said that the public shrine is making the society more democratic as well as caste free. It's because the food and water sharing at Sri Sailem, Sabri and the *Vaishno Devi* among pilgrims reduces the scope for maintaining a separate caste identity and purity-pollution concept at the pilgrimage sites. It gives the diverse background a chance to stay and share together. Even if some of them make their cooking arrangements separately, even that there are no caste barriers in bathing at holy rivers or entering the public temples or shrines. It could be only in the private temples where restrictions on entry are imposed on visitors (Venugopal, 2011:110). Therefore, the study on the public shrine has given an idea to do more research on the shrine in India to make them more liberal for all kinds of faiths. The present study could help us to understand the basic difference between the structure and functioning of the public and private shrine in the contemporary Indian society. It also reviews the state, government role in addressing the various issues and challenges the pilgrimages are facing in India. At the end, the thesis has given suggestive measures to understand the contemporary pilgrimage in a more systematic and rational manner. It also has given some critical points that could

be significant for policy related initiatives in the context of pilgrimage and the society in India. Therefore to keep all the important things discussed in the present study could be significant for knowledge production. Because the study has engaged with the argument of shrine and society, the pilgrimage, and society in the contemporary India, the emerging challenges with reference to of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* in the wider context of religion and society in India.

Rationale of the Study

The present study has given the sociological analysis of pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India with special reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. The study has questioned the foundations of the shrine, the pilgrimage process, the political economy of the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges like the religious tourism, the ecological and the security concerns in the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* context. Therefore questioning all the aspects discussed above and analyzed them in a scientific and rational way could make the research more reliable and the valid. The research problem has been contextualized with the use of theory, approach and methods. It also has collected the field based data to make the research study more scientific in nature. The field data has been conceptualized, theorized as well as comparative discussed by reviewing the various reports by the tourism ministry and culture ministry, the census of India, department of statistics etc. The present study has discussed some important aspects that could be reliable as well valid for the society. First, it discusses the religion in the constitutional set up where it talks of the democratization of religion in the public sphere. It has given the idea of an inclusive culture where a person from different background visits at the same pilgrimage place and performs rituals. It also critically evaluates the things that oppose the scientific nature of the study. Many scholars have raised their voice on the democratization of religious space. One of them is T.N.Madan who in his book the *Images of the World* has discussed some aspects of the religion and constitution. He argues that most of the shrines in India have been taken over by the government due to their scope and relevance. Now the government of India under its subordinate's bodies are handling the management of many shrines in India. With the changes in management from the private trust to the public

boards, the concept of pilgrimage has been changed a lot. Now the religion seems to be more democratic and secular. Therefore, the religious space has become more rational. The present study also contextualized the diverse perception on the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. It understands both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine with the holistic approach.

Scope of the Study

The study is exploratory in nature so the scope is extensive. First, the study has discussed the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* which are on the radars of government for more initiatives. Both the shrine generates huge revenue that is being utilized in the developmental activities of the shrine. Therefore the scope is economic in nature. The study of Jain (2007) argues the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* boosts the local economy. Both the shrine is contributing hugely for the development of the local area. Second, the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* understands motherhood in a spiritual sense. Ranganathananda (2007) argues the economic condition is a big challenge for the country and there are many problems happening in our day to day life. In the country, many people have committed suicide due to these problems. Therefore the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* gives the spiritual support to people who are in need of it.

Present Research

The study deals with the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India with special reference to the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine*. These shrines have come under various changes. In this way, the present research study has tried to understand the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India. Therefore, the focus is on the contemporary issues and challenges. Now the pilgrimage and society have come under various societal changes. **First;** it understands pilgrimage and society and shrine. **Second;** the rise of faith-based tourism; where it looks at the role of the tourism industry in the global age, the rise of global religious markets, the inter relations between pilgrimage, shrine and the state and the public policy on it. **Third;** it looks at pilgrimage and its impact on the local economy in the context of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and

Amarnath Shrine. **Fourth;** it studies the state, civil society and NGO's response to various challenges in the context of pilgrimage.

The study could be significant from a policy point of view. Because the study, has discussed the role of the shrine, state, and the policy. As we have witnessed the issue of religious conservativeness in many places in India. But, this study has discussed the institutionalism of religious places, the entry of bureaucracy in the functioning of religious activities of the shrine and the role of the state. Therefore, the study could set an example for the other non-public shrines in India. In India, most of the religious shrines have been discussed the religious beliefs and rituals. They have not given systematic accounts of non-religious functions of shrines that become the great concern of present research to study. Therefore the present study is itself a new one who has given accounts of various activities of a shrine that helps the society as a whole.

The present study tries to analyze the concept and context of Emerging challenges towards pilgrimage in the contemporary Hinduism. Hinduism and pilgrimage are two sides of the same coin. The whole Hindu civilization has been associated with the various notions of pilgrimages. Most of the literature in the Hinduism has given an account of it. Having kept all the existing literature in mind on one side, the present study has contextualized the notion of pilgrimage in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine* which could make an attempt to explore the nature of pilgrimage and how the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* can help to understand the challenges pilgrimages are facing. On the other side, the study has explored and analyzed various emerging challenges in the contemporary context of *Vaishno Devi Shrine and Amarnath Shrine*. In this way, the study has tried to explore the shrine as well as the pilgrimage in the present Indian society, where sacred and profane converges. Emile Durkheim has said that the sacred and the profane constitute the basis of religious life. Durkheim in his study of religion has given the functional perspective. He defined two categories sacred and profane in religion in the society. He argues that the sacred things are those whom community gives importance and profane considered as unholy. The holy things could be anything like stone, rock, person, plant or anything that relates to the people's beliefs and rituals.

The present study is different from the earlier studies done on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath*. Because, the study has examined the emerging challenges in the background of *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath* shrine. Second, the study has focused on the rise of faith-based tourism. Third, the study has done a comparative analysis of *Vaishno Devi shrine and Amarnath*. Fourth, the study has examined the role of the shrine in the contemporary period which is an important step to look at the role of a shrine as well as the relationship between pilgrimage and society. The pilgrims are coming from North India, East India, West India, North East India and South India. Most of them are literate and belong to the middle class. The reaches Jammu or *Katra* from New Delhi via train or plane or by road and those who departure at Jammu takes shrine guest house for rest or book taxi for *Katra*. At *Katra* also most of them books hotels and this generates markets economy. The study has been conducted in *Vaishno Devi* in Jammu and *Amarnath* in Kashmir. These two shrines had been selected to understand the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India. In these two shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*, the field work had been conducted from August 2014 to December 2015. Before, the researcher had conducted the pilot survey during 2013 to understand the holistic nature of the field. It became difficult for researcher to make the blueprint for field work due to the complex nature of the field. In the first stage of the field work, the researcher had entered by assuming the research questions, research objectives, and the literature review. Researcher started questioning the targeted field i.e. the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage. The main focus was to gather data of pilgrims, laborers, priests, shrine board, local markets and the local community. Researcher prepared semi structured interview schedule that contains open and close ended questions. The data has been collected through diverse tools, techniques, and methods. The Durkheimian comparative method, Case study methods, and ethno methods have been used to understand the research paradigm of the present study. The works of Roland Robertson, Peter Beyer, Durkheim, Weber, Anthony Giddens have been used. However, the study has separately discussed the research methodology in the third chapter. The study has explained the meaning of *Sanskrit* and the *Hindi* word used in the study in the glossary section. However, some words have been discussed in the footnotes.

Comparison of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine* in the religious Context

The comparative of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine* with the other shrines of India have been understood in the context of contemporary pilgrimage, beliefs and rituals, sacred space and the various social changes. **First**, the *Vaishno Devi* shrine and *Amarnath* could be seen important because of its geographical locations as well as the spiritual bliss. **Second**, *Shiva*, considered as the god of creator and destroyer and *Vaishno Devi* could be seen more related to the concept of *Shakti* which means power. Thus, *Shiva* and *Shakti* are two sides of the same. The role of both becomes significant in the survival of the universe. **Third**, the shrine cave at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* could make them unique among the other shrines in India. **Fourth**, the pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* shrine remains open the entire year, but in *Amarnath*, the pilgrimage journey is just for 40-50 days in a year. **Fifth**, Both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are vegetarian in nature, which makes them different from the other religious places that have sacrificial rituals. **Sixth**, the heavy rush to the *Vaishno Devi* stands her pilgrimage at number two after *Tirupati Balaji* in South India.

The shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have played a very significant role in the social and economic context in Jammu and Kashmir. Now, both the shrines activities are managed by the state government. In the recent times, the state is handling various challenges shrine facing. The emerging challenges have been understood from various approaches, theories and methods. In the contemporary scenario, the challenges have become the important concern for the study. The rise of pilgrims to the pilgrimages places, the changes from religious to cultural journey, the rise of multicultural and plural pilgrimage, the management challenges, the introduction of bureaucracy are some of the relevant concerns of the study. The *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine reflect traditional beliefs, rituals, and modern rituals. People from diverse strata are visiting the shrines. *Vaishno Devi* shrine is most visited shrine as compare to the *Amarnath Shrine* due to the geographical and security reasons. The security reasons have become the major concern for the shrine board and the state. Therefore the security aspect, the rise of faith-based tourism and the local community issues

with shrine board directly affect the pilgrimage of *Amarnath* Cave and *Vaishno Devi* as comparison to the other shrines in India

Limitations of the Study

The present study has done a comparative analysis of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. The study has located the socio-cultural and economic context of the state Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, the study seems limited in the wider context of shrines in India. It's because the focus of the study is particularly on the two shrines *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Therefore it becomes impossible to generalize the other shrines by taking the notion of these two shrines only. It's due to the time duration to complete the thesis and one has to go through the literature review, field work, report writing in the completion of the thesis. It also seems limited most of the data on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* is not available online as well at their offices. If possible it becomes difficult to make them out due to the rigid nature of bureaucrats. Sometimes it could be possible to do through RTI but also it has some limitations to make the reports publicly. In fact the study has analyzed various data on pilgrims, shrine management, tourism and the various challenges. But it seems limited from context to context.

Therefore, the present thesis has divided into five chapters besides introduction and conclusion. Introduction part discussed the background of the study, research question and research objective. The significance, rationale, and scope of the study also have been explained. It also has given the accounts of the purpose of the present study. The limitations of the research also have been explored. Therefore, it has located the central idea of the whole research study. **Chapter One** has critically evaluated the existing literature in the context of religion, culture and the social change as well as the contemporary challenges in the context of Pilgrimages. There are many debates regarding the '*pilgrimage and the emerging challenges*' both in Indian as well as in the western context. The religion versus state also has been debated. It has examined, reviewed all the literature in the field of pilgrimage, religion, culture, globalization, contemporary society etc. The **Chapter Two** on methodology has discussed the methods, tools, techniques used in this research. The main aim of the chapter is to the

understanding of shrine as a social, cultural, religious, economic and political phenomenon in India. However, the study has tried to contextualize the significance in the Hindu religious context. The second part of chapter has analyzed the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine* in the wider context of religion, shrine, and society. It has given a brief description of shrines in India and Jammu and Kashmir. It also has explored the theory and approach used in this research. The chapter has also discussed the sampling, fieldwork and the challenges in the field. **Chapter Three** examines the shrine in the Indian socio-religious context with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. The chapter discusses the Sacred Space, Sacred time, Performance of rituals, religion, and Symbolism. It also has discussed the changing role of shrines in India. Both primary and secondary sources have been used in developing this chapter. The primary sources mean the data collected from the field and secondary means the various studies or data conducted or published related to the present chapter. In the last, the chapter has located the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* to become the purpose of the chapter more significant. **Chapter Four** discusses the pilgrimage in the contemporary. The chapter has focused on three things. **First**; pilgrimage as a spiritual journey of one person or family. The spiritual part has linked the human thinking, human activities with the long journeys to the sacred. Due to the various engagements in our day to day life a person needs some kind of satisfaction. For that need a person needs the spiritual environment and that we can get on a long journey to some sacred place or a pilgrimage place. Second; pilgrimage as a religious congregation of the community of faithful (moral community) as defined by Emile Durkheim and pilgrimage as the central ritual of the community of believers. Third; pilgrimage in Indian Society. Fourth; An Analysis of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* (1986-2016). **Chapter Five** analyzed the emerging Challenges with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. The chapter has highlighted three aspects. One; political economy of pilgrimage in the global village; Second; Pilgrimage as a Culture Industry; Third; Contemporary Challenges before religious tourism or pilgrimage industry in India with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. In the second part, the chapter has discussed many issues and challenges with reference to *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Shrine*. The conclusion

part concludes the entire thesis as well as has debated the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India. It also has given some policy based suggestions and recommendations. That could be useful for the organizations looking at the pilgrimage, society and the challenges in the present Indian context. It also has given the critical remarks to make the study more scientific and holistic in nature.

Chapter 1

Sociological Interpretation of Religion: A Literature Review

The chapter critically reviewed the existing literature on religion, culture and the contemporary challenges in the context of pilgrimage and Society. There have been many studies conducted on '*pilgrimage and the emerging challenges*' both in Indian as well as in the western context. Around the world Scholars, policy experts and social scientists have given much attention to understand and theorize the pilgrimage places. Almost studies conducted have been conceptualized pilgrimage and the emerging challenges from the religious perspective, philosophical imagination, mythical aspects, historical accounts etc. Having this wide range of literature regarding pilgrimage and the emerging challenges, somehow there has been lacking the studies talks about the contemporary issues and challenges in the context of pilgrimage and society. If any study has written about the contemporary challenges has just given a little description of it. There is no derth of any study conducted on the issues and challenges in the context of pilgrimage and society. There is also a lack of empirical studies in the area of pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India. Specifically, most of the sociological literature on religion and society has not focused much on social policy dimension of the shrine and the empirical analysis of pilgrimages in India.

In India, most of the scholars are not aware of the contemporary challenges the pilgrimages are facing. It's because most of the literature has been associated with religious and mythical aspects. It discussed the religious beliefs, rituals, sacred, profane and the pilgrimage aspect has been shown in a rigid manner. The emerging challenge that has altered the notion of pilgrimage seems to be unknown. Therefore it has become a matter of concern to understand the pilgrimage and society in the present time. In *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine still, the focus of many studies has been on the pilgrimage management. Like the studies on Pilgrim statistics, tourism related development etc. But there is no extensive research done on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. There is

no systematic planning to tackle the issue of faith-based tourism, the local communities challenges and the security threats. Pilgrimage is an old and has been part of human societies across the globe with a different meaning, scope and significance. It is a multidimensional phenomenon. Therefore, it becomes important to critically evaluate the literature on the pilgrimages in India.

Literature review plays an important role in the research study to formulate the research problem. It gives us an idea to conceptualize and contextualize research problem in a systematic manner. It prepares the background of the research and explores further. It also shapes the research study and also finds the research questions and looks for further sources in research to answer those research questions.

The first part of the chapter has given the sociological interpretation of religion, where it has explained various perspectives of sociologists on the religion and society. It has discussed the work of Emile Durkheim work the elementary forms of religious life (1912), Max Weber work on religion and social action, Madan work on the Indian religions, Hamilton work on the scientific nature of religion, Nadel work on the religious beliefs and rituals, Geertz work on religion and culture, Levi Strauss work on the sacredness. It also has discussed on religion and state in India. It has discussed the bureaucracy, the constitutional amendments in the religious context. It has conceptualized the Hinduism where it has discussed the *Shaktism*, *Shaivism*, and *Smartas*. The Hinduism has been discussed in socio-cultural and historical context. It also has reviewed the relevant literature of many scholars especially in the Hindu religion. The second part of the chapter has discussed the literature on the concept of shrine in India. Therefore, in part one and two of this chapter, literature on religion and society has been reviewed in a systematic manner.

The third part, of the chapter has explored the pilgrimage, society, globalization and social change, religious and faith-based tourism. It reviews the relevant study on pilgrimage and the global changes. The fourth part of this chapter has reviewed the studies conducted in the backdrop of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. This chapter has comprehensively prepared the blue print of the research study which helped very much during field work. Before discussing other theme the next section, has discussed the sociological understanding of

religion. It interprets the contribution of various scholars in the field of sociology.

1.1. Sociological Understanding of Religion

The sociological understanding of religion regards it as both a theory of knowledge means a body of theory or belief, an attitude of faith in the power and an attitude of devotion towards the system (Bernard: 1938: 8). T.N. Madan in his work on '*Religion in India*' argues religion the social phenomenon is difficult to define. It's because of the complex nature of religion. He pointed Max Weber in his book '*The Sociology of Religion*' said the definition of a religion could be possible only at the end of the study (Madan, 1992:1). Max Weber stated that the ethos of religion is not our subject, as we make it our quest to study the particular type of social action, its conditions and results. The religious behavior in its externality is so complex that an interpretation of this conduct can only be attained from the outlook of the personal experiences, belief, and goals of the person in little, from the standpoint of the religious conducts sense. Weber's first principle of sociology of religion may be said to be his assertion that interpretations of social reality generally must begin with interpretative understanding and lead to a causal explanation. The central concern of Weber's religion explains the enquiry of future of religion and the character of human existence in the modern society. Weber speaks about the subjective meaning, the social action of a person while performing the religious beliefs and rituals. The casual explanation could be more useful for the study (Ibid, 1992:7-9). Weber work on '*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*' published in between 1904 to 1905 has discussed the relationship between religion and the economy. In the work, Weber tries to develop a link between religious ideas and economic institutions. His central aim was the rationalization of religion where he identified the impact of Protestantism (primarily Calvinism) on the rise of the spirit of capitalism.

Hamilton (2002) argues sociology of religion comprised of two principle subjects or main questions, states, why have religious beliefs and rituals been so central a feature of culture and society, and why have religious beliefs and rituals taken such diverse forms? The sociology of religion poses the question of the

role and significance of religion in general, as well as that of understanding the beliefs and practices of particular groups and societies. In one respect, both of these central questions have been stimulated by the same puzzlement. Although things have changed dramatically since the sociological approach to the study of religion had its roots a nineteenth-century rationalism or positivism which questioned and rejected religious notions as illusory. They were thought to be irrational and noise in a modern society in which science as a mode of understanding of reality would predominate. Religious ideas would atrophy and die in the face of the superior conceptions and explanations of science. These thinkers saw religion as a natural phenomenon to be studied objectively and scientifically and explained like any other natural phenomenon in terms of underlying causes. As Max Weber put it, past societies had lived in a 'magic garden' whereas modern society had witnessed a thoroughgoing 'disenchantment' of the world. Hence the major task of the sociology of religion was to account for the very presence of religious beliefs and practices in human society. His central focus was to investigate the beliefs and rituals of any religion in the society (Hamilton, 2002:1-2).

Robertson Smith (1889) work in Hamilton (1995) on ancient Semitic religion, '*Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*' emphasized much on practices rather than belief. He argues that to have an understanding of religion one should have first and foremost analyzed, what people do rather than what they believe? Practices come first and beliefs as second and he also opined that sociologist should pay attentions to practical actions and not what they believe. Smith's central concern was to focus on the practices rather than what one believes (Hamilton, 1995:97).

Durkheim also has given anthropological accounts of religious beliefs and rituals. In the book, '*The Elementary Forms of Religious life*', (1995) Durkheim based his entire theoretical treatise on religion on ethnographic data pertaining to the aborigines of Australia. Durkheim has interpreted religion from a functionalist perspective; he is considered as the first professional in sociology, who explained religion, argues that all societies divide into two main divisions, '*sacred*' and '*the profane*'. Religion is what they represent (Durkheim, 1995:44). He argues that,

Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden-belief and practices which unite into one single community called a Church, all those who adhere to them (Durkheim, 1995: 44).

He has given three points while discussing the religion First; Religion is defined on scientific principles rather than making the person more subjective in nature. Second; religious beliefs and rituals are not heterogeneous but homogeneous in nature. He called it unified system. Third; rites and beliefs make the religious status as sacred which constitutes the moral community (Durkheim; 1995: XXXIV).

The sacred and profane debate has given much importance in Durkheim's work. The sacred was identified by Durkheim as the most fundamental religious idea or phenomenon and it requires a sharpness of definition by being contrasted to the profane and the secular. He has categorized the religious affairs into two divisions sacred and the profane. He argues that the all known religious beliefs whether simple or complex present one common characteristic, they presuppose a classification of things, real or ideal, of which men think into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred. Therefore, the Durkheim work on Religion and Society is centered on the sacred and the profane debate (Madan, 1992:2-3).

Durkheim argues that religion is the human need for social life. It arose from a social interaction and a collective phenomenon. He also said social facts were truly explained only sociologically. He located the roots of religious beliefs and practices in social interaction. Durkheim's interpretation of religion marked by what Stanner called an all-consuming sociological fixation derives religion from the very nature of social life and not from a particular primeval event or any psychological propensities of mankind. The role of religion in sustaining social solidarity was the central focus of A.R. Radcliffe Brown's sociological analysis of ritual. Deeply influenced by W. Robertson Smith's emphasis upon institutions and practices in the study of ancient religions, upon rituals rather than beliefs (Ibid: 4-5).

While understanding the religion in India, Madan has explored the notion of sacred "*as a particular class of phenomenon, as a kind of knowledge, as a*

variety of activities in space and time, and as a typology of roles and persons” (Madan, 1992:2).

The anthropologist Nadel (1954) in his study of the religious beliefs and practices of a West African people, comments that however, the sphere of ‘things religious’ is defined, there will always remain an area or border zone of uncertainty and it will be difficult to determine just where the dividing line between religion and non-religion is. He proposes describing, therefore, everything that has a bearing upon religion so as to be sure not to leave anything out and suggests that it will be necessary to feel one’s way towards the meaning of the term (Hamilton, 2002:12).

Geertz understands the notion of religion as a cultural system or as a set of symbols (Madan, 1992:10). Geertz article “*Religion as a cultural system*” (1966) approaches the subject from the cultural dimension of analysis. He understands religion as a cultural system. By culture, he means a historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms. he argues that people need to see the world as meaningful and ordered (Hamilton, 1995: 177-178). Studies of religion in India too are paying increasing attention to the problem of meaning, focusing attention on religious experience. For example the study of pilgrimages and experimenting with the phenomenological approach (Madan, 1992: 10).

Rao (1969) examined the connection between Hinduism and the economic development. His analysis was based on Vows and Votive offerings. He said individual and society vows the God to get economic benefits like the job, growth in business or money and there are thousands of temples in India where daily it’s being done to get some reward. It means vows are something a kind of belief which a person is asking the deity whom they trust for fulfillment. But votive offering is something the devotees reach to the place of worship after the fulfillment of his desire. They come with lots of things (*Chadawa*) when their desires (*Mann ki Muraad*) get fulfilled. Therefore he concludes that somehow religion is related to the economic development.

Wilson (1966) in his book “*Religion in Secular Society*” has reviewed the secularization process in the modern age. He argues that the contemporary

modern society has declined the religion at societal, individual and organizational level. It's because the present time has democratised the religious spaces.

Smith's contribution to the study of religion is not simply theoretical. He held substantive views, for example, on the relationship between organized religion and the state. Smith argued strongly for a disassociation between church and state. Such a separation, he said, allows for competition, thereby creating a plurality of religious faiths in society. By showing no preference for one religion over others, but rather permitting any and all religions to be practiced, the lack of state intervention (short of violence, coercion, and repression) creates an open market in which religious groups engage in rational discussion about religious beliefs. This setting creates an atmosphere of "*good temper and moderation.*" Where there is a state monopoly on religion or an oligopoly among religions, one will find zealotry and the imposition of ideas on the public. Where there is an open market for religion and freedom of speech, one will find moderation and reason (McCleary, 2008:1).

Religion as an institution has been considered an important part of classical sociology. From Karl Marx to Max Weber, to Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel, and to Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann, the analysis of religion played a central role in the study of modernization, urbanization and the industrial transformation of society (Bryan S. Turner, 2010:19).

Jain and Doshi (2001) argue religion plays the significant role in the Indian tradition. It not only relates with the worship in general but in some contexts, it controls the entire community by worshipping the supernatural beings. So, the beliefs and rituals become the central concern of a religious life in which beliefs could be fulfilled only when rituals become the mechanisms (Jain and Doshi, 2001:285-286). Lambek (2002) argues religion associates with the belief in supernatural beings (Lambek, 2002:22).

Thus the section has given the understanding of religion. It also has discussed the important contribution of sociologists and social anthropologists. Now the next section has discussed the concept of Hinduism.

1.2. Hinduism

Since 3000 years Hinduism has been a major cultural phenomenon and global reality. In contemporary times it seems to be a major influential force in the whole world. The century has witnessed India occupied a prominent place in the public eye around the world. Hinduism is both a way of life and highly organized social and religious system. Hinduism calls their religion the Sanatana Dharma. For the last 150 years, we have witnessed unprecedented Indian migration to various parts of the world. Now there are thousands of Indians in Europe, Nort America, Africa, the Middle East and Australia etc.Its not just in figures but Hindus have impacted the geographical locations also (Lipner, 1994:1-3).

Madan (1992) have discussed the theory of Life in Hinduism. Dharma is the central concern of all the major indigenous religions of India is that of dharma. Dharma as Hindus perceives as moral, social, legal and cosmological principles that gives the basis for the idea of an ordered universe. Dharma refers to the rules of social intercourse laid down for every category of person in terms of social status i.e. *Varna*, stage of life i.e *Ashrama* and inborn qualities i.e. *Guna*. Dharma is the first goal (Purushastra) is the basis for the rational pursuit of economic and political goals (Artha) as well as pleasure (Karna). All activities in the Hinduism have particular goals to reach at the end. The sources of dharma, according to tradition, are four: the original knowledge (Shruti), remembered teaching (Smriti), the conduct of good people (Sadachar), and moral reason or conscience (Atmatashti). Moksha is the alternate to Dharma, Artha, Karma, and way to it lie in Sannyasa or the renunciation of all social activity (Madan, 1992:16-17).

In 1893 Vivekananda lecture delivered in the Parliament of Religious held in Chicago said that Hinduism has been called a religion which teaches principles of tolerance and universal acceptance. He had spoken about the universalization of Hinduism (Jha, 1971:6).

Coomaraswamy (1996) said that Hinduism is not only the oldest religion or rather metaphysical disciplines but also the lived religion at present where millions of peoples have beliefs and faiths.

Apart from the understanding of Hinduism, there are some scholars who tried to contextualize the relationship between the Hinduism and the Economic institutions. In the year 1966 Rao has discussed the role of Hindu beliefs and rituals in the growing of economic institutions. Rao (1966) argues that two economists K.W. Kapp (1963) and V. Mishra (1962) have attempted to relate Hinduism with economic growth in India. Kapp studied certain general beliefs and the values of Hinduism, such as belief in rebirth and law of karma cosmic (causation), in order to show their significance for economic development. He states that the belief in cosmic causation leads to increased feelings of fatalistic helplessness, and to the view that human experience is transitory and illusory. Kapp concludes that the rigid deterministic character of Hinduism obviated the one basic vital of economic development, namely, the conviction that man makes his own history. On the other Mishra finds the theory of reincarnation and Karma helps the peoples in stress and that adversely affected economic growth (Rao, 1966:4). He argues that the empirical context of interests and activities of the people could understand more through a sociological meaningful approach that considers the relationship between religion and economic development. He said S.C.Dube (1965) observes that the practices by the peoples are more important than the superficial reality in considering Hinduism to Economic growth. It's also important to see which values and interests come out of religious ideas promote or hinder which aspect of economic activities. He reviews the study of Milton Signer's study (1956) of cultural values in India's economic development brings out clearly the importance of an empirical approach. It says that the values and motivation associated with the materialism of the West also exist in India. This form of asceticism may have direct impact on the social and economic lie in the transfer of property from one generation to another, in redistributing wealth from rich to poor and the accumulation of wealth (Ibid: 1966:7).

Rao argues that there are many religious places in India where the deity asks their devotees to visit their temples for self-purification and the fulfillment of one's desires. Devotees are visiting the *Vaishno Devi* in Jammu and Kashmir, Aiyappan in Sabarimala in Kerala etc. The pilgrims might take an additional vow of circumambulating the temple by rolling their bodies on the ground or by

prostrating at every step. This is recognized as a special form of service (Seva). However, the benefits which the pilgrims seek are often mundane and material. Among other things these include attaining wealth, having children (especially male children), success in business undertakings, and improvement in worldly prospects. He also says that another aspect of Hinduism which needs to be stressed in this connection is the proliferation of saint-centred institutions. For instance, worship of Saibaba of Shirdi in Maharashtra, who is believed to be a Muslim but worshiped mainly by the Hindus, has developed into a cult. Such saints, some living and some dead, but believed to be alive, have supernatural powers to fulfill any wish of their devotees. He argues that a minister at the Centre who believed that he secured his Ministership only by the grace of Saibaba. There are many beliefs and rituals which a person performs for the benefit of material gain (Ibid, 1966).

Hinduism has categorized into four main traditions, Vaishnavism, the follower of Vishnu; *Shaktism*, worships *Shakti*; Shaivism, believers of *shiva* and smartism are those who offer devotion to the god or goddess of his/her choice. The next part has discussed the *Shaktism* and Shaivism. The present study has reviewed the various relevant literature on *Shaktism* and Shaivism. Because the study explores the *Shaktism* and Shaivism tradition in the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

1.2.1. Shaivism

Shaivism considered as one of the largest traditions in the Hinduism and the part of Sanatana Dharma. Hinduism considering *Shiva* as the supreme god and believed that *Shiva* is the creator, preserver, and destroyer. The followers of Shaivism are called Shaivites or Saivites. Shaiva has many sub-traditions from Shaiva Siddhanta to the yoga oriented such as Kashmiri Shaivism. In the Indus Valley Civilization which reached its peak around 2500-2000 BCE an early form of *Shiva* worship may have been practiced. Artifacts from Mohenjodaro, Harrapa and other archaeological sites of northwestern India and Pakistan, including lingum and the Pashupati seal have been interpreted as signs of *Shiva* worship. Gavin Flood (1996) argues that the formation of Saiva traditions as we understand them begins to occur during the period from 200BC to 100 AD.

Shiva's rise to a major position in the pantheon was facilitated by his identification with a host of Vedic deities including Purusha, Rudra, Agni, Indra, Prajapati, and Vayu. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (400-200 BCE) is the earliest known textual exposition of a systematic philosophy of Shaivism. The *Shiva Rahasya Purana* an Upapurana is an important scriptural text and another is Tirumurai. *Shiva* is one of the pan-Hindu concepts found across India, Nepal, and Srilanka. Therefore Avalon (1918) said *Shiva*'s power of action and activity is *Shakti* (Avalon, 1918:18). Vivekjivandas (2013) said Shaivism is that tradition where people believe *Shiva* to be the Parameshwara, the highest god and supreme being. It's the highest tradition after Vaishnavism in the Hinduism. In the eighth and ninth centuries, CE Kashmir Saivism developed in northern India. But the roots of the sects may be several centuries older. Kashmir Shaivism or *Shiva Advaita* includes both knowledge and devotion as sadhana for the realization that soul is *Shiva*. In the *Shivasutra* text of Vasugupta (900 CE) the basic philosophy of this school has discussed. The *Shiva Advaita* philosophy is known as the Pratyabhijna Darshana or 'Recognition School' the recognition that the Lord is one reality.

1.2.2. Shaktism

Shaktism is one of the four traditions of the Hinduism. It's also called the half power in the making of this whole universe. The metaphysical reality exists is the feminine and Devi. The whole concept of *Shaktism* has been discussed in the Devi Mahatmya, Shakta Upanishads and the Shruti and Smriti text in the Hinduism. *Shaktism* also has sub-tradition like Goddess Lakshmi, Goddess Saraswati, and Goddess Kali and associates it with the god lord *Shiva* or Vishnu. *Shaktism* is also known for its various sub-traditions of Tantra. Erndl (1993) argues that *Sakta* tradition has been discussed in the 6th century BC in *Devi Mahatmya*¹³ a part of the *Markandeya Purana*. In the elite Sanskrit tradition it has become possible to speak of Saktism as a cultic orientation. Sometimes the Saktism and Tantrism are considered one. She argues in Hinduism the Saktism has many forms both regional and philosophical. Ten Goudriaan defines Saktism

¹³ Devi Mahatmya is the oldest and the most popular text in the Sakta tradition.

as the worship of Sakti, “*the universal and all-embracing dynamics which manifests itself in the human consciousness as a female deity*”, adding that an inactive male partner is inseparably connected with her and that she functions as his power of action and movement. N.N.Bhattacharya distinguishes between dependent Saktism the cult of the female principal associated with Vaishnavism or Saivism and an independent Saktism the cult of the female deity as Supreme Being in her own right. Pushpendra Kumar argues that Saktism is the worship of Sakti or the female principle the primary factor in the creation and reproduction of the universe. Erndl argues that Goddess is associated more with Vishnu as in her epithets Narayani and Visnumaya than with Siva in earlier *Sakta* texts such as the Devi Mahatmya. It also shows in the same text the Goddess can be represented as the personified Sakti or creative power of male gods without being represented as a consort. Within Saktism the Goddess as virgin or independent is more predominant than Goddess as divine consort although the glorification of Radha or Laksmi within Vaisnavism certainly reflects *Sakta* ideas. Erndl argues that *Shakti* is the eternal power governing the entire universe, the feminine supreme power the totality of all existence (Erndl, 1993:21-22).

Vivekjivandas (2013) argues that in fifth century CE the Shakta tradition or *Shaktism* became an organized sect. The feminine character has been believed as the highest form in *Shaktism*. Sati or Parvati, the consort of Lord *Shiva* has been considered as the supreme being. She is believed to be the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the infinite universe.

Shakti means the power which creates the universe from its womb. The Yoginihridaya Tantra salutes her *Shakti* who conceives, bears produces and thereafter nourishes all worlds: “*Obeisance be to Her who is pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as Power, who exists in the form of Time and Space and all that is therein, and who is the radiant Illuminatrix in all beings.*” (Avalon, 1918: 18).

Pintchman (2001) argues that the Goddess worship has been seen as an important aspect of the Hindu religious life. It has become one of the richest and most compelling traditions. In many forms of Goddess devotion, both men and women participate and it has impacts the lives of peoples. The goddess worship

exists both in rural and urban spaces and many devotees gather to these places to express their respect, anxiety or some expectation i.e. mundane affairs. She also argues that both a singular as well as plural goddess exists in the life of Hindus (Pintchman, 2001:1). After understanding the Hinduism, Shaivism and *Shaktism*, the next section has focus on the shrine.

1.3. Shrine

Shrine is a place where ritual worship is being performed to a deity or god or goddess. It's also a sacred place associated with a divine entity. Parker (2004) has discussed a case of Brighton Museum and Art Gallery in London reopened in May 2002 after having undergone a program of major redevelopment. One of the key aims of this redevelopment was to promote inclusion and improve access in all its forms: physical, intellectual and cultural. The partnership between the Museum and Brighton and Hove's Gujarati community, which was the basis for the Hindu shrine project, was one of the several initiatives that aimed to engage local community members with the Museum and its collections. The funding for the shrine project came from the J. H. Green Charitable Trust, which supports the Green Centre for Non- Western Art. The partnership with Brighton and Hove's Gujarati community was established in 1997 as part of the city's celebrations for the 50th anniversary of India's Independence and formed a strong and essential basis for the shrine project. One of the main events forming part of the 1997 celebrations was an exhibition at the Museum called 'India 50', with members of Brighton's Hindu community contributing knowledge and expertise as well as loaning objects for display. The idea for a permanent shrine for the Museum was suggested at consultation meetings with community members following this exhibition and was incorporated into the new plans for the James Green Gallery of World Art from the start. The shrine was installed in the World Art Gallery with the traditional blessing ceremony that would accompany the installation of a new Hindu shrine. The Hindu community in Brighton and Hove felt particularly strongly about this as there is no Hindu mandir in the city. It was hoped that the shrine would serve as an important public focus for the local community and encourage a new audience group for the Museum (Parker, 2004: 64-68).

1.4. Pilgrimage and Society

Kaur (1985) explained that the concept of *tirtha* seems to have come out of the Aryan reverence for the rivers, as is evident from the river hymen Nadistuti in the Rig Veda. The pilgrims with a strong sense of Geopity, means a theme in man's attachment to nature and to place. The origin and evolution of the tirtha yatra tradition of Hindus seem to be as old as their civilization or perhaps older than that with the advent of Hindu civilization. We find some parts of the sub-continent consecrated to the glorious role (Kaur, 1985:19-27).

Fuller (1992) argues that the pilgrimage is classically a tirtha yatra a pilgrimage journey (tirtha) to a holy place, literally a ford or crossing place (tirtha). Some tirthas are crossing places such as the most celebrated of all pilgrimages sites, the city of Benares (Kashi) on the river Ganges. The Ganga itself is an object of pilgrimage as are rivers such as the Godavari in Andhra Pradesh or the Kaveri in Tamil Nadu which are regarded as forms of the Ganges but do not attract so many pilgrims. The holy cities on the Ganges especially Benares, Prayaga (Allahabad) at its confluence with the Yamuna and mythical Saraswati, and Hardwar on its upper reaches are major pilgrimage centers, although for many Hindus Gaya a city on a tributary of the Ganges in Bihar is probably second only to Benares in importance. Benares and Hardwar are always included in the classical list of seven holy cities which is generally completed by Ayodhya (Rama's Capital), Mathura (Krishna's Birthplace), Kanchipuram (the southern Benares and the only one in North), Ujjain and Dwarka (Krishna's capital). Brindavan a favorite pilgrimage center is particularly notable because it is imagined as a forest not a true city, unlike so many other great centers. Allahabad pre-eminently together with Haridwar and Ujjain and Nasik are also important destinations for pilgrims when the great triennial Kumbha Mela festivals are held. The main Kumbha Mela held every twelve years in Allahabad attracts vast numbers of pilgrims. In January 1989 an estimated 15 million arrived to bathe in the river. Dwarka also takes its place among the four divine abodes (dharma). Badrinath in the Himalayas to the north, Puri in East, Rameshwaram in the south, Dwarka in the west. For many Hindus, the ideal pilgrimage although accomplished by only a few is the journey around all four

sites in the auspicious, clockwise direction, a circumambulation of India itself. In some mountain centers a particular place is the pilgrim's destination, such as Badrinath's Vishnu temple or nearby Kedarnath's *Shiva* temple. Some temples (such as Kedarnath) stand where, in legend, *Shiva*'s linga shown as a fiery, luminous column and others (such as Kalighat in Calcutta) stand where parts of the goddess Sati's dismembered body fell to earth. Some are situated in famous holy cities, such as Vishwanath's temple in Benaras and some are found in otherwise rather unimportant localities such as immensely popular and wealthy temple of Venkateshwara at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. All these centers and much more are all Indian in the sense that Hindus everywhere would probably attest to their importance even if they are unlikely to visit them. They are commented by many other centers of predominately regional significance such as Ganesha's temples in Maharashtra or Murugan's in Tamilnadu and even more of merely local appeal (Fuller, 1992:205-206).

In early Sanskrit religious literature, the Tirtha Yatra means an arrangement of journey to the various stipulated centers (O'Connell, 1999). Sharma article in O'Connell (1999) explains tirtha is a noun meaning 'passage', 'way', 'road', 'a river', 'bathing place' and a place of pilgrimage on the banks (tira) of sacred streams' or 'waters'. An object of where rituals are being performed has been termed tirtha. Similarly, yatra has various meaning; 'going', 'setting off', 'journey', 'march', 'Expedition', a 'festive train' or procession'; going on a pilgrimage. However, the compound tirtha-yatra generally is used to describe a journey or a procession or a pilgrimage to a sacred place or a sacred stream (O'Connell, 1999:42).

Jha (1971) pointed out that it's difficult to trace the origin of the growth of pilgrimage. It speaks highly of the spiritual feud of the Hindu mind that the places of pilgrimage have never ceased to draw crowds of pilgrims. In any case, a monotonous life of routine often dulls the religious fervor in many. In such cases, a visit to holy places gives a stimulus especially as it brings them into contact with many devout minds. When pilgrimage is done on foot like *parikrama*, one meets with thousands of pilgrims whose devotion and love for God make a deep impression even with a skeptical mind. There are many sacred

places where many sects of Hinduism are represented and all the temples located there are visited by pilgrims without any distinction of creed, caste, and sect. For example, Kashi, with its two thousand sanctuaries and half a million images is a standing parliament of religious sects of ancient and modern Hinduism. It is the place of pilgrimage where even the orthodox Hindus forget the distinction of castes and untouchability. For example, at Puri, the rigor of orthodoxy is completely loosened and Hindus dine together forgetting all distinctions of castes. The pilgrimage has played an important role in imparting education to the Hindus. It affords at least an opportunity to the people living even in distant villages to know India as a whole. Even those women who remain in Parda in their homes observe freedom from conventions when they go to pilgrimage. Thus it has a great educative influence upon their lives. The importance of pilgrimage in the cultural evolution of the Hindus people can hardly be overestimated. From time immemorial this indigenous institution has preserved the spiritual aspirations of the people and stimulated in the Hindu mind a deep love for its culture and civilization in spite of its manifold diversities. Even today both the Sadhus and the householders (Grihastha) take part in the sacred pilgrimage without bearing any distinction. In ancient time even kings and great men like Balabhadra, Arjun, Vidura etc. undertook pilgrimages to holy shrines and tirthas. The Girnar inscription of Ashoka refers to the Emperor's pilgrimages for the promotion of Dharma. The sacred centers of Hindu pilgrimage are scattered throughout length and breadth of India. Since pilgrimage is considered a sacred act, it is open to all and there are no age, sex and caste restrictions for the pilgrims. It has been observed at Janakpur that pilgrims come from different castes and sects from the Hindu universe irrespective of their age and status. It is believed that there is a sacred aim behind this and that aim is to fulfill the desire of obtaining *Punya* and to get rid of *Paap*. It is further understood that those who obstruct a person intending to go on pilgrimage or tirtha have to bear the result of whole accumulated *paap* of the pilgrim. Therefore no one comes in the way of others (Jha, 1971: 45-46). He further said,

“Another very integrative factor in Hinduism is the institution of pilgrimages. In the Mahabharata we find the description of the numerous tirthas (holy places) all over the country and great emphasis is laid on pilgrimage (tirtha-yatra). Sankara established the four headquarters of his

monasteries in places of pilgrimage at the four corners of India. Dwaraka is situated on the extreme western end of the Kathiawar peninsula; Puri is on the eastern coast; Badrinath in the Himalayas; and Sringeri in Mysore near the southern end of the Peninsula. Kashi, being the most ancient sacred centre of India has attracted pilgrims from the Hindu universe since time immemorial. (Ibid, 1971:10).

Sharma (2011) argues that pilgrimages in the traditional India had been associated with sacred and secular. Because in the cultural gatherings people from diverse backgrounds interact, that makes a strong the strong cultural bond between the communities. For example the Kashi pilgrimage, Rameswaram, Kedarnath, Dwarka, Badrinath, and Ajmer (Sharma, 2011:56).

Viswanathan's article on, '*Travellers and Pilgrims*' in Sharma (2011) book on '*Religion and Culture in Indian Civilization*' considered pilgrim the best travelers who keep in their mind the notion of pilgrimage is one such purpose among other such purposes to visit the pilgrimage places (Ibid, 2011:190).

Shinde (2007) argues in her work '*Pilgrimage and the Environment: Challenges in a Pilgrimage Centre*' that a large number of pilgrims visiting the pilgrimage places during pilgrimages has a high potential to influence the environment in the sacred spaces. The paper also analyzed the traditional and modern system of pilgrimage, where it says that the traditional pilgrimage is governed by seasonality and is limited to space and time. On the other in the modern system of pilgrimage has changed in scale, frequency, and character.

Gesler and Pierce (2000) argue that throughout Hindu sacred space, places, where pilgrims can cross bodies of water, are known as *tirthas*, from the Sanskrit root *truth*, which means "crossing point" or "place of pilgrimage. *Tirthas* are associated with special acts or appearances of the gods; shaped by geography they are long lasting. They carry both literal and symbolic meaning. They further argues

“India is engraved with traces of mystic events. It is a living sacred geography, claims Diana Eck and Surinder Bhardwaj writes that "the whole of India is a vast sacred space organized into a system of pilgrimage centres and their fields". For believers, Varanasi represents several aspects of India's sacred geography; it is a microcosm of the subcontinent. It evokes seven holy cities usually associated with one or more of the

principal Hindu gods: Ayodhya is the capital of Lord Rama; Matura is the birth place of Krishna; Haridwar is the gate of the Ganges; Ujjain is sacred to *Shiva*; Dwarka is the capital of Krishna; Kanchi is sacred to both Vishnu and *Shiva*, and Varanasi is the city of *Shiva*. Varanasi, many Hindus believe, is the holiest city, containing the others, which are "located" within it at specific sites. As examples, Rama Kund, a pond just north of Luxa Road, is said to be Ayodhya, and Kanchi is a locale in the Pancha Ganga Ghat area, beside the Bindu Madhava Temple. Gesler and Margaret argue that sacred sites comprise natural and human-made assemblages of sacred symbols and landscape markers invested with special meaning (Tanaka 1988). These symbols may be given concrete expression in various ways. For example, at Gaya, in northeastern India, three forms of expression, sacred geography, sacred performances, and sacred specialists have been noted (Gesler and Margaret: 2000:222-237).

Rana (2013) in his book, '*Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage: Sacred Space and System*' explains that in pilgrimage we can find the deep feelings, faith, belief and respect to the divine (Rana, 2013).

On the other Shinde (2007) argues that the notion of pilgrimage in all the societies considers a form of travel provides opportunities for people to visit sacred places. It also says that the key elements of pilgrimage are motivation, destination, and journey. In a traditional religious pilgrimage, the pilgrim accomplishes on foot, a long journey that is reinforced by a sense of renunciation of worldly matters. But the modern form of pilgrimage has been changed because of increased accessibility and improvement in transport infrastructure (Shinde, 2007:343).

As Erndl (1993) understands the concept of pilgrimage by associating it with the physical and geographical place. The centres of pilgrimage relates with energy and endearment which forced the pilgrims to reach the place. With the hope to get their wishes fulfilled the pilgrims participates in that centre of energy. She relates the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage with the divine world or the zone between sacred and profane (Erndl, 1993:83).

Eck (2012) in her book, '*India: A Sacred Geography*' has defined the concept of pilgrimage by considering it as one of the sacred place and there are various sacred pilgrimage places in India (Eck, 2012).

The motive for pilgrimage in Ajmer fall into two categories which correspond closely to the roles of the *Shaykh* as a healer, and as a guide: the practical or material, and the spiritual or ritual. Historically Emperor Akbar made his pilgrimage on foot to Ajmer and also to Mu in al-din's tomb to gave thanks for his military victories. Ajmer is not only a sacred center, it is also a market place. Many of the visitors come to exploit its commercial possibilities (Madan, 1992:242-43).

Lipner (1994) argues that at pilgrimage centres and temples people may perform various specialised rituals, such as undergoing penance, making offerings, receiving instruction, heavy paths, expiating or undertaking samskaras, worshipping, giving alms, even dying and cremating. Specialised activities require specialist officiates. There we must distinguish from the purohita or domestic priest, who may also be hereditary and who administers the samskaras gives advice etc at home (Lipner, 1994:280).

Major pilgrimage shrines, especially, are not at all scenes of the ultra mundane tranquillity and peace which religious literature promises pilgrims. In his work on pilgrimage the anthropologist Victor Turner argues that the relation among believers in pilgrimage centres can be characterized as a communitas, a direct encounter of equal individuals. The motherland of all "sons of the soil" (bhumi putra) is a sacred space demarcated by Hindu shrines and sacred rivers and mountains. Sacred sites are not only contested as markers of space but also as markers of time. The history of shrines, as told in religious tales and established in archaeological evidence, is the history of the nation. The temple of Somanatha, on the seashore in Prabhasa Patan only connected to the mythology of *Shiva* (Veer, 2015:85-109).

Lokeswarananda (1995) argues that pilgrimage is not just a physical concept but it's an ideal journey that connects with the supernatural or the divine world (Lokeswarananda, 1995:47).

Fuller (1992) argues that Pilgrimage has always been a vital part of Hinduism, but never more so than in the modern era, as ever increasing numbers of pilgrims set out on longer and longer journeys. In the early twentieth century according to M.N.Srinivas only a few inhabitants of Rampur village in

Karnataka had heard of famous centres like Benaras and no more than a handful had been to them. Then a pilgrimage to Banaras was regarded as a hazardous enterprise though much less so than in the nineteenth century when a pilgrim's successful return from it was a fortuitous accident. Today the mass media and better education have improved ordinary people's knowledge about Hinduism's sacred centres and how to reach them. Pilgrimage has also become safer. Whatever the hazards faced by contemporary pilgrims, nowadays they rarely include uncontrollable cholera outbreaks in crowded centres or attack by robbers and wild animals during journeys lasting for days or even weeks across wild terrain. In the 19th century communication in pilgrimages begins to improve that made long distance travel quicker and cheaper. Railway has played a significant role in the pilgrimages. The railway companies themselves advertised to attract and encourage the pilgrim traffic. During the last 30 years there has been a large increase in pilgrimage by road and now it is common throughout India to see busloads of pilgrimage often unsophisticated villagers arriving from far away states at all the major centres. Less numerous but equally noticeable and naturally most welcome to priests and other people earning their livelihood from pilgrims, is the growing of wealthy, urban middle class travellers both Indians and expatriates who visit pilgrimage centres by air and in cars. For all classes of people, even when the religious purpose is upper most pilgrimage is commonly combined with ordinary tourism to monuments and museums, beaches and beauty spots, and a clear distinction between sacred and secular journeying is often impossible to draw (Fuller, 1992:204-205).

1.5. Globalisation Religion and Social Change

Singh (1996) said Robert Redfield in his studies of the Mexican communities has used the concept of 'Little' and 'Great' traditions to understand the social change in modern India. He shows his structure of traditions at two levels, first at the orthogenetic or the indigenous structure of change in which the little tradition lies and second at the heterogenetic, that means the encounters or the contacts with the other cultures or civilizations. He also argues that both the traditions interact with each other (Singh, 1996:13).

Geoffroy (2004) understands religion in the global time, which he pointed to be a very complex process, which requires more theorizing in order to examine the scientific data on it. In article he focuses on two things one the difference between religion and religiosity; two an understanding of modernity in the global age. The theories who have discussed about the globalization consider religion as a fundamentalist reaction to modernity. He also argues that religion is a type of communication and has taken the cultural form (Geoffroy, 2004: 36-45).

Somayaji and Somayaji (2006) argues that due to the virtual culture religion has become globally aware in the globalized world because the technological expansion, the means of communication and transport has shorter the distance between local and global and the term globalization makes the society aware and its impact happens not only on the individual's life but it also brought so many socio-cultural changes in the society (Somayaji and Somayaji, 2006:1-2).

Waters (1995) said that, in 1961 the term 'Globalization' first entered the English lexicon through Webster's Dictionary in which it has been defined as the interconnectedness of social events and relationships. On the other Anthony Giddens in 1966 has defined globalization in terms of link between global and local and this becomes possible only due to the rise of global culture. David Harvey (1989) has defined it as the time space distancing; in the same way Giddens (1990) has understood it in terms of time and space dichotomy. As Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) has focus on the global consciousness in a short period of time and the complex global connections (Warrier and Wunderlich, 2010:5-7). Due to the globalization there has been risen the global cultures in which various cultures of the world becomes available to all and it can be in the form of idea, goods, information etc. In this global culture the technology revolves all around and in sometimes the whole world seems to be culturally singular as well as diverse (Ibid, 2010:153).

Khaled (2007) explained that globalization is an umbrella term that has increased the global connectivity. The concept of globalization is not very new but its sine the 14th century. Therefore, both religion and globalization could be located in the deep historical context. But, the word globalization could be understood better or in a systematic way in the late 20th century. It has made all the societal

aspects i.e. social, cultural, economic, political, etc interdependent and integrated. It also said that there has been risen the virtual culture due to the internet technology (Khaled, 2007, 2-5).

The Indian television started the screening of two epic 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayana' written and directed by Ramanand Sagar in 1987 in which 100 million people i.e. one eighth of the nation have viewed the episodes (Lutgendorf, 2006:146).

Many times, the television industry made serials on the life or the myths of Hindu gods or goddesses. Like Jai Mata Ki, Om Namah *Shivay*, Shanidev, Jai Hanuman, Jai Santoshi Maa etc (Bhela, 2010:99).

The traditional beliefs and values had been influenced by the virtual culture. Earlier, we peoples used to read religious books in many occasions of Hindus. But due to the rise of virtual culture, the peoples starting watching most of the religious things started on the television. It also says that now a day's peoples may not read their religious texts, but many of them uses religious ringtones on their mobile phones. At present there have been a started lot of rituals done online due to the internet technology (Doniger, 2009:641).

Shattuck (2003) focuses on modern technology and associated it with Hinduism, while understood the concept of globalization. He argues that the globalization process has increased the activities of Hinduism (Shattuck, 2003:113).

The use of information and communication technology provides greater convenience and comfort to pilgrims by providing access to information. The technology element facilitates hassle free darshan to tourists, encourages the rate of repeat visits by managing the long wait hours and also information about other services (Kapoor: 2014: 48).

Beyer (2006) argues in his work '*Religions in the global society*' that the rise of communication has given a different shape to the religious space. He understands that globalization has aware the religious consciousness.

Giddens (1993) in his book, *'New rules of sociological method'* said that in globalizing trends, everyday activities connect to global outcomes and vice versa. In the book he has discussed about structure and agency, which he argues that they are two sides of the same coin. In his structuration theory the emphasis is on the duality of structure and the ordering of institutions across space and time (Giddens, 1993:8). He was talking about intimate connection between modernity and the disembedding of traditional systems¹⁴ (Campo, 1998:42).

Nanda (2006) argues in his work *'The God Market'* that the understanding of globalization and religion says that globalization has been seen as a useful platform for the marketization of gods. It also looks at the context of Hinduism in the larger political, economic and the institutional shifts. Now there have been emerging the interrelations between state, temple and corporate complex in the global society.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) said that the concept of globalization has made the world more conscious globally. It has raised the global culture, where technology has becomes the central factor influences the social life (Warrier and Wunderlich, 2010).

One can see that with the period of time the notion of pilgrimage is constantly changing. One reason could be the globalization process that have shaped religion in a different way, now the world religions have diverse understanding and interpretation, where it could be seen as a matter of global sphere because of the enormous role played by Information communication technology (ICT) or unified communications. The global change and its effects on the religious sphere, the pre and post 90's period becomes the relevant in understanding the debate on globalization and religion. Because of the change in

¹⁴ Campo, Juan Edurao. American Pilgrimage Landscapes. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 558, Americans and Religious in the twenty-First Century, (1998, Jul.), pp. 40-56. Sage Publications, Inc. Accessed on 24.08.2013, 13:03.

the process, a lot of changes had/has happened in the religious institutions and many scholars have pointed towards it¹⁵.

Dissanayake (1988) quoted in Y.Singh (2000) said that in socio-structural context, the concept of globalization could be seen at various historical phases i.e. at agrarian-industrial post-industrial and now with an information society (Singh, 2000:50-51).

In the Indian context most literature on globalization could be seen post 1980-90s¹⁶ because of many reasons, one; the rise of economic liberalization¹⁷, second; the increase of Internet Technology¹⁸, third; the world could be seen as a single entity and vice versa.¹⁹ Kumar (2011) said that the possible reason in the exploration of globalization is world economy and international relations reasons in the (Kumar, 2011: XVII). Therefore, the emergence of globalization could be seen in India, in the last of 20th century.

Juergensmeyer (2003) argues that religion has become a global concern, due to the rise in the interactions (Juergensmeyer, 2003:4).

In the modern world, religion, contrary to the conventional understanding of modernization as secularization, continues to play a major role in politics, society and culture. In broad terms, religion appears to be increasingly an important component of public culture rather than a matter of private belief and practice (Bryan S. Turner, 2010:1).

1.6. Religious Tourism

Raj and Morpeth (2007) argues that the changes in global political landscapes the religion has become a central concern. It takes place due to the rise in the interactions between shared secular and sacred spaces on global stage (Raj and Morpeth, 2007: 1).

¹⁵ See Meera Nanda, Ronald Robertson and Robert Beyer's writings on globalization and Religion.

¹⁶ Kumar (2011) said that in the later part of 1980s globalization as an object of inquiry could be found in the agenda of sociologists (p.3).

¹⁷ Nayak (2008) argues that economic liberalization is a new mantra of development, where the focus is on planned economy, free markets, etc. (p. 115).

¹⁸ Pathak (1998) conceptualizes Internet technology in terms of technologies of communication, where India has become a global village (p.172).

¹⁹ Harvey (1989) mentioned in Kumar (2011) pointed towards shrinking of time and space beyond the nation-states (p.4).

Das Gupta (2006) work mentioned in Vijayanand's (2012) said that that pilgrimage tourism plays a significant contribution towards socio-economic changes. It said that religious tourism has explored various economic and job opportunities (Vijayanand, 2012).

Vijayanand (2012) argues that tourism plays a significant role in the economic development of the state. The religious tourism becomes impactful when peoples start their visits. Except the religious place, peoples spends money in markets, surrounded the religious sites. It generates various kinds of employment to the native communities. It also said that various companies/organizations around the world send their experts to study various locations that had more public influence. That could become easy for the organizations to frame policy according to market status. But, they preferred to those places has public influence, like Kumbamela at Varanasi, Allahabad, Rajmundry etc (Vijayanand, 2012).

Libison and Muraleedharan (2008) argue that the sabarimala in Kerala has been considered as a sacred place. The temple has been receiving maximum number of pilgrims. The temple dedicates to Lord Ayyappa, a god associated with forest. Riding on a tiger, the Ayyappa has been seen as a protector of the forest. The local Pandalam community has great importance in the sabarimala pilgrimage. During pilgrimage season various economic activities are taking place in the Pandalam locality. The rise in the number of pilgrims has boosted the socio-economy of the region (Libison. K.B and K.P. Muraleedharan, 2008).

1.7. Studies on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*

There are many scholars who had written on the pilgrimage of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*, rituals worship, had given the anthropological accounts of mother goddess *Vaishno Devi* and the *Shiva*, the security aspect of *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* shrine. But, somehow the existing literature had explored limited about shrine policy, the faith based tourism and the security issue of both the shrine in detail. To know the disparity, the below section have separately discussed about the Indian studies and Western studies on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*.

1.7.1. Indian Studies

The accounts of the Indian studies on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are very few and most of them have given very little description of their studies. The first work on *Vaishno Devi* that came on limelight was by Goswami (1998) in his book titled, '*Vaishno Devi: The Shrine*', has given the description of *Vaishno Devi* shrine. In the book he has written about the Shrine cave of *Vaishno Devi*, the sacred pindis and management of the shrine. He argues that *Vaishno Devi* is incarnation of goddess Lakshmi. His study could be also located in the religious and mythical aspects. But, his work seemed limited in understanding the contemporary challenges to *Vaishno Devi* shrine. In *Amarnath Shrine*, Bhardwaj (1983) argues that the pilgrimage to *Amarnath* is most difficult among various pilgrimage places in the World.

Another report has been discussed by Chaudhary (2003) in her paper presented in Zimbabwe on the topic '*Mata Vaishno Devi Ji and Shri Amarnath Ji their intangible values*', where discussed about the life of Hindus and the significant role the pilgrimages are playing in India. Her paper focus on the mythical and religious aspects of *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* shrine. She has discussed the rituals worship of *Vaishno Devi Shrine*. Her paper also says that thousands of devotees of *Shiva*, belong to diverse ethnic groups and cultures reaches Jammu, known as city of temples everyday during the annual pilgrimage to *Amarnath Shrine*. For *Amarnath* pilgrimage, the base camp is Jammu city. Pilgrims come from all parts of the country. The journey from Jammu to Chandanwari, takes one or two days to reach. The first spot on the track of *Amarnath*. The vehicles can drive upto Chandanwari. From Chandanwari pilgrims have to trek on foot up to *Amarnath*. The shrine board who manages the pilgrimage allows limited numbers of pilgrims to pay obeisance at shrine cave. Many pilgrims visit several times for spiritual bliss.

Kumar (2006) discussed about the shrine board of *Vaishno Devi* at the international temple summit. In the report he had discussed about the shrine board management, achievements of the board, its developmental works and shrine cave of *Vaishno Devi*.

Madan (2006) in his book, *'The images of the world'* (2006) discussed religion in the modern age. He argues that many shrines in India are takeover by the government. The *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* are among those shrines captured by the public bodies and are handling their management (Madan, 2006:18).

Navlakha (2006) in his article on, *'Pilgrim's progress causes regression'* has particularly focus on the rise in the number of pilgrims at the shrine of *Amarnath*. He said that the increased pilgrims every year posed a great challenge to ecology of the area.

Jain (2007) study particularity focus on the economic aspect of *Vaishno Devi* shrine. He argues that millions of pilgrims with diverse backgrounds visit *Vaishno Devi* shrine. The increase in the number of pilgrims has created various business and job opportunities.

In the book, *'Theory and practice of case method of instruction'* by Bhattacharyya (2007) discussed mythical and cultural aspects of *Vaishno Devi* cave and the Trikuta Mountain that has been considered as sacred. In the Indian religion and culture, many myths of *Vaishno Devi* have been associated. Since the beginning of Indus Valley Civilization (3000 BC), the history of Jammu and Kashmir could be located in the wider Indian context. It has discussed about the description of the Dharmarth and the newly formed shrine board.

Gupta and Raina (2008) explained that the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* situated in the three peaked mountain known as Trikuta. It further says that the rise in the numbers of pilgrims has boosted the local economy and market development. The study says that the religious tourism of *Vaishno Devi* plays important role in the overall development of the tourism in the state. It also says that the *Vaishno Devi* shrine is one of the sacred pilgrimage place and it's known for *'Moonh Maaangi Muradein Poori Karne Wali Mata'*, that means mother fulfils all the dreams of her children's.

Navlakha (2008) in his article on the *'State cultivation of the Amarnath Yatra'* argues that the state forest department, principal secretary, granted permission to the SASB on May 29, 2005 to use forest land. It later erupted a major controversy in the state. It also pointed out that the decision of the land

was not in accordance of the Jammu and Kashmir, Forest Conservation Act of 1997. The High also withdrew the permission to use land. But in 2008 when the state cabinet gave approval to use 40 hector of land at *Baltal* for *Amarnath* pilgrimage started protests by the peoples of Kashmir.

Bhat (2009) has given the socio-historical dimension to understand *Vaishno Devi*. It says that the rituals worship of mother goddess has been seen among various societies of the world. He associates the origin of Vaishnavi Devi with the god Vishnu as his *Shakti*. It also says that the *Vaishno Devi* shrine accommodates pilgrims from diverse backgrounds.

Bhat (2013) explained pilgrimage tourism in his paper in Jammu and Kashmir. It says that Jammu and Kashmir has various pilgrimage places for all the faiths. He argues that the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine has become a centre of attraction and could boost state's economy. He said that the tourism has become an important industry in the state. It had generated various jobs and business opportunities.

Vivekjivandas (2014) said *Amarnath* means the lord of immortals. There are two holes in the *Amarnath* cave from which water trickles and freezes into ice. With this there is formation of huge ice annually and is famous *Amarnath linga*. Its height is eight to twelve feet and flacked on either side are two more ice formation known as Ganesh and Parvati. Pilgrimage to the *Amarnath* held during Shravana Purnima every year which considered as the sacred days where *shiva* appears in the cave.

The ministry of tourism stated that pilgrimage Tourism is expected to generate a high growth rate of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. The report has mentioned two important shrines *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi*. Jammu attracts a large no of pilgrimage tourists. Jammu is the terminal point for one of the pilgrimages for North India²⁰.

The economic survey report 2014-15 have mentioned that the Srinagar has distinction of being important tourist destination, Jammu city which is also called city of temples has the distinction of important pilgrimage, destination and

²⁰ Ministry of Tourism Report, Government of India, 2014-15

industrial hub. Besides these two cities, the state also contemplates to recommend inclusion of Anantnag & Katra Town in the smart city mission as both these towns are gateway to the two important religious destinations namely, *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. These towns are expanding at a faster trajectory and it is the appropriate time to place the faster growing towns in smarter cities framework²¹.

Shastri, Sharma, and Mansotra (2015) had given the outline of pilgrims in *Vaishno Devi*. Tourism plays a significant role in the total GDP of the state. The study says that the *Vaishno Devi* receives millions of pilgrims every year. Post 1986, the newly formed shrine board had started many developmental initiatives that has boosted the tourism of the state.

Saurabh and Jamwal (2015) had raised the issue of solid waste in *Vaishno Devi*. He argues that the rapid growth in drifting population has led towards the increase in the consumption patterns in the *Katra* town. Due to the rise in the stay rented accommodation, food points and the population the solid waste of *Katra* has resulted into an alarming rise of waste quantities both in solid and liquid form in *Katra*. It is estimated in a recent study that on a daily basis 17.4 tons of solid waste is generated in the town out of which 15% is burnt openly, 9% is thrown in Drains and Nallah, 29% is thrown openly on roads and streets and for remaining 47% other waste disposal methods are used.

Koundal (2016) has given the economic and environmental aspect of *Vaishno Devi Shrine*. He argues that the pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* is popular in all over India. It attracts people due to its spiritual significance. In the present time, the various tourism boards as well as the tourist map has given to it the important consideration as a religious tourism place.

1.7.2. Western Studies

The western literature on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* looked upon various scholars who had written on it. Erdnl (1993) has done an extensive study of goddesses in the northern India. *Vaishno Devi* is one among them all. She particularly focuses on myths, rituals and symbols. Her approach to understand

²¹ Economic Survey report 2014-15, Jammu and Kashmir, Volume I, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, J&K

the divine feminism could relate with the women in reality. Her study calls *Vaishno Devi* as the *Sheravali* or *Durga*, *Chandi* or *Amba*, in which she compares with seven Devi's of northern India. She also associates the *Vaishno Devi*, with the male deities Vishnu and *Shiva*. *Vaishno Devi* is also represents *Shakti*, the dynamic power of the universe. She admits that the rise of pilgrims to *Vaishno Devi* has made it unique among the other shrines in north India.

Anthropologist Paul Hershman mentioned in Erndl (1993) has considered *Vaishno Devi* both a divine or spiritual motherhood (Erndl, 1993:6).

Pintchman (2001) argues in the life of Hindus, the ritual worship of goddesses has been seen significant. She said *Vaishno Devi* is Mahadevi, who had all the *Shakti* or Powers to create the universe. She also said that the goddess *Vaishno Devi* is inclusive goddess, connected with devotes from all over India.

Foster and Stoddard (2010) argue that the pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* has become an important destination point in the last few years. In her study, she focused on two things, **first**, to understand *Vaishno Devi* and its comparison with the Devi's of Siwaliks region²². **Second**, to examine the various changes in *Vaishno Devi* shrine. Her study argues that *Vaishno Devi* is most powerful among the Seven Devi's of the Siwaliks hills. Because, *Vaishno Devi* shrine contains three sacred *Pindis* of Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati. She also said that the pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* had been increased since 1947. She also admits that the rise in the number of pilgrims is due to the changes in the management board of the pilgrimage i.e. Dharmarth Trust to Shrine board constituted in 1986.

Jordan (2004) associates *Vaishno Devi* with the goddess Lakshmi and also considers her as *Shakti* or the Power of god Vishnu.

Dalton (2010) in his book on, 'Sacred places of the World' has discussed about the sacred religious journeys of the world. He argues that the sacred character of *Vaishno Devi* has made the shrine famous. He also said that the shrine had received popularity around the world.

²² Siwaliks, hills is situated in the lower Himalayas, 600 meters to 1500 meters from the sea level.

In the same way, Eck (2012) in her book, 'India, A Sacred Geography' has explored the sacred feature of India. She argues that *Vaishno Devi* is the incarnation of *Shakti* and considered it as the virgin goddess (Eck, 2012:282).

Jones and James (2007) argue that *Amarnath* is a famous shrine dedicate to the *Shiva* in Kashmir. The *Shiva lingam* is covered with ice snow and located inside the cave. The *shiva* lingam created by nature, revealed the immortality to Parvati at this cave. Some literature argues the discovery by Bhrigu Rishi but another said that Muslim shepherd Buta Malik discovered it. The pilgrimage remains open during the full moon of Shravana (July-August). He said that the pilgrimage to *Amarnath* had been continuous since 1850 and it takes 40 days to undertake it.

Thus the chapter has reviewed the relevant literature on religion, Hinduism, pilgrimage, religious tourism, *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. Therefore the chapter covers all the aspects needed to conceptualize in the present study on the emerging challenges towards pilgrimages in India. The chapter also has given the critical view on the lack of studies that actually is required to sociologically understand the research problem of the present study. Now the next chapter deals with the research methodology that engages a debate on methods, tools, techniques, field and the various methodological issues and challenges.

Chapter 2

Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The present chapter deals with the research methodology in which it has discussed methods, tools, techniques, theories, approaches, etc. used in the present study. The chapter has given an outline to the whole research study. The purpose of this chapter is to have an understanding of the whole process of research and to have a systematic analysis of the whole study, to contextualize the study from various dimension and approach and to reach at new findings. It has discussed the field conducted at two places *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Various aspects of the field have taken into account. The description of field work like the field data collected from diverse sources has been discussed. The chapter tried to analyze the holistic meaning of shrine, the concept of pilgrimage in the Hindu religious context. Apart from Hindu religious context, the focus is also on the notion of the shrine in all the religious. How people, society, the state is looking at these shrines as well as the way shrines functions in the wider spectrum of society. The present chapter also has discussed the socio-cultural profile of the respondents as well as has given both accounts of quantitative as well as qualitative measures taken to understand the present study. In this sense, the chapter becomes significant part of the whole thesis. Because both methodology and the field work part has been discussed in this chapter.

Research methodology is a procedure systematically solves the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically (Kothari, 2002). Social research may be defined as a methodological and systematic study of the subject with the aim to generate new information, verify the existing knowledge in that subject and reach to a new understanding (Srivastava 2005:1). Research is an empirical quest for knowledge. We collect and analyze data about the social world to understand it better (Lune, Pumar and Koppel 2010: 5). As Durkheim consider social facts as

things. Weber talks about the interpretative understanding of social action. P. Berger and Thomas Luckman focus on the dual character in terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning (Blumer, 2003:1). It denotes the systematic and logical study of the general principles guiding the sociological investigation, concerned in the broad sense with questions of how sociologists establish social knowledge and how they conceive others' knowledge is correct. Methodology as Max Weber in his methodology of Social Sciences refers to general consideration. Parsons said that it involves the consideration of the general grounds for the validity of scientific propositions and systems of them (Blumer, 2003: 4-5). Thus, the methodology is a process to carry forward the research. It plays a crucial role in the whole research process. The methodological part is the soul of the whole research study. From generalization to experimentation and experimentation to the new findings and conclusion is known as methodological part.

2.2. Locating the Field

The field is philosophically guided, historically shaped, socially and culturally interconnected and geographically expands or constructs. Philosophical means the construction of knowledge behind the selection of a particular place for the research study. The research problem itself has linkages with philosophy, history and the practical reality. Philosophy broadens our wisdom to locate the research problem more holistically. The field also has a strong historical bond that becomes the source of knowledge in the conceptualization of the study. History helps in shaping the research argument more valid. The field is also socially and culturally interconnected. It's because the field is exploratory in nature. It's not something static but dynamic and has interrelations with various contexts. Therefore, the field could be the study of individuals, families, and the society in which they live, surroundings, others' culture etc. The study of one culture and making linkages and contrasts with the other culture for better analysis become significant in the field research. The comparative analysis has been considered as an important aspect of research based on the field data. Therefore, field is both macro and micro or the interrelation among diverse aspects. The field could be seen in the geographical expanded category. It's because the field selected in the

study could not be taken as the only field in investigating the research. Also the other spaces relates or try to make interrelations with the selected field could be included in the research inquiry. It could help the research to become more unbiased and scientific. It gives the holistic dimension to the whole research study. The concept of ‘field research’ first come into limelight when it was used by the anthropologists like Redcliffe brown and Malinowski to understand others culture, primitive culture etc. In the discipline sociology Durkheim has used the ethnographic approach to understand the field area. Martin (2003) argues that field theory offers social scientists a combination of analytical insight and attention to the concrete. Martin tells us how the idea of field theory helps the researcher to be more focused into the research study. Field theory works like a guiding principle and makes the research more systematic. Therefore, the nature of field is very complex and articulate. The field has been explored with holistic approach in the present study. In order to study the pilgrimage and the emerging challenges in India, the field work has been conducted in the following places of Jammu and Kashmir state²³ i.e. *Katra*²⁴ in the Reasi District, *Pahelgham*²⁵ in the Anantnag District and *Baltal*²⁶ in the Ganderbal district. The table below has given the details about area, population of Reasi, Anantnag and Ganderbal districts.

Table No. 2.1. Showing the area and population of Reasi, Anantnag and Ganderbal districts in Jammu and Kashmir

S.No.	District	Area Sq Km	Population as per 2011 census of India		
			Male	Female	Total
1.	Reasi	1719	1,66,461	1,48,206	314,667
2.	Anantnag	3574	559767	518925	1078692
3.	Ganderbal	259	158720	138726	297446

Source: Census of India, 2011

²³ Jammu and Kashmir, situated between 32° 17' N and 36° 58' N latitudes and 73° 26'E and 80° 30' E longitudes, constitutes the northern most extremity of India. The Total area of Jammu and Kashmir is 222236 sq. Km of which 78114 sq. Km is under illegal occupation of Pakistan and 37555 sq. Km under China. In addition 5180 sq. Km area of J&K was illegally ceded to China by Pakistan. J&K is the 6th largest state of India occupying 6.76% of the country's geographical area (Economic Survey, 2014-15).

²⁴ Katra is the base camp for pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi shrine.

²⁵ Pahelgham is base camp for pilgrimage to Amarnath.

²⁶ Baltal is also the base camp for the pilgrimage to the shrine of Amarnath.

Reasi district in the Jammu province came into existence in April 2007. Reasi is a hilly district. The district is divided into nine tehsils, 12 developmental blocks and 147 halquas panchayats. It covers an area of 1719 Sq Km with population of 314,667. On the other *Anantnag* and *Ganderbal* districts in Kashmir division has an area of 3575 Sq Km and 259 Sq Km and has population of 1078692 and 297446. In these respective districts *Katra* in *Reasi*, *Pehalgham* in *Anantnag* and *Baltal* *Ganderbal* have been selected to understand the direct impact of pilgrimage on the lives of peoples.

The *Vaishno Devi* Shrine is situated in the Reasi District of Jammu region and *Amarnath* Shrine in the Anantnag district in the Kashmir region. The district *Reasi* is surrounded by *Udhampur* district in the east, *Jammu* on the south, *Rajouri* on the west. The district is popularly known for the shrine of mother goddess *Vaishno Devi*. *Katra* (latitude 32°59N), longitude 74°55E) and average altitude of 2840 feet above mean sea level is the most important town from religious and economic point of view. It is situated at the foot hills of Trikuta²⁷ mountains, a part of sub-Himalayan *Shivalik* Range in Reasi District of J&K state. *Katra* is 48kms from Jammu city. It is one of the most flourishing religious tourism destinations in India which offers facilities like hotels, restaurants, guest houses, railway stations, dhabas, fast food junctions etc. Regular influx of large number of tourists has direct or indirect impact on the economy and environment of the area. Such developmental activities are not restricted only to base camp but are also carried out extensively on the 14 km track from *Katra* to cave shrine. The change in land use pattern of *Katra* town has resulted in closely knitted shops, hotels and other commercial establishments which all are approachable by narrow lanes (Sharma and Raina, 2014). In the recent times *Katra* town has become the hub of economic activities. The rise in the pilgrims every year has explored the scope of *Katra* town. The income generated from the following fields in *Katra*, which has more or less dependency on tourism. Like the Hotels, Transport agencies, big establishments, markets and the labor works. The unorganized labor has grown due to the rise of pilgrims at *Vaishno Devi*. It could be seen the thousands of labourers reaches *Katra* for work. The town is getting

²⁷ Trikuta means three peaked mountain.

popularity across the globe due to *Vaishno Devi Shrine*. It's because there has been risen in the interaction process that ultimately becomes the source of income. Secondly, people believe in those gods who are more responsive to the others. For example there are some temples in India belongs to the Shakta and Shaiva tradition whom getting popularity among the millions peoples. The temple of *Vaishno Devi* is a historical temple where people from high to low status are going for self purification, peace, progress and prosperity in life. In the contemporary times there has become the notion that one in lifetime a person should visit this shrine or after marriage for the blessings of the mothergoddess. The study also witnessed to the fact that peoples from different backgrounds but mostly Hindus visits the shrine after marriage for her blessings. Post marriage visiting is not just a contemporary phenomenon but embedded in the deep historical context. The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* dedicates to the three supreme deities of Hinduism, i.e. *mothergoddess Sarasvati*, *mothergoddess Lakshmi* and *mothergoddess Kali*. The shrine is located at 5200 ft above the sea level in the *Jammu* region of the state Jammu and Kashmir. There is no accurate data available that tells us about pilgrimage journey to the shrine, but in some Hindu religious text²⁸ there has been mentioned about it. The Puranic period has mentioned the practicing of *Shakti*. Many stories have been associated with the discovery of the shrine of Mata *Vaishno Devi*. The most prevalent among them was the story of Shridhar as well the story of Asuras. The shrine board that manages the pilgrimage considers *Vaishno Devi* as one of the most responsive and powerful goddess in the Hinduism. It further says that the three *pindis*²⁹ situated at shrine of *Vaishno Devi* belongs to Mahakali³⁰, Mahalakshmi³¹ and Mahasaraswati³². The *Vaishno Devi* could be seen as *Shakti*, and she considered as mother of all (Shrine Board, 10-11). Another scholar Rohe (2001) argues

²⁸ There has been mentioned the practice of Vaishnavi in the Bhagwad Gita, when god Krishna was asking Arjuna to take blessings of Vaishno Devi before the Kurukshetra war.

²⁹ Pindis means three natural rock forms

³⁰ She is known as the goddess of power. Manfred Lurker in the Routledge dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons, defines Kali, (who is black) is an Indian goddess of the Great Mother type (Lurker, 2005:99).

³¹ She is known as the goddess of wealth. Manfred Lurker, in the Routledge dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons, defines, Lakshmi, as Hindu goddess of good fortune and beauty, also known as Sri, (Lurker, 2005:108).

³² In the Hindu religion, she is known as the goddess of knowledge. David, Kinsley, in his book on, 'Hindu Goddess' defines Sarasvati is one of the few important goddesses in the *Vedas* who remain significant in later Hinduism, (Kinsley, 1988:55).

Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati as one form of Mahadevi has been identified in the text *Devi-Bhagavata Purana* and the *Devi-Mahatmya* (Rohe, 2001:71).

But the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has changed a lot due to the contemporary changes. Post 1980 there could be seen many changes in the context of *Vaishno Devi shrine*. In between 1980-86 many pilgrims had complained about the mismanagement by the *dharmarth trust*³³ who had managed pilgrimage till 1985. During 1980 to 1986 many newspapers had covered the issue of corruption at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. Many discussions on the corruption related issue had been discussed in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. Later in 1986, the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly has passed an Act on *Vaisho Devi shrine* and took over the charge of it and then it came under the *Vaishno Devi Act* of 1986. After august 1986 the *Dharmarth trust* a private body got replaced by the *shrine board*, a public organization. Therefore, the structural changes in *Vaishno Devi* shrine have been discussed in the field. It has explored the *Katra* town from 1986 to 2016. The division of labor, the market expansion, the rise of urbanization, increase in connectivity, the rise of faith based tourism, the security and ecological challenges has been discussed in the context of *Vaishno Devi* shrine. The *Katra* town has been taken to study the impact of *Vaishno Devi* shrine on the social geography. The below table has given the details about the distance between *Katra* and the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* shrine and the various spots on the way to the *Bhawan* (Shrine of *Vaishno Devi*).

Table No. 2.2. Distance from *Katra* to *Bhawan* of *Vaisho Devi* and the weather conditions.

Distances from <i>Katra</i> , Altitude w.r.t. Mean Sea Level & Average Temperature						
Location	Distance from <i>Katra</i>	Altitudes	Temperature °C			
			Winter		Summer	
			Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
<i>Katra</i>	00 Km	2500	3	15	20	41
Banganga	01 Km	2800				
Charan Paduka	02.5 Km	3380				
Adhkuwari	06 Km	4800	1	14.5	16	33

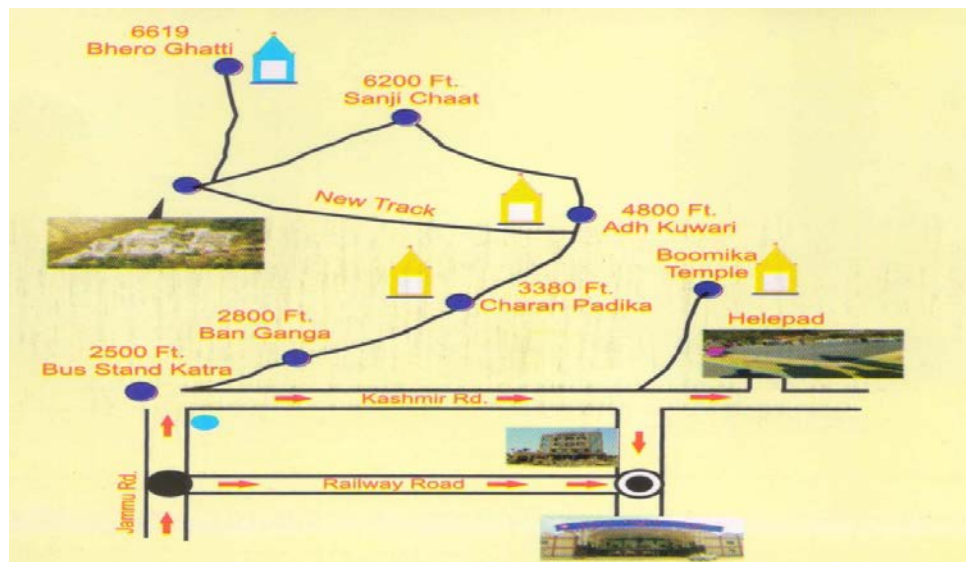
³³ Trust means a kind of organization handles by Trustees, and the word *Dharmarth* means associated with the religious purposes.

Himkoti	08.5 Km	5120				
Sanjichhat	09.5 Km	6200				
Bhawan	13.0 Km	5200	-2	13	15	30
Bhairon Ghati (Via Bhawan)	14.5 Km	6619	-3	11	12	26

Source: <https://www.maavaishnodevi.org/guidemap.aspx>

According to the table above the distance between *Katra* and the Bhawan is 13 Km and the altitude is 6619 above the sea level. There are also the temperature variations between *Katra* and Bhawan. The maximum temperature of Bhawan in winters is 11 and 26 in summers. *Katra* is a small developing town has maximum temperature 15 degrees in winter and 41 degree in summer. Other spots comes in between *Katra* to Bhawa are Banganga (1km from *Katra*), Charanpaduka (2.5km from *Katra*), Adhkuwari (6km from *Katra*), Himkoti (8.5Km) and Sajichat (9.5Km) from *Katra*. Each spot has set up shops, restaurants for pilgrims by the shrine board. All the spots have mythical and historical accounts relates with the *Vaishno Devi* shrine. After taking the blessings of *Vaishno* the pilgrims visits the Bhairon Gathi which is 14.5km from *Katra* and 1.5km from bhawan to have his darshan.

Map No. 2.1. Showing the Guide Map *Katra* to Bhawan



Source: <http://caltourist.com/mata-vaishno-devi/>³⁴

³⁴ Caltourist is a travel agency has registered office in West Bengal, India

The temperature has its relation with the pilgrimage and has the important part of discussion in the ecological aspect of the shrine. Saluja (2007) argues the heavy rush to the pilgrimage of *Vaishno Devi* is because of the geographical conditions. He said that the place of *Vaishno Devi* also suits to the Chinese Feng Shui³⁵. In his description about the temple of *Vaishno Devi* bhawan or main building faces towards the west direction and behind the temple the mountain locates towards east direction and is quite high. He said that in front side of the temple the mountain faces west direction, where water flows continuously. On the north side of Mata *Vaishno Devi* temple, Jammu is located in the deep surface because of its position at the end slope of the mountain. The south side of *Vaishno Devi* locates the Bhairo temple, where the mountain is high and it extends up to west of southwest zone (Saluja, 2007:72-73).

Table No.2.3 Showing *Katra* (MC) Area, total households and population

S.No	Name	Area per sq Km	Total Households	Population		
				Male	Female	Total
1.	<i>Katra</i> (Municipal Committee)	1.84	1594	5106	3902	9008

Source: Census of India, 2011

Katra town comes under Municipal Corporation in the Reasi district has area of 1.84 sq km, 1594 households. It has population of around 9008 i.e. 5106 males and 3902 females. Other municipal committee in the Reasi districts are Reasi, *Purana Daroorh*, *Talwara*, *Marhi* etc. Therefore, the field is not just to understand the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* but also the interrelated parts like the perception of the local shopkeepers, the tourist agencies, the security personals, the local hotel owners, the labor class working at shrine and the local community peoples etc. All the aspects of field have been explored to know more rationally the issues and challenges of pilgrimage in the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*.

The other sub-areas that have been taken into account to understand more about the field are the Jammu city and shri mata *vaishno Devi* special train from

³⁵ In the Chinese system Feng Shui is a method of divination, which believed to be use the laws of both laws and earth.

Delhi to *Katra*. Till 2014 it had been observed that most of the outstations pilgrims preferred to have the journey from Jammu. At Jammu they stay at the Trikuta bhawan near railway stations, hotels in jewels or after little market survey they book cap or take bus for *Katra*. This also becomes the part of whole economic activities for the local inhabitants and the state. In July 2014 the prime priminister of India, Narendra Modi flagged off the train linking *Katra*, the base camp of *Vaishno Devi* with the rest of India. Post July 2014 the outstation pilgrims directly get the chance to reach *Katra* due to the rail connectivity. The direct rail connectivity to *Katra* somehow impacts the Jammu local markets. Because most of the pilgrims prefers to go directly *Katra* and while back after from the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* they prefer to take train directly to their destinations outside the state. But, those who visit other locations like patnitop or Srinagar visits Jammu on their arrival and takes train from Jammu Tawi station or some prefer to go by air. But most of the pilgrims prefer trains than by air when visits the shrine of *Vasihno Devi*. Pilgrims explores all the available facilities to reach *Vaishno Devi* shrine.

On the other the *Ananatnag* District is famous known for the *Amarnath* Shrine. The total area of *Ananatnag* District is 2917 Sq Kms. Geographically, the district lies between 33⁰-20 to 34⁰-15 north latitude and 74⁰-30 to 75⁰-35 east longitudes. The total population of area is 10.70 lacs which consist of 5.52 males and 5.17 females. The district is known as the land of springs, which is mentioned in the *Neelmat Purana* as a sacred place for Hindus. Literature has given much importance to the Anantnag and the Pehalgam. It's because the place has been considered as the holy. Peoples were coming to have the *darshan* of *linga* since generations.

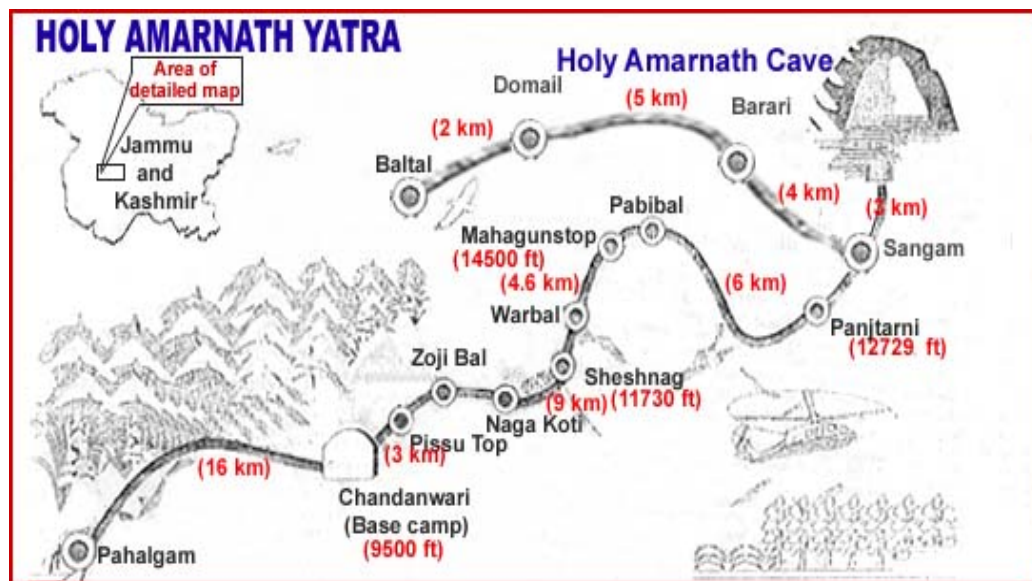
Table No2.4. Showing Pehalgam, Area, total households and population

S.No	Name	Area per sq Km	Total Households	Population		
				Male	Female	Total
1.	Pehalgam (Municipal Committee)	18.2	966	5541	3723	9264

Source: Census of India 2011

In present times there has been developed the local markets at pehalgham, one of the base camp for *Amarnath* pilgrimage. Pehalgham is 315 Km from Jammu, 96 Km from the main city Srinagar and 42.8 Km from its district headquarters Anantnag. Pehalgham is known for scenic beauty and famous as tourist destination spot. *Lidder* River makes the pehalgham more beautiful and situated at an altitude of 7200 ft above the sea level. *Pehalgam* is an urban small town. The tourists have direct influence on the local town economy. Amaranth pilgrimage also exchanges the economic values. The total area of the town is 18.2, 966 households and the population of about 9264 i.e. 5541 male and 3723 females. Baltal is the another route to the shrine of *Amarnath* shrine falls in the Ganderbal district. Baltal is 101 km from Srinagar, 74 Km from Ganderbal and 400 km from Jammu. The distance between the Baltal and holy cave is 14 km and most of the pilgrims prefer to undertake baltal for short distance.

Map No. 2.2: Distance Map of *Amarnath* shrine



Source: <http://www.shriamarnathjishrine.com/plan-a-yatra.html>

The *Amarnath* shrine has been mentioned in the *Rajtarangini* an ancient book written by *Kalhan*. The shrine has a long historical background. The shrine dedicates to the *Shaivism* in the Hinduism. The cave is located at an altitude of 12, 756ft above the sea level. The shrine is situated in the Kashmir region in the state Jammu and Kashmir. The study of the shrine is similar to the understanding of art, culture and history of Kashmir region. In the context of Hinduism, the

shrine forms an important part. Every year pilgrimage begins in the month of July and ends on the day of festival Rakshabandan comes in August. Most of the pilgrims from outside Jammu prefer government arrangement. Due to the limited capacity at *bhawan* pilgrims takes rest on the roofs by having blankets from the store of shrine board on security deposit which got refunded at the time of deposit of the blankets. The *Amarnath* shrine has been mentioned in the *Rajtarangini* an ancient book written by *Kalhan*. The shrine has a long historical background. The shrine dedicates to the *Shaivism* in the Hinduism. In the year 2000 the state of Jammu and Kashmir has passed an Act known as Shri *Amarnath* Shrine Board Act of 2000. The introduction of Bureaucracy in the religious activities of shrine has changed the notion of pilgrimage at some extent. In the context of globalization the shrine has many issues and challenges, the most importantly known as the rise of religious tourism and the security challenges.

Therefore, *Katra* in *Reasi* and *Pehalgham* in *Anantnag* district seem to be the famous pilgrimage and tourist destination points. Tourist across the country visits *pehalgham* and the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* during summer every year. As per government records the *Pehalgham* also receives highest number of tourists as compare to *gulmarg* in Kashmir. The same is the case of *Katra*, many tourist agencies have made the *Katra* destination mandatory in their tour packages. *Katra* is known as the gateway to *Vaishno Devi* shrine. The presence of *Vaishno Devi* shrine has constantly changing the *Katra* town due to the rise of faith based tourism, the expansion of markets and the commercialization of space and the unsystematic planning on pilgrimage management, where as the *Amarnath* shrine has been challenged by the separatist movements in Kashmir and the impact of terrorism. Recently government of India has chosen the districts *Reasi* in Jammu and *Anantnag* in Kashmir to make them important tourist spot. During the three months of *Amarnath* pilgrimage the local community in the Kashmir region accumulates huge amount of money whereas the *Vaisho Devi* shrine boosts the local economy throughout the year.

In the field researchers main task was to understand the structure and functioning of Shrine board management, to observe the daily activities, to know

the pilgrims beliefs and the practising rituals, to explore the pilgrim's perception about the journey as well as the response of government, NGO and Civil society.

2.3. Theory Used in the Research

Theory guides both our questions and interpretations of any data we find. Our theories about the world suggest ideas that need to be investigated and our findings raise questions and suggest modifications in our theoretical models. Theory and research are thus partners in the development of knowledge in constant with one another (Lune, Pumar and Koppel 2010:5). The present study has understood religion, culture, globalization and contemporary social changes. It also has explored the concept of pilgrimage, the faith based tourism, the rise of religious tourism, the security issues and challenges. The present study comes in the wider domain of religion and society. Because the present study has taken two shrines *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine in the Hinduism. Specifically the study has used the Durkhemian theory, weberian theory, Geertz work on religion and culture. Giddens work on globalization and Modernity, Roland Robertson work on 'Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture (1992) and Peter Beyer on Religion and Globalization (2000) has been understood to understand the religion and globalization in the contemporary times. The work of other thinkers like Robert Redfield on Little and Great Tradition has been discussed to contextualize the social change.

Durkheim theory has been used to understand the beliefs and ritual of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. His work on religion has given the idea to explore the various mythical and religious aspects of the shrine. Durkheim argues that sacred is something above the society and accepted by the community. With the notion of sacred the society associates themselves with the god and starts worshipping the supernatural things. The entire *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage could be seen in the context of sacred and the profane. The places like *Katra*, the abode of *Vaishno Devi*, the *Charanpaduka*, *Banganga*, *Ardhkuwari*, *Sanjichat*, *Bairav ghati*, *Amarnath*, the *Pissutop*, *Sheshnag*, *Ganeshtop*, *Panjtarini*, the *cave of Amarnath* and *linga* has been considered as sacred by the pilgrims, community and the Hindu Society. Each spot on the journey track has been considered as sacred has associations with the *Vaishno*

Devi and Amarnath pilgrimage, its present, history and myths. All the sacred places have associations with mythical, religious and historical contexts. In present time the relevance of all the sacred places could be seen when pilgrims visits and worships and make more sense of the sacred.

Durkheim work on the 'Division of Labor in society' (1897) has been used to understand the structure and functioning of a religious shrine. Earlier the shrines were under the charge of private trust or organizations but in the recent past the both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine has been taken by the government. Now the management of the shrine has been expanded. The mechanical society has taken the shape of organic society.

Weberian work on Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism has helped the present study to explore the relation of religion, economy in the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The study has shown that how the contemporary culture has helped the beliefs to generate more revenue. Weberian work shows how protestant disciplined work have changed the economic structure. But the present study shows how the *Shakti* belief has changed the entire societal structure. That is socio-cultural and economic in nature.

The bureaucracy aspect of the shrine has been explored to understand more about the management of the shrine. Bureaucracy is organized in nature and has rational principles. Bureaucracy is that instrument that has shaped the policy, economy and technology in the modern society. In the same way the study has analyzed the bureaucratic structure of *Vaishno Devi* shrine and *Amarnath* shrine where the management of the shrines has been discussed, the role of state has been taken into account.

Anthony Giddens argues that the global and the local have come together due to the global culture and the rise of modern era. The study also has understood the impact of global on the local culture. It has explored the interrelations of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* with the global aspect.

Robertson (2000) globalization refers to processes whereby the world is moving toward "unicity" or "global unicity", the growing "oneness" of the world as a single, socio-cultural place. In moving toward unicity, the significance of

territorial boundaries declines, a profound change because territoriality had been a basic strategy of geographic control for much of human history. The movement toward unicity refers to two features of the human condition for Robertson, rising connectivity across the world and "global consciousness". He adds that the analysis of globalization has often focused on rapid growth of transworld connections but paid less attention to the increasingly common phenomenon of people seeing the world as one place. But global unicity does not mean that the world is moving toward a single culture. To the contrary, Robertson stresses that consciousness of differences among people are, if anything, sharpened with the intensification of globalization.

Peter Beyer (1994) in his book *religion and globalization* explores the interaction between religions and worldwide social and cultural change, the author examines the major theories of global change and discusses the ways in which such change impinges on contemporary religious practice, meaning and influence. Beyer explores some of the key issues in understanding the shape of religion today, including religion as culture and as social system, pure and applied religion, privatized and publicly influential religion, and liberal versus conservative religions.

Jurgensmeyer (2003) argues that religion always has been global, in the sense that the religious communities and traditions have always maintained permeable boundaries. They have shifted and interacted with the new communities across the globe. Some of the traditional cultural traits they might get changed but many of them had great impact on their day to day life. They are unchangeable. Religion is global in that it is related to the global transportation of peoples and the transnational acceptance of religious ideas. He also says that there is a third way that religion is global, which might be called the religion of globalization in which forms of new religion emerge as expressions of new interactive cultures.

Thus the study has been understood by various theories by anthropologists and sociologists on religion, society and the global culture.

2.4. Approach Used to conduct the research

Literature review gives us an idea to locate the research problem and theory guides us in the whole methodology. But approach shapes the entire research in a systematic way. It's a technique to make the research more focused and to find the solutions for research problem. In this study the researcher has used multiple approaches to understand the research argument. Connolly (1992) said that when we use any approach, it also accept certain assumptions as well as priorities. With this aim, we can explain the research problem as much as possible and further it helps to build a scientific character (Connolly, 1992:2). Religion has been a subject of study and reflection for a very long time. The sociology of religion is by contrast a very young subject or if one prefers a young branch of an old subject. It is necessary to stress the diversity of approaches to the study of religion in order to highlight the distinctive features of the sociological approach to it (Beteille, 2015:185). Connolly (1999) further argues that sociologists should question the sustenance of religious beliefs and practices, relationship between the social contexts and belief about god or gods rather than question on the existence of god. Many sociologists have talked about religion like Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber (Connolly, 1999: 194-195).

The study has used the works of various scholars discussed about the mythology to understand the various myths associated with the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It's like the mythical stories talks about the incarnation of *Vaishno Devi*, the holy cave, the three pindis, the *Bhairav nath*, *Bhairav ghati*, the sacred *Ardhkuwari*, the other mythical stories related to *Treta Yuga*, Mahabharata and *Shakta* tradition. Levi Strauss (2006) argument history is myth and myth is history has given a different idea to conceptualize the mythical aspects. He also argues that if the myths seems to be meaningless than why there are different myths exists in all the world religions. He means there are thousands of stories behind the historical fact and to understand the reality needed some assumption to make the context more systematic. Singh (2000) in his book 'Culture and Change in India' argues that myth is a powerful social reality. He further explains that there always exists a critical relationship between history and mythology. Myth is an important phenomenon that influences the social

institutions. In the recent past there has been transformed a lot of history into mythology. Ideologies flourish between mythology and history. Various myths have been created by the collective efforts of societies and it also affects the human life in their daily activities. He has elaborated myth and I quote:-

“A very important aspect of the relationship among myth, history and reason is that in theoretical terms it goes beyond the metaphors of tradition and modernity. Sometimes we think that the modern society which lives entirely in the space of reason is disenchanted from the principle of myth. The principle of history, science and logic are of course central to the concept of modernization as reflected in the nation-building process, but what about myth? A paradox of human condition today is that myth never dies. The dynamic and intricate relationships among myth, history and reason continue to prevail. It only changes its form. So what is described as the movement from tradition to modernity in nation-building is not a replacement of this triadic pattern of relationships among myth, history and reason but a qualitative reconfiguration of internal structure of their relationships” (Singh, 2000:129-130).

Susan Vishwanathan (2011) mentioned Elide (1975) in her article argue that till 19th century, myth was used as a synonym with ‘fable’, ‘invention’ ‘illusion’ and ‘what cannot really exists’. It was only with the translation and application of primitive categories of thought, that came about with the impact of the field work method, that myth came to mean a true story, sacred, exemplary and significant (Vishwanathan, 2011:142). The mythological approach is significant to explore the religion in the context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Myths have been attached with the religious sphere in all the world religions. To understand the religious beliefs and rituals needs the study of myths. Therefore, the discipline mythology has broadly discussed about the discourse on various myths exists in this world and has strong connection with our everyday life. The historical approach has been used to understand the various historical documents of *Vaishno Devi*. That could be the various written records by the government, state documented history and the published literature. It also helps us to understand the present social phenomenon of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It compares and contrasts the *Dharmarth Trust* and Shrine board management. Scholars like ramaswamy (2011), Durkheim (1893) *The division of Labor*, Diana Eck (2013) *India: A sacred geography* has given historical accounts. The Philosophical approach considers suitable, because of its exploratory imagination to conceptualize the concept and cultural approach on the one side

gives us the proper understanding between religion and culture, but on the other the approach understands the philosophical imagination of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Fisher (1999) said philosophy is the love of wisdom. It horizon our mind to think more about the phenomenon or the thing. It can refer to variety of things i.e. knowledge, life experience or understandable. He further said for Plato philosopher is a person curious about knowledge and never satisfied. Aristotle associates philosophy with truth (Fisher, 1999:114).

Swahananda (1983) understands the philosophy in the context of motherhood. He argues mother as eternal and why the god concept of mother came into existence, because mother is that power which is universally present behind us all; with this approach he doesn't understands the biological mother but also the spiritual motherhood as well as earth mother (Swahananda, 1983:36). Osho (2009) said India is the only country in the world, associated with the qualities of mother and India is also known as motherland. He also argues that the country like America and Germany are known as Fatherland, but the soul of India lies in female's part of the country (Chinmay and Aggarwal, 2009:301). Therefore, philosophy always remains very close to the Hinduism. This approach helped the research to locate the sakti and *shiva* tradition in the social reality.

The Durkhemian structural functional approach helped the research to understand the religion and society in the contemporary society. His work on religion, division of labor and social facts has made the argument of the research more systematic and useful. Durkheim work gives more importance to the society or the structure than the individual which he considers a micro part of social structure. In the book the rules of sociological method (1895) his central focus was on the social facts i.e. external, coercive and constraint. In the society he has focus on the institutionalized law or shared beliefs and their impact on the individual. On the other he differentiated social facts into material as well non material social facts in the study of society. Secondly, in his another book division of labor (1893) he has compared between the two types of societies i.e. primitive and modern in order to understand the society. He also has given some characteristics of both the societies at different point of time, for that he has used

the comparative method to understand the societies (Ritzer, 2011). He focuses more on the social solidarity, moral order and social goals as well as the shared values (Norchott, 1999). Therefore the durkhemian approach helped in understanding the social structure and the various changes undertaken in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*.

The Weberian approach helped the study to understand the bureaucratic structure and to explore more about the economic and religion relation in the context *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. He says religion was not just a social product, not simply a function of the human capacity to create societies, but rather a source ideas and practices which transcend the immanent social world and therefore capable of acting upon the social world in independent and unpredictable ways. Religion has been in different contexts both a source of social change and a source of social order, the legitimating of the status quo. However Weber also believed that religion would gradually fade in social significance as a consequence of the rationalization of modern social and economic organization (Northcott, 1999).

The Mythological, Durkheimian and Weberian approach seems to be interrelated. It's because as a religious institutions has various myths attached to them. Myths also could be located in the structural functional aspect of these shrines. Thus, Durkheimian approach becomes significant to understand how myths are practiced by individual and the society. Weberian approach becomes important to understand the management of these shrines, in which the myths, beliefs and rituals becomes significant.

The ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel also helped the study to understand about the day to day activities, common sensical knowledge, practical sociological reasoning. It also explains the documentary method. In *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*, Garfinkel's approach has focused on the micro pilgrimage activities and process.

The global approach has been used to understand the relationship between religion and globalization in the context of *Vaishno Devi* shrine. In this aspect it has explored the role of online technology in making the religion more consciousness. Giddens (1993) said in globalizing trends, everyday activities

connect to global outcomes and vice versa. In his book, 'New rules of sociological method' (1993), Giddens has focused on the structure and agency. He also argues that both individual and society considers important in the structure, in which he has developed the concept of duality of structure (Giddens, 1993). Therefore, the multiple approaches have been used, like, structural functionalist, interactionist, mythical, philosophical, historical and the global approach to understand the aspect of the research in a holistic manner. The next section has discussed the research methods.

2.5. Research Method

The central focus of the research is on the pilgrimage and emerging challenges in India. In this context, the researcher had chosen *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Both of these shrines attract lakhs of pilgrims from many parts of India and even from various countries³⁶ in the world. Any research starts with a problem or begins with the selection of the research question. The researcher finds out the conclusion with the use of techniques, methods and theoretical perspective. The whole process of research is followed by an appropriate methodology (Srivastava, 2015:2). In research methods multiple approaches have been used to understand the aspects of the research problem. The study has used mixed methodology. The comparative method, case study method and ethno methodology has been used. In comparative method it has compared the *Amarnath Shrine* and *Vaishno Devi Shrine* pilgrimage, where it has focus on the nature and duration of pilgrimage, the interconnectivity and accessibility, the livelihood of local communities, the division of labor, the shrine management, the religious tourism, the ecological and security concerns and the role of state, NGO, Civil society.

Durkheim wrote that comparative method in sociology is not a special branch in sociology; it's sociology itself (Beteille, 2015: 124). Radcliffe Brown spoke of social anthropology as comparative sociology. Both Durkheim and Radcliffe Brown are best known for their case studies of the Australian Aborigines by the first and the Andaman Islanders. Both believe that

³⁶ Kumar (2006) has identified U.S.A, U.K, Australia, Gulf and Neighbouring countries.

comparative method would enable them to discover general laws about society and its institutions, including its religious institutions. Their strategy was to proceed in a systematic way through observation, description and comparison to generalization. Comparative method gives equal consideration at least in certain respects and for certain purposes to all societies irrespective of our personal engagements. The comparative method brings all societies on a level with each other (Beteille, 2015: 187-88).

The comparative method has been used to understand the structure and function of pilgrimage at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. In the context it has looked upon the duration of pilgrimage, the ritual performance and shrine management. It compared the pilgrimage connectivity and accessibility to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The local communities livelihood and nature of work has been discussed, compared and contrasted. The division of labor at both the shrines has been explained and compared. Other thing that has been compared was the aspect of religious tourism, the security issue and the role of state, NGO, Civil society.

The case study method has used to make the research more focused. Frederic Le Play introduced the case study method in social sciences in 1829. Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss have discussed the case study method in their work on grounded theory. Durkheim, Weber, Malinowski, Brown also have given much consideration to the case study method. In this study the case of shrine priest has been taken to understand the traditional and modern priesthood. It has been observed that the priesthood has been changed with time and space. Now the shrines in India are in the process of becoming more democratic and liberal. The case of priest also helped the research to contextualize the structure and function of shrine in the contemporary period. Case of labor class working at the shrine has focused on the division of labor both at traditional and modern society. It also has discussed the response of shrine board management. The case of *baridar* community in *Katra* and local communities in Kashmir has been discussed. It has shown the relationship between the shrine board and the local community that has become a challenge. The case of tourist agencies, local shop owners and the security aspect has been

discussed to understand more about the emerging challenges in present time's pilgrimages.

The ethno methods has discussed about the day to day activities at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It explored how pilgrims make sense of the whole pilgrimage activities. Basically the ethno methods focus on the day to day interactions, common sensical understanding about the notion of pilgrimage, to cooperate with various rules and regulations set up by the shrine to manage the pilgrimage. It also has documented the historical aspect of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine and inter-related it with the present context. Both history and the contemporary context become significant in understanding the present issues and challenges. Garfinkel has discussed the history-present context dichotomy in his work where he argues that both history and the present time are interconnected and make more sense if taken both the context in the study of any phenomenon.

2.6. Data Collection

The data has been collected through diverse tools, techniques and methods. The primary source has been used to gather field data. Primary data means the collection of first hand information. Field data has been collected by using semi-structured interview schedule, general observation of the field, face to face interview, focused interview and group discussion. The semi-structured and unstructured interview schedule has been used to collect pilgrim's data. It gives them more options to explore their perception of pilgrimage journey. The observation became the significant tool to observe the pilgrims activities, their belief and rituals performance. Face to face interviews has been taken of local markets, the tourist agencies, the shrine board official, state, media, Ngo and the civil society. Focused interviews have been taken of the working class at these shrines. In some cases there has been taken the group discussion.

Both open ended and close ended interview has been taken The observation method has been used to know the pilgrimage activities, the local markets, the labor class and the day to day activities performed at the shrine. Face to face interview has been taken of pilgrims, priest, the shrine board officials etc. Focused interview has been taken of the labor class, local

community, shrine board, tourist agencies, state governing body, media agencies, Ngo and Civil society. The group discussion has been held with pilgrims, the local community, the labor class etc. All the tools and techniques have been used to gather primary data. The secondary data has been collected from books, journals, articles, government reports, shrine board's reports, religious tourism reports etc. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to gather data. Quantitative method have gathered numerical data while qualitative method collected data through field diary, open ended questionnaire, unstructured interviews and unstructured observations. Various cases have been taken of the shrine priest, the labor class; the local community has been taken to understand the insider aspect of the shrine.

The data has been collected from pilgrims, shrine priests, shrine board officials, local community, labor class, local markets, hotel owners, tourist agencies etc. The data has been collected at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. At *Vaishno Devi* the data gathered from *Katra*-the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage base camp, where it has collected interviews of pilgrims, local markets, the tourist agencies, the local community, the labor class, *Katra* railway station, shrine board office *Katra*. It also has interviewed the pilgrims, the labor working class when they were undertaking pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi*. The data also has been collected at Jammu railway station, *Trikuta Bhawan* complex near railway station Jammu for *Vaishno Devi* pilgrims & during bus journey. The data had been collected in the train from New Delhi to *Katra*. At the shrine of *Amarnath* the data has been gathered from *Bhagwati* Nagar rest house (Ashram) for pilgrims, *Pehalgham* in *Anantnag*, *Baltal* in *Ganderbal*. The data on amaranth shrine has been collected from Jammu office of *Amarnath* shrine board office and some data has been taken from online sources. Interviews have been taken when pilgrims were taking place their journeys from *Pehalgham* to the *Amarnath* cave and back to the *Baltal* from the shrine cave.

2.7. Sampling Method

Sampling may be defined as the selection of some part of the total part on the basis of which a judgement about the totality is made. Sample data enables to estimate the population parameters (Kothari, 2002). The shrine of *Vaishno Devi*

and *Amarnath* has been selected because these shrines are becoming globally famous, millions of pilgrims visit the shrine and these shrines have been facing many issues and challenges. **Second**, becoming the centre of attraction as well as the shrine functions under the state government has many new aspects to study like the political economy of the shrine. It also understands how the shrine board managements impact the local economy or the local community. **Third**, these shrines are facing many challenges like the issue of local management, the rise of religious tourism and its impacts on the socio-economic and ecological and security challenge.

The samples have been drawn from these two shrines viz. *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine*. The former attracts most of the pilgrims from all over the country as well some from foreign countries also. While the later also attracts pilgrims but due to the geographical reasons the pilgrimage take place only for two months in a year. In the context of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and *Amarnath Shrine*, the data collected from various sources i.e. pilgrims, pilgrimage centres, shrine boards, tourism boards, shop owners, hotel staff, local communities, local authorities and the state government. For that purpose it have covered the field based interviews where interview schedule, semi-structured interviews and narratives of the local communities have been taken well. The *Vaishno Devi* shrine has much diversity with the shrine of *Amarnath*. Both have different pattern of pilgrimage management. For Conducting the interviewee the researcher have chosen random sampling and little used purposive sampling of rough estimate of one hundred thirty interviewee from each *Amarnath Shrine* and *Vaishno Devi Shrine* of which it will amount of two hundred sixty interviewees. The pilgrim's data have been collected by looking at gender, age, education, occupation, class, religion, caste, marital status, region etc. It will cover the shrine board's officials, pilgrims, shrine priests, labourers (*pithuwallas and ponnywalls*), shop owners, hotel owners, local communities and local authority's interviews. The purposive sampling has been selected the pilgrims, labor class, government officials, shrine priest, local community, local markets, the state governing council, media, Ngo and the civil society to have their interviews. Therefore in purposive sampling we have selected respondents, as the respondents belong to the diverse sphere like the shrine, pilgrimage and the

society. The researcher had taken semi-structured and unstructured interviews of pilgrims. For working labor at shrines, local markets/shopkeepers, local community and shrine board official's researcher had taken focussed as well as informal interviews. The semi-structured, informal and focus interview schedule has been used for data collection. The semi-structured and unstructured interviews had been used to gather data of pilgrims. This study had taken some cases to understand the whole spectrum of the research. Apart from primary sources in the field, this has critically evaluated secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, newspapers and government reports. In the broader overview of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine, the shrine priest's case has been taken to understand the various myths associated with these shrines. The semi-structured and unstructured interviews of pilgrims have been taken to know the relation of shrine, state and society. The interviews of shrine board officials, the state, the markets, the transport agencies, Ngo, civil society and media has been taken to understand the comparison of pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. The case of both the shrine has been discussed.

Sample Size

Sample size is an important part of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about the population from a sample. A total of 260 respondents have been taken to understand the whole research study. 130 respondents have been taken from the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and another 130 from the shrine of *Amarnath*. The respondents belongs to the different strata i.e. gender, education, class, caste, religion, marital status, region, family type etc. Therefore all the necessary variables have been taken into account to make a general idea about the research hypothesis or the problem of the research study.

Table No. 2.5. Sample Size

Shrine	Gender		Total
	M	F	
<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	72	58	130
<i>Amarnath</i>	82	48	130
Total	154	106	260

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Total Sample: 260

We have taken 260 respondents by interview schedule through random sampling. We have taken pilgrims, the locals, the labourers and the shrine board management board officials as our respondents by using purposive sampling. From one shrine 130 respondent's have been selected. There have been selected 72 males and 58 females from the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and 82 males and 48 females from the shrine of *Amarnath*. Apart from the 260 respondents 60 unstructured focused interviews have been taken from both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It covers Shrine board, Labor/ Local Community, Local Markets/Transport Agencies, NGO/Civil Society/Media, Government Agencies.

The data has been collected by using both quantitative as well as qualitative methods. 260 structured interviews of pilgrims have been taken from both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. Unstructured and Focussed interviews of Working labor, shrine staff and case study of priest two priests have been taken from both the shrines. Local community perception, case of baridar community has been discussed in this study; Unstructured interviews of local markets, shopkeepers at *Katra, Pehalgham, Amarnath Cave* have been taken. The unstructured and various informal discussions had with the transport agencies both at Jammu and Delhi have been captured. Focussed interviews of NGO, Civil society and media have been taken. The study also have taken interviews of the shrine boards officials, tourism board officials, labor class working at both the shrines, narratives of the local community, focused interviews of priests, interviews of Langar organizations, security agencies, Dharmarth trust, civil society, NGO and Media organizations. The study also has discussed the case studies of Shrine priest, Dharmarth Trust, Baridar Community, NGO, Media, and Security Agencies, Tourism Board, Local Politics, state government and some pilgrims have been taken. The aim of this sample size has been comprehensive and holistic for the undertaken research. The following independent and dependent variables had been taken in this study.

Gender is the social construction of male and female. The gender has been selected to understand the perception of both male and female. It has selected 154 male and 106 females from both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

There has been seen the females visits less as compare to the males at both the shrines. But comparatively *Amarnath* receives more numbers of male's pilgrims as compare to males. It's because pilgrimage has been associated with the long journeys to the sacred place. Due to the issue of safety and security they get less options to go alone or friends. Females make their pilgrimage with their families and some cases with their friends. But males have unlimited options to make pilgrimage journey at any point of time. Therefore, still the patriarchal authority has dominated the society.

Table No. 2.6. Showing Gender of the respondents

S. No	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percent
1.	Male	154	59%
2.	Female	106	41%
	Total	260	100%

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

The table above has shown the 59% males and 40% females visit both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Female visiting more to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* than the *Amarnath* shrine has certain reasons. One; females has attachment more with the goddess than with gods. It's because in Hinduism literature has somehow associated the practical women with the incarnation of *Durga*, *Kali* and *Lakshmi*. So, these resemblances of Women with the goddess have attached the emotions of women's more with the *Vaishno Devi*. Second, *Vaishno Devi* as a female goddess wins the heart of women's. Third, the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has more connectivity, accessibility, safety and security as compare to the shrine of *Amarnath*. Age group gives diverse opinions on the notion of pilgrimage, the shrine, state and the society. It's also significant to make the holistic nature of the study.

Table No. 2.7. Showing the respondents age

S. No	Age	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total
1.	15-30	84	44	128(49.2%)
2.	31-45	36	66	102(39%)
3.	46-60	8	18	26(10%)
4.	61-75	2	2	4(1.5%)
	Total	130	130	260

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

49.6% pilgrims in the age group 15-30 visits more to the shrine. Second the age group 31 to 45 with 39%. 10.0% of 46-60 and 61 to 75 with 1.5%. The age factor also played an important role to these shrines. It has been shown that pilgrims in the age between 15-30 years visit more to these shrines of *Vaishno Devi* than *Amarnath* shrine. It's because the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* remains open throughout the year as well as it have more accessibility as compare to the shrine of *Amarnath*. Now the young generation plans pilgrimage to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* without having any religious notion in mind. Most of them are doing the pilgrimage as a recreational journey. Kind of Occupation explored more about the kind of peoples visiting the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. In this study the govt employees, private job holders, the business class and the other working groups are visiting the shrine.

Table No. 2.8. Showing professions of the respondents

S. No.	Age	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Percentage
1.	Govt. Job	25	31	56(21.2%)
2.	Private Job	27	47	74(28.5%)
3.	Business	17	31	48(18.8%)
4.	Other	61	21	82(31.5%)
	Total	130	130	260(100%)

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

21.2% of the government sector people visit the shrine. 28.5% private sector employee visits and 18.8% business community. 31.5% are those who are student and are not into any kind of employment. Students and private job holders are more visiting to these shrines.

The **income variables** had been chosen to understand the class factor. It showed us the people who are visiting more to the pilgrimage places in India.

Table No. 2.9. Showing class (Income) of the respondents

S. No	Income	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Percent
1.	5000-20000	44	54	98 (37.3%)
2.	20001-35000	24	37	61 (23.5%)
3.	35001-50000	11	22	33 (13.1%)
4.	50000 & Above	18	10	28 (10.8%)
5.	No Income	33	7	40(15.4%)

	Total	130	130	260(100%)
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Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

The data shows that people earning in between 5000 to 20000 visits the shrine followed by the income 20001 to 50001 which constitutes 23.5% of the total income group than 13.1% are those who earns from 35001 to 50000 rupees per month and only 10.8% are those who have higher income or belong to the higher class. Those who don't have monthly income and belong to the below poverty lines also constitutes 15.4% of the total 260 respondents. It shows that the lower middle class and middle class peoples are visiting more to these shrines. Many studies have shown that middle class participated highest among other classes in the religious tourism.

Education variable explores the human thinking in the religious world. Peoples with different educational background and their notions towards the religious beliefs and rituals have been explored. Education plays a very important role in grooming personality. It makes us more conscious about our surroundings. In the present time it becomes important to take perceptions of pilgrims with different educational status about the notion of pilgrimage and the emerging challenging.

Table No 2.10. Showing percentage of literacy among the respondents

S. No	Education	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Percent
1.	Illiterate	4	10	14 (5.4%)
2.	Up to 10 th	7	17	24(9.6%)
3.	Intermediate	25	27	52(20.0%)
4.	Graduation	44	25	69(26.5%)
5.	Maters & Above	48	47	96(36.2%)
6.	Others	2	4	6(2.3%)
	Total	130	130	100%

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

The educational background of the respondents shows that educated peoples are visiting more too both the shrines. The illiterate constis 5.4%; those who are matriculate are 9.4%; intermediate are 20%; 26.5% are graduates; 36.2% are those who have masters degree and they are the highest in number visiting to these shrines. 6% are those who are into professional degrees. Therefore it

becomes wrong to say that peoples with highest education doesn't mean the person has detached themselves from the religious spaces but it proves that educated peoples are more interested to visit these places for religious, cultural and recreational means.

Religion is one of the social institutions. The study falls in the field of religion and society where it becomes important to understand the perception of pilgrims about the various changes in the religious sphere. It has asked questions on the notion of pilgrimage, beliefs and rituals, sacred and profane and the contemporary changes.

Table. 2.11. Showing Religion of the respondents

S.No	Religion	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Percent
1.	Hindu	120	120	240(92.3%)
2.	Muslim	5	4	9(3.5%)
3.	Sikh	5	6	11(4.2%)
	Total	130	130	260(100%)

Source: Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs visit both the shrine. But 92.3% are Hindus, 3.5% are Muslims and 4.2% are Sikhs. This proves that people from diverse background are visiting to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Infact there are thousands of non Hindus who are into various kinds of jobs at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

Table No. 2.12. Showing Caste of the respondents

S. No	Caste	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Percentage
1.	General	102	104	206(70.2%)
2.	SC	15	12	27(10.4%)
3.	ST	8	7	15(5.8%)
4.	OBC	5	7	12(4.6%)
	Total	130	130	260(100%)

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

The general category peoples consists of 70.2%; 10.2% belongs to the schedule caste category; 5.8% are Schedule tribe and 4.6% belong to the OBC background. Therefore every section of the society visits both the shrine of *Vasihno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

Table No. 2.13. Showing Marital Status of respondents.

S.No	Marital Status	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath</i> Shrine	Percent
1.	Married	54	94	147(56.5%)
2.	Unmarried	76	36	113(43.5%)
	Total	130	130	260(100%)

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

Out of 260 pilgrims 56.5% are married and 43.5% are unmarried. It's also seen that married peoples come to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* for her blessings after marriage as well visits the shrine of *Amarnath*.

Table No. 2.14. Showing Family of the respondents.

S.No	Family Type	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath</i> Shrine	Percent
1.	Joint	95	112	207(79.6%)
3.	Nuclear	33	11	44(16.9%)
4.	Other	2	7	9(3%)
	Total	130	130	260(100%)

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

The people visiting belong to the joint family (79.6%); 16.9% are from nuclear family; 9% belong to the other type of families. Therefore people belong to all kind of family background visits the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

Table No. 2.15. Showing Region of the respondents

S.No	Region	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath</i> Shrine	Percent
1.	North India	108	95	203(77.7)
2.	East India	11	25	36(13.8)
3.	West India	0	6	6(2.3)
4.	South India	4	0	4(1.5)
5.	North East India	7	4	11(4.6)
6.	Total	130	130	260(100.0)

Source: Primary data collected during August 2014-December2015

Most of the pilgrims belong to the north India (77.7%); than 13.8% belong to the east India; 6% from west India; 1.5% from south India and 4.4% belong to the North East India.

2.8. Fieldwork Experiences

Fieldwork is that step in the research process that proves the theory or ideas by visiting the field, to collect the data from the respondents. As defined by Srivastava (2005) in his book *Methodology and Fieldwork* that a field is that kind of place where a researcher or investigator plans to study. Field can be anything that is exploratory in nature. At the selective place the researcher stays and observes the whole activities. He spends a long time in the field. The process of gathering the data by staying with the people having a firsthand experience of their lifestyle is termed fieldwork. Madan (1995:112) quoted in Srivastava argues that the “*fieldwork also teaches the distinction between what people think, what people say’ what people do and what people say they ought to have done. The fieldworker can alter strategies and techniques of data collection, improvise newer methods, and follow up new leads that arise because fieldwork provides immense flexibility to the investigator. He can devise on the spot strategies to come to grips with unforeseen challenges of fieldwork*” (Srivastava, 2005:1).

The fieldwork has been carried out in two districts viz *Reasi* and *Anantnag* of Jammu and Kashmir and each of the districts represents the research area. On the other it could also cover the *Udhampur* and *Jammu* district in the *Jammu* Division and the *Srinagar* and *Baramulla* district in the *Kashmir* Division. Because these districts are the main pilgrim’s destination points for *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage. The field work for the study was carried out at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine over a period of 16 months in the year 2014 and 2015. Further visits were made to the concerned offices of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine to collect additional data. As the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* was familiar to me because I had written my MPhil dissertation on it. In fact my work was on the secondary literature but I had visited the many times to know the pilgrimage process. I also had reviewed all the secondary literature on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. The MPhil experience helped me to locate the research problem more in a systematic way. It motivates me to explore more to reach at new findings. I was deeply enthusiastic to conduct field work to understand more about the shrine in reality. Therefore, I decided to carry forward my research on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and started exploring it. Later after review of

literature and many discussions with my supervisor I finally decided to do a comparative study of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. In the year 2014 I visited many times to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. I visited the field with observation method and did pilot survey. I started taking interviews of the respondents. During the month of July and August 2014 I visited the shrine of *Amarnath* for data collection. I got registered with some friends. I took bus and reached Srinagar and then booked a car for *Pehalgham*. At evening I reached *Pehalgham* and I booked a hotel for us. *Pehalgham* is one of the most famous tourist places in Kashmir. It has small market, shops and hotels resorts. Markets have been prepared to the meet the tourist requirements. Most of the pilgrims stay at the pilgrimage camp near *pehalgham* but I decided at hotel. Because I wanted to explore the market and the local community. I had taken interview of hotels owners, staff and the local shopkeepers. But due to the Kashmir situation I felt insure at night but somehow I managed till morning. At 5am I started my journey to the *Amarnath*. Every stoppage there was the paramilitary and army for the safety of pilgrimage. During the whole journey I interacted with the pilgrims, the labor class, the priest, the security personals, the *Langar* organizations and shopkeeper. All the interviews had been taken while on the way or at panjarini or the shrine cave. I found that the data collection at *Amarnath* shrine is very difficult than at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. It could be because of the many reasons. One; the *Vaishno Devi* remains open throughout the year but pilgrimage remains only for 40-60 days at *Amarnath* Shrine due to the geographical reasons. Two; the due to Kashmir situation there has been created a psychology of fear among the pilgrims that led them not to disclose their identity. When I started conversation with the pilgrims at *Amarnath* shrine most of them tries not to share their experience. Pilgrims started countering my question and asked me about my details. It forced me to locate the issue of *Amarnath* shrine in the context of security and fear that I have discussed in the sixth chapter in this study. Third; there is more connectivity and accessibility to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* than to the shrine of *Amarnath*. The *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage has managed to provide all kind of facilities to the pilgrims who visit the shrine for various reasons. But the *Amarnath* shrine falls in one of the difficult geographical terrain which makes the development impossible. This

lack of proper infrastructure makes the journey most difficult and harder. But every year lacs of pilgrims visited the shrine of *Amarnath*. Few years back the *Amarnath* shrine board had started the helicopter service to make the pilgrimage more easy and comfortable. It also explores that both the pilgrimages are unique and different from each other. I had conducted fieldwork at *Amarnath* in august 2014 and august 2015. I also had visited the shrine board officials, the concerned officials of the state government. At the shrine of *Vaishno* I had visited in the year 2014 and 2015 but in 2016 some visits had made to gather remained data.

2.9. Challenges in the Field

The researcher came across with various challenges during the field work. First I had prepared a common depth interview schedule for the respondents. I came to know at the field that pilgrims are not ready to give proper time due to scheduled time to reach at the pilgrimage site. Therefore in many cases I started informal talk with the pilgrims during journey. Most of pilgrims communicated only *Jai Mata Di or Jai Bhole Nath*. They were not ready to discuss other things in detail because of the situation of the state Jammu and Kashmir at large. Data collection also becomes challenging while dealing with the complex nature of the study. The study has collected data from different sources like it had taken interviews of pilgrims, labor class working at shrine, local community, the local shopkeepers, tourist agencies, priests, shrine board officials, state governing council, media, Ngo and the civil society. Both the shrines have autonomous authority but controlled by the governor of the state. The security reasons were the biggest challenges in collecting data. I found that pilgrims across the globe seem to be visiting to these shrines. In spite of that there are some compares and contrast between the *Amarnath Shrine* and the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* and it lay on the geographical and security reasons. In the context of *Vaishno Devi shrine* throughout the year pilgrims visits to the shrine. But in the context of *Amarnath Shrine*, pilgrimage remains only for three months in a year. Due to the *Amarnath* pilgrimage time specific it becomes difficult to explore the beliefs and rituals. Also there is not enough literature available on the emerging challenges in *Amarnath* pilgrimage. I found some articles that have spoken about the environmental concerns but most of them seems the influenced by Kashmiri

separatist movemet. It's because always the Kashmir perspective have challenged the *Amarnath* pilgrimage. On the other there is enough literature on *Vaishno Devi* shrine. But the present study relied on the field data to understand the present research study. Second, due to the terrorism in the Kashmir Valley, pilgrims seem to be declined. Both the shrine comes under the state legislature Act. Both the shrines are the helping hands which boosts the local economy. Some articles on the ecological aspects of *Amarnath shrine* and the *Vaishno Devi Shrine* have claimed responsible the increased the number of pilgrims. We also should not forget that both the shrines have their own specialized board who deals with the pilgrimage and the pilgrims. It came to notice that the pilgrims are throwing waste disposal anywhere they wishes. No doubt global warming is a major societal challenge, but the *Amarnath Shrine* ecological issue is because of the mis-management by the shrine board at some extent. The researcher had conducted fieldwork in both the regions of Jammu and Kashmir. In Jammu region the researcher conducted interviews smoothly. But in Kashmir the researcher faced many challenges in collecting the data.

Thus, the chapter on methodology has discussed about the field, theory and approach used in the research, research method, sampling, fieldwork experiences and the challenges in the field. Thus, the present chapter has developed an approach to study the further research. In the next chapter it has discussed about the shrine, the sacred and profane debate, beliefs and rituals etc.

Chapter 3

Understanding of Shrine with Special Reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*

3.1. Introduction

This chapter conceptualizes the concept and significance of shrine in the Indian society. The intrinsic aim is to explore the structure and function of the shrine in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* in the present time. However, the study has deliberated about the mythical, historical and religious aspect. This chapter has explored the first objective of the present study. First, it starts with the discussion on the concept of the shrine, where it has understood the notion of the shrine in the wider context of Indian society. Second, it has given accounts of the socio-cultural and economic history of temples in India. Third, mythical and historical accounts *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* has been discussed. Fourth, it has discussed the sacred geography, sacred space and time and symbolism. It explores how the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* symbolize in the wider context of Indian society. Fifth, it has explored the performance of the ritual in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. Sixth, it understands the changing social organization of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. The sacred versus profane debate, Scholarly work of Diana Eck on '*India as a sacred geography*' and P.B.Rana Singh on the sacred space and time has been given consideration due to their rich contribution in the understanding of sacred Indian geography.

Selvam (2003) study on changing social organizations of Hindu temples speaks about the various changes in the south Indians temples in the present era. Therefore in this way, the present chapter has given a broader overview of the concept of the shrine in the wider context of Indian society with particular emphasis on two shrines *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Both quantitative and qualitative methods, the relevant literature and the field data has been used in the preparation of this chapter. The chapter is sociological relevant because the emphasis is to explore the relationship between shrine, state and society. In this sense, the understanding of the shrine in present times could be significant for knowledge production. Because the chapter has made the discourse on the

structure and function of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine in the broader context of shrines in India. The next part has discussed the concept of a shrine in the wider societal context.

3.2. The concept of Shrine

A shrine is considered as a sacred place due to its supernatural or prodigious qualities. It could be anything like the deity; human beings who had done phenomenal work for the society, Saint, ancestor or anything that have been given awe by the society. Shrines are found in all the lived world religion like Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc. It could be found in churches, mosques, temples, home, etc. In every shrine, there is a place to worship and votive offering is made is known as alter³⁷. Raina (2014) explained that deity is worshipped in a shrine. Shrines are typically located inside a temple known as a *Mandir*, though many Hindus also have a household shrine as well. Sometimes a human is venerated at a Hindu shrine along with a deity, for instance, the 19th-century religious teacher Sri Ramakrishna is venerated at the Ramakrishna Temple in Kolkata, India. Central to a Hindu shrine is a statue of a deity, which is known as a *Murti*³⁸. Hindus believe that the deity that they are worshipping actually enters and inhabits the *Murti*. This is given offerings like candles, food, flowers, and incense. In some cases, particularly among devotees of the goddess Kali in northern India, animals are sacrificed to the deity. At a *Mandir*, the congregation often assembles in front of a shrine, and, led by priests, give offerings and sings devotional hymns (Raina, 2014). Sarma (1982) mentioned in Ray (2009) said that from 2nd to 1st century BC onwards the archaeological records have shown the presence of many deities. The *Besnagar Brahmi pillar* from *Vidisha* dated back to second century BC on a *Garuda pillar of Vasudeva* stated that it was authorized by *Heliodoros*, son of Dion from *Taxila*, a worshipper of *Viṣṇu*³⁹. In *Chittoor* district of Andhra Pradesh, the *Siva liṅga* at *Gudimallam* dates to the second to first century BC and was enshrined in a brick shrine dated to the first century AD. The

³⁷ It's a place of worship

³⁸ Means statue

³⁹ Vishnu is one of the supreme god in Hinduism

archaeological accounts of *Krishna* and *Tungabhadra* rivers between second and sixth centuries AD had shown that there were various brick temples that contained small stone *linga*. Srinivasan (1981) argues that *Chaurasi* at Mathura had been found the first *Shaiva* shrine dated to first century AD (Ray, 2009:82-83).

Thus the religious history has shown the presence of numerous shrines in the Indian subcontinent as well as in the south Asia. Many studies conducted in the field of archaeology, history, and religion has given accounts of it. It also has shown that there had been many roles of shrines in the life of peoples at ancient, medieval and the modern India.

The shrine board focusing on management and administration of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have explained the concept of a shrine in its official document which says that shrine means the shrine area, the holy cave and the temples surrounding within the shrine space. The document doesn't consider the shrine cave as Temple but shrine itself has natural or sacred character. The holy cave, the other sacred spaces have been considered as part of the shrine. No other artificial construction is included in the shrine but it calls them development around the shrine spaces so that maximum pilgrims could get the chance to seek blessings of the sacred things (SMVDSA⁴⁰ & SASBA⁴¹ Act of 1986 and 2000).

Therefore, a shrine could be anything related to the supernatural powers in which the entire community or society considers it as sacred. Sometimes a clan considers their ancestors as a sacred soul and starts belief and rituals that become the routine for the entire family or community or the next generation of the family. In north India, the household, individual, family or society says it *PitrDevata*⁴², *Kuldevta*⁴³. The basic difference between shrine and temple is in their structural forms. Temple could be the building or an area covered for the sacred character. But shrine is the *Murti*⁴⁴ anything inside the temple. Therefore the thing covers the shrine known a temple. Many scholars like Emile Durkheim, T.N. Madan, and Diana Eck have discussed the sacred character, beliefs, rituals

⁴⁰ Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Act of 1988

⁴¹ Shri Amarnath Shrine Board Act of 2000

⁴² God who are being worshipped and has been considered as holy.

⁴³ It's a god of one caste, community etc.

and the moral community. The present study has discussed about two shrines *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It's because both doesn't have any artificial building that covers them. The traditional cave route to the pindis had been stopped in *Vaishno Devi* due to its small space that becomes difficult to manage the huge pilgrim's gatherings in the present time. Therefore the shrine board had constructed two more caves that are big in size and length and accommodates more than 15,000 to 20,000 pilgrims in a day and also has the capacity to manage one lacs pilgrim in a single day. In case of *Amarnath*, it has some constructions surrounding the *Shiva linga*. At present pilgrims visit the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* to see natural rock *pindis* or at *Amarnath* for Cave or the snow form *linga*. In Hinduism *Murti* has been considered a shrine but the temple is the constructed part around it.

The next section has given a description of the socio-cultural history of temples in India. It helps the chapter to make historically, culturally and genealogically more significant to understand the notion of shrines in India.

3.3. Socio-Cultural history of Temples in India

Temples have been part of human civilization for decades. *Vedic* (1500 to 500 BCE) and *Harrapan* (2500BCE) period had mentioned about many temples structures. There were found many pieces of evidence about the presence of temples in the ancient India. One; in *Mohenjo-Daro*, a noteworthy building has been found that has a mesial courtyard and a symmetric arrangement of rooms. For rituals, every other room has a low brick platform. In the courtyard fire alter was placed for rituals performance. Two; In *Lothal* there was evidence regarding the presence of fire altars. Third; in *Dashli* in North Afghanistan of 2000 B.C. that uses *Yantric*⁴⁵ forms that have traditionally been used in the *Vedic* tradition. Another ritual worship of goddesses in the *Harappan* times and even earlier in the older rock art that has been found at many places in India (Kak, 2005). Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968) Russian-American sociologist of Harvard University has written: "*Art for a Hindu is life as it is interpreted by religion and philosophy. Art for art's sake is consequently unknown. Instead, a symbolism*

⁴⁵ Yantra is a form of tantric tradition used it the worship of deities and belong to Hindu astrology.

was created to express various qualities of the superhuman soul and superhuman figures." (Shah, 1991).

There is evidence of sacred things used in Bronze Age and Indus Valley civilization. With a rich history, Hindu temples are found in large numbers in culture and civilization. At present times across the world, Hindu temples have been built in various countries that include Cambodia, Nepal, Mauritius, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Great Britain, the United States, Australia, South Africa, Malaysia and Canada. Hindu temples are known by many different names, varying on region and language, including *Alayam, Mandir, Mandira, Ambalam, Gudi, Kavu, Koil, Kovil, Déul, Raul, Devasthanam, Degul, Deva Mandiraya, and Devalaya*.

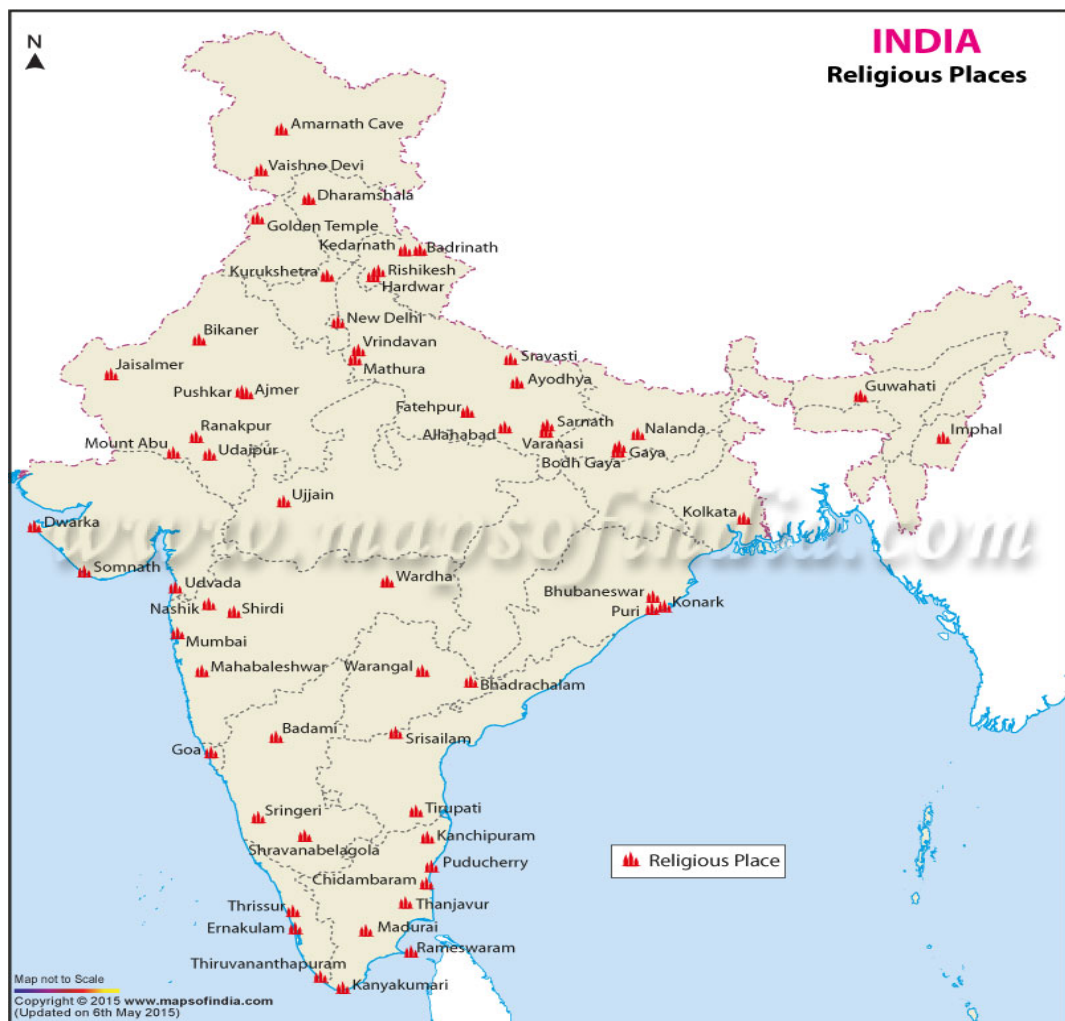
The God or Goddess resides in the temple (*devalaya*). To a human body, the *Vastu* texts present the temple plan as homological. In the *Purusha-Sukta* the human body serves as the plan for all creation. To the standing *purusa*, the temple structure is homologous as the *silpa-panjara*. A similar measure informs the proportions of the sculpted form, that may be standing or seated, and also of painted figures at a lower level. This body at its profound level is a body of knowledge. As such as body, the structure of music is also to be conceived; hence one can speak of the *Sangita-Purusa*, where there exist explicit relationships between ascending and descending notes. According to *Sarngadeva*, with eyes, hands, and feet the composer composed the music. It must have a balance between opposites: symmetry and asymmetry, movement and pause, recurrence and variation. In the words of Stella Kramrisch, "*The temple is the concrete shape (murti) of the Essence; as such it is the residence and vesture of God. The masonry is the sheath (kosa) and body. The temple is the monument of manifestation. The Indian temple tradition falls into two broad categories, the Nagara and the Dravida, whose separation from the earlier tradition is traced back to the middle centuries of the first millennium. In addition, the texts speak of a hybrid category, called Vesara, which in Sanskrit means "mule" that emphasizes this hybridity. The Murti in the garbhagrha stands on its pedestal pitha*". A *Vaisnava* temple has an image of Visnu, a *Saiva* temple has a lingam, and a *Devi* temple has the image of the Goddess (Kak, 2005).

India is known as the land of temples. From a small village to the urban cities temples are found everywhere. The word 'temple' is derived from the Latin word *templum* means a sacred precinct. In ancient and medieval period many temples were architectural and sculptural excellence. The Hindu temple architecture has been classified into *Nagara* or the north Indian style, *Dravida* or the south Indian style, and *Vesara* which contains elements of both. The temple architecture is unique in every region of India due to the geographical context and the material things available. The emergence of the temple architecture in India can be traced to Vedic times. The basic design of temples has been motivated by the square shape of the *Vedi* (*Vedic sacrificial altar*). The Indian shrine outlined in early at *Bharhut*, *Sanchi*, *Mathura*, and *Amravati*, has a small square altar, often enclosed by a *vedika* (*square railing*) and covered by a tree or a *chattra* (*parasol*). In the form of a *yantra*, *Vastu Sastra* visualizes the *vastupurua mandala* the abstract representation of temple architecture as a square. Thus to connect the human being to the universe is one central concern of Indian temple architecture. However, the Indian temples are not only just limited to the rituals worship of the deity but the centre of Knowledge, art, culture, architecture, and learning. The evolution of the Hindu temple architecture has been one of the most remarkable highlights of Indian architecture (Varida, 2007).

There are numerous shrines of all religious faiths in India. In the modern India, there are thousands of temples in India from north to south and east to west. Most of them receive thousands of devotees every year. In the Hindu religious life, the concept of shrine or temple has been given much importance. The Hindu philosophy considers the human body as a temple. Therefore the notion of the shrine is an embedded phenomenon in the Hindu Society that influences social, cultural, religious and economic life of an individual or the society. There has been the presence of numerous temples or shrines in all over India. It could be seen from North to South and East to West. Each region has some famous temples where enormous numbers of devotees visit for the blessing of the deity. In North India, there is *Vaishno Devi*, *Amarnath*, *Badrinath*, *Kedarnath*, *Haridwar*, *Kashi Vishwanath Temple*, *Kashi Vishwanath Temple*,

ISKON⁴⁶, Ajmer Jawalamukhi Temple and Golden temple in Amritsar. In central India the Khajuraho Temple and Bodh Gaya, Tataknath, Tarapith, Kalighat, Lord Jagannath Temple, Konark Sun Temple in east India. In West India the Swaminarayan Temple, Somnath Temple Shirdi, Sai Baba Temple, Siddhi Vinayak Temple. In south India Srikalahasti Siva temple, Balaji temple, Tirupati Virupaksha Temple, Mookambika Temple, Kanyakumari temple, Minakshi temple Rameswaram temple, Padmanabhaswamy temple, Sabarimala Pilgrimage, Kerala. The Kamahakya Temple in North East India.

Map No 3.1: Major Religious Places in India



Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/religious-places.htm/2015>

⁴⁶ International society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON) also know by ‘Hare Krishna’ movement is a Gaudiya Vaishnava Hindu religious organization founded by Swami Prabhupada in 1966 in New York.

The temples in each region have distinct features and qualities that influence the devotees most to visit these places. In the north the *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi to Triputi* and *Rameshwaram* in the South many shrines are part of Hindu religious life. Sometimes we may call the land of India as the land of shrines or temples. The country is rich in art, culture and religious places. Most of the shrines are visited by millions of people across the country. People of diverse faiths are also taking part in each other religious places.

Troll (2004) focuses on the character of various saints in the Muslim shrines, their history, and significance. It discusses the cult of Muslim saints and Sufism in South Asia. In the thirteen and fourteenth centuries, the Chishti Sufi saints were the most revered in the history of Islam in South Asia. They all have played an important role in the spiritual healing and socio-religious functioning. Their Dargahs also play a significant role in the cultural integration of different communities (Troll, 2004).

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has numerous shrines of all faiths like Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist and Sikhs. Jammu is known as the city of temples; Anantnag the place of lord *Shiva*. Srinagar the city of Sufi shrines and Ladakh the place for monasteries. Mir (2006) argues that the study of the history of Kashmir could be incomplete without having the knowledge of shrines in Kashmir. The shrines have given a new explored various economic activities in Kashmir (Mir, 2006). Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist shrines could be seen in the Kashmir region. Along with the religious significance, the shrines also performs the non-religious functions. That could be the related to the Education, Spiritual knowledge, employment, health and healing and ecological balance etc.

The above section has given the detail description of the socio-cultural history of shrines in India. Now the next section has discussed the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

3.4. The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*

The present section has been specifically focused on the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine*. It has explored various myths associated with both the shrines. It has been noted that every religion in the world has attached various mythical accounts, folklore, and stories. Most of the literature also had given accounts of

such mythical associations. But when we practice in our day to day life at temples, shrines etc on the basis of these mythical notions. Then it becomes the matter of sociological inquiry. Where it raised questions on the association of these myths with our days to day life or how these myths affect our practical life or the relationship between mythical stories, individual and the society. In the same manner, there are many mythical stories where the present context of both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* could be located or we can see the myths in practice in the present times. Second, the recorded historical accounts of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine have been discussed. Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have deep rooted history that speaks about the relationship between the shrine and society.

In the folds of the three peaked mountain known as *Trikuta* the Shrine of *Vaishno Devi* is situated. It's the holy abode of mother goddess *Vaishnavi*. In the contemporary Hindu society, the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage is considered as sacred (Shrine Board, 2010:8). But the present study argues that shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are not specific to Hindu religion but pilgrims from the other religions are also taking part. Because one of common belief of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* says that both the shrines doesn't discriminate peoples on the basis of caste, religion, class, gender etc. But, the supernatural power of the sacred space makes the pilgrimage more inclusive in nature.

Table No.3.1. Showing other religious faith pilgrims visits the shrine.

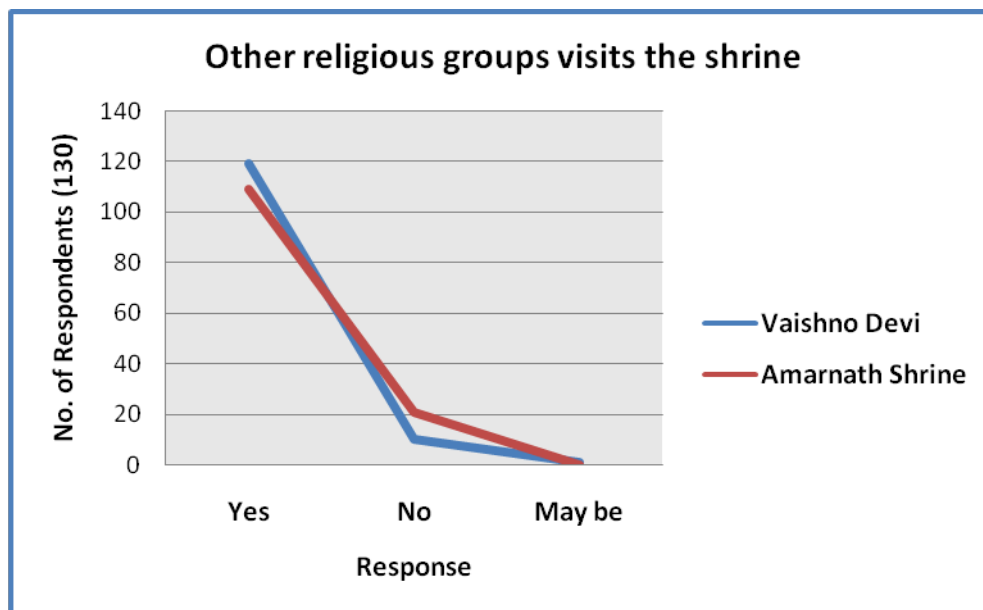
Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	119	109	228	91.5	83.8	87.69
No	10	21	31	7.7	16.2	11.92
May be	1	0	1	.8	0	.39
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

The data has shown that both the shrines witnessed peoples of other religious faiths visiting the shrine. It's because of the democratization of Hindu shrines that led to create such environment where other faiths peoples undertake the pilgrimage journey or becomes part in the management of the pilgrimage. The

data of 260 pilgrims from both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* said that pilgrims from other religious groups seem to be the part of the day to day pilgrimage. Philosophically, historically the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* considered being centre of attraction in the south Asia. Communities residing along the Sindhu River had been regularly visiting the shrine. The present times could be seen the pilgrims from Pakistan visiting the shrine. But the numbers of Pakistani are few due to the effect of the partition of India and the continuous tense situation among the two nations. It's has been seen that people from other religious communities are visiting to these shrines, because these shrines doesn't have any *Murti* or statue but have natural three rock formation *Pindis* and the ice *linga*. This feature also attracts the peoples from other communities who consider it somehow similar to their beliefs and rituals. But comparatively, among the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*, it has been seen that the other religious faiths pilgrims visit more to *Vaishno Devi* than *Amarnath*.

Chart No. 3.1. Comparatively showing other religious groups visits the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*



Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine witnessed pilgrim's visits from other religious groups. It has been seen more in *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage due to more connectivity and accessibility. But *Amarnath* is located in difficult geographical terrain and also got affected due to the separatist movement in Kashmir and the rise of militancy in Kashmir. Therefore, a pilgrim prefers to visit those places that could be easily done rather than full of challenges. But the perception of

respondents at *Amarnath* shrine says that at present times the other religious visits are visiting the shrine cave. Ganhar (1973) explained the *Dharmarth*⁴⁷ Trust has opened all shrines in Jammu and Kashmir to the refugees from Pakistan⁴⁸ occupied areas of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. It also stated that the trust had spent at least 28 lakhs rupees on the provision of relief to the refugees and in the management of the shrines (Ganhar, 1973:12).

3.4.1. Myths associated with *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*

Both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have been associated with various myths, stories, folklore etc. To understand the present context needed to go back into various myths, stories. Diverse myths have been related with the *Vaishno Devi* shrine. That includes the emergence of *Vaishnavi*, the myth of *Bhairava*⁴⁹, the myth of *Garab Joone*⁵⁰ cave, the myth of three pindis, *Pandit Sridhar*⁵¹ story. It has been explored how the pilgrims takes the notions of these myths.

In the Rig-Veda the *Vaishno Devi* find its description in which the mountain *Trikuta* does finds its mention and in fact the worshipping of *Shakti* has been seen among various societies during the *Puranic* Period (Shrine Board, 2010:12). In one version of the discovery of the shrine believed that *Pt. Shridhar* had found the shrine cave 700 years back. One day the *Vaishnavi* appeared in his dream and told him about the cave in the *Trikuta* Mountain. Many times *Pt. Shridhar* visited the *Trikuta* Mountain but couldn't be able to find anything. Ultimately he reached the destination where he found three rocks shaped form. The time *Vaishno Devi* appeared before him and introduced the three rock heads. Later *Pt. Shridhar* spread about the holy cave to the peoples surroundings and started worshipping the *Pindis* in the cave.

Erndl (1993) Stated that, around seven hundred years back, there was a devotee of *Vaishno Devi* named pandit Sridhar, who was belonged to Hansali

⁴⁷ Dharmarth means charitable, is private trust works to look after the management of the temples in Jammu

⁴⁸ Ganhar said that, before the 1947 or the partition of India, the shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi has been visited by many people from those parts which are now in Pakistan, (Ganhar, 1973:8).

⁴⁹ A demon

⁵⁰ Means mother womb

⁵¹ A Devotee of Vaishno Devi

village near *Katra*. He was performed *Kanya Pujan*⁵² for the wish of a child and then divine maiden appeared in front of him and ordered him to invite the people for *Bandara*. After that *Pandit Sridhar* invited the people for *Bandara*. On the day of *Bandara* people are started to come but still *pandit Sridhar* was nerves' about the food because it was opinion of that divine girl, and *Bhaironath* and *Gorakhnath* also came in the *Bandara*. When the *Bandara* started *Bhaironath* asked question of the satisfaction of food. Then *Vaishnavi* started serving the food, *Baironath* demanded for meat and liquor and rejected the vegetarian food, then the divine girl answered him about the manner of somebody's home and their capability and their belief but from this *Baironath* got angry and want to grab that girl but that time and space she got disappeared (Erndl, 1993:41). At the *Vaishno Devi Bhavan* there is an image of *Chamunda* where she beheaded *Bhairo*. There is a route for the *Bhavan*, from the *Banganga*, then *Charanpaduka* and *Adkuwari* (Rohe, 2001:60). *Kinsley* (1978) in the Sanskrit text *Devi-Mahatmya*, written in 6th century A.D had discussed the mythical discourse on goddess *Durga* victory over *Mahishasura*. It argues that *Durga* is unique in it and is primarily a female version of *Vishnu* and she manifested herself in various forms in order to protect the world from demons (*Kinsley*, 1978:489).

Another legend of the *Vaishno Devi* said that during the fight between goddesses and the asuras, the *lakshmi*, *kali* and *saraswati* decided to create a power to destroy the evil on earth. Therefore they created an energy known as *Devi* and asked her to take birth in the house of one of the devotee of mother goddesses *Ratanakar*. Then *Vaishnavi Devi* took birth and during childhood she started doing meditation and was enthusiastic for knowledge. One day *Vaishnavi* left home and decided to live in the forest. It was during the time of *Ramayana*. When she heard about *Ram* the incarnation of *Vishnu* she decided to marry him. But it was not possible for *Ram* to marry her but will come again after the end of exile. As promised *Ram* visited again in disguise of an old men but *Vaishnavi* couldn't be able to identify him. Later he told her that during *Kaliyuga* when he would be in the incarnation of *Kalki* and thereafter *Vaishnavi* went to the *Trikuta* mountain set up an ashram and started meditation.

⁵² A ritual where female child are worshipped

According to Erndl (1993) argues that there are many mythical stories of *Vaishno Devi* origin, to protect the dharma from the demons on this earth. There was a story about the war between gods and demons but the demons were more powerful than gods due to boon by Bharama. According to the boon whosoever took birth from mother womb can't defeat demons, who took birth from the womb. And another myth about the Treta Yuga , when evil powers and Ravan work together to destruct the dharma, then all the gods created the *Mahashakti*, a power named Vaishnavi from the combination of three powers or *shakti* e.g. Mahasarwati, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi..They all are united their powers and produced a *Mahashakti* (Erndl, 1993). When the *Mahashakti* started to kill the Bhaironath , then he apologise for his sinful behaviour, who was unaware of the powers of Vaishnavi (Erndl, 1993).

Erndl (1993) with the cult of *Vaishno Devi*, there are many stories that tell us how *Vaishno Devi* made the Trikuta Mountain a sacred space. In Treta Yuga she has been related with the god Vishnu and the sacred book Ramayana (Erndl, 1993). Rohe (2001) in the Treta Yuga, Vaishnavi wanted to be the wife of Vishnu who had incarnated during the era. When Rama was on the path to Lanka, Vaishnavi met him and had shown wish to marry, but Rama refused because he had already to Sita. But he promised to come back during the Kali Yuga, at the time Vaishnavi will be Rama's power (Rohe, 2001). Some studies have related *Vaishno Devi* with the goddess Lakshmi and some have shown that, she is *Mahadevi* and many scholars have argue that she is mother goddess Durga. In Sanskrit *Vaishno Devi* means Vaishnavi and in Durgasaptshati, Vaishnavi is one of the 108 names of Durga and Dalton (2010) said *Vaishno Devi* is the incarnation of Durga as the shrine is the *Shakti* peeth (Dalton, 2010).

In one myth relates with Jammu, tells the story of Baba Jittoo, an admirer of goddess Vaishno. He was a poor labourer, had exploited by the local king many times because of the much embarrassment finished his life. Later the whole kingdom of the kind got destroyed. In the present time the local peoples of Jammu organize a function at *Vaishno Devi* and Jhiri fair in Jammu to remember Baba Jitto, and particularly the peoples who killed Baba Jitto, are now managing the entire function fair that happens annually (Foster and Stoddard,

2010). Madan (2000) argues that the story of Baba Jito associates with the Karma interpretation in Hinduism (Madan, 2000:65). In the 18th century, at the time of Mughal rule in Delhi, with Maharaja Ranjit Dev, the ruler of Jammu, myths relates with *Vaishno Devi*. At point of time he had been called by the regional Mughal governor of Lahore. Before he had gone to Lahore, he prayed and asked help from *Vaishno Devi* and returned successfully. Later on he constructed huts as well as starts water facilities for pilgrims at *Vaishno Devi* and afterwards he had started his visit to the cave once in a year. In local literature, *Vaishnavi* has been associated with the local peoples of Jammu where she helped them in difficult times (Foster and Stoddard, 2010:113-114). Erndl (1993) argues that, in the north western India, *Vaishno Devi* has become the famous regional cult. She also said that at the national level the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has got recognition (Erndl, 1993:38).

Surroundings the *Vaishno Devi* cave have *Dharamshalas* (Rest House), restaurants; the shrine board office, police station and a long footpath proceed to the cave of *Vaishno Devi*. The Shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has three black rock shaped known as *pindis* dedicated to *Saraswati*, *Kali* and *Lakshmi*. Pilgrims visits to see these *pindis* for the blessing of *Vaishno Devi*. There is no such temple constructed at the Shrine of *Vaishno Devi* but *pindis* could be seen inside the cave. But timely the various management boards had done some developments to make it more accommodative for the pilgrims. Earlier 1986 there was only one cave that was natural, means no artificial construction. It was very difficult to cross it to reach the *pindis*. But after the coming of another board in 1986 there had been started construction of new cave that is comfortable to walk.

The ancient texts *Bhringish Samhita* and *Amarnath Mahatmya* talks about the topography and religious life of Kashmir in the 6th century Sanskrit text which depicts the culture of Kashmir and about the *Amarnath* cave which has been mention in the *Nilmata Purana*. *Amarnath* has the historical chronicles like the *Rajatarangini*. Kalhana wrote his chronicle in 1148-49, which clearly presents picture about the pilgrim's journey to holly *Amarnath* cave. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, King Samdhimat Aryaraja worshipping the *Shiv Linga* and he was

spending his time to worship *shiva linga*. About the ice linga, his references are in Amareshwara or *Amarnath* and in Rajatarangini.

Kalhana stated that, about the Queen *Suryamati*, wife of King Ananta (1028-1063), she arranged consecration of trishulas, banalingas and other things at Amareshwara under her husband's granted name agraharas at Amareshwara, and arranged for the consecration of trishulas, banalingas and other. In his Chronicle of Kashmir, a sequel to Kalhana's Rajatarangini, Jonaraja relates that that Sultan Zainu'l-abidin (1420-1470) paid a visit to the sacred tirtha of *Amarnath* while constructing a canal on the left bank of the river Lidder (vv.1232-1234). The canal is now known as Shah Kol. As we well know Francois Bernier, a French physician accompanied Emperor Aurangzeb during his visit to Kashmir in 1663 has written about amaranth.

Once paravati asked to the lord *Shiva* about immortal, *Shiva* replied, "*whenever you are born I add more heads to my bead*". Parvati said, "*I die again and again, but you are Immortal. Please tell me the reason behind this*". "*Bhole Shankar replied that for this you will have to listen to the Amar Katha*".

There is also a story of shepherd Buta Malik⁵³ about the finding of the holy cave. Once a saint gave Buta Malik a full bag of coal. When he reached home he amazed to axiom the bag was full of gold coins. He then back to see the saint. But the Saint was not there. There, he found the Cave and the Ice Lingam. Later he aware the whole village about it. Then onwards this became a sacred place of Pilgrimage. But the story of Buta Malik is just 150 years old while the *Amarnath* pilgrimage finds its mention in the Nilamata purana in 6th to 8th century AD.

The divine cave is located at the end of Lidder Valley. *Amarnath* Shrine is 46 Km from Pahalgam and 14 Kms from Baltal. The original pilgrimage journey is undertaken from Srinagar, the more frequent practice is to start journey at Chandanwari, and cover the distance to *Amarnath* and back in five days. Pahalgam is 96 Kms from Srinagar. *Amarnath* the abode of Lord *Shiva* is considered to be one of the major Hindu Dhams. The protector of the absolute, Lord *Shiva*, the destroyer, is enshrined in the form of an ice-lingam in this cave. This lingam is formed naturally, which is believed to wax and wane with the

⁵³ A local Sheppard in Kashmir

moon. The next section has discussed about the history of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine

3.4.2. History

The Mata *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board (SMVDSB) manages the pilgrimage of Mata *Vaishno Devi* shrine, has no written records or accounts of when the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage had been started. In mythical context the shrine board associates the history of *Vaishno Devi* with some epical references, where it becomes difficult to find out the actual fact of when the pilgrimage process had actually begins. Another, a geological study indicated the age of the cave being nearly a million years, but there also founds no exact reference, where it has been mentioned. It also believed that, *Trikuta* does find its mention in the Rig-Veda the mountain and the worshipping of *Shakti* has been seen among various societies during the *Puranic* Period (Shrine Board, 2010:12).

From Aggarwal point of view, in the ancient times there was mention of shrine in the Vedas and ancient scriptures, *Vaishno Devi* shrine find its place but the accounts were in a systematic and chronological manner. According to him there was a mythological story, in the Mahabharata battle when Krishna advised to Arjuna to seek the blessing of *Vaishno Devi*, it means *Vaishno Devi* find its place in pre- Mahabharata and also reflects its 1000 years long history and tradition (Aggarwal, 2007:212).

At *Vaishno Devi* shrine, there are five stone structures that was constructed by the Pandvas of Mahabharata (Erndl, 1993:38). Erndl (1993) stated certain accounts of goddess worship which could be helpful in tracing the Mata *Vaishno Devi* shrine. In philosophical tradition the concept of Prakrati has been in the Vedic tradition, also the notion of goddess as Vak, Trayi and Vidya were visualized. In Samkhya, Vedanta and Puranic myths, goddess goddess Lakshmi, Sarasvati and Durga represents the power of Sahakti in its duality as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv (Erndl, 1993:20).

In 1847, a book Rajdarshni was compiled for Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu by Ganeshdas Badehra in which he has mentioned about Raja Jas Dev and *Vaishno Devi* during the time of 996 C.E. Thus, *Vaishno Devi* could find its historical even thousand years before (Pintchman, 2001:55-56). It has been said

that the founder of the Sikhism, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and Maharashtrian saint, Nam Dev (1270-1350) had visited the *Vaishno Devi* (Erndl, 1993:38). In the year 1847, a book Rajdarshni was compiled for Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu by Ganeshdas Badehra in which he has discussed about Raja Jas Dev as well as the *Vaishno Devi* during the time of 996 C.E. With this reference, the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage has started thousands years before (Pintchman, 2001).

The next section deals with sacred geography in the Indian society. It explores the notion of shrine in the socio-religious context. In India the whole geography has been considered as the sacred space in the Hinduism. The whole literature on Hinduism speaks about the sacred space where it has been associated with the day to day life. The symbolic representation of both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has been explored.

3.5. Exploring the notion of ‘Sacred Geography’ in the Indian Society

The whole geography has been considered as the sacred space in Hinduism. Sacred could be anything given much consideration by the moral community. It could be river, mountain, tree, temple or shrine. The Hindu mythology has given an embedded meaning to the notion of sacred space and the sacred geography. The whole Hindu literature had given accounts of the sacredness. Sacred consists of both material and non-material form. Material form like the human constructed space representing community beliefs and rituals etc and non material like the river, mountain, natural shrine etc. Another category of sacred space comes in the modification of temples. In the Hinduism temple or shrine has been considered as one of the most sacred space.

Durkheim (1995) explained in every religion, beliefs are considered as significant. He said the entire society is divided into two parts, sacred and profane; such is the character of religion. Beliefs, rituals and folklore are part of the structure. It's sacred and has relationships with the profane or the unholy. He said that the sacred character can be material or the supernatural beings (Fields, 1995:34-35). Another scholar who explained the sacred meaning, Singh (2010)

said sacred in socio-cultural history relates the geography. He also stated that the place which has been considered as sacred would become famous in present and future. Singh (2010) explored argues that the individual and society in makes some places sacred and starts doing various beliefs and rituals towards that place, which later becomes the religious tradition. Then the entire community starts worshipping that sacred place. Sacred space is something rooted in deep faith (Singh, 2010:7-11). Bremer (2006) argues, Yi-Fu.Tuan, a Cultural geographer (1977) has noted that, “Space is more abstract than ‘place’. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Bremer, 2006). As Eck (2012) defines vast network of pilgrimage places India has been seen as sacred geography (Eck, 2012:2).

In Hinduism, as compared with other religions, the high mountains of the Himalayas occupy a unique position as a sacred geography. This significance is expressed by the large number of shrines which are visited by varying numbers of pilgrims (Grotzbach, 1994).

A sacred geography portrays a believer's values, aspirations, and beliefs. Mythical worlds are mapped to specific geographies of a holy place; the physical world is imbued with mythological or religious meaning. In that case Varanasi becomes a projection of sacred reality (Flood 1993). Like Rome and Jerusalem, Varanasi is also a sacred landscape have natural environment composed of a river Ganges, streams, and pools, all believed to be holy creation of god (Gesler and Margaret: 2000:222-237).

Vidyarthi (1979) argues that in Kashi there is a popular saying ‘*Kankar Kankar main Shankar*’, which means that in each pebble of Kashi is god shankar’. Therefore in this way the entire Kashi is considered as sacred. The other most significant thing that makes Kashi visible as sacred is the sacred river Ganga and the temple. Another scholar Sherring (20002) argues that Benares is sacred city represents India religiously and intellectually just like the Paris represents the political segments of France.

Jha (1971) asserted sacred complex of Gaya was formed of three allied things; sacred geography, sacred performances and sacred specialities. Other

scholars who studied sacred space in India are Milton Singer (Madras), Prof. Cora Dubious (Bhubhaneshwar), Dr. Baidyanath Saraswati (Varanasi), Dr. Surjit Sinha (Kali Temple), Dr. D.N. Pattanaik (Puri temple). In Nepal, Janakpur is a place of Hindu pilgrimage is said to be the birth place of Sita and the marriage place of Ram, the epic hero of the Ramayan. To this sacred place, the Hindus of India and Nepal go on pilgrimage (Jha, 1971).

Grotzbach (1994) argues in the Hindu religion, most of the pilgrimages have been associated with the high mountains that have been associated with the sacred (Grotzbach, 1994). Bhardwaj (1983) said pilgrimage is known as *Tirth* yatra in the Hindu literature means the journey to the sacred places and has been considered as continuous religious tradition (Bhardwaj, 1983).

Lokeswarananda (1995) said every religion has its sacred spaces. These sacred spaces have been associated with society and appeal them to visit it once in life. Similarly, to visit Mecca, a Muslim's lifetime ambition gets fulfilled and his life gets purified. Every Hindu wishes to visit the sacred place, Varanasi and for Jerusalem, a Christian thinks the same (Lokeswarananda, 1995). Varanasi for Hindus, Mecca for Muslims and Jerusalem for Jews (Eck, 2012).

Vidyarthi (1979) argues some little description of Hindu pilgrimages had been given by Indologists, orientalist and travelers pre 1950. But after 1950 anthropologists gave attention on cultural analysis of pilgrimage. For instance "*L.P.Vidyarthi works in Banaras in 1953-54 and Bose study of Bhubaneswar in 1955-56. Robert Redfield work on great and little tradition in 1955 has discussed civilization in Madras. He said Gaya is a sacred place associated with the Hinduism*" (Vidyarthi, 1979).

Bhattacharyya (2007) argues that pilgrimage plays a significant role in the life of individual and society. In the Hindu tradition, pilgrimage has been associated with the sacred. In one sense the pilgrimage is undertaken to meet god's place, to interact with him and to attain a spiritual experience. The pilgrimage tradition is so strong that it binds the whole nation together. He further said that *Vaishno Devi shrine* is considered as one of the sacred place (Bhattacharyya, 2007:211).

Both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have been considered as the sacred shrines. The belongingness to the sacred comes with the deep historical past, in which the Hindu community had been performed the beliefs and rituals. That led the entire society to perform the rituals worships at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The pindis and lingum are sacred in nature. In the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* the *Katra* town the base camp of *Vaishno Devi* to the holy pindis are considered as sacred. In the same way the whole journey of *Amarnath* is considered as a sacred, the holy shrine of *Amarnath*, the Holy cave, the *lingum* is considered as sacred. In fact the entire journey that starts from *Pehalgham* to the *Amarnath* cave has been considered as the holy creation of god.

3.5.1. Sacred Space and Sacred Time

The sacred space could be located in the two contexts traditional and modern. Both the contexts are different due to the time and space. Many scholars have discussed about the sacred space and sacred time. Sharma article in O'Connell (1999) have raised a relevant question on traditional and modern pilgrimages. He further asked a question 'should *tirtha-yatra* be used for a pilgrimage to a single sacred centre as well as for the circuit of the whole pilgrimage network (O'Connell, 1999:41). Goswami (1998) argues that the *Vaishno Devi* shrine cave is sacred in nature.

Madan (2000) said the concept of space and time as sacred in the religious tradition is against profane. The entire earth has been deep rooted in the notions of sacredness which they consider as holy creation and sacred has been associated with many pilgrimage places. Madan explained about sacred character of religion and I quoted "*The sacred as a particular class of phenomena, as a kind of knowledge, as a variety of activities in space and time, and as a typology*

of roles and persons”. For Muslims the sacred is the entire universe, mosque, god, and the pilgrimage to the Mecca. Thus, the whole earth, rivers, the pilgrimages in the Hindu tradition has been considered as the sacred. Gautam Buddha has been considered as sacred in Buddhism. Therefore, the sacred is interconnected like time and space (Madan, 2000:97).

In the Hindu religion the concept of *Mandir* is one of the most sacred places in the Hindu religious context. The religious architecture played an important role in the history of humankind. Religious architecture represents sacred space amid this profane world. All religious faiths over the course of human history have initiated and improved upon the construction of their place of worship. These grand physical structures naturally draw one’s attention and so it is important to appreciate the significance, sentiments, and symbolism that these sacred spaces and places represent. Since early times humans have innately realized that life extends beyond the visible and have postulated a sacred dimension in addition to this physical realm. However, this sacred or divine domain is not directly accessible by the five physical senses. So, humans require assistance in order to experience the divine; this is facilitated by sacred and places. Sacred spaces command tremendous power, for they are where the divine dwells. This does not mean that the gods are confined to only this place; although they are present here, they are omnipresent and so transcend the earthly sphere, simultaneously being present in their own heavenly realm.

Religion in general and sacred spaces, in particular, are relief valves that help spiritually individual and society to enable his daily pressures and pains and protect his all round well being. Hindus construct *mandirs* in honor of God, since the sheer effort needed to sustain them in terms of time and resources is not possible otherwise. A *mandir* is a house and so provides an appropriate atmosphere to be in the presence of God. It is regarded as a scaled down model of the cosmos where devotees can offer devotion, service, and prayers and direct their reverence to God. It’s not only a place of worship, but it’s also an object of worship (Amrutvijayadas, 2014).

Meaning of space in the Temple

There are two varieties of religious building in Buddhist Sri Lanka, *Vihara* and *Devala*. *Vihara* which we can designate by the term temple is Buddhist temples which house images of the Buddha and his disciples. *Devala* is shrines of the gods containing images of the gods derived primarily from the Hindu pantheon but incorporated into Buddhist worship. We may use the term shrine to them.

The ideology behind the architecture of Hindu temples is to connect man with the gods. Hindu temple is the centre of god's energy. It is a portrait of the macrocosm (the universe) as well as the microcosm (the inner space) and has developed over two thousand years. The sacred and secular lives of a Hindu are unified and for the most part, the daily routines require numerous contacts with the divine, whether it takes place in the miniature temple at home or a local temple. Among the cults of Hinduism, there is rarely any evidence of religious persecution as Hindu believes that cults are divine in different forms i.e. *Shiva*, *Vishnu* and Goddess. Among the cults, this apparently results in a remarkable degree of tolerance and attempts of harmonization. Temple is not just a place of worship in the Hindu culture but also the centre of intellectual and artistic life (Michell, 1988).

For recitation and listening of folk tales, Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata and debates, the spacious halls of the temple were the place. In the temple, Music and dance is part of daily rituals that gave the people more knowledge about the traditions and made them appreciate the older practices. Temples also generates revenue that supports the needful during poverty and emergency. Temple provided means of livelihood to peoples and greatly influenced the economic life of the community (Brown, 1942). For entire community, the temple is the centre of all aspects and everyone donates for its building, management, religious and cultural activities (Varida, 2007).

Many steps in *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage explore the notions of the sacred space and time. *Katra*, the abode to *Vaishno Devi* is considered as a sacred town. The entire track and various spots from *Katra* to *Bhawan* have been associated with sacred (Erndl, 1993:64). Vidyarthi (1979) argues that in pilgrimages, the peoples from diverse backgrounds, region or religion participates, for the

spiritual and sacred experience. The Kashi is one small part represents the unity of diverse faiths at one place (Vidyarthi, 1979:7).

In the same way, a pilgrimage to the *Amarnath* is considered as sacred in space and time. Jammu city is considered as one of the holiest places. Even today known as the city of temples, because it has many temples all over the city. Bhau Fort, Raghunath temple are the most famous among other where *Amarnath* pilgrims visits during pilgrimage. *Amarnath* pilgrims not just stays the accommodation given to them by the state administration at Bhagwati Nagar but they explores the entire city due to its sacred nature. During pilgrimage one could find most of the pilgrims at the all the temples in Jammu. Then *pehalgamam*, *Chandanwari*, *Pissu Top*, *Sheshnag*, *Panjtarini* and the *holy cave of Amarnath* has been considered as the sacred place. Each spot has been deep rooted in the mythical, philosophical and historical contexts than speaks of the sacred character in space and time.

Therefore sacred is something that has been mythically, historically or religiously decided and practiced in day to day life world. The *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have many sacred spaces like the holy cave, the lingum, pindis, Garb Joon, *Katra*, Each and Every spot of the pilgrimage, etc. But sacred time means the time of doing various beliefs and practices as per the Hindu calendar. One part of this chapter has particularly focused on the various beliefs and rituals being performed at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

The next part has explored the various symbols that represents the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. In this context the sacred character of both the shrines has been discussed as well as the various material things that influences the peoples to visit more to these shrine in the present times.

3.5.2. Symbolism

Mandirs contribute to the universe search for meaning and encourage enquiry into life's most profound questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? What do we have to do? Through their symbolism, *mandirs* enable communication of concepts that provide answers to these and many other questions. By entering a *mandir* one enters a world a world of rich symbolic narratives and messages some clear, some cryptic that trigger an

experience of the sacred and divine and give meaning and purpose to life. While the use of traditional symbols helps to communicate these ancient concepts, the resulting art creates a welcoming atmosphere that encourages serene and unhurried contemplation and aids significantly in one's worship and experience of the sacred. However for the present day visitors it is necessary to appreciate the spirit and circumstances of the era in which the *mandir* was built to fully understand the symbolism (Amrutvijayadas, 2014).

Preston (1980) argues that in India, goddesses, motherland and women have given great respect and it reflects the socio-cultural understanding of females or Indian mothers. Worship has been a part of complex interlocking symbolic network, in religious symbolism, for instance in Odisha, the Hindus have their diverse beliefs and rituals, a devotee at one time might be worships goddesses but at another stage they always spends a portion of their day/life to worship the male deities (Preston, 1980:16).

The cave of *Vaishno Devi* represents various religious symbols that resembles with many deities in Hinduism. Many myths of the sacred shrine cave of *Vaishno Devi*, makes her mother of all the deities. It is believed such unique that symbolizes all the deities in the Hindu religion. In the same way *Amarnath* cave also symbolizes the brotherhood among various communities.

Chaturvedi (2007) explored sacred cave of *Vaishno Devi Shrine*, its symbols resembles with all the deities in Hinduism. The cave total length is approximately ninety eight feet. He says symbol of Vakra Tunda Ganesha⁵⁴, in front of cave associates *Vaishno Devi* with Ganesha, the *Shiva's* son. The symbol of Surya Dev and Chandra Dev represents the sun and moon deities. Behind there is symbol of Hanuman⁵⁵ known as Launka veer. On the upper side in the cave it appears the Shesh Nag, then ahead it also shows the Shankh Chakra⁵⁶,

⁵⁴ Vakra Tunda means the first Incarnation of Ganesha.

⁵⁵ Hanuman is the Hindu Deity and a great devotee of lord Rama and his story is mentioned in the epic Ramayana

⁵⁶ Shankh Chakra, is manufactures by sea snail and in the Hindu religion, it is consider as sacred and has been associated with the god Vishnu.

Gada⁵⁷ and Padam. Next could be seen the *Pandavas, Sapt Rishi*. There is also shown the paw of lion, symbolizing the lion that associates with *Vaishno Devi* as maa sheravali. Then there is a symbol of Shankar and Gouri on the left side, then comes the sacred pindis of the goddess Vaishno. Under the pindis, flows water, that has been considered as sacred by the pilgrims and the society (Chaturvedi, 2007).

Rohe (2001) explained that *Vaishno Devi* is both a cave shrine and a pilgrimage place. She is superior to any other deity and believed to be an ascetic, vegetarian, virgin goddess (kanya) and mother (Rohe, 2001:56). Kinsley (1988) said mountains, hills, rivers, caves have been known as the sacred places. These sites are usually called *Tirtas*, means that place where one may cross from the realm of the profane to the sacred, from human to the divine or from this world to another world. In many instances these sites have been associated with the various deities in the Hindu tradition (Kinsley, 1988:184).

In the Hindu religion river Ganga has considered as a sacred (Sengupta, 1947:34) which symbolizes the purity and in myths Ganga has frequently depicted with Brahma, washing the raised foot of Vishnu Trivikrama (Jorden, 2004:102).

Poonam (2006) argues there are thousands of pilgrims who visits *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* again and again “A blind man has been visiting the holy cave of *Amarnath* for the third consecutive year. A couple has been visiting the holy cave of *Amarnath* every year for the last eight years.” *Vaishno Devi* symbolizes oneness, where diverse communities share things together. It also plays the role of a spiritual motherhood. But another thing worth noticing is that *Amarnath* yatra is regarded as a symbol of Indian brotherhood as this is one Hindu

⁵⁷ Gada symbolizes the power or the weapons in the hands of Hindu deities, i.e. Shiva, Parvati and Hanuman.

pilgrimage which is run and managed to a large extent by Muslims in the sensitive state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The next section deals with the performance of rituals in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. It has explored various beliefs and rituals being performed at both the shrines on daily basis.

3.6. Performance of Rituals

Khwaja Mu 'induddin Chisthi settled at Ajmer before the establishment of Muslim rule in India. The early chronicles as well as the hagiographical writings are writings in details pertaining to the origin and evolution of numerous rituals and ceremonies performed at the shrine. Three important rites are regularly performed every day per schedule (i). *Khidmat* (Service routine) twice a day; (ii). *Roshni* (lighting ceremony); (iii). *Karka* (Closing of the main doors of the shrine). At 3p.m the doors of the tomb are closed for the noon khidmat, and almost the whole process described above is repeated (Troll, 2004). Durkheim defines rituals is a means of renewing the belief of a community and gathering the collective effervescence necessary for engendering solidarity (Durkheim, 1995). Clifford Geertz understands ritual as a symbolic fusion of the world as livid and the world as imagined (Geertz, 1973). Jain and Doshi (2001) argues that beliefs and rituals becomes the central concern in religion. Belief could be fulfilled only when the rituals gets practiced (Jain and Doshi, 2001).

Mandirs are home to religious rituals purposeful sacred actions which help a seeker to engage with god throughout body, mind and soul and experience his presence. Involvement in collective spiritual activities empowers individuals and enhances their spiritual activities empowers individuals and enhances their spiritual practices. They enable a community to feel the presence of transcendent god and collectively experience divinity. They help to focus the mind on spiritual matters and enable teaching to be put into practice (Amrutvijayadas, 2014). Aggarwal (2007) said that in northern India, *Vaishno Devi* shrine has been considered as one of the holiest pilgrimage in which the millions of pilgrims have been rising every year & participates in various rituals (Aggarwal,

2007:211). Hamilton (1995) argues rituals are considered in social life. It maintains the social order and influence the behaviour (Hamilton, 1995).

3.6.1. Rituals performance in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*

The ritual performance at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* goes throughout the year. People across the world visit the shrine to see the pindis, to attend *Aarti*, having puja, just to go through the daily process or for the blessings of *Vaishno Devi*. The people also visit the shrine to get jobs, children, to pass exams, peace in the family, success in life, etc. Rituals at the shrine can be analyzed from two aspects. One the daily activities at the shrine; Second the modifications of certain rituals in the contemporary times.

In the cave there are three sacred pindis; each one is different from other in colour and formation. On the left side of *pindi*'s represents Mata Mahasarasvati which is white colour. The *pindi* of Mata Mahalakshmi is in the centre with a yellowish red tinge. Mata Maha Kali *pindi* is towards the right with a black tinge. These colours resemble with the goddesses in the Hindu religion. (Shrine Board, 2010:10-11). The all the beliefs are being practiced as well as rituals are performed everyday at *Vaishno Devi*.

The goddess Kali, represents, *Tam*⁵⁸ qualities that resemble with the darkness. Lakshmi, represents, *Raj*⁵⁹ associated with wealth and *Sarasvati*, who represents *Satva*⁶⁰ that means the goddess of knowledge and power. Each person represents Tam, Raj and Satva. Because, it is believed that the supernatural beings have made the human species to perform the role of theirs, so, that the entire planet could be managed systematically. Therefore to make life healthy, successful one has to make the balance between Tam, Raj and Satva to lead a full and meaningful life that requires *Vaishno Devi* blessings. A person has to

⁵⁸ The qualities associated with the darkness

⁵⁹ Has been associated with wealth, inspiration and effort

⁶⁰ It means the quality of purity

perform the better role in the society. These attributes of Tam, Raj and Satva makes *Vaishno Devi* a different among all the other deities (Goswami, 1998).

There is rituals worship (prayer) at *Vaishno Devi* inside the sacred cave daily at morning and evening relates her with the incarnation of Durga⁶¹. The festival of *Navratra* and *Diwali* considered as significant rituals at *Vaishno Devi*. Jain and Doshi (2001) Durkheim explains ritual as a part of social and religious life (Jain, 2001). Chaturvedi (2007) said *Navratri* is the amalgamation of *Nav* and *Ratri* which denotes the nine sacred nights. *Shakti* or Divine mother being worshipped during these nine days. (Chaturvedi, 2007). The festival of Navaratri celebrates across India (Swahananda, 1983). Rodrigues (2003) also said that in various parts of the country the celebration of Navratri and the ritual worship of *Mahadevi* is being performed at home with the family, with neighbours, at temples etc (Rodrigues, 2003). It is also believed that *Navaratri* is observed for the victory of mother Durga over Demons. The nine days during has been associated with mother goddess Durga nine incarnations. The Hindus doesn't delimits the festival of *Navratri* to worship goddess *Vaishnavi* but they also worship the biological mother. The festival also gives them the chance to think or respect the elders (Chaturvedi, 2007).

In the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*, the worship of Navratri continuous for nine days; that splits into three parts to worship all the goddesses *Kali*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati* at *Vaishno Devi*. The first three days, the worship of Durga is performed to extinct all the negativity. The other three days performed the worships of mother goddess *Lakshmi* to attain peace and progress. In the last there days the worships of *Sarasvati* is being performed for wisdom and knowledge (Chaturvedi.:115-116). The festival of *Navratri* is observed two times in a year, one; in the month of March-April and another during September-October, worships goddess Durga.

In various parts of India, *Durga* is considered and worshipped as mother, which has supernatural qualities or has spiritual powers. She is known as queen

⁶¹ The daily prayer in the worship of *Vaishno Devi* is itself the prayer for Durga and full prayer has been mentioned in the appendix IV.

of this universe in Rig-Vedic *Devi Sukta*. The worship of Durga becomes important during Navratri, Durga Puja and Dussera (Swahananda, 1983).

Amarnath pilgrimage remains open for a short time in a year. During the pilgrimage the worship of various is being performed. Every year the pilgrimage starts in the month of June or July and ends on the days of *Raksha Bandhan*. The first ritual worship is held at *Chandanwari* on the first day of *Jyestha Purnima*. *Jyestha Purinma* is known as the full moon day. The amaranth Board organizes the *Pratham pooja* every year for peaceful pilgrimage. The official members of the shrine board participate in the *pooja*.

Table 3.2. Ritual Worship performed at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*

Month	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	No. Of Days
April & October	Navratras	NA	09 days in each month
July-August	NA	Daily Rituals	40 to 50 days
Throughout the Year	Daily Rituals	NA (Except July & August)	365

The Navratri ritual is performed at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* in the month of April and October. At amaranth shrine daily rituals is performed during the pilgrimage only. Because it remain open for two months only during June July and the pilgrimage concludes on the day of *Rakshabandan* the month of *shravan* festival.

Table. 3.3. Daily Rituals at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*

Activity	<i>Vaishno Devi Shrine & Amarnath Shrine</i> ⁶²
Daily Morning Aarti	Before Sunrise
Pilgrim Darshsn activities	Whole Day
Daily Evening Aarti	Immediately after Sunset

Whole year daily Aarti as well as *Darshans* and Puja is performed at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. But only during the time of pilgrimage the daily rituals are performed at the shrine of *Amarnath*. But the rituals performances at the shrine

⁶² Rituals being performed only during pilgrimage at the shrine of Amarnath but goes throughout the year at the shrine of Vaishno Devi

of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have many differences. The *Vaishno Devi* have started various online *darshans* of *pindis*, *bhawan* etc. People from across the world are accessing these kinds of facilities available online. On the other *Amarnath* shrine board manages to start donation online. There is no online facility to have *darshan* of *Amarnath* cave or the *Lingum* during the pilgrimage. Only pilgrims have to visit the *Amarnath* to have *darshan* of lord *Shiva*. The shrine board of *Vaishno Devi* have fixed various rates to have *darshan* online of *Vaishno Devi Shrine*.

Table No. 3.4. Poojan ritual at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*

Activity	Category	Rate
Poojan Ritual	'A' Devotee need not Present	1100
	'B' Devotee has to be present with maximum of four person of his family members	5100

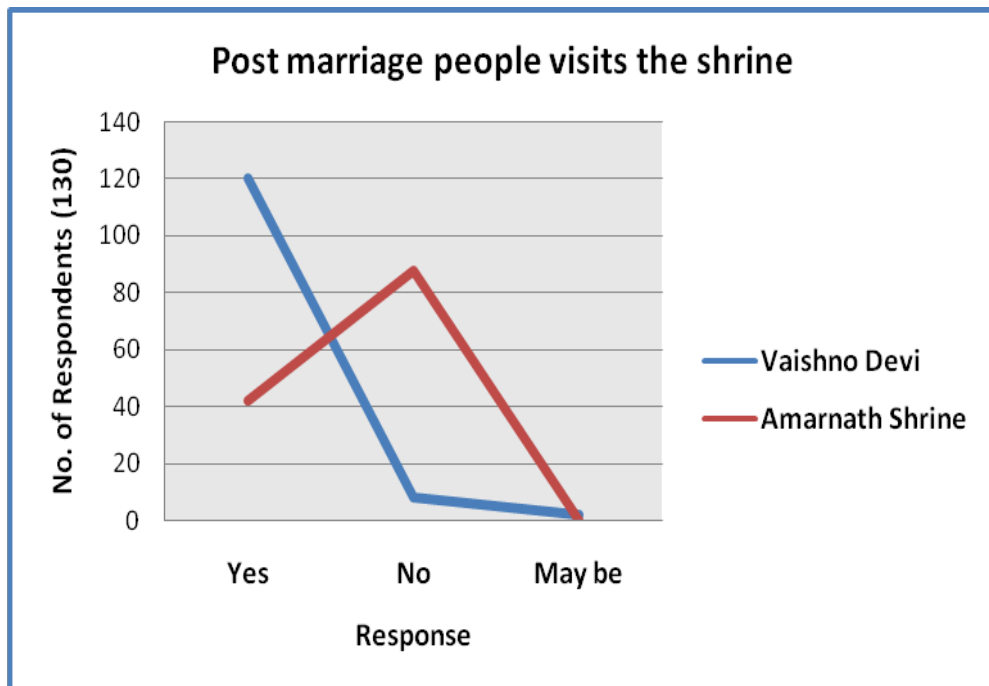
There are two types of poojan at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. **One** a devotee has to pay 1100 where the priests performed poojan in the name of a person. The poojan prashad is sent through courier to the given address. **Two** the poojan of 5100 rupees where he has to be physically present. He/she can attend the Havan/Poojan himself/herself along with a maximum of four person of his/her family members. The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* speaks of *sakta* tradition and the *Amarnath* belongs to the Shaivism in the Hinduism. Both the shrine's considers an important place in the present times. Peoples visiting the shrine since very past. In the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* peoples are visiting throughout the year. But mostly visiting during Navratras that comes during March-April and September-October. The period of navratras witness heavy rush to these shrines.

Table No. 3.5. Showing Post marriage people visits the shrine

Response	Total No. of respondents			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	120	42	162	92.3	32.30	92.7
No	8	88	96	.1	67.70	6.6
Other	2	0	2	1.6	0	0.7
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 3.2. Showing Comparative of people visits the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* after marriage.



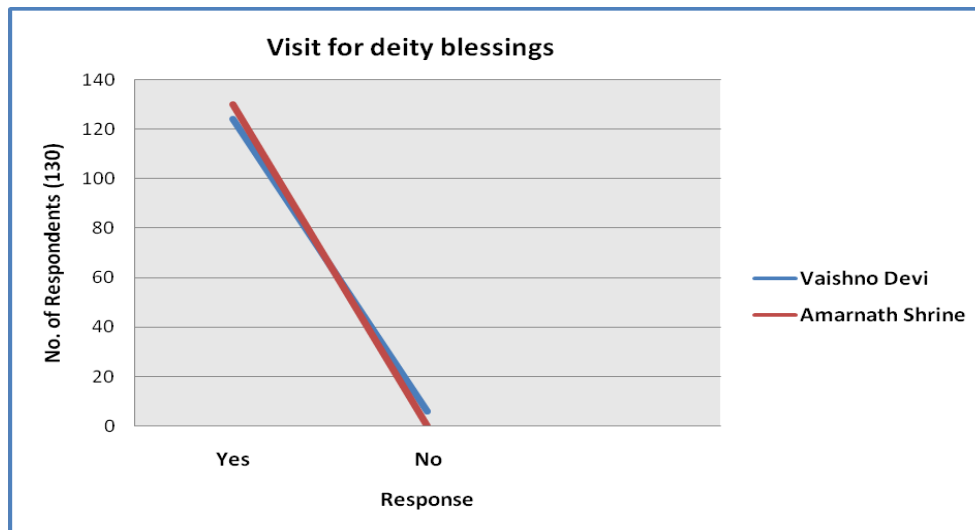
The data shows that most of the pilgrims visit the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* than the *Amarnath* Shrine for the blessing of the deity after marriage. Its general belief that to take the blessing of mother after marriage symbolises the prosperous married life. Because blessing of mother has been seen as the supreme in the Hindu literature. The pilgrims prefer to visits the *Vaishno Devi* due to its accessibility and connectivity and *Amarnath* could be the difficult one to reach. Therefore, the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage could be easily understood in the cultural context but the Amaranth pilgrimage mostly seen religious one.

Table No. 3.6. People visit the shrine for deity blessing

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	124	130	254	95.4	100.0	97.7
No	6	0	6	4.6	0	2.3
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 3.3. Showing comparative of People visits *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine* for deity blessings



The data reveals that there is a strong bond between the pilgrim and the deity. 97.7% of the respondents had been visited the shrine for the blessings of the god or goddess. Only 2.3% puts some other factors like the spiritual for their visits. There are many reasons they have spoken like the hectic life schedule in day to day life where they come to seek blessing of the deity for more healthy and prosperous life. It's also seen that there is a belief especially in the context of *Vaishno Devi* which says '*Whatever one wishes gets fulfilled*' at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and most of the respondents said they have come for more successful life. It could be for job, business etc. But due to the contemporary changes, the government started intervention in the public affairs of the shrine. Now the internal structure of the shrine has been changed with the formation of board by the state government.

The next section has discussed the changing social organization of the shrines *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It understands and compares the *Dharmarth Trust* the early management trust of *Vaishno Devi* and the newly formed the *Vaishno Devi* shrine board. It also explores the internal and external factor that affects the overall structure of the shrine in the present times.

3.7. Changing Social Organization

In present time the shrines are constantly changing due to the democratization and secularization of religious spaces. There are various shrines or temples in

India under the control of government to look after its administration and management. The government intervention had impacted the internal structure and functioning of the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. The changing structure could be understood at two levels. First, the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* administration under the *Dharmarth* Trust i.e. from 1846-1986 as well as the pre formation of *Amarnath* board since 2000. Secondly, the administration of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* comes under the newly constituted board i.e. the *Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board* (SMVDSB) from 1986-2016 & the shrine of *Amarnath* from 2000 to 2016.

3.7.1. Dharmarth Trust

For 140 years (1846-1986), the *Dharmarth* Trust had managed the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage administration. The division of labor of the trust was not very much specialized.⁶³ It becomes difficult for the trust to manage the pilgrimage when it started increasing in the number of pilgrims. But under the guidance of Maharajas of Jammu, they somehow managed. But, slowly the pilgrims started making complaints to the state government as well as reported to the media. Therefore in 1986, the government of Jammu and Kashmir took the decision to replace the *Dharmarth* Trust by some other specialized government board. Later on, they gave the name to the new board as *Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board*.

Maharaja Gulab Singh founded an organization named, '*The Dharmarth Trust*'⁶⁴ when he bought Jammu and Kashmir from the Britishers, that came into existence in the year 1846. This Trust established for the proper maintenance of several temples and shrines in Jammu and Kashmir that include *Vaishno Devi*. It continued its roles and functions under the descendants of Gulab Singh, who, along with their kingship, retained the position of sole hereditary trustees⁶⁵ (Foster and Stoddard, 2010:114).

Vaishno Devi has always remained the family deity of Dogra Rajas of Jammu and for the *Dharmarth* Trust, Maharaja contributed five lacks rupees as a

⁶³ The concept division of labor has discussed by Emile Durkheim in his book, *Division of Labor in Society* (1997/1893).

⁶⁴ An organization formed for the Hindu religious affairs in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

⁶⁵ A trustee is a part of organization that has certain administrative powers.

donation to the trust, then his successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh handled the trust and set up the administration as well as made the constitution to handle the endowment of various shrines in the Jammu region (Ganhar, 1973:12).

Aggarwal (2007) explained that the earlier organizational structure that handles the management of *Vaishno Devi* temple was known as *Baradari* system⁶⁶. The main role of the baridars was to provide better facilities to the pilgrims. These baridars had been appointed by the Maharajas of Jammu and belong to the native place. Most of the baridars were those who were the Maharajas traditional priests. It had been seen the caste was the dominating factor as well as the loyalty to the Dogra rulers in order to gain any position in the temple. But due to the monopoly by some baridars the pilgrimage management started declining. *Baridars* also used to collect various funds as well as the donation given by the pilgrims. It had been seen that the baridars were not managing the account of the donation properly. Even the fund sanctioned by the members of Dharmarth trust for the development of the shrine was not utilized properly and was misused by the baridars. For instance, baridars had constructed twelve special rooms, three big rooms at *Vaishno Devi* shrine and one main building at *Ardkuwari*⁶⁷. It had been seen that the baridars were involved in a various case related to the corruption in the temple management. Later, pilgrims started complaining to the state government against the baridars system (Aggarwal, 2007:213-214).

Dr. Karan Singh⁶⁸ started handles the governance of the *Dharmarth* trust and the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* in the year 1947. He particularly focused on the road connectivity, opened another exit for pilgrims to control on the heavy rush (Foster and Stoddard, 1986:114).

To looked upon the various activities managed by *Dharmarth* Trust that was not capable of handling the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage management. Therefore, the Jammu and Kashmir, government in 1986 took intervention and constituted a board known as 'Mata *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board' (SMVDSB). In

⁶⁶ A group of local peoples, who had handled the shrine, most of the people's belongs to the higher Castes.

⁶⁷ Ardhkuwari is a famous spot on the way to the shrine of Vaishno Devi. The famous Garbh Joone is situated at Ardhkuwari.

⁶⁸ Dr. Karan Singh is the son of Maharaja Hari Singh, of Jammu and Kashmir. He is senior politician in the Indian National Congress.

the same way, the continuous security threats to the *Amarnath* pilgrimage the government of Jammu and Kashmir decided to constitute a board similar to the *Vaishno Devi* shrine board to handle the pilgrimage every year at *Amarnath*. Therefore, in the year 2000, there had been officially constituted a board known as the *Amarnath Shrine Board* of 2000.

In most of the shrines in India the government as well the judiciary has intervened. Madan (2011) has discussed the constitutional aspect of religion. He explained many shrines in India had come under the government. Clause 2 of the Article empowers the state to regulate or restrict various kinds of secular activities that may be associated with the religious practice. Article 31A also provides for the acquisition of estates and their management in public interest. The Dargah Khwajah Saheb Act of 1955 of the Indian parliament that empowers the state to handle the management of famous Muslim shrine at Ajmer. The temple of *Vaishno Devi*, *Amarnath* in Jammu and Kashmir, Vishvanath temple at Varanasi, the Jagannath Temple at Puri comes under the Public shrine Act policy. Even Haj Pilgrimage to Saudi, Pilgrimage to Mansarovar in China is managed by the government of India, external affairs ministry. The government took over those shrines that were public attentive. Thus, the legislative, executive branches of government, the judiciary played the significant role in the religious affairs. In 1996, P. B. Gajendra gadkar, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court ordered that temples of the Satsangi community be thrown open to the untouchables (Madan, 2011).

The Hindu religious Endowments Act of 1951 and Act II of 1952 speaks about the controlling of religious institution by the government. The Jagannath Temple in Puri came under the jurisdiction of the commissioner of Endowments due to this Act. Finally the government takeover the Jagannath temple management from the Raja and passed an act called the ‘Shri Jagannath Temple Act of 1955’⁶⁹(O’Connell, 1999).

⁶⁹ It’s not the government who had started the controlling the administration of shrines but even before the Britishers were also intervening in the internal affairs of the temples (O’Connell, 1999).

Therefore, the government constituted *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine boards, specialized in various administrative responsibilities. The *Vaishno Devi* shrine board has also recorded the yearly pilgrimage statistics and various activities, decisions and steps taken by the board. As comparative of *Dharmarth* Trust with the newly formed shrine board, it found that, s *Vaishno Devi* shrine board has developed various infrastructures for the pilgrims and has initiated various developmental activities. The next section has discussed about the newly formed board of *Vaishno Devi*.

3.7.2. The Formation of *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board in 1986

Due to the mismanagement in pilgrimage by the *Dharmarth* trust, the government of Jammu and Kashmir passed an Act No. XXXIII of 1986 came into effect from 30th ad 31st august, 1986⁷⁰. The Act was stated that the newly formed board had taken over the management, administration and governance of *Vaishno Devi* shrine from the *Dharmarth* Trust (Kumar, 2006:8). Later the Act of 1986 got repealed in the year 1988 under the Act No. XVI of 1988. It stated that the entire building, endowments, lands, the area beginning from *Katra* to the holy cave transferred to the shrine board from the *Dharmarth* trust (SMVDSA, 1988:2).

The Shrine Board is administrated and managed in a bureaucratic structure, the chairman of the ex-officio is the governor of the state and its structure and function of the shrine is complex in its nature. Bhattacharyya (2007) said that *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board has got the autonomous status from the government when the state was under the governor rule. It was under the legislation section 92, Act 1986, and it was turning point for the Shrine (Bhattacharyya, 2007:216). According to SMVDSA, The Act of 1988 make a shrine board committee included the members from the different section of society are as specialized person from Hindu religion, women specialist ,three person from legal ,administration and two from eminent Hindu persons from the state (SMVDSA, 1988). The structure of decision making is administrated in bureaucratic and centralized under the CEO and each employee is reported to the

⁷⁰ In the year the state Jammu and Kashmir was under the President's rule (Madan, 2006:44).

concerned administer for the accountability in a systematic process (Bhattacharyya, 2007:217).

In the era of technological development, shrine board also got under its influence. The *Dharmarth* Trust came under the state Govt. In 1986 and since then various new initiatives are to be introduced. Now the time of modernization, new technology is used for the development. The online donation system and also information is available on the internet. From this technological revolution, various awareness programmes are introduced for the people and now a day's online registration is also available. It has increased the number of pilgrims

Kumar (2006) stated that the *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board is a panel comprised of ten members, chairman and nine other board members who handle the entire administration, supervision and authority of Shri Mata *Vaishno Devi* Shrine (Kumar, 2006:8). But in any case if the governor does not belong to the Hindu religion, then there is a provision under this Act of 1988 of *Vaishno Devi* shrine, which states that that any prominent person of the state could be the chairman of the board. Except this a Chief Executive Officer, a Chief Accounts Officer and other accommodating staff are selected from all over India. Under this Act of 1988 a systematic bureaucratic organization appears with a hierarchy of officials and they have their various tasks and responsibilities in their day to day activities. The main authoritative official in the Mata *Vaishno Devi* shrine board includes the CEO, deputy CEO and other officers on special duty. In terms of executive set of, the Mata *Vaishno Devi* shrine board has various departments like administration, finance, personnel, management. Each division has numbers of subordinates and assistants have been selected according to their qualification, ability and experience and have assigned the post by the shrine board. Bhattacharyya (2007) said that, work force of employee in shrine board in 2007 was 2100 in numbers (Bhattacharyya, 2007:216). In the same way, the government of Jammu and Passed as act on *Amarnath* shrine and took over the whole management of the shrine from clusters of peoples who manages it like *Shadus*, *Akharas*, *Dharmarth* Trust and formed the shrine board works under chairmanship of the governor of the state.

3.7.3. The Formation of *Amarnath* Shrine Board in 2000

The government of Jammu and Kashmir took over the management of *Amarnath* shrine and constituted a board in the year 2000. There after the board of *Amarnath* started handling the management of the pilgrimage till now. Similar like the board of *Vaishno*, governor chairs the board, if he be a Hindu, if the Governor is not a Hindu, and then he may nominate any eminent person of the State, professing the Hindu religion, and otherwise qualified to be a Member to function as the Chairman of the Board. The governor also nominates nine persons experts in Hindu religion and Culture, Gender, administration, legal affairs or financial matters and two eminent Hindus of the State, Jammu and Kashmir. The nominated Members of the Board hold office for a term of three years from the date of their nominations under section 4. The members of the board have the powers to appoint executive head of the shrine board if he/she deemed fit as per criteria. The board members also have the power to suspend any officer on disciplinary grounds. The board looks after management, administration except the donation part that rest with the governor who appoints a Tribunal for that. The board member appoints the chartered accountant to audit the annual financial report of *Amarnath* shrine⁷¹.

3.7.4. The Entry of Bureaucracy

After the Public Shrine Act 1986 in *Vaishno Devi* and in the year 2000 in passed in the *Amarnath* context. The previous whole structure got changed and the new one introduced with Bureaucracy and Government. According to the Shrine Board Act Policy, Senior IAS officer can handle the management of the shrine. He holds the position of Chief Executive Officer. He takes all the decisions of the day to day activities. For any major decision he takes the guidance of the chairman of the shrine. The governor of the state holds the portfolio of the chairman. Therefore the whole activities come under the bureaucratization process. Bureaucratic functioning introduced the technology in both the shrines.

Weber argues bureaucracy handles the various forms of administration. He argues bureaucracy has become the main concern in the modern society (Weber, 2013).

⁷¹ The above discussion on Amarnath shrine board has reviewed the Amarnath shrine board policy document, 2000

3.7.5. The Changing Structure and Role of Priesthood

Priest plays a significant role in the performance of worship in the Hindu temples all over India. Their meditative role between the supernatural beings and the society keeps them close to the gods (Selvam, 2003). With the various constitutional and political changes the internal structure of the shrine got affected. Earlier priests were managing the entire temple. He used to handle the day to day activities includes the performance of various rituals at the temples premises. Most of the Brahmans could be seen as the temples priests, performing *Puja* and *Arti*. But the present times had changed many things in the temples. Now the temples are appointing priests belong to any caste that have required qualification. The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has been takeover by the state government. Now entire management and administration of these temples is controlled by the state management board. The earlier private organization has been changed and had been replaced by the public shrine. A public shrine is one where the vested interests go to the charity and societal initiatives. The structural changes had changed the priesthood. Now both the shrine has government appointed priests and whatever the state wishes they have to perform. With such kind of changes the power structure of the temples started decentralizing with the creation of various divisions that controls the administration of the shrine under the state authority.

Case of Priest, Rishi (Name changed) at *Vaishno Devi* shrine, He was the senior priest or the head at *Vaishno Devi*, told that he joined the shrine on 30th august 1986. It was the year when the earlier trust got replaced with the new board constituted by the state government, Jammu and Kashmir. He told many micro accounts since 1986, which could be seen as a change in the role of priest and the priesthood. He told that during 1986 to 87 winter's hardly 800 to 1000 pilgrims had been visited. But the pilgrim's numbers goes high during summer. There were only two caves before the formation of shrine board. But, after the formation of shrine board one more cave was constructed by additional CEO. During 1989-90, 14000 pilgrims took *darshans* of Mata *Vaishno Devi*. The shrine board changed everything like infrastructure, roads connectivity, etc. He told that when he joined the whole track were full of stones and kacha road, there

were less no of pilgrims, there was less donation coming. At present every day pilgrims are increasing. At *bhawan* shrine there is 7 marla land belong to druda family known as baridars. When pandit Sridhar took *darshan* of Mata *Vaishno Devi* than he started day and night artti of Mata *Vaishno Devi*.

The tradition of *Aarti* is very old in the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. When people saw padit Shridhar were doing *Aarti* puja than they started coming. The people coming were offering money and other things to the *Mandir* of *Vaishno Devi*. The whole donations were controlled by Baridars. But later the *Dharmarth* trust came into existence by Maharaja Ranvir Singh. He constituted a team of official to handle the activities. All donations were controlled by *dharmarth* trust. But the donation inside the temple was belonged the baridars. Than the division in the *druda* family started and money also got divided. Routine wise they were getting their chance at the shrine. In a year some were getting one day, some ten day depending upon the family structure. Then the business on donation had been started. He told that at present there are four *Aarti* pujaris doing *Aarti* puja in *Vaishno Devi* Shrine. The governor has started new process to recruit the Pujaris. Basis education is required to become a priest. A person who is qualified in *shastri puja*, *karam kand* could apply to become a priest. *Shashtra* is equivalent to graduation. Many priests are PhD's, Acharya's, Madhiyum (10+2), matriculate, under matriculate in Sanskrit. Priests are specialized and manage every activity related to the rituals in a systemic manner. There is a senior priest, *katha vachak*, grade one priest, grade two priests, senior sewadhar, and junior sewadhar as decided by the shrine board. Earlier there were very few priests but gradually it started getting increase in numbers due to the increases in the number of pilgrims. Earlier the pilgrim could take coconut inside the temple but now he would be issued a token for coconut during *darshan* and receives his coconut from the counter outside after return from *darshan*. At present there are 58 employees at the *bhawan* of *Vaishno Devi*. In that there are *Pujaris*, *Sewadhars*, *Bhajaniks* (06), Cook, clerks. There is 8 hours duty. Salary is as per seniority, post and qualification. Newly recruited priests are getting 25000 per month 30,000 per month and some senior's priests having experience are getting 40,000, 50,000, and 60,000 per month. There is no pension after retirement. The retirement age is 58 years and if needed shrine board gives

extension for one year more. Other priest's Aarti Pujari don't have any age specified for retirement. They can service as the temple priest as they can. Other people who are contractual have retirement age of 65 years.

He also told that there is a systematic process for recruitment. Shrine board issues advertisement in newspapers. After receiving applications only qualified candidates would be called for an interview by expert committee or panel.

At present the shrine priest belongs to Jammu district, Reasi district, Kathua district, Samba, two priests are from Mathura, Virendavan. A person belong to Shridhar family are entitled to bath *Vaishno Devi* pindis and Aarti, mantra Vicharan are by the expert priests. Because, mantra vicharan are not known to Shridhar family members. Mantra, Puja, Vidhi Vidhan are done by experts priests. Now many people from Shridhar clan wants to service at *Bhawan*. But, shrine board gives option to most qualified person. There are thousands of families belong to this Shridhar clan. Now the shrine board is thinking to give them chance through recruitment. Sometimes the shridhar family meet with the governor, the chairman of the board for their demands.

Earlier there was the system of Pooja like ringing the bell, slogans etc and then finishes. But now the process of Aarti has been changed. Its happen because people are more curious in Aarti puja, they want to sit in more and more numbers. Pilgrims also gave feedbacks. On response to their feedback the shrine board published a book of Aarti and started online *darshan* of *Vaishno Devi*. The Vidhi of Puja is decided by Pujari. Now they have made such kind of platform where a pilgrim gets satisfied after aarti. The main reason behind the success of this shrine are the facilities provided by shrine board, various sheds constructed, many new track constructed, battery car started, helicopter, health services started. Earlier if something happens to a pilgrim than it could take more time to reach *Katra*. But now with the ambulance service it becomes easier. At various places there is health facility available like *Sanjhichat*, *Himkoti*, *Ardhkuwari*, etc. The doctors and staff recruited by shrine board. Now *darshan* become easily, earlier pilgrims had to wait for a week or more days. But at present if pilgrims comes more than 50,000 than they can have *darshans* in day. New constructed have the capacity to accommodate more pilgrims. It's also the reason behind the increases in the number of pilgrims. Other facilities are related to food items. Fix

rates decided by shrine board with hygienic food and cleanliness. Now there is big difference between today and earlier pilgrimage. Earlier if some day receives one lakh rupees could become a big day. But now a day crores of rupees donations are coming in one day. People from all over the world visit the shrine. Now a system of havan has been started for the well being of pilgrims and world peace and prosperity. But in that havan only those pilgrims could take part that pay the required money like rupees 1100 through online and the priest will chant his name. He just has to write his name, gotra, etc. Second, five people could be seated in 5100 amount. Limited people could get opportunity because there is no more space arrangement. There is proper record of every day in Aarti donation. Some pilgrims want to have Puja Path at *Bhawan*. Priest doesn't have any role in the Aarti donation money. He performs as asked by the shrine board. The whole system has been structured by the shrine board. In shrine board there is CEO, head of the activities of shrine board, 2 Additional CEO's, 5 Deputy CEO's, Tehisldar, SDM, Deputy manager, Assistant manager, etc.

Beautifully lines replied by the Priest, he told that, *“Every person is in search of peace and happiness. With the growth of a person he comes in contact with family, school, friends, books, environment, society etc. His brain also starts growing. He thinks that what he will do after education etc. He also thought that he will do job and earn money. Then will marry and get family. Then troubles start coming in his life and he needs mother help. He needs spiritual help to get rid of it. At the moment most of the people think of Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. When a person with true heart reaches to any temple than his works start getting done slowly. His trust getting strong gradually. He starts continuously visits to that temple”*.

He also told that most of labourers belong to Muslim community working in the shrine of Mata *Vaishno Devi*. Some of them visit for *darshan* also. Some people from Muslim community are also visiting the shrine as per record. Some Muslim families told that their fore fathers were also visiting the shrine. Some are coming annually and have Puja and Kirtan at their homes. One Muslim person after having gone under treatment visited the shrine. Some people told him to visit to receive blessings of Mata *Vaishno Devi*. At present he is fine and

stable. He takes water from *Bhawan* as medicine. Another Muslim pilgrim suffering from cancer, doctors stopped giving him medical advice and told that the person chance of survival is very low. Because, he was in his last stage of life. The person had great trust on *Vaishno Devi*. He took sacred water to drink and mala to pray to *Vaisho Devi*. After that he told doctors to check him again. But doctors were refusing. Later the doctor checked him and came to know about improvement of his life. *A priest comes in between pilgrim and the supernatural powers. The priest works for the betterment of humanity and the whole world.*

The Vidhi of Puja is being done in this way, *Atam Puja*, *Sankalap Puja*, *Vishnu Kalyan*, *Aarti* and *Darshan*. The vidhi vidhan of aarti is;-one Vedic Aarti and *Shridhar ji ki Aarti*. Those who sit in the aarti have to pay 1000 per person. Around 300 pilgrims can sit in the aarti. Another 10 pilgrims can sit and get most of the benefits have to pay 16000 each, to sit inside the cave. Therefore, at one time in aarti around 4.6 L amount goes to shrine board. The two time amount of aarti is 9.2 L in a day. The whole donation is controlled by shrine board. Now every activity is being managed systematically.

Priest No. 2. (Kamal) name changed at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*: earlier there were no such activities managed. But now days everything is managed. Even the priests, board are getting lot of criticism. Criticism is good for progress and prosperity. It's necessary for positive change. Many pilgrims gives feedback did complaints to the shrine board to review various activities of the shrine. Those good for the pilgrims and shrine are being adopted by the shrine. The priest told that *Gulshan Kumar's* started *Langar* at *Banganga*. In 1976 the *Yagya* has been started. At present there are two *Yagya* in a year. It has been started by *Anil Goswami*, CEO Shrine board. Priests only ask for *Hawan Samagri* and don't ask for money. The purpose of this *Yagya* is for *World peace and prosperity*. At present the shrine board has constructed a big university named *Mata Vaishno Devi University*, *Spiritual Centre*, *Hospital*, *Gurukuls* etc. In *Gurukuls* childrens are learning *Sanskrit*. Its motive is to make qualified priest. These children's could get the chance to become priest in the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. Every year the *gurukul* takes 20 children's. The total strength till now is

120-25 children's in Gurukul. Every facility shrine board provides to these children's free of cost. A child has to go through written test and an interview to enter the gurukul. These children's belongs to Brahmin, Rajput and Mahajan's Caste. In future when these priests goes outside than there will be publicity of shrine board and dharma. After education they become what they want to be. This is considered as important step by shrine board.

Priest No. 3. Sant/Shadu (Kulbir) told that the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* is one of the total 52 sidh piths in India as well as some locations in Pakistan. The popularity of the shrine is growing day by day. The reason could be the relevance of the place. Now a day's many changes have been take place in the structure of temple, Arti Puja etc. He told that there is more need to construct dharamshalas, more bhandaras should be start. There should be completely ban on plastic. It should be polythene free. He told that Dharma is totally against deforestation. It maintains ecological balance.

Amarnath Shrine

Swami Kuldeep (Name Changed) from Rajashtan at Amarnath pilgrimage told that, the *Amarnath* Cave has mythological and historical relevance. At present people from all over the country are visiting to have *Darshan* of the cave at least one in life. He told that the earlier the Pehalgham name was bhelgham, Pissu top was Bichu top, Sheshnag was Nags and Panjtarni was Ganga and Chandra. The story of two parrots has great importance. Then pilgrims proceed to the next stoppage Sheshnag. It's told that in the ancient times there was a demon, equal to air structure lived there. He created many hurdles in the moments of gods. Then all the gods went to sadashiv ji maharaj who got happy. Then all the gods went to shri sagar and prayed to shri Vishnu. Vishnu replied that he would finish vayu roopi demon. Then he finished him. It's said that those pilgrims have bath in the pond considered as sacred. According to Indian Map service (2013), argue that the Sheshnag lake is one of the most beautiful lakes in the world situated in the majestic mountains. The next stoppage comes Wawbal 13,500ft above the sea level, and then comes Mahagunstop, 14,800ft above the

sea level. Then comes Rabibal, Posh Pathri, Panjtarni, S.S. Pedi, and finally Holy Cave, 13, 500 ft above the sea level. Without any door cave situated in the middle 60 feet long, 30 feet breadth and 15 feet height. Kashmir was the land of pilgrimages. Many mythical stories have been associated with the cave of *Amarnath* that explores the socio-cultural history of Jammu and Kashmir.

Thus, the chapter has understood the structure and function of shrine in the society. It has explored the mythical, historical and religious aspects of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* shrine. The sacred geography, sacred space and time, symbolism, various rituals performance and the changing social organization of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* shrine has been explored and discussed. Now the next chapter has tried to understand the pilgrimage and society in the contemporary *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

Chapter 4

Pilgrimage and Society in Contemporary India With Reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed about structure and function of the shrine with reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. Now, the present chapter tries to understand the notion and significance of pilgrimage in the contemporary Indian society with reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. Pilgrimage had been seen important part of societies in all the periods of human history. History tells us about pilgrimages were given much importance in all the world religions. The possible reason behind the origin of pilgrimages could be their relevance, the inner peace and the notion of sacredness attached to them. The sacred character of pilgrimage forces the individual and society to think more about the supernatural beings. It also tries us to connect with the god or the holy things. Most of the pilgrimage places in India have been considered as the god's home. Therefore to visit god's places means to attain *Moksha* and followed the principle of *Dharma*. It also leads to the purification of soul. But pilgrimages have come under various social changes in the present times. The traditional form of pilgrimage has been converted into the modern form of pilgrimage. Now the pilgrimage places are adopting various contemporary technological tools and techniques. It's because most of the shrines in India where there is much public attention has been more focus on the management of the pilgrimage and the commercialization of the place than on the performance of rituals.

Therefore, to understand the entire complexity of the notion of pilgrimage and society the present chapter has divided into five parts. **First;** pilgrimage in Indian Society. **Second;** it explores pilgrimage as a spiritual journey of one person or family. **Third;** pilgrimage as a religious congregation of community of

faithful (moral community) as defined by Emile Durkheim and pilgrimage as the central ritual of community of believers. **Fourth;** pilgrimage as a recreational journey. **Fifth;** An analysis of the pilgrimage and society with special reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* in the contemporary Indian society. Both primary and secondary sources have been used in the preparation of this chapter. The data collected on the notion of pilgrimage, religious, cultural and spiritual pilgrimage, pilgrimage as a recreational journey, the pilgrimage statistics of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has been discussed in this chapter. Thus, the chapter understands the pilgrimage and the society in contemporary India with special focus on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine.

4.2. Pilgrimage in the Indian Society with reference to the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*

In all the world religions the concept of pilgrimage has been given important place. In the *Rigveda* (c.1500 BCE) there has been mentioned the earliest reference to the Hindu pilgrimage. *Mahabharata* and *Puranas* also have given important consideration to the various beliefs and rituals at the pilgrimage places. Singh (2013) explained the first mention of Hindu Pilgrimage had been in the *Mahabharata* in 5th century BCE. Even the *Ramayana* (1000BCE) narrates the story of Rama a pilgrimage journey. The *mahatmya* literature (8th to 16th century) of the medieval period have discussed about the mythological stories relates with the pilgrimage (Singh, 2013:49-52). Hindus have considered many pilgrimages sites as the holy creation of god and visits them continuously for *Karma* and *Dharma* reasons. Buddhism also gives important consideration to the following pilgrimage places like *Lumbini*, *Bodh Gaya*, *Sarnath* and *Kusinara*. Christianity also makes pilgrimage to those places connected with the life of Jesus. Islam gives importance to the pilgrimage of *Mecca*. In Sikhism the *golden* temple in Amritsar is one of the sacred pilgrimage sites for Sikhs.

Singh (2013) said that pilgrimage is believed to be merit giving act in the Hindu tradition. It involves three stages of function: Initiation, limitation and reaggregation (Singh, 2013:52). As mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and the *Nilmata purana* the pilgrimage journey to the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* could be started even before 5th to 6th century BCE. Even there are many historical

evidences in ancient, medieval and modern India that speaks about the power of these *Shakti Peethas* as well as the moment of pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine*.

The institutionalization of Pilgrimages started with various kinds of traditions in the Indian society. Bharati (1963) said, in Hinduism *Tirth* word has been used for the place of pilgrimage while the *Tantric* word is *Pitha*. Hindus considers seven places as the most significant. *Kashi*, *Prayag*, *Mathura* and *Ayodhya* in Uttar Pradesh, Haridwar in Uttrakhand, *Dvaraka* in Gujarat and *Kanchi Puram* in Chennai. Gupta (2002) associates the origin of pilgrimages with the Indian civilization. In societies the notion and pilgrimages journey had been seen through ages and still exists in the present times (Gupta, 2002). Many scholars across the world had written about the pilgrimage and the society⁷². Bhardwaj (1983) have given accounts of the pilgrimage and history in India. He found many pilgrimage places in India since ancient civilizations to the twentieth century. He said the Hindu religious life accepts the origin and process of pilgrimage or *Tirth Yatra* is an ancient, universal and ubiquitous phenomenon. He further argues millions of peoples irrespective of caste, class visit the place of pilgrimages every day due to their liberal character. Also the four important things considers significant in the life of Hindus are Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. All of the goals have been attached with the pilgrimages. Therefore, religion as an institution has become the principal mechanism that attracts peoples to undertake pilgrimage journey (Bhardwaj, 1983:1-2). Hinduism has been given important consideration to the pilgrimage places (Fuller, 1992:204). Singh (2013) explained during 1950s pilgrimages becomes more popular due to the resurgence of traditional Hindu belief system (Singh, 2013:52).

Campo (1998) explained pilgrimage a kind of journey to the unknown places across the geographical spaces where individuals undergo a process of self discovery. He also argues that anthropologists and religious historians who had studied American pilgrimage saw communities, institutions performing rituals and travel collectively to form sacred places. Pilgrimage connected with

⁷²For Instance see Davison and Gitlitz (2002) in their book, '*Pilgrimage: From the Ganges to Graceland*'; Dalton (2010) in his book, '*Sacred places of the world*'; Fuller (1992) in the book '*The Camphor Flame*'; Rana P.B.Singh (2013) in his book on '*Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimages: Sacred Space and System*'; Eck (2012) in her book, '*India: A Sacred Geography*'.

cultural religion or called implicit religion. In India pilgrimage or tirthyatras has been considered as one of the significant part of religious practices. People visits the four sacred places are temples, river banks, mountains and forests for worship of Hindu deities. S.M.Bhardwaj (1990, 96-97) who has studied Indian pilgrimage extensively, has pointed, "*The institution of pilgrimage in Hinduism is so deep rooted that it would be surprise it did not transfer to America. He had made this observation after visiting many Hindu temples in America constructed by Indians who arrived after immigration Act of 1965 went into effect*". Post 1980's there has been developed the pilgrimage places in India. It could be seen by looking at temples were getting donations and worshippers from diverse sections of the society (Campo, 1986:41-46).

Pilgrimage is a journey full of challenges, talks of peace and humanity. It's full of adventures. A journey to the place considered as sacred by the pilgrim. Pilgrimage in the contemporary Indian society has been changed in its structure and function. Now a pilgrim goes on the pilgrimage journey with various motives. There is also the time and space factor that influences the entire pilgrimage journey. Because earlier we had very less options or the facilities to have pilgrimage journey. But now due to the rise in the infrastructure and connectivity the pilgrimages journey could be happen easily. The rise of religious tourism has given different dimension to the notion of pilgrimage. Now tourism boards, tourist agencies have focus more on the religious places. They are including those religious places in their policies which are public attentive.

Vaishno Devi and *Amarnath* pilgrimage has been considered as a sacred journey or the holy creation of god. Both the shrines constitute an important part in the Hindu religion. How pilgrims understand the meaning of pilgrimage? How he thinks about the whole journey to the sacred place? Pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* is a spiritual passage with hollowed purposes. It means faith in the god. It's a journey that's leads us to humanity. Pilgrimage means a reverential journey to a shrine or the sacred place. A pilgrim narrates that earlier pilgrims visited the pilgrimage place with lots of hardship, which them considered as significant for life. But now the pilgrimages places are becoming more recreational. It's a holy place where a person connects directly to the god. Pilgrimage is a place a person fulfils his religious beliefs, faiths to fulfil their

wishes. It's also a place where a person visits for peace of mind, soul and self purification. But, the contemporary pilgrimage has been trapped by the tourism. Now tourists visit the pilgrimage places. It's the demand of the tourist where the tourism boards, tourist agencies are being forced to keep the religious places also among the other destinations for tourists. This overall could also impact the local economy.

Pilgrimages are drastically changing due to the information technology period. The more information about the pilgrimages leads to the rise of numbers in pilgrims. This is one factor that *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine are receiving thousands of pilgrims every year. In this context M.N.Srinivas mentioned in Fuller (2004) work on pilgrimages says that in the early times few people of Rampur Village had little information about pilgrimages in India. For Example before the technological era a small section of peoples had little information about the Varanasi. But the technological changes have impacted the information system and the people's life. Now a day's information about pilgrimage places could become easy to gather. More peoples are also visits the place of pilgrimages due to better connectivity and safety (Fuller, 2004:204-205).

There were happened many instances in the history where the pilgrimages had been seen in the conflict situation. Fuller (1992) explained that in April 1988 the ministry of external affairs, government of India announced in the press that it would start pilgrimage to the Mount Kailasa in Tibet under the Chinese government and those wanted to be part of the thirty day pilgrimage could submit the applications. Thereafter the ministry started all kind of facilities like health checkups, registration of the pilgrims. Those pilgrims found medically fit had to pay the fee of Rs 3,000 (*three thousand*) as well as US \$ 380 in foreign exchange to the Chinese authorities (Fuller, 1992:204). In context of *Amarnath* pilgrimage got stopped from 1991-1995 by the government due to the terrorist threats to the pilgrimage. The state government also constituted the shrine boards to make the pilgrimage of *Amarnath* and *Vaishno* more comfortable. The traditional law handles the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine got replaced by modern law.

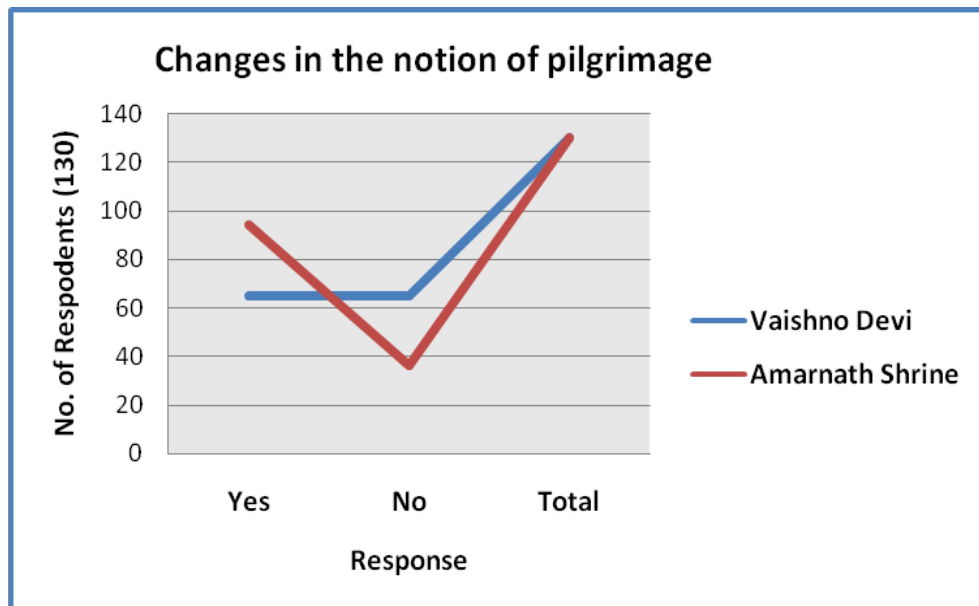
The contemporary place of pilgrimages has come under various social changes. The global impact could be seen on local place of pilgrimages. Both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have been impacted by the global changes. The pilgrimage to the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are constantly changing. The field data has shown some mixed responses. Some respondents were agreed that the pilgrimages had got affected due to the various societal changes. But respondents also thinks that the still there could be seen the strong feeling for religion in the present times. The below table has given details about notion of pilgrimage at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

Table No. 4.1. Showing the changes in the notion of pilgrimage.

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	65	94	158	50.0	72.3	60.8
No	65	36	102	50.0	27.7	39.2
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No.4.1 Showing the representation of changes in the notion of pilgrimage



The information related to the notion of pilgrimage, 72.3% respondents at *Amarnath Shrine* responded that the notion of pilgrimage has been changed, followed by 50% respondents agreed. 50% of respondents in *Vaishno Devi* shrine responded that there have been no changes in the notion of pilgrimage in

the present times, followed by 27.7% respondents at *Amarnath* shrine. Combining the responses of both the shrines, 60.8% respondents the notion of pilgrimage has been changed, followed by 39.2% responded no changes. The above chart has given representation of changes in the notion of pilgrimage in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

Respondents at *Amarnath* shrine responded the notion of pilgrimage journey has been changed due to various contemporary changes. Like the global changes and the rise of terrorism. The data reveals that gradually there has been seen the impact of global changes on the local pilgrimages places. Now the journey to *Vaishno Devi* shrine has been seen more cultural in sense than the earlier religious one. Cultural mean peoples from various faiths visit the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. They plan the pilgrimage to *Vaishno Devi*, with having various motives. There are diverse opinions of the respondents who visit the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. Pilgrims from all over the country irrespective of various complexities has been visiting the shrine. Therefore, the analysis of the notion of pilgrimage of both the shrine reveals that pilgrims admit the changes in the notion of pilgrimage. Now they are giving many reasons like the contemporary changes, the rise of globalization, liberalization and the social changes.

But when asked the same question on the notion of pilgrimage to the pilgrims at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* their perception was balanced. The respondent's data reveals that the notion of pilgrimage at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has balanced opinions. Because 50 percent of the pilgrims think that there have been changes due to the various social changes. But, another 50% have said that the significance of *Vaishno* is still powerful among them and there are no changes in the sacredness of the journey to the Mother goddess *Sheravali*.

One pilgrim who lived in the Jammu city responded that the journey to *Vaishno Devi* shrine has not been changed. According to him the journey to *Vaishno Devi* is considered as holy or sacred. But another from Jammu told that now many friends of mine are visiting to the shrine on Saturday evening after college just for enjoyment. In the same way another from Jammu itself told that the western culture has great impact on the young generation and now they are

thinking differently and most of them are visiting the shrine for entertainment purposes. One pilgrim told that the notion of pilgrimage journey has been changed due to infrastructural development. A pilgrim from Uttarakhand told that the notion of pilgrimage has been changed due to the luxurious journey to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*.

Second pilgrim same from the state of Uttarakhand told that most of the young generation visits the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* as a picnic spot. A pilgrim from Uttarakhand told that the notion of pilgrimage is constantly changing and now the religious places are developing as a tourist spots. A pilgrim from Uttarakhand told that the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has become the famous tourist destination instead of religious place for one community. It's because most of the people's now visiting to these pilgrimage destination or taking it as tourist spots and to get rid from day to day life's stress. Another told that the more recently the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has turned into tourist place for the young generation. A pilgrim from Delhi told that now there are many ways and short routes constructed to reach the holy cave from *Katra* and these all small changes have been great impact on the overall notion of pilgrimage. A pilgrim from south told that now the people are forgetting their culture, values due to the westernization of everything.

A Muslim pilgrim from Poonch district in Jammu region told that the intervention of state government into the activities of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has changed a lot. Another Muslim pilgrim from Madhya Pradesh told that the journey to the *Vaishno Devi* is something that accommodates everyone irrespective of diverse rituals and beliefs. May be the notion has been continuously changing due to various factors but the fundamental image of the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* is unchanged. A pilgrim from Bihar responded that there has been no change in the notion of pilgrimage journey but the young generation is confused about what exactly is the meaning of *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage.

It has been seen that pilgrims talking about various changes had given various reasons for that but those who responded against various changes that led to the impact on the notion of pilgrimage were saying just no. They had no proper justification for that. But, the sacredness of the pilgrimage seems to be

attached with the pilgrims. Each and every place during journey from *Katra* to the holy cave has been considered as the sacred. Throughout the journey pilgrims chanting '*Jai Mata Di*' '*Zor se bolo*' '*Sare Bolo*' '*Aage Walee Bhi Bolo*' '*Piche Wale Bhi Bolo*' '*Milkar Boloo*' '*Bolo Sanche darbaar ki*' '*Jai*'.

The respondents at *Amarnath* shrine agreed that the notion of pilgrimage has been changed. Only 27.7 percent responded that the contemporary changes have no impact on the notion of pilgrimage journey. But, there is little difference between the pilgrims of both the shrines. The *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage has been seen more cultural in nature. But *Amarnath* is purely religious in nature. The pilgrims at *Amarnath* responded that only little infrastructure has been developed but the still the inner peace, the sacred character of the pilgrimage is still the same. Also the 1989-90 Kashmir insurgency and the forced migration of pandits from the Kashmir valley due to the terrorism. The whole notion of pilgrimage has been drastically changed due to various security threats since 1990.

A pilgrim thinks twice before taking above to the holy cave of *Amarnath*. Gupta and Raina (2008) explained science and technology has impacted the ancient beliefs and practices of pilgrimage and has taken the shape of a modern pilgrimage. Now within days or hours the journey to these pilgrimage places could complete. But earlier within a shorter period of time it was difficult or even impossible to complete the journey. Earlier there was the notion that harder the journey better the reward, but now the notion of pilgrimage journey has been changed due to space and time (Gupta and Raina, 2008:1).

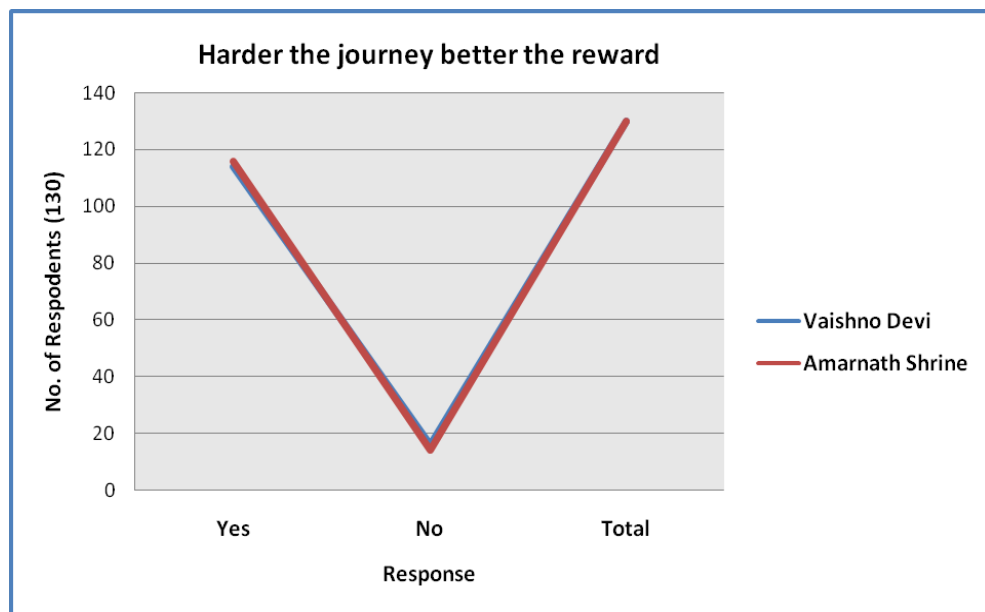
The next table has given representation on religious belief which says "*Harder the journey better the reward*". It also shows the respondents response that reflects traditional and modern thinking. Traditional means just locating the religious sphere that doesn't speak of any change, which is still to the pre-technological, pre-infrastructure times. But modern, reflects the modern secular, democratic, constitutional and global change.

Table No. 4.2. Showing the perception of “*Harder the journey better the reward*” has been changed or not

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	114	116	239	87.7	89.2	88.8
No	16	14	29	12.3	10.8	11.2
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 4.2. Graphical representation of respondent’s notion on “*Harder the journey, better the reward*”



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 87.7% respondents responded that ‘*Harder the journey better the reward*’ has been changed in the present times. Now most of the pilgrims look for comfortable and easy pilgrimage. It speaks of the modern pilgrimage, the introduction of new technologies to facilitate the pilgrimage. The new technology means the latest tools and techniques. But 12.3% of the respondents at *Vaishno Devi* disagree, which says there has been no change in the harder character of journey. But at *Amarnath* shrine 89.2% says that there has been impact of social change on the character of the pilgrimage journey. They traditional belief of pilgrimage has been continuously changing in the present times. But, 10.8% of the respondent’s responses at *Amarnath* shrine still reflect the notion of harder journey. By combining the percentage of the both the shrine which says 88.2 belief that the modern technology has changed the harder

journey, followed by 11.8 still follow the traditional practices in the pilgrimage journey. The below chart has shown the difference of opinion at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

The data says that 88.8% pilgrims agreed with the connotation harder the journey, better the reward. It's because the notion of pilgrimage in the Hinduism always have been associated with the hardship, long and difficult journey to reach the supernatural beings or the god. One pilgrim said "*Jo Jitne Kasth Sehta hai, Usko Utna Mitha Fal Milta Hai*". It means whosoever does work hard gets blessings of god. Pilgrims at both the shrines believes that harder the journey better the reward has been changing in the present times. But still there has been seen people visited the shrine with religious purposes & thinks about pilgrimage as more adventurous and harder journey. They relate it with the '*Punya*' and '*Paap*' in life. Pilgrimage has many notions. Either it's a spiritual journey of one person, journey with family or with the community etc. Therefore, the next section has discussed the pilgrimage as a spiritual journey.

4.2.1. Pilgrimage as a spiritual journey of one person or family

Pilgrimage could be known as the spiritual journey. In the pilgrimage a pilgrim tries to connect with the supreme powers. There are different motive to reach the destination point. But a pilgrim in the present times looks pilgrimage more spiritual than the religious one. It's because the world passes through the technological change. After hectic schedule with various activities a person looks for peace. Than the pilgrimage place becomes the best place for them to get spiritual. We have seen the pilgrimage places in the Hinduism has been seen the long journey to the mountains, rivers where there is peace and recreation. People connect themselves with the natural beauty, the peace of mind, the unique place, the supreme powers etc.

Madan (2000) put a question to know the reason of huge gathering at the tomb of Mu in al-din tomb and Ajmer. It's one of sacred shrines of Muslims but due to the impact of Sufi/secular nature has attracted pilgrims from diverse background. He said that it's the faith on god that inspires the believers. He told

that there are material and spiritual purposes for which a person visits the pilgrimage or the sacred places. Akbar also had visited the shrine for material gains. But some pilgrims visit the pilgrimage place to get spiritual or to connect with the god. (Madan, 1992). Another scholar Bharati (1963) argues that pilgrimage is highly meritorious among all the religious groups in India. Muslims believe that they do not regard their spiritual duties completed until they have made pilgrimage to the Hajj (Bharati, 1963, 135-67).

A spiritual pilgrimage draws attention of all the peoples irrespective of any differences. A mind with full off spiritual motives share feelings and belongingness with others. A spiritual pilgrimage gives an opportunity to meet different peoples. When pilgrimage is done on foot like *parikarna*, one meets with many pilgrims who have love and devotion for the deity that make a great impact on the overall interactional process as well as in the life. In India there are many pilgrimage places where peoples visit without any distinction of creed, caste and sect. For Example *Kashi* is one of the very old religious places for Hindus. But the modern visits to the *Kashi* are made by peoples from different caste groups. The pilgrimage to the *Puri* is also becoming spiritual and secular in sense. It's because Hindu dine with the other community peoples. With the rise of interactional process there have been rise in the educational level. It also gives the opportunity to the local inhabitants to explore the entire India its cultural geography. It also aware women to come out of *parda* when they visit the pilgrimage place. Thus the spiritual quest embedded in the culture and civilization had decreased the differences (Jha, 1971:45). Many pilgrims visit the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* for spiritual or *Moksha*.

Table No. 4.3. Visits for spiritual or *Moksha*

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	117	128	245	90.0	98.5	94.3
No	11	2	13	8.5	1.5	5.0
Other	2	0	2	.5	0	0.7
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine 90% pilgrim's visits the shrine for spiritual or *Moksha* purpose, followed by 8.5% visits for non-*Moksha* reasons, 0.5% mentioned other reasons. In *Amarnath* shrine 98.5% visits the shrine for spiritual *moksha*. Because, *Amarnath* pilgrimage is more considered as religious journey than more cultural one. 1.5% visits for other reasons to the shrine of *Amarnath*. Combining both the shrines 94.3% visits the for spiritual/*Moksha* reasons, followed by 5% mentioned non-spiritual reasons, 0.7% visits for other cultural reasons.

Chart No. 4.3. Showing the graphical representation for respondent's purpose of visiting the shrines.



The above chart shows comparison between *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. The concept of *Moksha* has been shown more among the pilgrims at *Amarnath* than the pilgrims at *Vaishno Devi*. Because, it observed in the field, spiritual belief for *Shiva* is seen more strong among pilgrims as compared to pilgrims at *Vaishno Devi*. However the variation of such belief is 8% between the *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi*. *Moksha* seems to be higher at both the shrines. There are various spots on the track of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* that speaks of spiritual or *Moksha*.

Goswami (1998) said at *Vaishno Devi* shrine a cave known as *Garabh Joon* situated at *Ardhkuwari*, on the track to *Vaishno Devi* shrine resembles with

the mother womb. It is believed that a person crawl through *Garab Joon* gets purified and washed away all his/her past sins and attains *Moksha* (Goswami, 1998:66). Gandhar (1973) also pointed that anyone to get pass through *Garab Yoni* leads to the purification of body, soul and gets Moksha (Ganhar, 1973:5). Madan (2000) explained Moksha is the final stage in life comes after dharma, artha and Kama. Moksha means looking for freedom from all the worldly affairs or renunciation of all social activities and desires to enter the spiritual world for reincarnation and purification (Madan, 2000:17).

So, in the same way the Garab Joon cave represents a sacred symbol, not a totem. The cave has its own history as well as the sociological imagination, and how the cave has established a relationship between sacred and society. At the *Amarnath* a person gets purifies his soul and body once he enters the sacred cave. There is a strong notion among the peoples about the *Vaishno Devi* that whatever her children wish from her gets fulfilled. Thus, mother goddess Vaishnavi is familiar as '*Moonh Maangi Muradein Puri Karne Wali Mata*'. In the Hindu way of life, the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage attains the four values, *Dharm* or right conduct in life, *Arth* or to gain success or wealth, *Kama* or to fulfil desires and Moksha or spiritual bliss. With such kind of strong beliefs and practices have attracted the pilgrims from across the world ⁷³ (Shrine Board, 2010). Jones and Ryan (2007) explained *purusharthas* of human life, Artha, means material gains. Than second comes *Kama* means bodily pleasure. Third, *Dharm* means the right behaviour in life. At fourth stage comes *Moksh* means free from worldly affairs or to search for peace. These all four stages play a significant role to maintain the social order (Jones and Ryan, 2007).

Madan (2000) explained the notion and purpose of *Dharma* and *Karma* in the Hindu life. Karma means to perform the role in the society. Karma also says every action in life has reactions. Karma associates with the birth and death of a person. Dharma he means to hold and perform the role and duties. In the Hindu belief dharma guides the whole universe to do the things in a systematic way. Whatever is right or wrong teaches Dharma. It's the right action that we take in

⁷³ The local literature and the perception of pilgrims at Vaishno Devi shrine argue that that there is adjacent relation of *Vaishno Devi* with her believers and followers.

our day to day life. Dharma also leads us to the spiritual world. It's also gives us imagination to learn how to respect others (Madan, 2000). In the Hindu tradition, *Moksha* is the fourth i.e. last stage where a person seeks mukti from life and prefers to attain the spiritual goals (Jones and Ryan, 2007). Thus the section has discussed about the pilgrimage as a spiritual journey. Now the next part has focus on pilgrimage as a religious congregation of community of faithful or moral community.

4.2.2. Pilgrimage as a religious congregation of community of faithful or Moral Community

Pilgrimage has been associated with the moral community since civilizations. Community always remained part and parcel of pilgrimage. Peoples together visit the pilgrimage places. They share the common belief and values. In *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* many features relates with pilgrimage and the Hindu society. Like beliefs, rituals, sacred cave of *Vaishno Devi*, Shiva Linga at *Amarnath*, *Amarnath* cave and the sacred pindis.

Table No. 4.4. Visits with family or for the performance of family or community rituals at both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*?

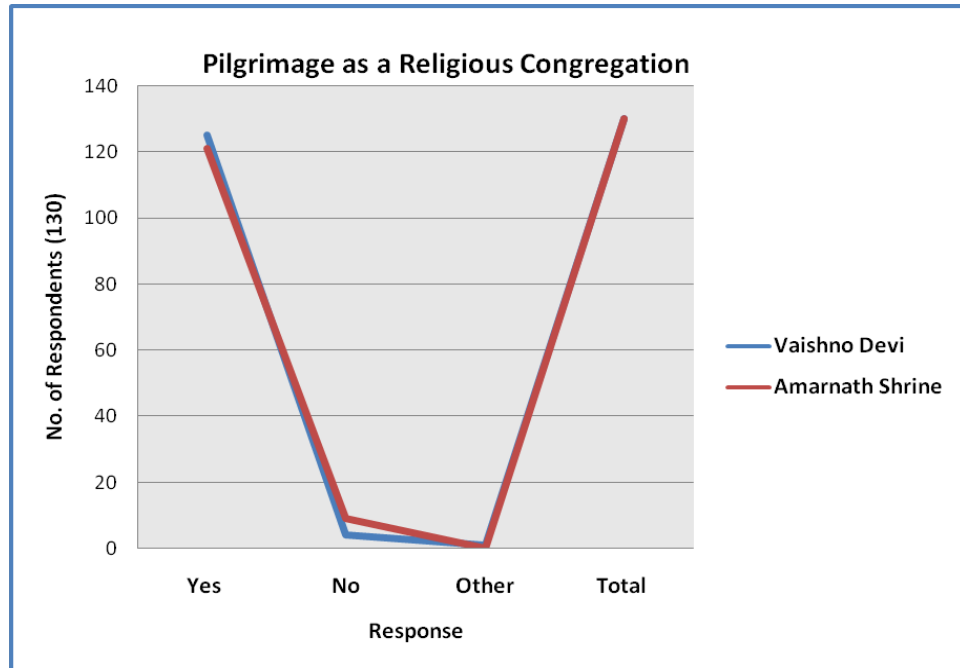
Response	Number of respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath</i> Shrine	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	125	121	246	96.2	93.1	94.7
No	4	9	13	3.1	6.9	5
Other	1	0	1	.8	0	.3
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi*, 96.2% of the respondent's visits with family for performance of family or community rituals at both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine, followed by 3.1% replied other reasons visit to these shrines. In *Amarnath* shrine, 93.1% visits with family or community to these shrines for

rituals worship. 6.9% mentioned other reasons of their visit. As total of both the shrines, 94.7% stated their visits with family or community, followed by 5% without family or community and 0.3% mentioned other reasons of their visit to these shrines. Therefore both the shrines show more numbers of pilgrims visit these shrines with family or community to perform various kinds of rituals.

Chart No. 4.4. Showing the comparison between *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*



The data shows that 94.7% pilgrims agree that they visit with their families for the family or community rituals. Only 5% disagree with it and .3% mentions other reasons who visit the shrine. Durkheim (1995) argues beliefs are important part of every religion. He explained that the sacred and profane constitutes the basis of the society. Sacred things are the holy creation of god and profane unholy. A community visits the religious place for sacred motive. Sacred things could be both material as well as non material thing (Durkheim, 1995:34-35). Durkheim argues that social life is not possible without the moral beliefs and shared values which form the collective conscience. Without their absence there would be no social order, social control and social solidarity. Due to the shared belongingness there will be integration in the society, strength and unity among peoples (Haralambos, 2003:456-457).

Both the shrine constitutes lots of community or family visits. They together perform various rituals. The data of both the shrines speaks of pilgrimage as a religious congregation. But, it observed that a pilgrim also visits the shrine for profane things. The detail about profane has been discussed in the next section on pilgrimage as a recreational journey.

4.2.3. Pilgrimage as a recreational Journey

Apart from spiritual and moral community, pilgrimage in the contemporary also has been associated with the recreational journey. Pilgrims visits the shrine for profane things. It has been shown that the rise of global culture, the generation at the young age has become more advanced. It could also be seen by looking at the tourist agencies. They have identified pilgrimage as one of their picnic spots among their other tourist spots. It has been observed from the respondent's responses that a pilgrim with young age visits the shrines for especially for recreation and fun. The below table has given the accounts of it.

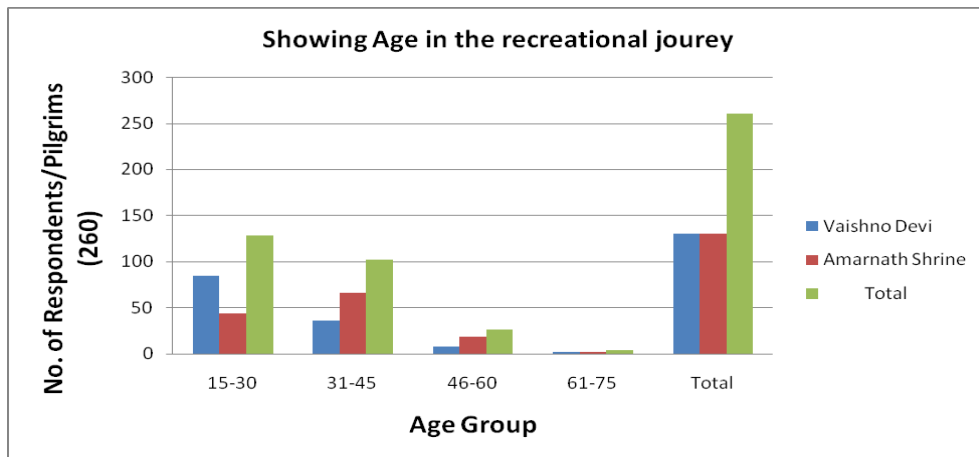
Table No. 4.5. Pilgrims visit the shrine with friends?

Response	Numbers of respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	120	50	170	92.3	38.4	65.4
No	3	80	83	2.3	61.6	32.0
Other	7	0	7	5.4	0	2.6
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

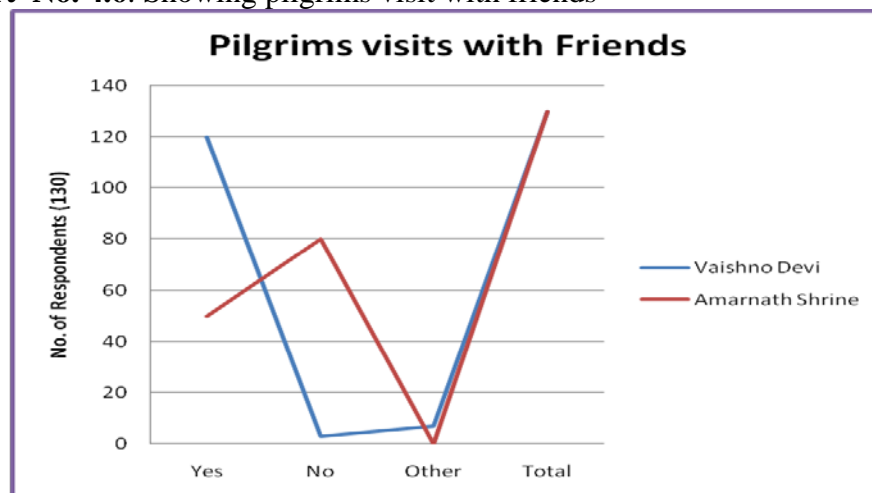
In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 92.3 respondents responded that pilgrim's visits the shrine with friends, followed by 2.3% mentioned other reasons of their visit, 5.5% stated other reasons. In *Amarnath* shrine 38.4% responded that pilgrim's visits with friends, followed by 61.6% disagree and mentioned other reasons of their visit. Combining of both the shrines 65.4% stated pilgrims visits with friends to these shrines, followed by 32% not visit with friends, 2.6% mentioned other reasons.

Chart No. 4.5. Showing the factor in the recreational pilgrimage journey age



The above graph clearly reflects that the age group (15 to 30) have the highest numbers of representation at both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* followed by the age group (31 to 45), (46-60) and (61-75). It's observed that young age could be the reason for visiting the maximum among other age groups. The above data in the above table shows that 96.2% respondents agreed that both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have been seen the maximum numbers of pilgrims having young age pilgrims. But most them undertake the pilgrimage for enjoyment, picnic or for recreational purposes. Therefore, they don't have any sacred purpose of their visits but to fulfil their profane goal. Durkheim has defined the profane as unholy that includes the worldly affairs and day to day life. The below table compares between *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine, showing the pilgrims visit with friends.

Chart No. 4.6. Showing pilgrims visit with friends



It has been observed in the field that there are many reasons that force the pilgrims at their young age to visit the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. **One;** Enjoyment with friends where they will get maximum time to spent time with each other. As we know pilgrimage is considered as one of the long journey and it motivates the young peoples to visit more and more. **Second;** the younger age peoples are using the pilgrimage as their picnic spots. **Third;** the families let them go easily when they ask for permission. It's because sacred character of pilgrimage that influences their families or the society. But, the young generation uses these places mostly for profane purposes.

Thus, the chapter has understood pilgrimage in the Indian society, pilgrims as spiritual journey, pilgrimage as religious congregation, pilgrimage as a recreational journey. Now the next part of the chapter analyzes the pilgrimage and society in contemporary context of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

4.3. An Analysis of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Pilgrimage

The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has great role in the contemporary Indian society. Both the shrine attracts thousands of thousands pilgrims every year from across the globe. These shrines could be seen as global one in the contemporary Indian society. There is difficult to find the pilgrims statistics before the 1980 on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage. But after 1980 there has been started improving in the pilgrimage planning and management. It has been seen when the management of shrine of *Vaishno Devi* took over by the state government and for the pilgrimage management, various decisions on the shrine constituted a board called Shri Mata *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board SMVDSB⁷⁴ in the year 1986. Therefore the year after 1986 many new things got introduced in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. In the year 2000 the state government of Jammu and Kashmir took decision to take over the shrine of *Amarnath* and constituted a board called Jammu and Kashmir *Amarnath* Shrine Board for the betterment of management that was similar like *Vaishno devi* shrine board.

⁷⁴ Much information is available about the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*, information about pilgrimage, various facilities available, helpdesk for pilgrims, booking information and online services at www.maavaishno.org.

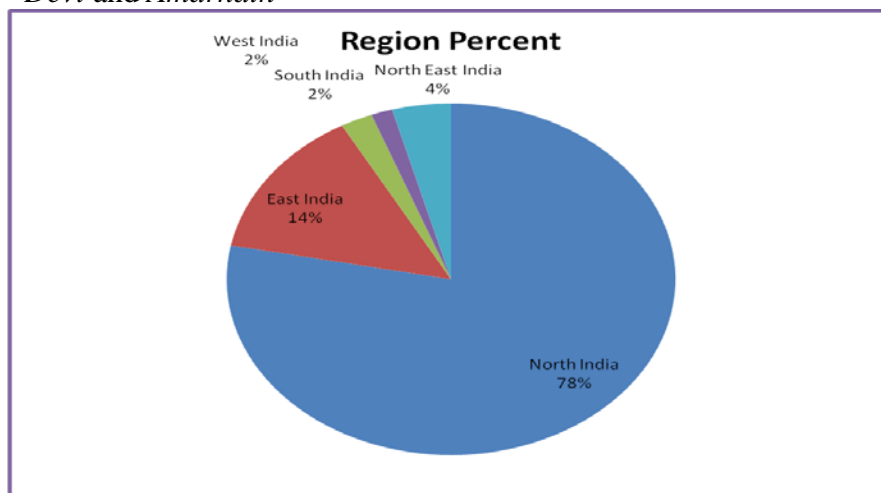
4.3.1. A Journey of Faith

Faith constitutes the basis of religion. All the religions of the world have great faiths and their practices. The community gets attracted to the various things because of their supernatural or extraordinary faiths. In the same way the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* also have faiths to attract more number of pilgrims. The philosophy of *Shakti* and *Shiva* says they have created the entire universe. *Shakti* resemblances nature and *Shiva* is the power to generate various things. Thus, a person life gets influenced by such faiths. Thus Individuals and societies perform various rituals at the sacred sites. In the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine pilgrim's visits with diverse faiths. The following faiths that has been observed in the field as well as interacted with the respondents, like *Vaishno Devi* is powerful, superior among other goddess, action goddess, fulfil all the wishes of the devotees, mother of all. *Shiva* as protector, fulfil all desires and makes life successful, sacred place, faith to meet the god.

4.3.2. Pilgrimage Process

Pilgrims visits the shrine from all over India. Now they reach the *Katra* to visit *Vaishno Devi* and Jammu for *Amarnath* pilgrimage. Jammu is connected with rail, air and bus. Pilgrims visits the *Vaishno Devi* directly by train or by bus.

Chart No. 4.7. Showing the region wise pilgrims visits the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*



Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2016

Most of the pilgrims visit from north India (78%) like Jammu Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and Chandigarh. East India constitutes (14%), West

India (2%), South India (2%) and North East India (4%). Pilgrims reached to *Katra* or Jammu. The stays at various accommodation, either government or private. In *Vaishno Devi* shrine the pilgrim's stays at various hotels or the shrine board accommodation. But due to the increase of pilgrims every single day becomes the impossible for shrine board to accommodate all the pilgrims. Therefore to see the rise of pilgrims, the market starts developing. Now days *Katra* village has become most *Katra* town, an urbanized city with five star, three star hotels, lodges and guest house to facilitate the pilgrims. In the field 130 respondents were asked the choice of accommodation they wished to prefer. The below table has given analysis of it.

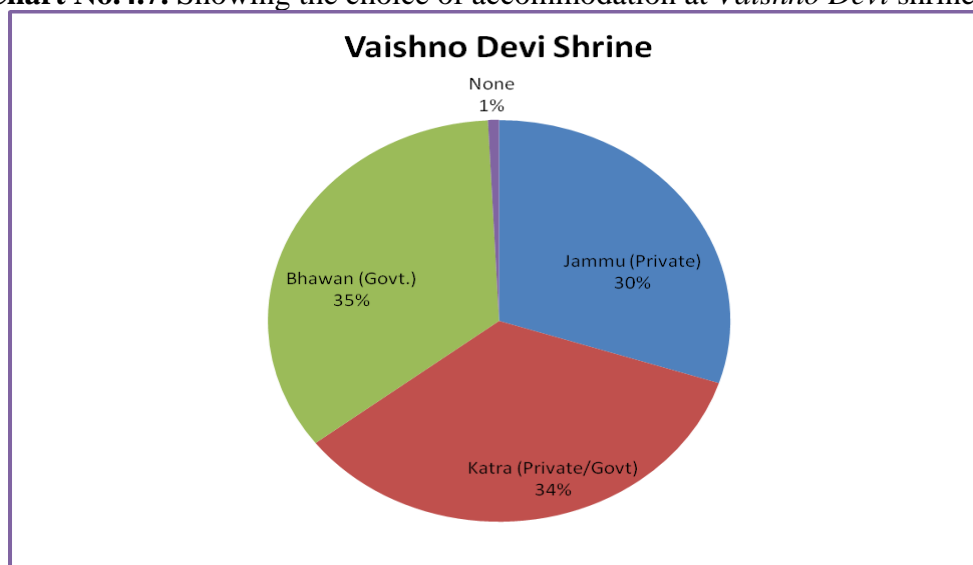
Table No. 4.6. Showing the preference of accommodation, *Vaishno Devi* Shrine

S.No.	Accommodation	Numbers
1.	Jammu (Private)	39
2.	<i>Katra</i> (Private/Govt)	45
3.	<i>Bhawan</i> (Govt.)	45
4.	None	1
	Total	130

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine 39 respondents preferred private accommodation at Jammu, 45 looks for both private hotels and shrine board space, 45 respondents prefer to stay at *Bhawan* accommodation and 1 respondent didn't prefer any accommodation. The below chart has given the percentage wise choices of respondents.

Chart No.4.7. Showing the choice of accommodation at *Vaishno Devi* shrine



The above chart shows that respondents prefer to stay at *Bhawan* (35%), followed by *Katra* (Private/Government accommodation), than Jammu (30%) and in the last (1%) without any choice.

There has also been asked to the respondents at the shrine of *Amarnath* about the choice of accommodation they prefer to stay. The below table has given description of it.

Table No. 4.7. Showing the preference of accommodation, *Amarnath* shrine

S.No.	Place of Accommodation	Numbers	Percentage
1.	Government	130	100.0
2.	Private	0	0
	Total	130	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

The above table shows that a pilgrim prefers to stay in government accommodation than in private hotels due to the security reasons. The security aspect has been discussed in the sixth chapter.

Elite Pilgrimage

The VIP culture that had been recently stopped by the prime minister of India in 2017 could be seen visible at the shrine, when a pilgrim asks for VIP pass journey. A VIP journey is one where a pilgrim gets less time to perform rituals worship at the shrine cave than the other pilgrimage. The shrine board office at *Katra/Bhawan* receives letters from many influential people for VIP quota. The trend exists in the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. The below table has given representation of the pilgrim journey as common or VIP pilgrimage.

Table No. 4.8. Showing preference of journey as common/VIP pilgrimage

Response	No. of Respondents			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Common	95	120	215	73	92.3	82.7
VIP	35	10	45	27	7.7	17.3
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine (73%) visits the shrine as common pilgrimage, followed by (27%) as VIP pilgrims. In *Amarnath* shrine (92.3%) visits as common pilgrims and (7.7%) as VIP pilgrims. Overall (82.7%) visits both the shrine as common pilgrims, but (17.3%). Comparatively the elite culture of pilgrimage could be seen at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*, than the *Amarnath*. Therefore, elite culture in the sacred pilgrimage associates more with the profane. I observed most of the pilgrims ask the various politicians, bureaucrats for such VIP quotas to undertake such journey. But few of them get that that has good social, economic and political position in the society. The class structure represents the elite pilgrimage. I also asked the respondents about elite pilgrimage should be stopped or it should remain. The below table has given the representation on elite pilgrimage.

Table No.4.9. Elite pilgrimage should be given to pilgrims to undertake sacred journey

Response	No. of Respondents			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	23	9	31	17.7	6.9	11.9
No	107	121	229	82.3	93.1	88.1
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary data collected from August 2015 to December 2016

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, (82.3%) respondents say the elite pilgrimage should be stopped, followed by (17.7%) says it should be there. In *Amarnath* shrine, (93.1%) says it should not be given to anyone come for sacred journey, followed by (6.9%) says elite should be part of the pilgrimage. It's noted that respondents say that the VIP passes should be available for pilgrims with old age or who need it more than others.

4.3.3. Time and Space Factor

In the present time the rise of information period, the global connectivity, the rise in the infrastructure at the pilgrimage sites has become the pilgrimages more assessable to undertake the pilgrimage journey. Now a day's journey to the sacred pilgrimage has become more cultural one. People's visits more to the sacred places due to the time and space factor. It has great impacted the religious

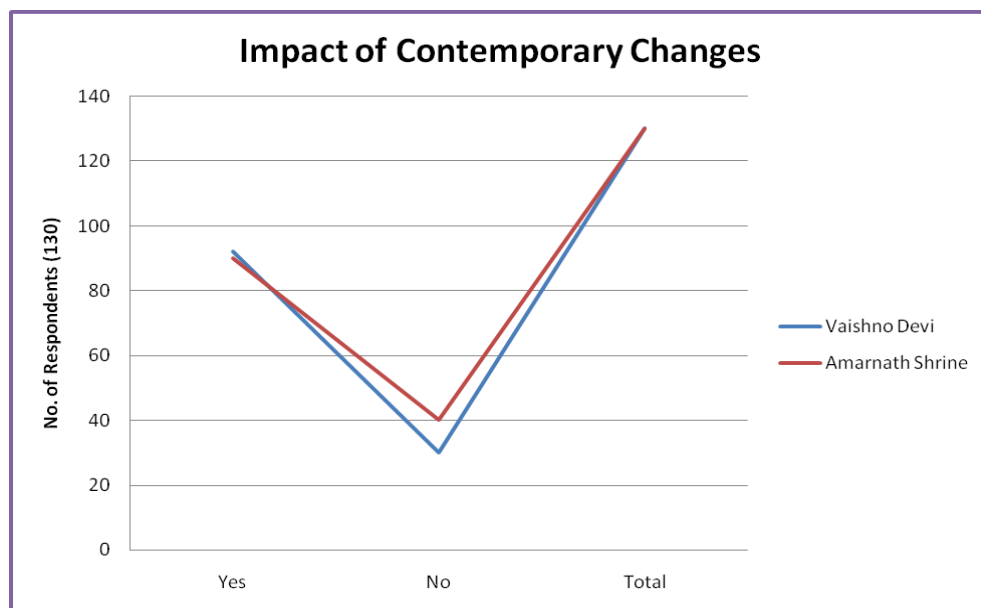
spaces. Now a day's peoples visits without any caste, class, gender, barrier. Anyone can visit these pilgrimage places anytime. Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are under cultural change. Both of the shrines witnessed heavy rush of pilgrims from all over India. The reason could be the rise in the infrastructure in the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*, the government of India, started many new trains to *Katra*, for pilgrims. It could be seen heavy rush in these trains. Even the development in the security of *Amarnath* has made the pilgrimage more possible to undertake. The below table has given the representation of contemporary changes that have reshaped the religious sphere.

Table No. 10. Contemporary Changes have reshaped Religion

Response	No. of Respodents			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	92	90	183	70.8	69.2	70.3
No	38	40	77	29.2	30.8	29.6
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

Chart No. 4.8. Showing contemporary Changes have impacted the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine 70.8% respondents agreed that the contemporary changes have reshaped religion, followed by 29.2% says no impact of contemporary changes on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. In *Amarnath* shrine 69.2% says present changes have changed the *Amarnath* shrine, followed by 30.8% stated no impact of present social changes. By combining of both the shrines, 70.3% respondents responded that there has been changes in the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine due to the contemporary changes, followed by 29.6% stick to the ancient religious beliefs and rituals.

4.3.4. Pilgrimage statistics (1986-2016)

The pilgrimage statistics starts increasing due to the infrastructure development, the connectivity and the security of the pilgrims. The below table has shown the pilgrimage statistics of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* from 1986-2016. The below table has shown the pilgrimage statistics of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine from 1986 to 2016.

Table No. 4.11. Shows the Pilgrimage Statistics of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* from 1986 to 2016⁷⁵

Year	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i> ⁷⁶	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>
1986	51000	1395832
1987	52000	1857935
1988	96000	1992605
1989	95238	2312011
1990	4824	2169093
1991	Pilgrimage Banned	3115447
1992	Pilgrimage Banned	3516267
1993	Pilgrimage Banned	3368665
1994	Pilgrimage Banned	3704944
1995	Pilgrimage Banned	4011627
1996	120000	4335432
1997	79035	4434233
1998	149920	4622297
1999	114366	4670454
2000	173334	5217715
2001	119037	5056919
2002	110000	4432178
2003	170000	5400296

⁷⁵ The table has been prepared on the basis of shrine board information booklet and other pilgrimage statistics data taken from the shrine board website.

⁷⁶ The amaranth remains for two months in a year while the pilgrims visits the *Vaishno Devi* shrine throughout the year.

2004	400000	6109895
2005	388000	6251998
2006	347000	6950573
2007	296565	7417619
2008	533075	6792223
2009	381419	8234896
2010	458046	8749326
2011	621000	10115647
2012	635000	10495000
2013	354000	9324000
2014	372000	7803000
2015	352771	7776000
2016	220490	7723000

Source: The table has been prepared on the basis of various articles and the local newspaper and the data available on the website of *Amarnath* shrine board

A Jammu based newspaper, Daily Excelsior has reported (2011) in 1986 the *Vaishno Devi* shrine board came into existence, where 13.96 pilgrims visited the shrine but 101.15 lakhs pilgrims had undertake the journey in 2011. The report has comparatively discussed the pilgrimage statistics of the year 2010 and 2011 which argued that in the nine months of 2011, 77.75 lakhs pilgrim had visited the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* but the figure was 65.80 lakhs in 2010. The given data shows there have been grown 11.95 lakhs pilgrims. It also argued that the first Navratra festival in the year 2011, 45,000 pilgrims had reached to the shrine, but in the same festival the number was 36,900 in 2010. On the second day of Navaratra 40,047 pilgrims had reached in 2011 as compared to 38,800 in 2010 and in third Navratra there were 35,000 pilgrims who visited the shrine in 2011 but in 2010 the figures was 31,300 (Daily Excelsior, October 2011:1).

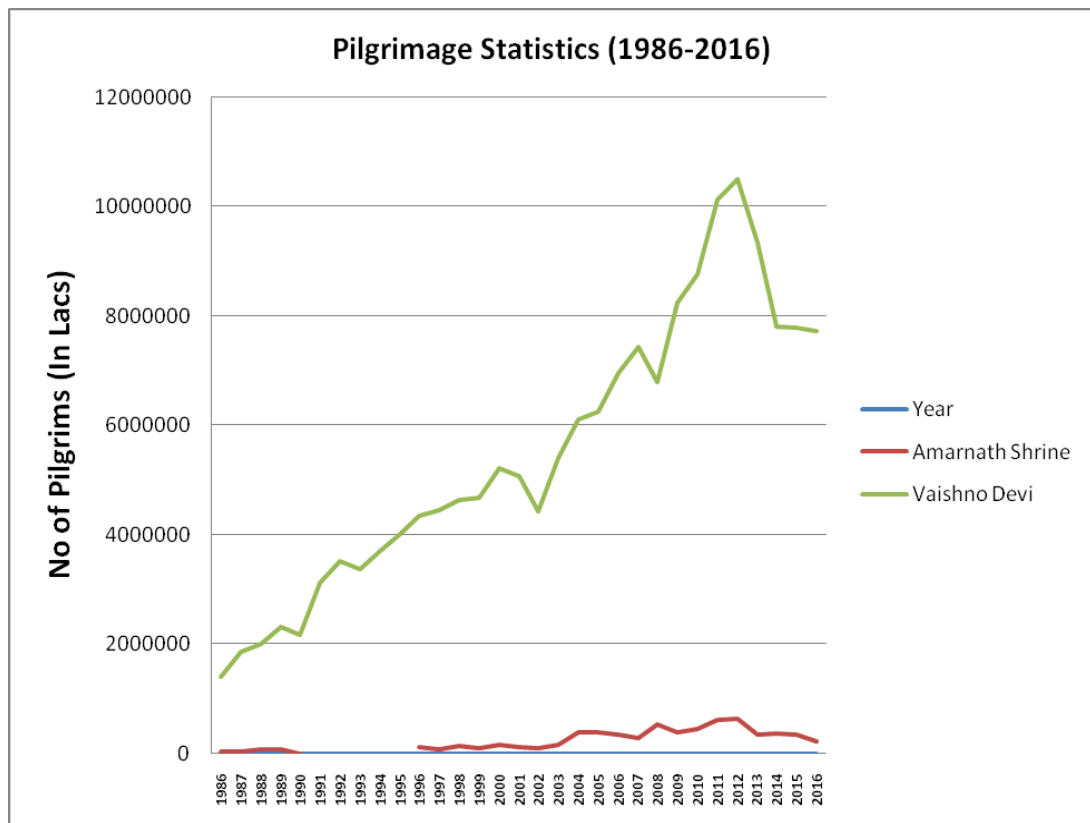
The data shows that the pilgrimage in *Amarnath* was suspended from 1991-1995 due to the rise of terrorism in the Kashmir valley. The detail about the various reasons that stooped the pilgrimage of *Amarnath* as well as decreased the pilgrims been discussed in the sixth chapter.

The reason behind the selection of year for taking the data of pilgrims into account for analysis is because the year post 1986 there has been given important consideration to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and simultaneously various other shrines got influenced because of changes in the management of the shrine from a local trust i.e. Dharmarth trust to the shrine

board. In the same way, the pilgrimage data from 1986 to 2016 has been taken. It's because, the pilgrimage remains open for two months in a year. But, in 2000 the government of Jammu and Kashmir passed resolution on *Amarnath* shrine to make the management and administration under the state government. Therefore, it constitutes the shrine board similar to the *Vaishno Devi* board with autonomous authority but work as per directions of the governor. With the formation of boards, the pilgrims starts had been increased. But the various challenges had decreased the numbers in pilgrims at both the shrines.

To understand the variations in pilgrimage statistics since 1986-2016 in both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* the graphical chart has been shown in the Fig no. 1. It also relates the number of years in the context of *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage with the no. of yattris (in lakhs).

Chart No. 4.9. Showing the pilgrimage statistics of Mata *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* (1986-2016).



The data shows that the pilgrimage at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has been risen year after year. In the year 1986 less than 20 lacs pilgrims visited the shrine but

it crossed 1 crore in the year 2012 and in the year 2016 it was approximately near to 80 lacs pilgrims who took the darshan.

The *Vaishno Devi* receives the highest number of pilgrims as compare to the *Amarnath* Shrine. The data shows that the pilgrimage at *Amarnath* Shrine many times had been suffered due to various internal as well as external threats. In many cases the Pilgrimage to the shrine of *Amarnath* has been banned by the state government. Second, the pilgrimage to the shrine of *Amarnath* remains only for 40 to 50 days in a year while throughout the year pilgrimage remains open at *Vaishno Devi*.

The table and data shows that during the year 1990 the pilgrimage to the shrine of *amarnath* declined due to the rise in the terrorist activities in the Kashmir and the forcefully migration of Kashmiri Pandits. In the year 1988 and 1989, it shows the growth in pilgrims of 1% and 3% respectively. As in the year the pilgrimage to the shrine goes down by 1% because during the 1989-1990⁷⁷ the Kashmir valley had remained under the huge terrorism activities in which the *Kashmiri pandits*⁷⁸ became the main targets and most of them had left their native place and migrated to other parts of the India. The pilgrimage to the *amarnath* was banned from 1991 to 1995 due to threats from terrorists. Had dealt with the situation in the Kashmir, the parliament of India has passed the Act of 1990 with the consent of the president of India. In this Act of 1990, the whole of Jammu and Kashmir has come under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Power Act, 1990 (The Gazette of India 1990:1). Some Kashmiri *pandits* have settled mainly in cities of Jammu, Chandigarh and Delhi. In 1996 the militants had assured that they would not interfere allowing a resumed pilgrimage with far greater numbers than in previous years. The total numbers of pilgrims visited in the year 1996 were 1.20 lacs. But the year led to a tragedy that claimed the lives of 242 pilgrims. In the year 2000 just before the formation of shrine board the pilgrimage suffered another setback with the massacre⁷⁹ in Pahalgam of 30 pilgrims by Kashmiri Separatist. Most of the pilgrims were on

⁷⁷Aparna Rao in her book, "The Valley of Kashmir" said that during the period of 1989-90 there was jihadi violence happened in the Kashmir Valley, (Rao, 2008: ix).

⁷⁸ A Community who was forced to migrated due to the threats by terrorists in the valley.

⁷⁹ At the time the prime minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee blamed Laskar-E-Taiba for the killings.

their way to *Amarnath*. After than the pilgrims declined in the year 2001 and 2002. Another controversy interrupted due to the *Amarnath* land controversy in the year 2008. In 2010 the second controversy erupted when the government of Jammu and Kashmir issued a notification under the state Motor Vehicle Taxation Act 1957 under which vehicles going to *Amarnath* pilgrimage has to pay a tax of Rs 2,000 for seven days and Rs 2,000 fine per day after that.

But, in the context of *Vaishno Devi* from the year 1991 to 2011 the pilgrimage statistics has grown i.e. 2.4% to 8%, which argued that in the last 20 years the pilgrims has been increased by 5.6% and in the last 25 years the percentage was 6.9%. On the basis of data there are some years where the pilgrimage has effected by certain social reasons. The above table as well as the graph has shown the yearly description of pilgrims, the pilgrims increased or decreased in some years, pilgrim's percentage in lakhs and the yearly ratio of pilgrimage as against the total number of the pilgrims visited since 1986 to 2016. The next section has discussed the case of pilgrims and labor class.

4.3.5. Case Studies and Field Interpretation

In the analysis of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine it had taken some cases of pilgrims, working class at shrine to make the study more holistic and scientific. Before undertaking a pilgrimage, a person imagine of that sacred place, the kind of journey. It develops a pilgrimage blueprint in mind & thinks of many things like the journey to that holy place, *darshans*, entertainment etc.

The researcher had visited many times to *Vaishno Devi* Shrine as a pilgrim or as a researcher. The distance between Jammu and *Katra* is 50km and it takes around 1 hr and 30 minutes to reach *Katra*. After reaching *Katra* a pilgrim has to get registered for the onward journey. In the field the researcher interviewed labourers, shopkeepers, hoteliers, tourist agents and most importantly the pilgrims about the notion of pilgrimage. The below is a case of a working labor class works at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*.

Case of Working Labour: At *Banganga*, the first spot on the track to *Vaishno Devi*, the researcher interacted with many *Pithuwallas*, *Ponnywalls*, **Horse** riders, Palki labor etc. The researcher had interviewed them for 1hour and

they brought their issues, they faced. They thought researcher would help them and speak with the shrine board and the government. They had lots of issues like the pressure from administration, no proper union representation, no proper accommodation etc. There are around 35000 pithu labor persons working with the shrine board. Before they start job has to go through proper police verification. They charge 350 rupees per card. Most of the pithuwalls belong to the hilly areas like Rajouri, Poonch, Doda and Kishtwar. 90% of them are Gujjar and Bakarwalls a muslim community who are into this service.

Case of Mumtaj Ahmed (Name Changed): told that he was doing the labor work for the last 30 years. He earns 500 to 1000 rupees per day. He has constructed a good home and his children are perceiving education. He told that, *Vaishno Devi* doesn't specify particular religion. People of all the faiths visits to this Devi. Once in a week he also visits to the *Drabar* of *Vaishno Devi*. Devi is taking care of him and he is proud of her. The responded was a Muslim and was telling many things about the past and present. He also told that Dharmarth trust was also working better. But shrine board made everything systematic. That was needed but use of more technology could damage the purity of the place.

Case of Local Shopkeeper: At Banganda local market, the local community people have their property. The person belongs to Udhampur district in Jammu region and works as assistant in the shop on commission basis 25% of the total sale per day. He has visited three times to this shrine. According to him the shrine of Mata *Vaishno Devi* is one of the most popular shrine in the Jammu region. *Amarnath* shrine comes than in Kashmir. He told that the shops located at Banganga have no interference from shrine board. It's because the land is very old property of locals and now they are handling it. They have business here. In the shops a pilgrim can find *Vaishno Devi* Samagri, Sticks, photographs, small food shops, etc. He also told that shrine board shops at *Bhawan* have rent more than one crore per year. At Banganga there is a Gulshan Kumar Langar, a free service to all the pilgrims. On the way a pilgrim can find small stoppage, cold drinks, Nescafe, tea, food points. At charunpaduka there is a small market of dry fruits, mata *vaishno devi* cassettes etc.

Case of Ankush (Name Changed) He was a salesmen at Charunpaduka, in Gulshan Kumar Shop told that in *Katra* there are only two shops of Gulshan Kumar. One is T-Series shops located at Charunpaduka, another at Banganga Dry fruit shop. At Charunpaduka there are total 5 employees. The whole profit of the shops goes to the Gulshan Kumar Langar at Banganga. Most of the salesmen are locals. The shops have no interference from shrine board. The shrine is popular all over the country.

There are two way to reach to the *bhawan*. One is known as shortest route i.e. stairs second is footpath. The distance is 13 km from *katra* to *bhawan*. Pilgrims on the way interacts with each other by saying *Jai Mata Di, Jai Kara wo Shera Wali da, bol sanche darbaar ki jai*. Other slogans in groups are *zor se bolo, jai mata di, saare bolo, jai mata di, aage walee bhi bolen, jai mata di, piche walee bhi bolen, milke bolen, jai mata di, mai nehin suniye, jai mata di, pahada wali jai mata di*.

At Ardhkuwari there are two ways to proceed to the *bhawan* of Mata *Vaishno Devi*. One is through *Ardhkuwari* vis *Sanjhichat* route. Another is through Himkoti. Through entire route a pilgrim can find locals doing the service of massager. They are local inhabitants of hilly area like rajouri, poonch, reasi, udhampur districts etc. They charge Rs 20 to anyhow decide by pilgrim.

Case of Nazer and Nasir (Name Changed) from Rajouri district at Himkoti told that they earn Rs 500 to 1000 daily. Some time gets more than 2000 rupees. They have local technique to do this. They told that with the shrine of Mata *Vaishno* they are earning money and enjoying employment opportunities. Many times they had visited the *bhawan* of *Vaishno Devi*.

Case of Fateh and Khan (Name Changed) Another Massager named Fateh Mohd and Mohd Khan, Gujar Bakarwal community from Rajouri district told that they had been working at the shrine for the last 35 years. They also worked under the Dharmarth trust also before the formation of shrine board 1986. They replied that shrine board is systematic than Dharmarth trust. They came to know about the *Vaishno Devi* because some persons known to them were already working at the *vaishno Devi*. They only had issue with the shrine board was food

and eatable rates. They replied that here is no question of discrimination and the *Vaishno Devi* see all equally. On the way to *Bhawan* from *Ardhkuwari* a pilgrim can find massager roaming. When a pilgrim stops at any point than the massager tries to speak to the pilgrim. They try to convince the pilgrim. After finalizing the rate than with the local technique, without the use of any machine they do all the things to relax the pilgrim. Sometimes the pilgrims get happy and pay more to the massager. The massagers replied that it depends upon the pilgrim's mood how much he gives. Sometimes pilgrim pay beyond their expectations due to the blessings of *Vaishno Devi* on these massagers. At *Himkoti* a pilgrim can have food, refreshment. Shrine board has opened a small restaurant. In the *Bhojanalaya* a pilgrim can find tea, coffee, milk, rajma rice, kadi rice, juice, masala dosa, plain dosa, water, biscuit etc.

The rates are same everywhere in shrine board shops as compare to the local shops that charges 50% more. Therefore as compare to the local shops pilgrims trust the shops controlled by shrine board. *Ardhkuwari* to *Bhawan* there has been started auto service for the pilgrims. Auto service available on both the sides. The charge per passenger from *Ardhkuwari* to *Bhawan* is Rs 300 and from *Bhawan* to *Ardhkuwari* is Rs 200. The way *ardhkuwari* to *Bhawan* is upwards and difficult and the *Bhawan* to *Ardhkuwari* is downwards.

At *Bhawan* there is a market established by shrine board for the pilgrims. In the market a pilgrim finds food, *Prasad samagri*, STD/PCO booths etc. A pilgrim can buy things on reasonable rates. There are many bhaint shops near the *Bhawan*. Most of the people prefer to by souvenir from these shrine boards shops. The reason could be the location of shops near to *Bhawan* or these shops are controlled by shrine board.

Researcher took an interview of a person, working as a helper at shrine board shop at *Bhawan*. He replied that the salary he is getting is around 15000 per month. Many local youths are working in the shrine board. Shrine board has given job and economic opportunities to many youths. He also told that the shops at *Bhawan* are through tender based controlled by the governor.

At *Bhawan* pilgrims take bath before proceeding to the darshan of *Vaishno Devi*. A pilgrim arrival at *Bhawan* has to confirm group number for darshan on this registration card no from the counter at *Bhawan*. People from all over the world could be seen at *Bhawan*. *Bhawan* is considered as a sacred place, situated in the highly difficult geographical terrain. But, instead of that people across the world come to have a view of this shrine. There are many buildings constructed around the holy cave of *Vaishno Devi*. Some are government offices; S.D.M (Special district Magistrate) is the high authority at *Bhawan*. Other bureaucrats like Tehsildar, police officers are part of the grand team. The government teams are managing every activity systematically. A pilgrim feels safe and secure at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*.

Pilgrims deposit all the goods except cash and gold in the locker available at *Bhawan*. Lockers are available on the basis of pilgrim's registration slip. A pilgrim has to show his registration to get this facility. Pilgrims can also avail the facility to get blankets free of cost. But at the time of issue of the blankets pilgrims have to pay 100 rupees security deposit per blanket. At *Bhawan* have 5 blanket stores and 4000 to 5000 blankets available in each store.

Pilgrims according to their group number wait in that row to have darshan of sacred pindis and chant *jai mata di* till the darshan of cave and pindis. A pilgrim has been considered as sacred who takes bath at the shrine and proceeds to the shrine. This pilgrimage journey has been considered as such an experience which is supernatural and exceptional.

Case of a Pilgrim, Ajay (name changed): In his words *"I can say when the power means goddess calls you. You will be inspired and you would like to go. Unplanned I had gone with my cousin to see the high I had thought very difficult to climb but when I started I felt extra energy and some power drawing me towards itself and I even climbed faster through the short cut straight route not through the general route for all. But reaching I was tired and had been waiting for their arrival. In between the faith and belief more developed in me thinking how fast I came here it is not me but by the grace of Goddess. Even*

reaching Delhi I had got some opportunity again I thought due to grace of goddess. I respect and I believe the power”.

“My notion of pilgrimage is positive whether you have faith in God or not does not make any difference but you have faith then you can have a peace to visit. You will be recharged and will be feeling blessed. Here your attachment and believe matter. Second apart from this you visit these places without faith; even you are benefitted as in the physical world working, facing daily life problems you become tired, restless, tensed and sometimes depressed. Hence change of environment and place changes your mind to relax and helps you to forget the past tension and again you get refreshed and recharged. And sometimes you feel the change due to spiritual environment. In both the cases to visit religious places is fruitful in respect to be blessed to get recharged peace and to gain knowledge varies person to person and their belief”.

Global religious market is expanding day by day. Earlier less communities information's had been shared the people were not aware of most of the spiritual practices, now due to global contact the people knowing the importance of spiritual practices or an attraction to know the fact rush and have attracted a big global market due to propaganda. There are many challenges facing as proper arrangements to control crowd. People are not managing themselves to maintain the norms break queue. Misuse the bathrooms toilets etc. Safety lacks at many religious places. Pick pockets and other bad elements get the benefit of pilgrim's conditions sometimes. Maintenance of the places is big challenge. Proper care should be taken through the general public and the government. Shrine board is good and cooperative. Local markets are justified. See where there is faith there peace pleasure and prosperity.

Amarnath Shrine

Amarnath the abode of Lord *Shiva* is considered as one of the most important place for Hindus where a pilgrim meets with the lord *Shiva*. *Shiva* has been considered as the creator of the whole universe along with Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.

A pilgrimage to the holy cave is considered as sacred. People across the country as well as some foreigners visit the shrine. The pilgrimage to *Amarnath* is a testimonial to the faith and grift of an ardent devotee of lord *Shiva*. Pilgrims from all walks of life undertake this difficult track, noted for inhospitable terrain and climate. Famous Hindu place of pilgrimage is situated at a height of 13500 feet above the sea level. It's also said that the shrine cave is the biggest cave in the world. The pilgrimage to the shrine of *Amarnath* shrine starts in June and ends in August every year. The reason could be the location of shrine cave in most of the difficult geographical terrain. Instead of this pilgrims are on rise every year.

According to a report published in the IMS magazine that the state government makes elaborate arrangements for pilgrims and are well supported by volunteers *Chhari Mubarak*' the symbolic emblem of Lord *Shiva* is carried on foot by devotees from Srinagar to the *Amarnath* cave in various stages. The traditional route from *Pahalgam* to *Amarnath* via *Chandanwari*, *Sheshnag* and *Panchtarni* is endowed with breathtaking vistas. The 47kms distance is covered in four days, with night halts at *Chandanwari*, *Sheshnag (Wawjan)* and *Panchtarini*. The distance between *Pahalgam* and *Chandanwari* can now be covered by road. One can also visit *Amarnath* from *Sonamarg* side. The track to the sacred site is just 16 km starting from *Baltal*.

A pilgrim has to go through registration process before taking journey to the amaranth shrine. In the year 2000 the government of Jammu and Kashmir has constituted shrine board. The *Amarnath* shrine board is handling every activity of pilgrimage. A pilgrim has to contact the registrations centres or banks specified by the shrine board to get registration done. But at the time of regd. pilgrim a pilgrim should have to produce a medical certificate. Its required because, the shrine board decided on the basis of past incidents that medical check up is necessary. The shrine board has authorised hospitals state and UT wise to issue compulsory health certificate for *Amarnath* Pilgrimage. There is a complete health advisory for pilgrimage to the holy cave of *Amarnath*. There are two routes to reach the holy cave. One is through *Baltal* another is through *Pahalgam*. It depends upon the pilgrims which route he chooses.

Pehalgham route is very old route and most pilgrims chooses it because it's plane and easy as compare to the *Baltal* which is a new route constructed by shrine board. There are two ways to do this pilgrimage. Either a pilgrim has to go along with shrine board arrangement or he arranges his own vehicle or a private transport. Pilgrims outside Jammu and Kashmir go with the shrine board arrangement, while the local pilgrims prefer own or a private transport. As per schedule mentioned on the pilgrims registration card a person has to reach *Pehalgham* on the first day. At *Pehalgham* there is shrine board accommodation available as well as a small market available. A pilgrim can get accommodation easily. *Pehalgham* is a beautiful place. It's popular for its scenic beauty. Tourists are coming throughout the year.

The next stoppage to *Pehalgham* is *Chandanwari*, a place in the high mountains. Pilgrims hire taxi or by bus to reach *Chandanwari*. At *Chandanwari* there are many *Langars* organizations serving the food and water to pilgrims. These Langar organizations belongs to all over the country. Every year these Langar organizations takes permission from shrine board and holds the Langar during the pilgrimage. They thought it as one of holy task in the world. They feel blessed when serving the pilgrims. They thought the opportunity has been given by the lord *Shiva*. At every spot on the track could be seen the Langar organization, that serve the food free of cost

These lungers play a very important role. Pilgrims belong to the different regions have food together under one roof. There are various Langars organizations from Jammu as well from other parts of the country. It starts functioning as per the pilgrimage schedule that stops on the day of Raksha bandan. Anyone can take the food at lungers. Comparatively with the last year the numbers in Langars has been decreased due to the work on National Highways. The end of road route is at Chandarwari.

People on the way chanting *Jai Bhole, Bham Bham bhole, om namay shivay*, etc. The shrine board tries to implement every facility to get rid of any difficulty by the pilgrims. The shrine board has arranged tent facility for the pilgrims. The pilgrimage is managed in a systematic way. A system where experts looks after the pilgrimage and its execution. Shrine board constituted

teams working during the pilgrimage. After crossing Chandanwari stoppage, pilgrims have to walk ahead to reach the Pissu top. There is a difficult way to reach next stoppage. On the way pilgrims take the service of horse riders. Gujjars and Bakkarwars from Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu are serving at the *Amarnath*.

Case of a Horse rider Skeel Ahmed (Name changed) told that tribal community from Jammu are the service providers. There is *Ponny, pithu, horse* service at *Amarnath* shrine. There is a proper permission given by shrine board. Another horse service provider Mustafa from Jammu said that the path is not good for horse riding. Shrine board during *yatra* should construct it for a temporally period of time. But pilgrims can find *Langars* or *Bhandara* at every spot on the track.

Lunger at pissu top has been arranged by Om arora from sonipat. Pilgrims can have sweets, tea and puri channe free of cost. After having it pilgrim moves ahead to the next stoppage Jojhpal. On the way to Jojhpal tribal's can be seen at many places. It is true that upper reaches of Himalayas belongs to these tribal's. It's not that these tribal's are here for pilgrim service. At the time of pilgrimage most of them started working with the shrine. They have horses and capable to move here and there easily. So, they can handle the horse, *pithu, ponny* service. It's because they are habitual of these difficult terrain. Local people could get difficulty in ups and down.

Thus, the present chapter has discussed about the pilgrimage and society in the present time with special emphasis to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine. It concludes that the pilgrimage to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* is cultural and religious journey and it has more connectivity and accessibility where a pilgrim can make his pilgrimage easily. But Amaranth pilgrimage also has cultural and religious notions but due to the geographical reasons the pilgrimage could open maximum for two months in a year. Also the security challenge and the radical separatist movement in Kashmir had impacted the *Amarnath* Pilgrimage. Therefore to understand the various issues and challenges *Vaishno Devi* and

Amarnath pilgrimage are facing has been discussed in the next chapter on the emerging challenges with reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

Chapter 5

Emerging Challenges to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed the pilgrimage and contemporary society with emphasis on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. Thus have understood the notion of pilgrimage in the contemporary period with reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*, the present chapter has discussed the emerging challenges with special reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The present chapter has highlighted three aspects. One; Political economy of pilgrimage in the global village. It reviews the shrine board policy, the day to day activities of the shrine board, the shrine donation, the local community in the division of labour and the various political and economic developments of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. It also has discussed various local community challenges that have affected the entire management of the shrine as well as the pilgrimage. Second; the rise of faith based tourism, the pilgrimage tourism and the rise of global religious markets. Contemporary Challenges before religious tourism or pilgrimage industry in India with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. Third, it has discussed the security issues and challenges in the contemporary *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

In the present times there are many issues and challenges the pilgrimages are facing in India. Both internal and external factor are affecting the pilgrimage. The *Kumb Mela* have raised the alarm of management of handling the pilgrimsge. It's because it's not a gathering of thousands but millions of millions pilgrims reached at one place for the performance of sacred rituals. The *Kedarnath* natural disaster in the year 2013 had raised the issue of ecological concerns. In the same way both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have been facing many challenges. The present study has attempted to locate them in a systematic way. The first challenge both the shrine are facing is economic in nature. The management of the shrine is becoming the challenge day by day. The local community unsettled issues have raised many concerns. Second, the rise of faith

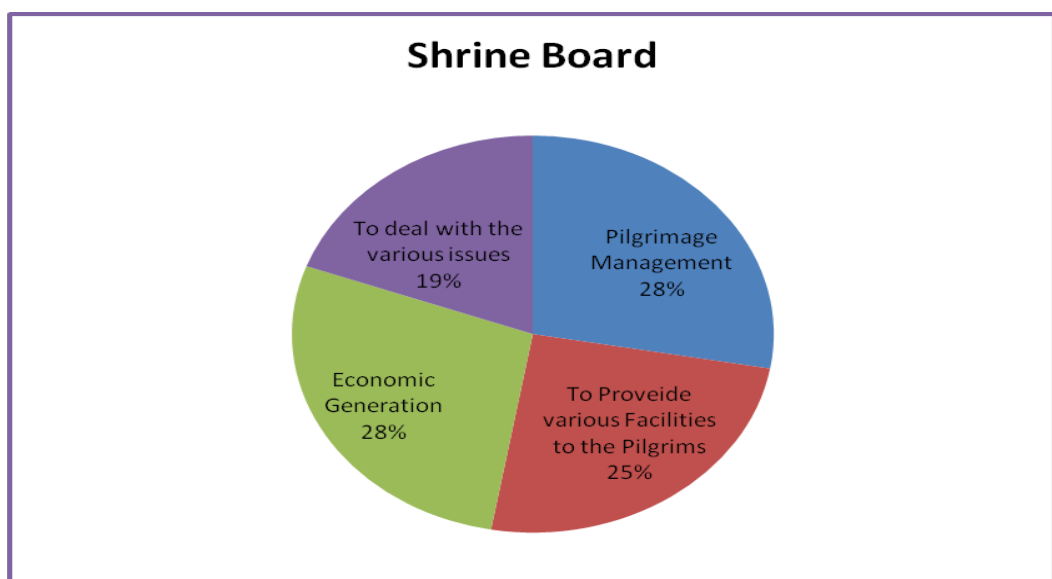
based tourism in the global religious market has raised various ecological concerns. Third, the security issue of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* becomes the most challenging aspect in the contemporary time.

Thus the assessment of contemporary challenges in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* has been analyzed in this chapter. Therefore, the next section deals with the political economy of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

5.2. Political Economy of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage in the Global Village

Due to the impact of various contemporary changes the entire structure of the shrine has been changed. At present both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine have various parts interlinked for the betterment of the pilgrimage. The *Dharmarth* Trust which got replaced by the *Vaishno Devi* shrine board in 1986 has left various issues. In the same way, the government of Jammu and Kashmir took over the management of *Amarnath* shrine in the year 2000. The political economy has focus on the structure and function of shrine, the management, the functionaries, the relationships between various aspects, about the shrine policy, the local community, the local markets, the working class as well as the response of state, media and the civil society in addressing all those issues and challenges. The data collected in this study of two shrines show the picture of the political economy of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

Pie Chart. 5.1. Showing the shrine board role in handling the various mechanisms



The above chart has been prepared on the basis of response received from the respondents. It says that shrine gives most importance to the economic generation and pilgrimage management. Then the shrine board has focus to provide various facilities to the pilgrims. They also deal with various issues concerning the pilgrimage. But the intensity of dealing with such issues and challenges is very low. Therefore the next section deals with the pilgrimage management.

5.2.1. Pilgrimage Management

After the takeover of shrine *Vaishno Devi* in 1986 and *Amarnath* in 2000 by the government of Jammu and Kashmir, the newly constructed board management started implementing rules and regulation as specified in the shrine policy document. The board had given the responsibility to handle the management of shrine without any chaos and crisis. It was also decided to make the pilgrimage more transparent and accountable. Now both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine gives important consideration to the pilgrimage management. Various departments help the shrine board in the management of the pilgrimage. Like police, paramilitary health, civil administration, tourism boards, Telecommunication, hostel and travels associations etc. Both the shrines witnessed heavy rush of pilgrims. Therefore, it becomes challenging task for the shrine board to manage pilgrimage in smooth manner. The shrine board provides all kind of facilities to the pilgrims so that they could not suffer. Like the accommodation, connectivity, security, refreshment points etc.

Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine have different methods to manage the pilgrimage. The *Vaishno Devi* shrine board had built around 13 buildings both at *Katra* and *Jammu*⁸⁰. There are around 70 shelter sheds constructed along the track. These sheds helps to save from rain, stone or in any adverse weather conditions. Pilgrims also take small rest at these sheds and gets relaxed. These sheds are also known as *Vishram Sthals*. Adjoining to most of the sheds them had been built toilets as well as refreshment shops. The sheds had been built at the distance of 500 with each other. In such difficult pilgrimage, pilgrims get

⁸⁰ See the Appendix No. I

satisfaction by spending some time at these *Vishram Sthals*. This also makes the pilgrimage more easy and comfortable. Because, *Vishram* helps the body in lowering the stress. The *Vaishno Devi* also asks the pilgrims to donate for the construction of these shelter sheds. In fact they receive lots of donation for infrastructure development. The shrine board had built many shops, hospitals, clinics etc. to facilitate the pilgrimage smoothly.

On the other the pilgrimage management of *Amarnath* shrine is very different not in structure but in process and also security concern of *Amarnath* had affected the pilgrimage management. The shrine also provides facilities to the pilgrims but due to the difficult terrain becomes the impossible to construct the huge infrastructure comparable to the *Vaishno Devi*. During pilgrimage many vendors/local organizations with the permission of *Amarnath* shrine board arranges various tents/huts for pilgrims at various places on the track⁸¹. On the track the shrine board built temporary shelter for pilgrims who wish to stay for a shorter time. Each department of the state like Health, Animal Husbandry, Police, Telecom, PHE, Electric Deptt, Tourism, PDA, Fire Service, Forest Department Food & Supplies, JKTDC, Information, and Cooperative becomes equal partner in the management of *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

Therefore both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine board handles the management and the administration of the pilgrimage. A pilgrim wishes to undertake pilgrimage has to go through registration process. Both the shrine boards have *Yatra Parchi* system to identify the pilgrimage background as well as to make the pilgrimage more sustainable. As the pilgrimage to the *Vaishno Devi* remains open throughout the year therefore pilgrims both online and offline get register them. For that they have to create online account on the official website of *Vaishno Devi*. But in *Amarnath* case the management board issues notification in the month of March-April every year for the pilgrims who wishes to go on *Amarnath* pilgrimage. They issue the list of authorised hospitals for health checkups. Only medically examined fit pilgrims are entitled to undertake the pilgrimage of *Amarnath* pilgrimage. During the entire journey the pilgrimage registration is being checked by the security department to avoid any problem.

⁸¹ See details in the Appendix No. II

Pilgrims without registration cards not permitted to undertake the pilgrimage journey at both the shrines. Jain (2007) explained that to avoid heavy unmanageable rush to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*, the shrine board issues the pilgrimage path entry slips known as *yatra slips* from the counters at *Katra* (Jain, 2007:2).

Table No. 5.1. Showing the numbers of pilgrims visits the shrine in one day (2016)

Year	Shrine	Total no of pilgrims visited	Duration of pilgrimage in a year	No. of pilgrims visits in one day (Estimated)
2016	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	7723000	Throughout the year	21158
2016	<i>Amarnath</i>	220490	46 Days only	4793

From above the table it has been estimated that on an average 21158 pilgrims visited the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and 4793 at *Amarnath* in one day. The number of pilgrims visits in one day to the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has been calculated on the basis of total pilgrims visited the shrine in the year 2016 divided by the duration of the pilgrimage. Therefore, it becomes the challenging task for the shrine boards to manage the pilgrimage in such difficult terrain. I observed and interviewed the shrine board about the various kinds of facilities they have been giving to the pilgrims. They stated that post 1986 in *Vaishno Devi* shrine there had been started multiple facilities like accommodation, medical, food stalls, clock rooms, Bhaint shops, Sovenir shops, railway reservation service, better transport, Banks, better transport, plantation and various other facilities like Ponny, Palki and Pithoos. In the same way the *Amarnath* shrine board provides the health, security, transport and accommodation facilities. Due to the shrine located in the high altitude the shrine board makes temporary arrangements during the pilgrimage journey. I also interviewed the respondents that consist of pilgrims, shrine board workers, local markets staff, hotel owners, shop owners etc. The below table has given the representation of the diverse groups in terms of the facilities the shrine boards provides.

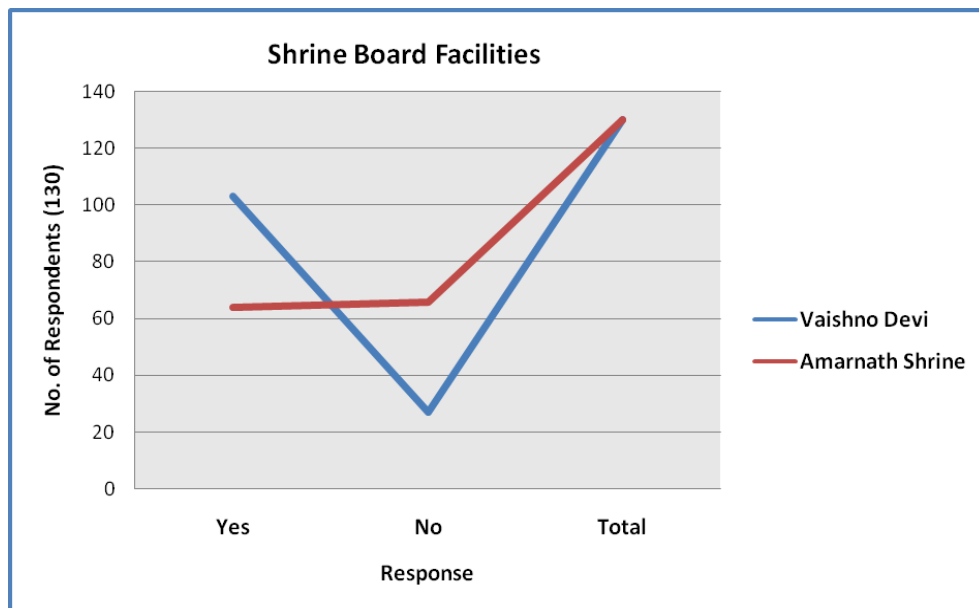
Table No. 5.2. Showing Response of the respondents in terms of facilities provided by the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine boards.

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	103	64	166	79.2	49.2	64.9
No	27	66	94	20.8	50.8	36.1
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine 79.2% respondents have been satisfied with the shrine board facilities, followed by 20.8 % respondents dissatisfied. But in *Amarnath* pilgrimage 49.2% have been comfortable followed by 50.8% not satisfied with the kind of facilities. The total respondents satisfied are 64.9% and 36.1% dissatisfied. Therefore, there are variations in the responses of respondents from both the shrine. At *Amarnath* shrine pilgrims has to pass through hardships while at *Vaishno Devi* it becomes easier to undertake the pilgrimage. The *Amarnath* makes temporary arrangement during pilgrimage journey for the pilgrims while the *Vaishno Devi* had constructed various buildings to the pilgrims. The below graph has shown the comparison of the responses of the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine respondents.

Chart No. 5.2. Showing the respondents response in terms of facilities provided by *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarath* shrine



As comparative with the *Amarnath* shrine, the *Vaishno Devi* developed various infrastructure facilities for pilgrims. It constructed buildings, dharamshalas,

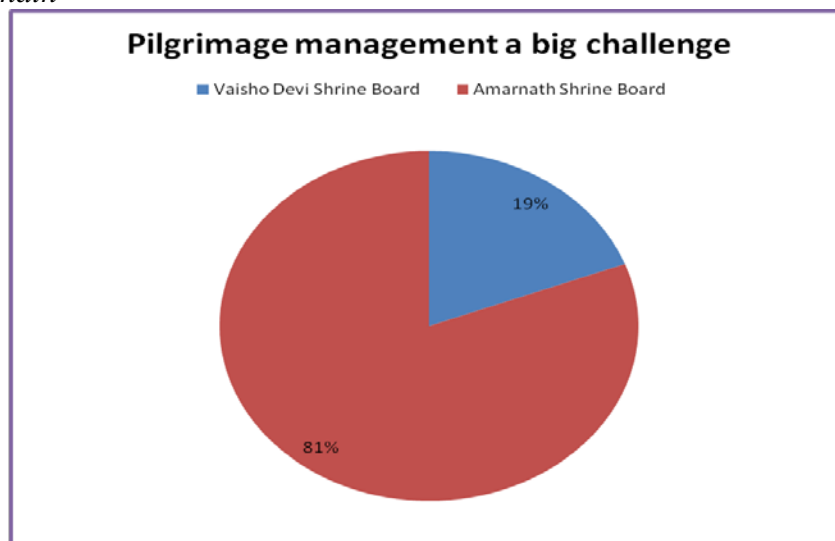
footpaths, shops to facilitate the pilgrims on pilgrimage. A report of the local newspaper in 2011 reported that the shrine board had started many food points as well as refreshment points at no profit no loss basis. The entire track from *Katra* to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has been widened. It also had started the battery car for aged and weak pilgrims (Daily Excelsior, 27 November, 2011).

The researcher took an interview of an employee working at one Dharamshala, Niharaka in *Katra* to understand more about the facilities given by *Vaishno Devi*. It's Known as Niharaka complex near the near bus stand. The employee told that now a day's people are doing online booking. People are asking for accommodation here because of safe and security. Shrine board has constructed many complexes like aashirwad, niharka. In aashirwad a pilgrim will get room on a charge of Rs 110/- with proper identification. No single person will get room here in *Katra*. For that he/she has to give in written from police station before taking room in entire *Katra*. Even police have instructed the shrine board officials to identify the person before giving room. The logic given was that some years back some pilgrims committed suicide. May be some have problems at their homes and that could be the reason. He also told that in Niharika complex there are 90 rooms, 352 in aashirwad, there are dormitories etc. People across the globe are visiting the shrine. When some foreigner applied for room that they sent his bio data to the concerned police station/SSP for proper verification. Foreigners are given rooms on first priority and it is decided by the shrine board authority. In shrine board complexes there are arrangements for refreshments etc. He told that accommodation provided by shrine board and the pilgrim gives first priority to them because they think that their money could be useful to the shrine of Mata *Vaishno Devi*. Like the other holy cities of India Benaras, Haridwar, Tirupati etc *Katra* is also attracting pilgrims from all over the globe. The *Katra* tow is developing rapidly. One can find markets, deluxe hotels, shopping malls, shrine board complexes, health services. He also told that the shrine board has started health facilities in *Katra* like the Apollo facilities in Delhi. The contract has been taken by the person constructed Apollo hospital. It has been given on rent for 20 years. OPD services have been started without any charge. The hospital has been started in the month of April, 2016.

In the newspaper daily excelsior dated 08 April 2016 reported that on the first Navratras the governor who is chairman of the Mata *Vaishno Devi* Shrine Board participated in a brief ceremony of the commencement of the 230 bed super speciality hospital at Kakryal near *Katra*. The hospital has been established at an investment of Rs 300 crore by the shrine board. The governor had requested the prime minister of India to inaugurate the hospital on 19th of April 2016. The hospital has all the modern computerised diagnostic and treatment equipments. The shrine board has agreement with Narayana Hrudayalya Pvt. Ltd Bangalore which operates 32 hospitals all over the country for operationalisation of the Super speciality Hospital (Source: Daily Excelsior dated 08.04.2016).

A person who works at *Amarnath* shrine board stated that the board arranges every kind of facility to make the pilgrimage more comfortable. But due to the threats from the terrorism and the shrine situated in the upper hills make the management of the pilgrimage more challenging. In fact the pilgrimage is more assessed by the governor. He gives more time in the planning and execution of *Amarnath* pilgrimage as compare to the *Vaishno Devi*. He conducts series of meetings every year before the commencement of the pilgrimage. Therefore, each day becomes the challenge to manage the pilgrimage at both the shrines. But the intensity of challenge to the *Amarnath* shrine board is bigger than the shrine board of *Vaishno Devi*. The below table has been prepared on the basis of the responses received from 260 respondents in the field.

Chart No.5.3. Showing the pilgrimage management of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*



The above chart has shown that 81% of the respondents felt there is big challenge for *Amarnath* shrine board to manage the pilgrimage. While 19% of the respondents felt that *Vaishno Devi* also has challenge in the pilgrimage management. The *Amarnath* pilgrimage suffers due to the following reasons; **One**, Geographical; **Two**, Security; **Third**, separatist movement. These all factor have great impacted the pilgrimage to the shrine of *Amarnath*. Instead of management of the pilgrimage the shrine boards focus on the revenue and manages the entire offerings as well as the donation. The next has discussed in detail about the economic generation.

5.2.2. Economic Generation

The economic aspect of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* has been examined by analyzing shrine board management of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. It also reviews the pilgrimage process, various activities and initiatives handle by the shrine board in terms of infrastructure, growth and development. The economic review has been contextualized in two contexts. One; the activities managed by the shrine board. Second the economic aspect as a challenge in the contemporary context. The shrine board has initiated various projects for the betterment of pilgrimage. Both the shrines *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have been managing the pilgrimage. But the pilgrimage remains throughout at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. Therefore, the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* has managed to create various platforms for the benefits of the pilgrims, the local community and the state. As the shrine of *Amarnath* remains open for three months only could generate economy but comparatively very less to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. Both the shrines are boosting the local economy and provide various economic and job opportunities to the local community. Both the shrines receive offerings donations from the pilgrims. Donation is the main income of the shrine. But comparatively *Vaishno Devi* shrine board gets opportunity to generate more revenue. *Amarnath* have different context where we can find limited options to increase the economic opportunities.

The table in the next page has given details offerings and donation received by *Vaishno Devi* shrine from 2000-2007

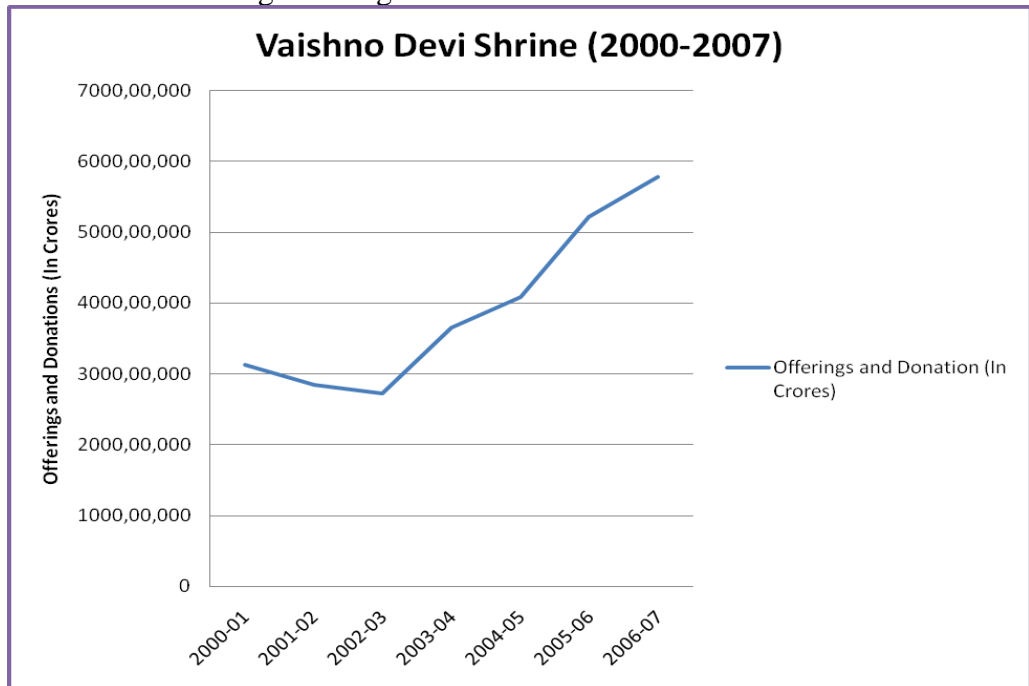
Table No. 5.3. Showing the offering and donation of *Vaishno Devi Shrine* from 2000 to 2007.

S. No.	Period	Offerings and Donation (In Rs)
1.	2000-01	312617540
2.	2001-02	283741635
3.	2002-03	272021631
4.	2003-04	365161296
5.	2004-05	408570192
6.	2005-06	521327055
7.	2006-07	578550634

Source: Gupta and Raina (2008) Pg. No. 55

The above table no have shown that there has been increased the offering and donations at *Vaishno Devi* shrine from 2003 to 2007. The shrine board utilizes the donation in various developmental activities of the shrine as well as in the pilgrimage management. Now the *Vaishno Devi* shrine board has started various activities online that are economic in nature. Like the online Aarti system, Bhaint, Souvenir and online darshan of the holy cave, pindies etc. Except online donation there are other worships like participation in the *Aarti* at Bhawan in which devotees have to pay the required fees to sit in the Aarti worship of the deity. Donation could be made online or offline depending upon the accessibility of the pilgrims. The below chart has shown the *Vaishno Devi* shrine donation from 2000 to 2007.

Chart 5.4. Showing Offerings and Donation increased from 2000-2007

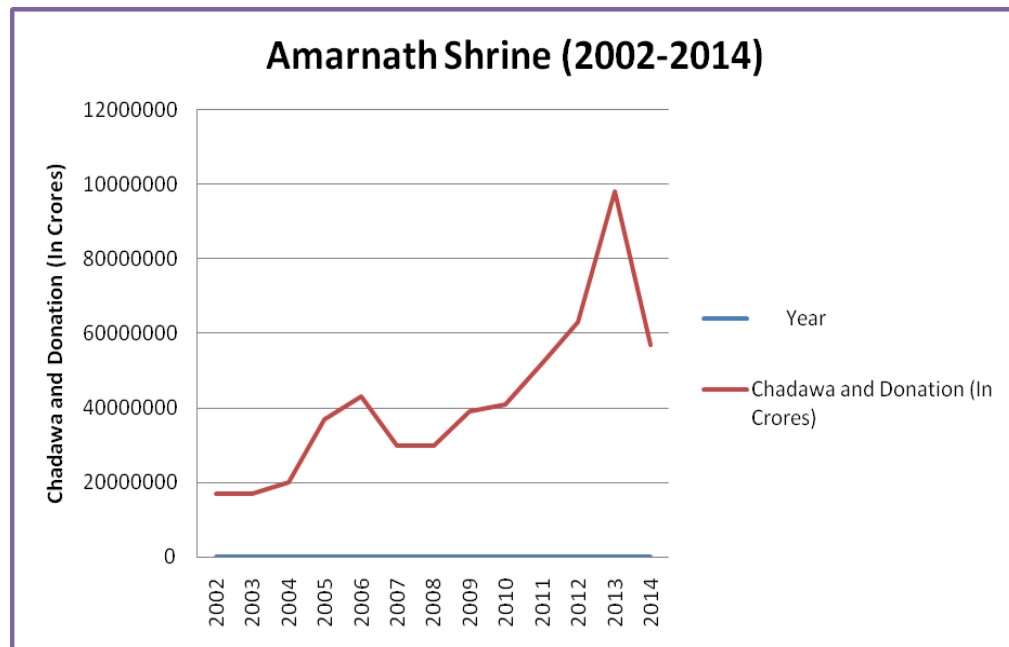


Pilgrims are also donating jewellery, ornaments, civil items like cement, bricks and tiles, electrical items like bulbs, tubes, inverters, catering items like atta, rice, daals of various kinds, refined oil, housekeeping items like blankets, mattresses, beds and bedcovers etc. Etc.

In case of *Amarnath*, the shrine board manages the entire revenue. Before the formation of Shrine board the finances of the shrine were managed by *Dakshmi Akhara, Mattan Sabha Purohits, Ganeshpura Purohits* and *Mullicks of Batkote*. But, after the formation of shrine board it started managing the various economic activities of the shrine. It generates revenue from *Chadawa, donations, Langar fees, Royalty* from helicopters, tent, shop fees, registration fee and various huts constructed during the journey.

The report by Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (2017) which states that the shrine of *Amarnath* generates revenue from various sources (JKCCS, 2017:59). The below has given descriptions of the revenue generated by shrine board from Chadawa and donation.

Chart No. 5.5. Showing offerings and donation received by *Amarnath* shrine board (2002-2014)



Source: JKCCS, Report on *Amarnath* Devi shrine, 2017⁸²

⁸² It's a comprehensive report prepared on the basis of data received through RTI from the *Amarnath* shrine board.

The above chart no has shown pilgrims are spending amount on offerings and donations. From 2002 to 2013 the *Chadawa* increased from approximately 2 crore to 10 crore. Like *Vaishno Devi* shrine the *Amarnath* receives Chadawa from the pilgrims.

With receiving donations, offerings, funds and generating revenue, the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has given many benefits to local community and the state. There are thousands of peoples belong to different backgrounds works at the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* and earns money. They belong to the local areas or the other regions of the state and have been engaged in labor works. In the field it has been asked to 260 respondents about the local communities in terms of job and economic benefits. The respondents were very much hopeful about the management of the shrine board. They said that the shrine board provides democratic space where a person belongs to any religion ad caste works. The table below has given the opinion of the pilgrims about the various infrastructure developed by the shrine board.

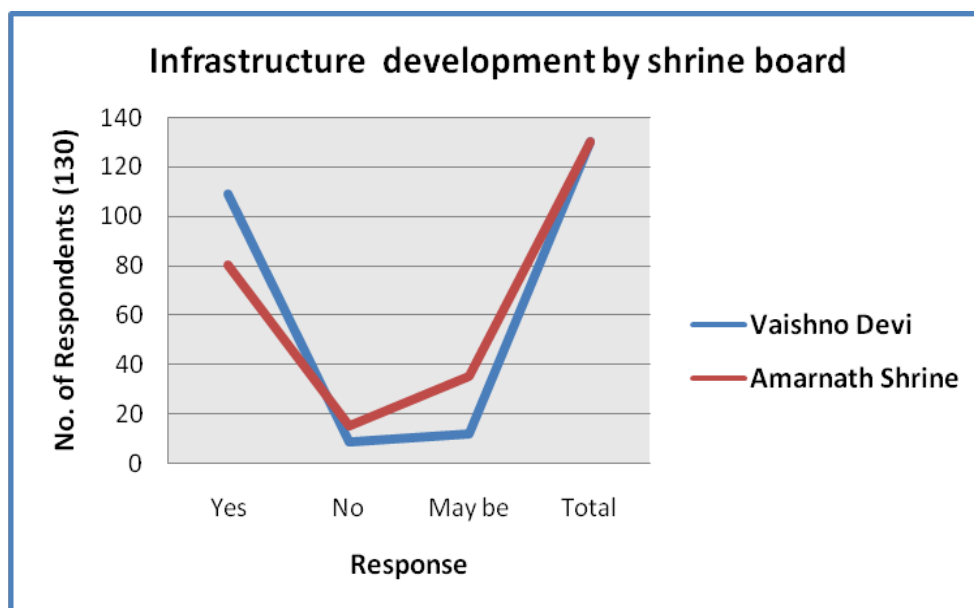
Table No. 5.4. Infrastructural Developments by shrine board has made pilgrimage more comfortable?

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	109	80	187	83.8	61.5	72
No	9	15	24	6.9	11.5	9.2
May be	12	35	49	9.2	26.9	18.8
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 83.8% respondents agreed that shrine board has created various kinds of infrastructure to facilitates the pilgrimage, followed by 6.9% disagree and 9.2 in between agree and disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 61.5% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by 11.5% unsatisfied and 26.6% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine 72% satisfied, followed by 9.2% not satisfied and 18.8% neutral.

Chart No. 5.6. Showing the comparison between *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* in terms of infrastructural development have made pilgrimage comfortable or not?



In terms of comparison the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* have developed better infrastructure than the shrine of *Amarnath*. It's due to the security and the geographical reasons the shrine of *Amarnath* lack such kind of vision that *Vaishno Devi* shrine had received. The respondents also said that the long journey also affects the overall development of the *Amarnath* pilgrimage. Therefore, *Amarnath* Shrine board makes temporary arrangements for the pilgrims during the pilgrimage. But, *Amarnath* shrine board in coordination with the various public and private organizations of the state manages the pilgrimage.

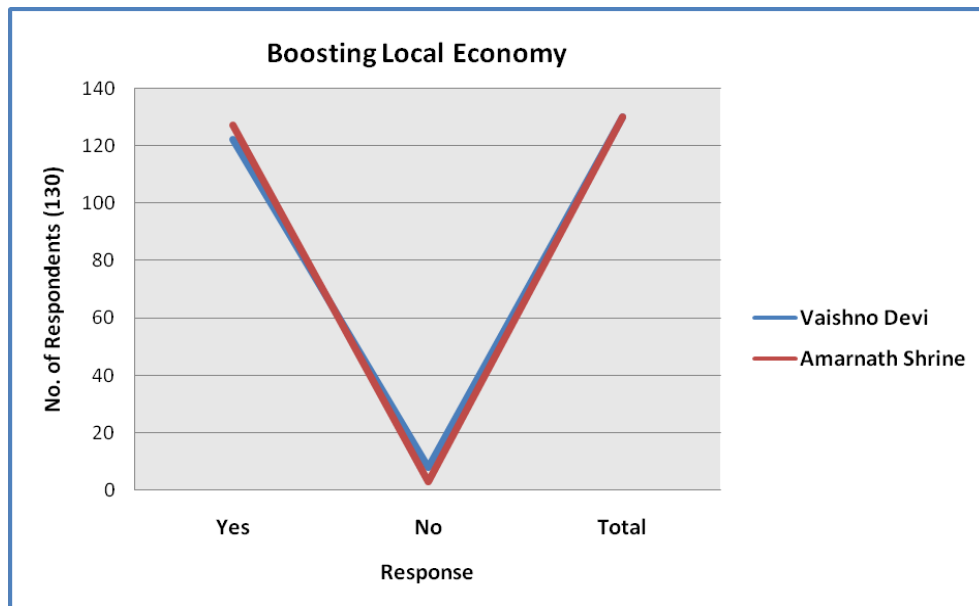
Table No. 5.5. Showing Shrine Boosts the Local Economy

Response	No. of Respondents			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	122	127	249	93.8	97.7	95.8
No	8	3	11	6.2	2.3	4.2
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 93.8% respondents agreed that shrine board boosts the local economy followed by 6.2% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 97.7% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by 2.3% unsatisfied. Total percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine 95.8% satisfied, followed by 4.2% not satisfied.

Chart No. 5.7. Showing the comparison of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine boosting the local economy



Comparatively both the shrine boosts the local economy. The above data have shown that both shrines help the local and state economy. The next table has shown the role of shrine boards in helping the local markets.

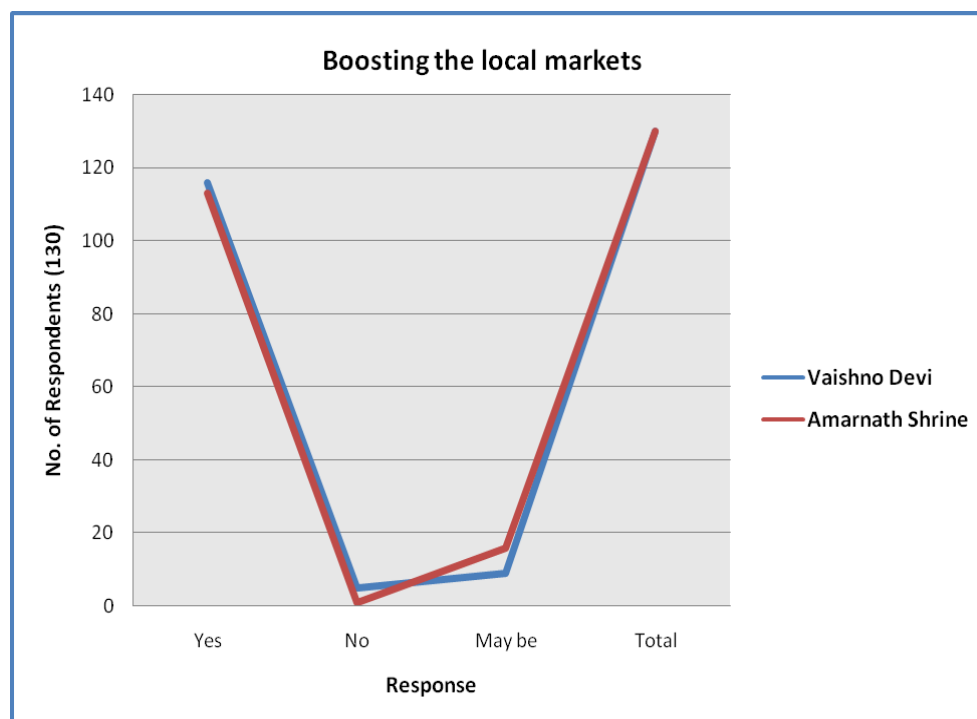
Table No. 5.6. Is shrine board helps in boosting the local markets?

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	116	113	229	89.2	86.9	88.1
No	5	1	6	3.8	0.8	2.3
May be	9	16	25	6.9	12.3	9.6
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 89.2% respondents agreed that shrine board boosts the local markets followed by 3.8% disagree and 6.9% neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 86.9% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by .8% unsatisfied and 12.3% neutral. With combine both the shrine shows 88.1% respondents satisfied, followed by 2.3 not satisfied and 9.6 neutral.

Chart No.5.8. Showing the comparison of *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* local markets



The shrine board also generates economy through helicopter services. In *Vaishno Devi* the shrine board has made its first private partnership with the M/S Deccan Aviations' Pvt. Ltd where the helicopter service has started in November 2002 from *Katra* to Sanjichhat (Kumar, 2006:45).

Gupta and Raina (2008) in their studies have showed that, the introduction of helicopter service in the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage has considered a beneficial step taken by the shrine board to boost the pilgrimage. The same service had started earlier so many times but was withdrawn by the operators for couple of reasons. But finally the shrine board made the deal successfully. At the time the DAL charged the tariff of Rs. 2000/- per pilgrims. They said that many pilgrims have availed the helicopter facility. So, it is mentioned in given table below which shows the number of passengers that used that service along with the income of DAL over the last 2.5 years i.e. from 2005-2007 (Gupta and Raina, 2008:10).

Table No. 5.7. Shows the Income of Deccan Aviation Limited from the year (2005-2007).

Year	Aviation Company	Passengers Travelled	Income (in Rs)
2005	D.A.L	N.A.	1.10Cr
2006	D.A.L	7996	15.12Cr
2007	D.A.L	4260	6.60Cr

Source: Gupta and Raina (2008), p.6

In terms of helicopter fare Daily Excelsior has reported that the fare per passengers has goes down and now the helicopter fare is Rs 699 and it has been considered the lowest fare if compares with the previous years (Daily Excelsior, 27 November 2011:4).

The Indian Railways also have started certain special tours packages many times for the pilgrims (Times of India, 6 May 2012). Erndl (1993) said that in the year 1972 the railway track from pathankot to Jammu was opened, which results in the pilgrimage rush of pilgrims to *Vaishno Devi* and it was reported that in the year 1977, 9, 00,000 pilgrims visited that Mata *Vaishno Devi* shrine and before the ten years i.e. 1967 nearly 50,000 per year had visited the shrine (Erndl, 1993:39).

In the year 2011 the shrine board has constructed a spiritual growth centre (SPG) at *Katra* over a cost of Rs 11 Cr. The SPG was inaugurated by President Pratibha Devisingh Patil on 26 November 2011 that was the silver jubilee year of shrine board. The SPG complex has the facilities of meditation, an open air theatre, an auditorium, space for food with traditional sitting arrangements, a prayer hall, dormitories, a training centre and library (Daily Excelsior, 27 November 2011:4).

5.2.3. The Local Issues

It has been observed in the field that both the shrines have local community issues. The traditional communities who were part of the shrine in the handling of the pilgrimage had been sidelined since 1986. But post formation of Amaranath Act of 2000 the Kashmiri separatists started raising the historical and environmental concerns of the shrine. Therefore the issue of *Vaishno Devi* local

community lies in the power, authority and the economic. But on the other side the *Amarnath* shrine has radical political challenges. The Baridar community had been traditionally serving the pilgrimage since 1846 as recorded in the historical documents. But some contexts in literature locate them before the *Dogra* rule in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Since the formation of shrine board the baridar community started protesting for the rights they had in temple premises had been taken. The baridars were the peoples who were handling the administration of the *Vaishno Devi* shrine till 1986. Most of them were traditional Pujaris and Purohits (Priests) and had good relations with the Maharajas of Jammu. On the basis of personal interactions, loyalty and the caste they were being nominated as the temple priest by the Dogra Rulers. Baridars were collecting the offerings, donation at the shrine. They were lacking the systematic and organizational hierarchy. With having such strong bond with the *Vaishno Devi* shrine they did whatever they wish to handle the management of the temples. But when started declining the rule of Maharajas in Jammu in 1947 thereafter baridars continued their role under the same Dharmarth Trust. But due to various social and legislative changes in the religious sphere has started declining the powers of baridars. Pilgrims also started making complains to the government about the mismanagement by the braiders. Finally, 1986 the government of Jammu and Kashmir took over the management *Vaishno Devi* from Dharmarth trust and constitutionally and democratically formed Shrine board of *Vaishno Devi*. Soon after *baridars* were withdrawn from all the services. The shrine board had given jobs, money to the baridars for their sustenance. Thereafter they formed various unions to fight against the injustice by the state as well as the shrine board. At present they have some shops on the track to *Vaishno Devi* shrine. In 2016 the baridar community staged protest against the shrine board for the construction of the third route from Dharmnagri to the Ardhkuwari. Baridars claimed that such routes could affect the business. They also have the issues with the land acquired by Mata *Vaishno Devi* University in *Katra*. The baridars community says that they are the native of the *Katra* town; any major decision by shrine board should get consulted by the local community. They blamed that the shrine board is constructing many new things that could damage the religious ethos and hurt the

sentiments of the local community peoples. Such kind of advanced infrastructure at the religious place could affect the bread and butter of the local community. Because, if the shrine board constructs short routes and make pilgrimage more mechanic could affect the business of the local who had established various shops on the whole track to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. The baridar also reported that the traditional route of *Vaishno Devi* has around 1700 shops and any new route could hamper the business as well as the employment. The Sewa Committee Baridaran looks after the rights of baridars and fights back whenever they thought any injustice had been happened to them.

Issue of Labor Class

As per Labor union *Katra* more than 1, 30,000 labourers consist of Ponny Palki, pithu, horse etc. They are working as per the guidelines of the shrine board. They have been issued the identity cards to carry on their labour tasks by the shrine board. Recently the labor union had dialogue with the shrine board regarding the new route to the holy cave of *Vaishno Devi*. They objected to all the decisions of the shrine board that speaks of the modern pilgrimage. In 2015-16 they had lodged strong protest against the shrine board for the starting of the motor cars from Ardhkuwari to the Shrine. There have been taken various perceptions of the labourers in the field.

Mushtaq (Name Changed) a Palki Walla, from Rajouri District, Jammu region told that shrine board has constructed a road from Banganga to Ardh Kuwari for autos. Now the shrine board internally is trying to disable the Palki service from Banganga to Ardhkuwari. There is no proper communication from District administration, MLA and the Palki union. Approximately there are 1, 10,000 pithuwallas, palki wallas, ponny wallas, horse wallas working in *Katra*. 25,000 are horse riders. Sunny Sharma a native of Akhnoor district told that at present there is case between shrine board and workers in the court. Because the shrine board has asked to vacate the services and the workers who are earning their bread and butter for the last 30 to 40 years are worried about their families.

On the other hand the *Amarnath* Pilgrimage doesn't have any big challenge from the native communities. It could be seen the local communities peoples are into service especially during pilgrimage to generate the income. But the Kashmiri separatists movement could be seen challenging because the kind of protests they were involved during the *Amarnath* pilgrimage could be understand more better as political movement.

Case of Ishpaq Choudhary (Name Changed) a local restaurant owner at pehalgham told that *Amarnath* shrine boost the local economy. People are doing many business opportunities during the pilgrimage. He also told that govt. can explore more options to expand markets and make it globally recognized. He also told that the govt can create more business opportunities for the local youths. He told that there should be handled tourism and pilgrimage differently. Because most of the tourists get difficulty due to various security check up at the time of *Amarnath* Yatra.

Case of two another person employed in the hotel as manager named Rafiq Ahmed Mir native of Pehalgham told that tourism is contradictory to pilgrimage in the context of pilgrimage. He told that the pilgrimage has no big role in the boosting of local markets. Because, it lasts for 3 months only than what about other 9 months. Tourist plays a important role here in pehalgham. The pilgrimage has given different business opportunities to the horse riders. The shrine board should create such kind of environment where tourist could not suffer.

Case Three: A local resident of Pehalgham named Ajaj Ahmed Shah (Name changed) a B.S.N.L contractor at *Amarnath* cave told that the shrine board has created various jobs opportunities to the local youths. There is division of labor at the time of pilgrimage. The way to the cave of *Amarnath* should be properly maintained. Tourism and pilgrimage should be handled separately.

But it had been observed that there has continuously expanding the *Katra* town. There has been grown various economic and job opportunities. In the field

the researcher had taken the perceptions of 260 respondents on the nature and the functioning of the new board *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine board.

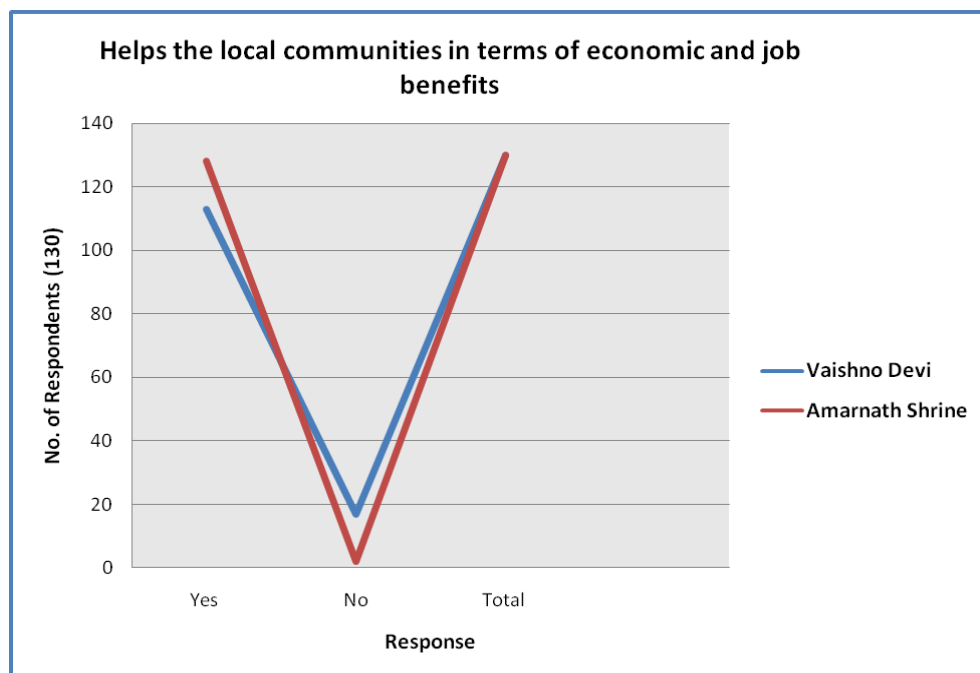
Table No. 5.8. Showing the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine helps the local communities in terms of job and economic benefits?

Response	No. of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	113	128	241	86.9	98.4	92.7
No	17	02	19	13.1	1.6	7.3
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 86.9% respondents agreed that shrine board helps the local community in terms of economic and job benefits, followed by 13.1% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 98.4% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by 1.6% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine 92.7% satisfied with the question asked to them, about accommodative nature of these shrines in terms of economic benefits, followed by, 7.3% not satisfied.

Chart No. 5.9. Showing the role of shrine that provides economic and job benefits to the local community



Most of the respondents were saying that the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have given much benefits to the local communities either in Jammu or Kashmir. Comparatively the respondents at the shrine of *Amarnath* Shrine seem more comfortable because of the state policy at the time of *Amarnath* Pilgrimage gives more opportunities to explore the pilgrimage economics to the *Kashmiri* communities.

The *Gujjar* and *Bakkarwalls* (Tribal community) could be seen serving the pilgrims at different capacities. They install various shops or the other facilities for the pilgrims so that they could generate income. The district administration permits the tribal community belong to Kashmir and Jammu to organize markets/shops during the *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

It has been asked to the respondents whether they have seen the local communities participation in the division of labor at both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The below table has given accounts of it.

Table No. 5.9. Do you find local Community participation in the division of labor?

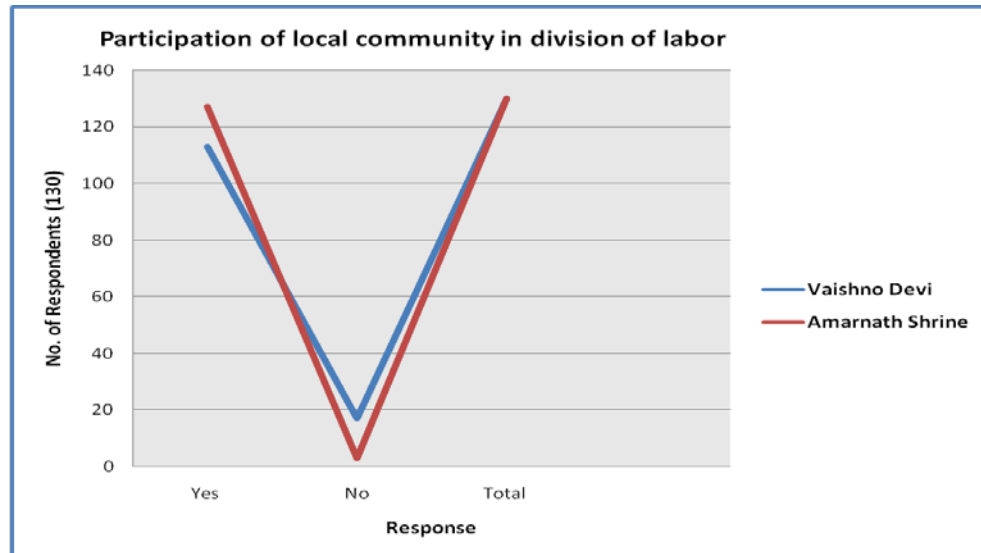
Response	No. of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	113	127	240	86.9	97.7	92.3
No	17	03	20	13.1	2.3	7.7
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 86.9% respondents agreed that shrine board engages the local community in the division of labor of the pilgrimage management followed by 13.1% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 97.7% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by 2.3% unsatisfied. Overall percentage

of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine 92.3% satisfied, followed by, 7.7% not satisfied.

Chart No. 5.10. Showing the comparative *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*



As per data more than 90% peoples belong to the local communities are working at both the shrines. They are either attached with various private associations working to help the pilgrims at both the shrine or they are part of the shrine board. There are thousands of laborers working at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*. They are *horse riders*, *ponny wallas*, *pithuwallas*, *palki wallas* etc. But at the shrine of *Amarnath* shrine most of the service is provided by horse riders. Because *Amarnath* is situated in the difficult geographical terrain. Apart from that the local communities peoples are controlling the entire markets and the establishments. They have created different business opportunities to meet the needs of the pilgrims.

Table No. 5.10. Showing native communities' participation in hotels/shops

Response	No. of Respondents			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	108	128	236	83.1	98.5	90.7
No	22	2	24	16.9	1.5	9.3
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 83.1% respondents agreed there is a native community's participation in the hotels and shops, followed by 16.9% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 98.5% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by 1.5% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine 90.7% satisfied followed by, 9.3% not satisfied.

Chart No. 5.11. Showing the comparison between *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* in terms of the participation of the local community in the hotels and shops



More than 90% native communities have captured the local markets. They are owners or doing job at various market places. Both the shrines are boosting the local economy. The local community has some issues with the shrine board due to various rules and regulations they impose at any time. Pre board formation the communities had participated in their own style, but post the formation of board there has been guidelines get for everyone whosoever is contributing in the management of the shrine. Therefore, still the baridars community has some unresolved issues with the shrine board of *Vaishno Devi*. But, most of the native communities seem happy with the management of shrine board. Because due to these shrines they have got opportunities to explore various things related to the economic benefits. In the field it has been asked to 260 respondents about the local communities' satisfaction with the shrine board as well as the role of state in governing these shrines. The table below has given the detail analysis of that.

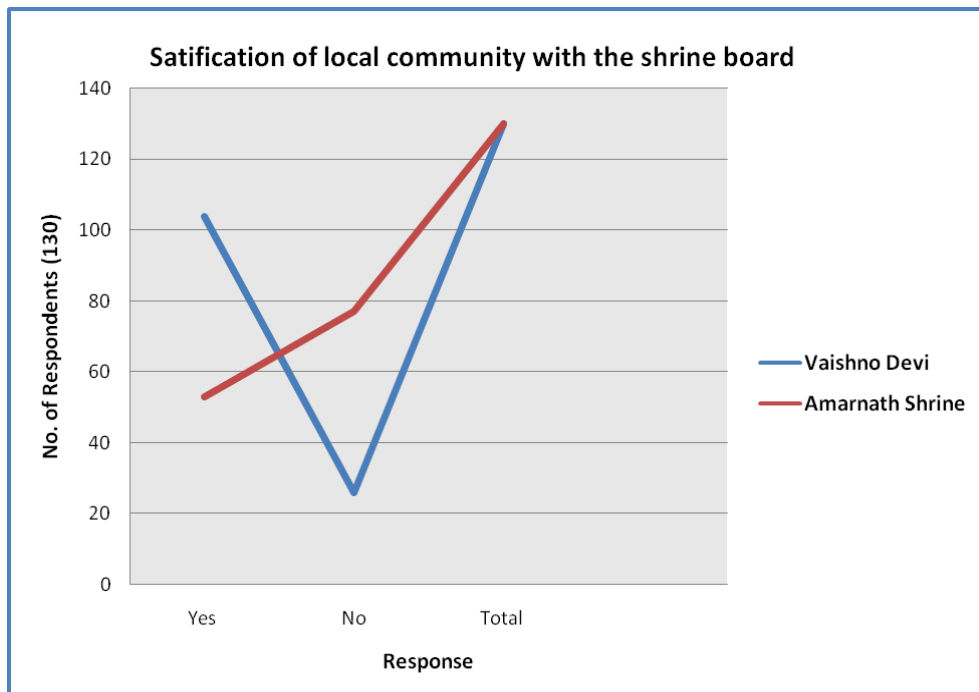
Table No. 5.11. Showing the satisfaction of local communities with the shrine board and the state policy

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	104	53	157	80	40.7	60.3
No	26	77	103	20	59.3	39.7
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 80% respondents agreed followed by 20% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 40.7% satisfied, followed by 59.3% unsatisfied. Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine shows 60.3% satisfied followed by, 39.7% not satisfied.

Chart No. 5.12. Showing the satisfaction of local communities with the shrine board and the state policy



The data reveals that more than 60 percent of the respondents that the local communities are satisfied with the state and the shrine board policy. But comparatively the 80 percent respondents at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* are satisfied with the vision of the shrine board. But only 40.7 percent respondents were unhappy with the holistic policy of state and the shrine board. The reason could be the security as well as the administrative challenges. Kashmir being a region surrounding with various political controversies as well as the security threats affects the *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

Both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are giving preference to the local communities in the job and economic benefits. The department of labor is handling all the labor related services during *Amarnath* pilgrimage. But there are unions/associations that are coordinating all the activities at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi*.

Table No.5.12. Showing respondents perception on reservations in jobs or economic opportunities given by shrine board to the local communities.

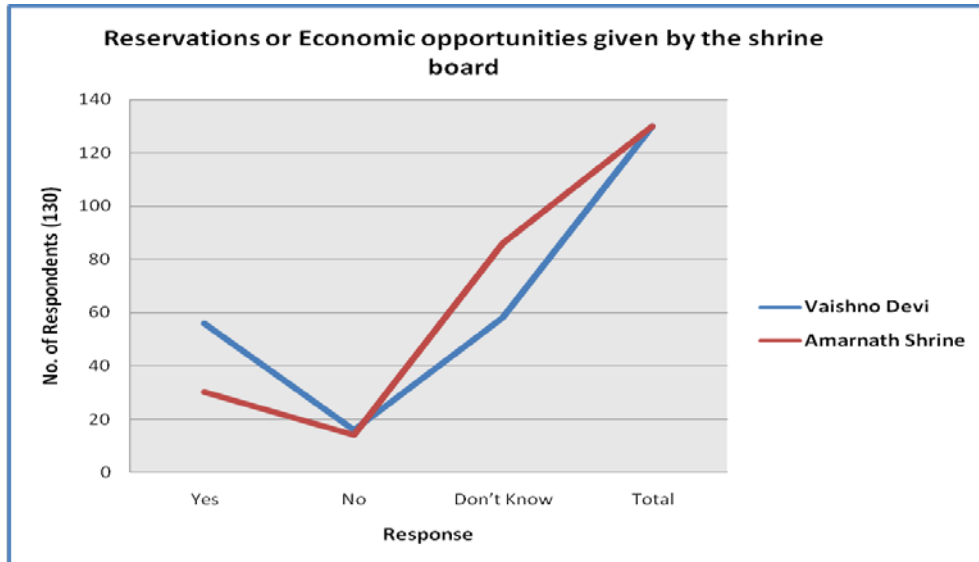
Response	No. of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	56	30	86	43	23	33
No	16	14	30	12.4	10.8	11.6
Don't Know	58	86	144	44.6	66.2	55.4
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 43% respondents agreed that shrine board gives reservation in jobs and other economic opportunities followed by 12.4% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 23% satisfied followed by 10.8% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine 33% satisfied, followed by 11.6% unsatisfied and 55.5% not aware about the things. The data says that respondents of both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are not aware about any kind of quota or economic help given by the shrine board.

Comparatively *Vaishno Devi* shrine performs better in terms of job quota and economic benefits as compare to the shrine of *Amarnath*.

Chart No. 5.13. Showing the job/economic opportunities given by *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine board



In terms of comparison the *Vaishno Devi* have created lots of jobs, economic opportunities for the local community peoples than the shrine of *Amarnath*. It could be seen more in *Vaishno Devi* because of the excess numbers of pilgrims visits to the shrine throughout the year that at *Amarnath*, where the pilgrimage could happen for limited number of days. The below table has shown that the flow of pilgrims has created various opportunities for the natives.

Table No. 5.13. Showing the increases flow of pilgrims has created different opportunities and Employment.

Response	No. of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	108	126	234	83.1	96.9	90.0
No	11	3	14	8.5	2.3	5.4
May be	11	1	12	8.5	.8	4.6
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 83.1% respondents agreed followed by 8.5% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 96.9% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine

board, followed by 2.3% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 90% satisfied, followed by, 5.4% not satisfied and 4.6% neutral.

Chart No.5.14. Showing the rise in pilgrims has created various opportunities to the local community

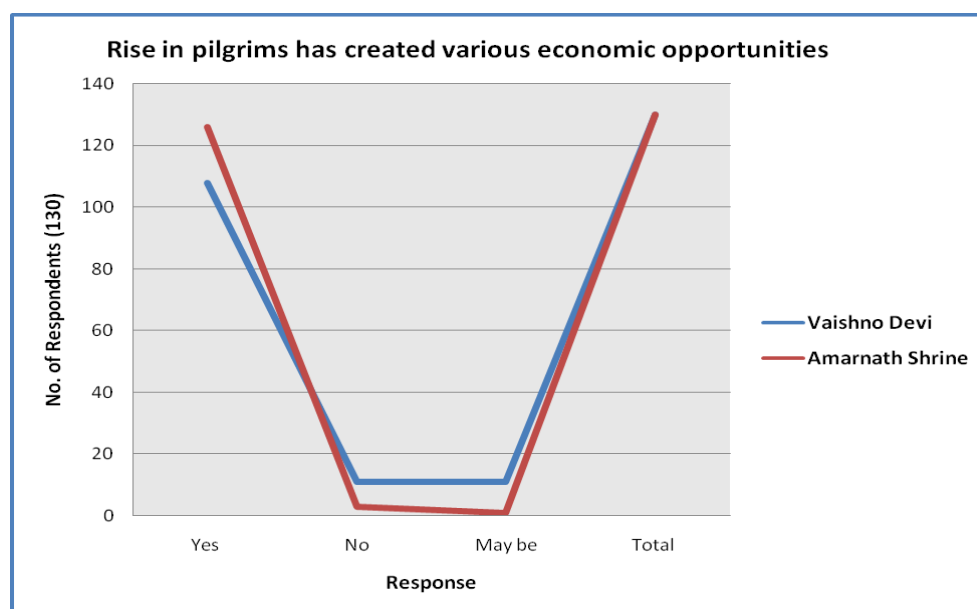


Table No.5.14. Do you aware of the shrine board Act of 1986 and 2000?

Response	No. of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	30	32	62	23	24.6	24
No	87	48	135	67	37	52
Heard of it	13	50	63	10	38.4	24
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 23% respondents agreed followed by 67% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 24.6% satisfied with the facilities provided by the shrine board, followed by 37% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 24% satisfied, followed by, 52% not satisfied and 24% neutral.

The Act was passed in the year 2000 when National Conference was in power in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Act was passed for better management as well facilities to be provided to the pilgrims. More than 70

percent of respondents were not aware about the shrine board policy. Only those are aware who are educated or concerned with shrine board. The data says that only 24 percent respondents are aware about the shrine board policy. 79% either don't know or just heard about the shrine policy. In the field there has been asked the question on whether the peoples find the rules, regulations of the shrine board satisfactory or not.

Table No.5.15. Showing pilgrim's satisfaction with rules and regulation set by the shrine board

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	41	33	74	31.5	25.4	28.5
No	22	34	56	17	26.2	21.5
May be	67	63	130	51.5	48.4	50
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 31.5% respondents agreed followed by 17% disagree, 51.5% neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 25.4% satisfied, followed by 26.2% unsatisfied and 48.4% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 28.5% satisfied, followed by, 21.5% not satisfied and 50% neutral.

Chart No. 5.15. Showing the shrine board rules and regulations



Table No. 5.16. Showing the perception of respondents towards the markets/hotels cost.

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	51	22	73	39.2	16.9	28
No	48	85	133	36.9	65.4	51.2
May be	31	23	54	23.8	17.7	20.8
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 39.2% respondents agreed followed by 36.9% disagree, 23.8% neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 16.9% satisfied, followed by 65.4% unsatisfied and 17.7% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 28% satisfied, followed by, 51.2% not satisfied and 20% neutral.

Table No. 5.17. Showing the perception of respondents about the nature of shopkeepers/hotel staff/ shrine board staff?

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	67	45	111	51.5	34.6	42.7
No	22	44	66	16.9	33.8	25.4
May be	41	41	83	31.5	31.5	31.9
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 51.5% respondents agreed followed by 16.9% disagree, 31.5% neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 34.6% satisfied, followed by 33.8% unsatisfied and 31.5% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 42.7% satisfied, followed by, 25.4% not satisfied and 31.9% neutral.

Chart No.5.17. Showing the attitude of Local shopkeepers and shrine staff at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

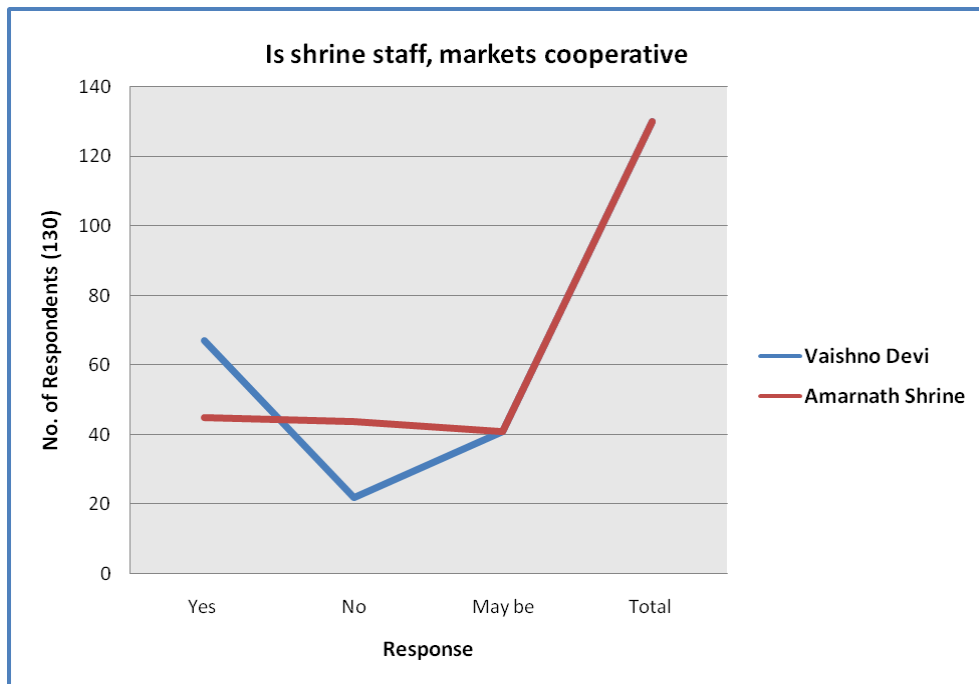


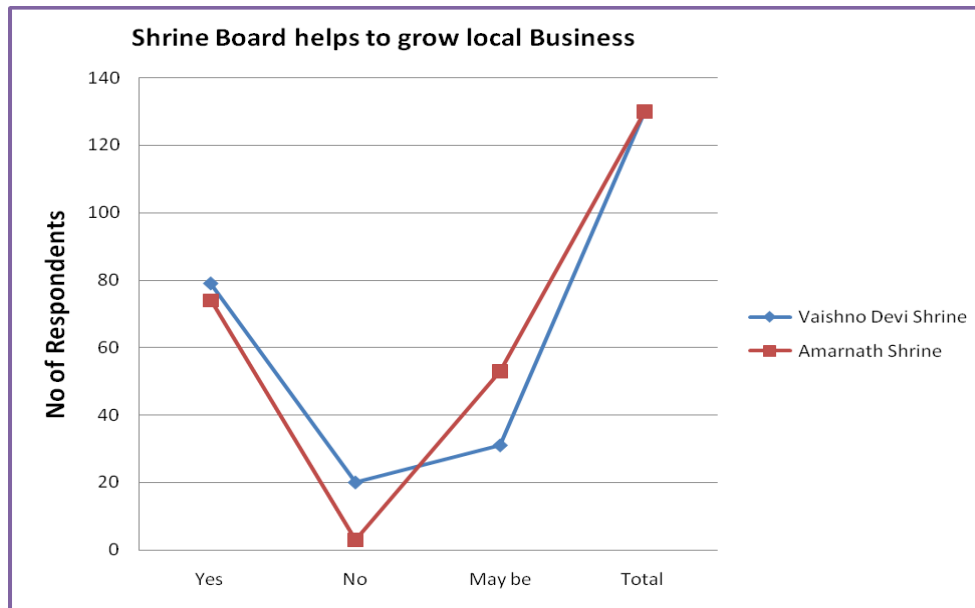
Table No. 5.18. Showing the respondents perception on the role of shrine board in the business expansion

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	79	74	153	60.7	56.9	58.9
No	20	3	23	15.4	2.3	8.8
May be	31	53	84	23.9	40.8	32.3
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014-December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 60.7% respondents agreed followed by 15.4% disagree, 23.9% neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 56.9% satisfied, followed by 2.3% unsatisfied and 40.8% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 58.9% satisfied, followed by, 8.8% not satisfied and 32.3% neutral.

Chart No. 5.18. Showing shrine board help the local business



The political economy of *Vaishno* Devi shrine and *Amarnath* shrine had explored the pilgrimage management, the economic generation and the issues the shrine boards faces. The data collected in the field, the data taken from various reports has shown that both the shrine board has the issues in the management of the pilgrimage, as an independent there is no direct involvement of the state in various decision making of the shrine boards makes them a challenges from the state bodies as well as to make the boards more democratic in terms of the role of these shrine in boosting the state's economy. Infected indirectly these shrines contribute in the infrastructural development of the state but the authority remains within the governing bodies of shrine boards. It has been also noticed in the field that the baridars community, the dharmarth trust have/had various concerns with the shrine boards. They are not in favour of any construction that hurts the sentiments of pilgrims as well as the local community. In *Amarnath* shrine the Langar organizations; the local community also had issues with the shrine boards. I observed that the markets in pehalgham are not in favour of the pilgrimage due to the security reasons. The locals stated that during the pilgrimage the tourism gets affected due to the deployment of huge security for the safeguards of the pilgrimage. It also observed that many of them were into various services during pilgrimage had issues with the shrine board regarding the less options to explore their business. Researcher observed there were very less

participation of Hindu community at the shrine. When I asked to one shopkeeper about the participation of other community people at the cave shrine of *Amarnath*. He responded that only tribal and the native communities could stay at such high altitude for long time. The things required to do is to make holistic policy on the shrine management where every part could get an opportunity to explore during the pilgrimage. There is needed to make the shrine board and the local community strong. Therefore, handling political economy of the shrine seems a big challenges now and could be more bigger in the future if go unaddressed.

The other factor that has made the pilgrimage more challenging is the faith based tourism. The next section has given detail accounts of it.

5.3. The Rise of Faith Based Tourism

The rise of faith based tourism started when the tourism started exploring its markets. India which is known as the land of religions becomes the centre of attractions for the tourism organizations across the world. They started focus on the pilgrimage tourism in India. Thus both the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* becomes the target group for tourism agencies to explore the concept of faith based tourism or religious tourism or pilgrimage tourism. In the present times both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* witnessed huge tourists visits the shrine. It could be seen post 1986 where both the shrine started increasing number of pilgrims. In the case of *Amarnath* it could also be seen but the entire scenario of Kashmir situation continuously changing the perception of tourism in Kashmir. Campo (1998) raised a question, Is this not tourism, rather than pilgrimage? The tourism and pilgrimage are easily distinguishable in the twentieth century. Pilgrimage usually invites tourism, while tourism amuses the possibility of pilgrimage experience. The globalization has made these pilgrimage spaces globally aware (Campo, 1998:53-54).

Tourism is the fastest growing industry globally accounting for 7% of total capital investment in the world and annual revenues approaching USD 500 Billion (USD 476 Billion in the year 2000 as per WTO estimates). There were 698 million international tourist arrivals in 2000, which are expected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020 as per the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) estimates. The

tourism industry in India has come a long way from just 15,000 tourists in 1950 to 2.64 million in 2000. The foreign tourist arrivals into India too have increased significantly (Santek, Ministry of Tourism Report, 2012: 5-6).

Table No.5.19. *Number of Foreign Tourist Visits (FTVs) in Jammu and Kashmir (2010 to 2015)*

<i>Number of Foreign Tourist Visits (FTVs) in Jammu and Kashmir (2010 to 2015)</i>						
State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
J&K	48099	71593	78802	60845	86477	58568
India	17852777	19497126	20731495	19951026	22334031	23326163

Source: Ministry of Tourism

A report by Planning Commission, Government of India report published by, 2003 stated that, the *2006 Task Force on Development of Jammu and Kashmir* identified tourism as one of the most important aspect of growth in the state. It explored that the tourism has the potential to create direct as well indirect employment, which can have significant impact on the overall growth of the state. In 2010, World Trade Organization argues that in service sector, tourism is widely recognized as a major mechanism of employment generation (Jones Zachary, Corey Singletary, Bartosz Szkatula , Farha Tahir, 2010:7-8). The state of Jammu and Kashmir always had/have been the important tourist destination place in India.

Table No. 5.20. *Tourist Growth in Jammu and Kashmir*

S. No.	Year	Tourists in J&K
1.	1989	2987964
2.	1990	2191486
3.	1991	3182251
4.	1992	3608269
5.	1993	3447162
6.	1994	3770208
7.	1995	4118632
8.	1996	4482072
9.	1997	4546200
10.	1998	4903930
11.	1999	5013571
12.	2000	5412863

13.	2001	5268246
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Source: Santek: 20 Year Perspective Plan for Sustainable Development of Tourism. The data from 1989 to 2001 shows that the tourist always had been rise in Jammu And Kashmir. The tourists decreased in 1990 due to the rise of terrorism in Kashmir. The below table No. 5.21 has shown the impact of faith based tourism on pilgrims. It has been seen that the religious tourism helps in the economic growth.

Table No.5.21. Showing the impact of Faith based tourism on pilgrimage helps in economic growth of the shrine and the state

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	127	128	255	97.7	98.5	98.1
No	3	2	5	2.3	1.5	1.9
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 97.7% respondents agreed followed by 2.3% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 98.5 % satisfied, followed by 1.5% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 98.1% satisfied, followed by, 1.9% not satisfied. Bhat (2013) stated that tourism is the life line of the people's and the state Jammu and Kashmir. There is a need to be undertaken for retaining, maintaining and sustaining it. Tourism opens up new window for resources, both investment generation and revenue generation leading to employment generation as well as socio-economic development of the local communities.

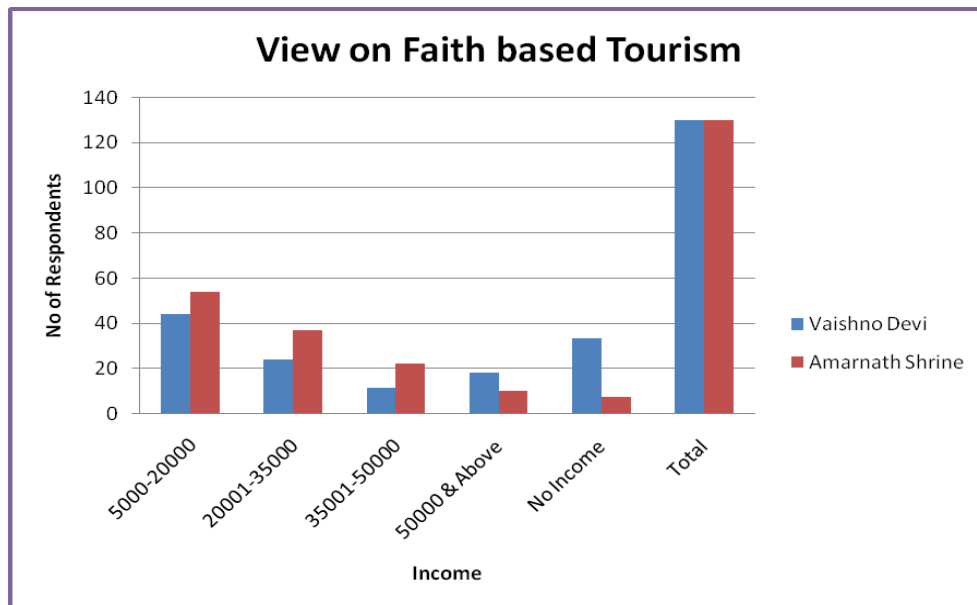
Table No. 5.22. Showing the Income group and their view about whether the faith based tourism has increased in India or not?

Income	Numbers of Respondents		
	Yes	No	Total
5000-20000	95	2	97
20001-35000	58	3	61
35001-50000	30	4	34
50000-1,0,000	26	2	28
No Income	37	3	40
	246	14	260

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In the table no it shows 36.5% with income 5000-20000 has the highest percentage among all who says that the faith based tourism has great impacted the pilgrimage space and it's the group whose participation is more than other at the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Then comes the income group 20001 to 35000 with 22.3, followed by 14.2% with income group 35001 to 50000, followed by income group 50001 to 1, 00,000 with 11.5% and lastly no income with 10% says that faith based tourism has changed the sacred character of journey. Jacobs (2010) associates the phenomenon of religious tourism with middle class sector and the increased mobility. He argues pilgrimage and tourism are two sides of the same coin and in many instances these two terms overlaps because pilgrimage is based on religious need and tourism gives recreational enjoyment and various people travel with the objective to achieve both the needs (Jacobs, 2010:33). The below graph compares the views of the respondents at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* on the faith based tourism.

Chart No.5.19. Showing the view of respondents at *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine on Faith based tourism in India



The local economy of *Katra* town has increased due to the heavy rush of pilgrims. *Katra* town develops and with this notion many regional and local governments have paid their attention to the various infrastructural facilities to meets the needs of pilgrims. Now many religious places have develops the religious tourism and are in the process of developing tools and techniques for

the need of proper functioning of these places and he also argues that many pilgrims or tourists are unhappy with the lack of infrastructure and they demands more modern technology (Jacobs, 2010:33).

Gupta and Jain (2008) explained in recent years, *Vaishno Devi* Shrine has become very popular destination among pilgrims. Pilgrimage Tourism to *Vaishno Devi* Shrine constitutes an important component of total tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and has contributed effectively to the growth and development of the place (Gupta and Raina, 2008:1). McMichael (2000) stated that globalization has impacted the tourism sector and in the contemporary times. At present cultural tourism is one of the world’s largest industries. He has used a term ‘otherness’ which means peoples of other cultures, is packed as a cultural export to earn foreign currency (McMichael, 2000: xxvii).

Olsen in Foster and Stoddard (2010) says religious tourism has become sacred and secular journey and the tourism becomes the relevant concept and destination for travellers in many religious places. Both government organizations and tourist industry arranges various facilities and activities for tourists or pilgrims. The middle class, businessman, industrialist and various professional classes’ peoples also visits the *Vaishno Devi* shrine to gain economic resources. These micro activities results in the expansion of huge tourism industry and the markets i.e. souvenirs shops, varieties of fast foods, huge accommodation and various artefacts associated with the popular culture. In many parts of India organizations, companies and agencies arrange special tours or packages to *Vaishno Devi*. The advertisement of religious tourism has been seen through television, internet, newspapers or mobile alerts. The rise of virtual culture either through television or internet becomes the dream for most of the viewers to have that trip in reality and in some concerns it becomes the important aspect of religious tourism (Foster and Stoddard, 2010:119-120).

Table No. 5.23. Tourist’s arrival in the state of Jammu and Kashmir 2008 to 2014

Year	Kashmir		Jammu	Ladakh Domestic or Foreign	Total State
	<i>Amarnath</i>	Domestic/Foreign	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>		
2008	498075	572100	6576000	72000	7718175

2009	373419	601250	8235064	78573	9288306
2010	458046	736448	8749000	76055	10019549
2011	634000	1314432	10115232	179204	12242868
2012	621000	1308765	10394000	178750	12502515
2013	353969	1171130	9287871	137650	10950620
2014	372909	1167618	7803193	181301	9525021

Source: Economic Survey J&K, 2014-15

The above table no.5.23 stated that the 77.19 lacs tourist had been visited in the year 2008 and 95.3 lacs in 2014 in Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh regions. Therefore, the state is significant from tourism point of view. The tourism and pilgrimage centres work in coordination in the Jammu and Kashmir. Both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine has been given important consideration by the state, ministry of tourism. The state invests on the promotion of tourism to attract more tourists in the state. The below table has given the state expenditure on the promotion of tourism for the year 2011-15.

Table No.5.24. State expenditure on the promotion of tourism 2011-15

State Plan		(Rs In Crore)
Year	Allocation	Expenditure
2011-12	117	142.78
2012-13	116.77	129.19
2013-14	91.32	34.89
2014-15	90.08	54.51
*end Jan 2015		

Source: Economic Survey, J&K, 2014-15

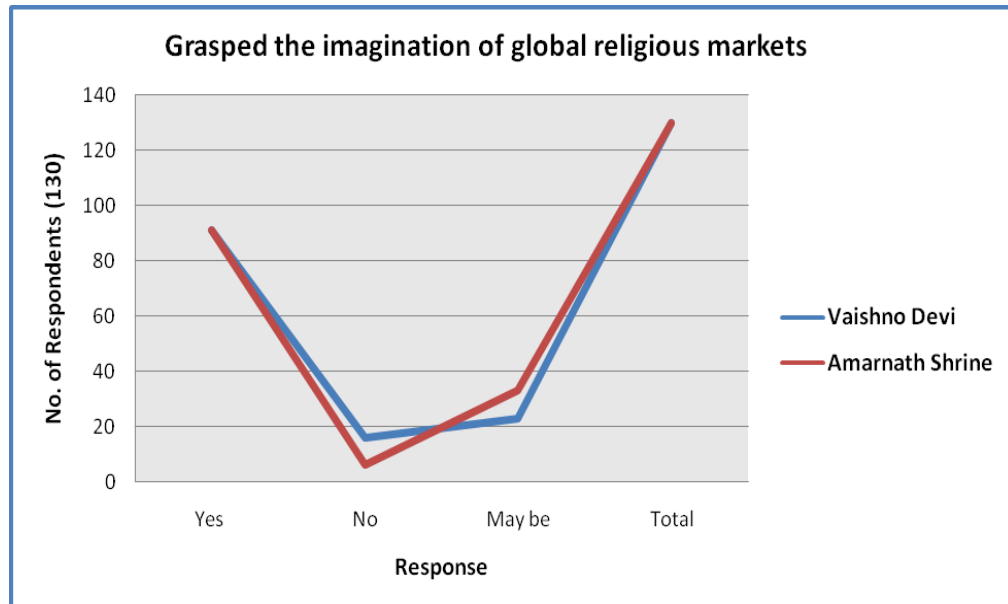
The two cities *Anantnag* in Kashmir and *Katra* in Jammu have been included in the central plan of the government of India for smart cities as these two places are gateway to the shrine of *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi*. Now these shrines have become the central to the global religious markets. The information communication technology has made the religious more fast in these shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The below table has shown the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* Shrine have impacted the global religious markets.

Table No.5.25. *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine* have grasped the imagination of global religious Markets.

Response	Frequency			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	91	91	182	70.0	70.0	70
No	16	6	22	12.3	4.6	8.5
May be	23	33	56	17.7	25.4	21.5
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 5.20. Showing both the shrine grasped the imagination of global religious markets.



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 70% respondents said that *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine has grasped the imagination of global religious markets, followed by 12.3% responded that there is little impact of the global changes. But at *Amarnath* shrine 70% reported the more interaction of local and the global culture, followed by 4.6% stated no impact. 17.7% in *Vaishno Devi* and 25.4% in *Amarnath* had been given neutral response. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 70% stated that both the shrines has influenced the global religious markets, followed by, 8.5% reported no influence. In the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* globalization could be seen in the form of global products which are being use. For instance, the introduction of internet technology i.e. on line pilgrimage slip, online donation, and online

vision of *Vaishno Devi* and online activities of *Amarnath* shrine board. *Vaishno Devi* shrine could be seen positively influencing the culture across the world than the *Amarnath*, due to limited option to explore its pilgrimage due to the terrorism in Kashmir.

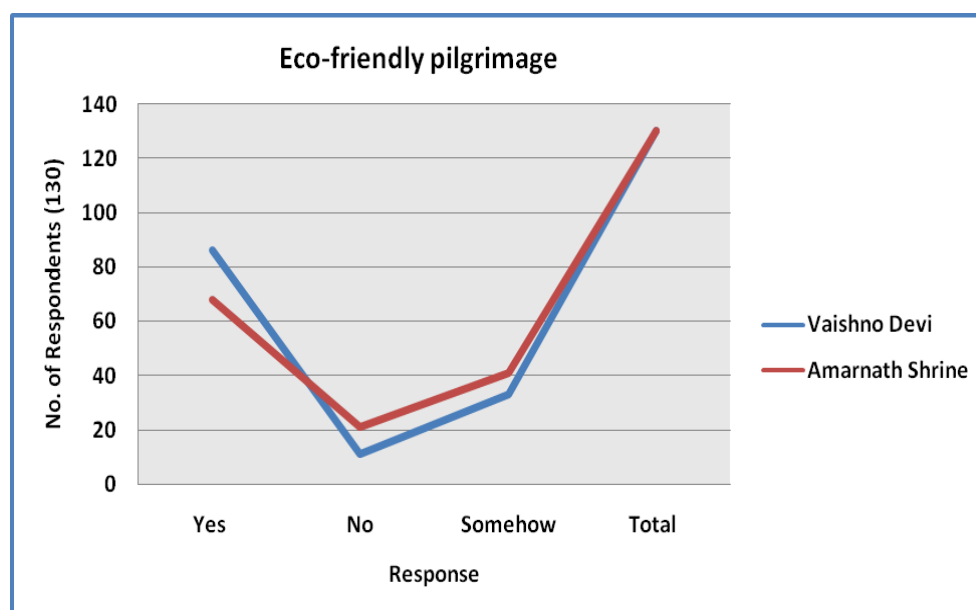
The rise in the numbers of pilgrims every day makes the environmental more challenging and appealing. *Katra* in *Vaishno Devi* has become a world class city with many hotels, restaurants, huge buildings and huge gathering. In the same way *Amarnath* during pilgrimage becomes the central point to explore the ecological concerns. The below table has shown the hygienic and eco friendly pilgrimage.

Table No. 5.26. Showing the response of respondents over hygienic and eco friendly pilgrimage

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	86	68	154	66.1	52.3	59.2
No	11	21	32	8.5	16.2	12.3
Somehow	33	41	74	25.4	31.5	28.5
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 5.21. Showing the eco-friendly pilgrimage



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 66.1% respondents responded the pilgrimage as hygienic and eco friendly, followed by 8.5% not agree and 25.4% neutral. In *Amarnath*

pilgrimage, 52.3% stated eco-friendly pilgrimage, followed by 16.2% unsatisfied and 31.5% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 59.2% asserted that pilgrimage to both the shrine is hygienic and eco-friendly, followed by 12.3% not satisfied and 28.5% neutral.

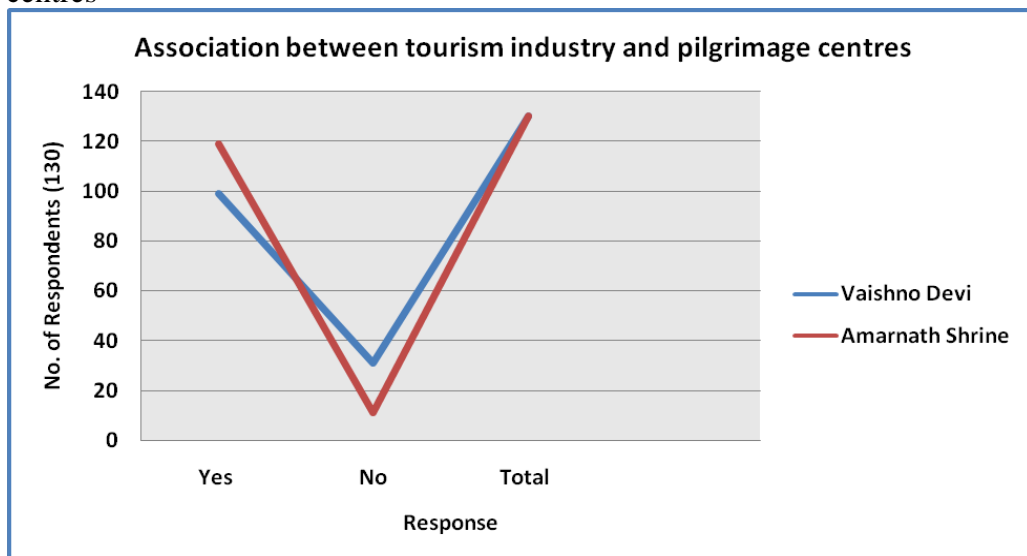
It has been observed that pilgrims are throwing the water bottles, polythene at various places while on the way to the shrine of *Amarnath*. It could be seen along the journey track. The shrine boards issues various notification as well as appeal to the pilgrims, not use any polythene during the journey. The shrine boards also have banned the use of polythene during pilgrimage journey. But the association of tourism industry with the famous pilgrimage centres have become the pilgrimage a challenging task for the management boards handles the pilgrimage. The below table has shown the association between tourism industry and the pilgrimage centres. It has been asked to the respondents whether the find any relationship between tourism industry or not.

Table No.5.27. Showing relationship between tourism industry and pilgrimage centres

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	99	119	218	76.2	91.5	83.8
No	31	11	42	23.8	8.5	16.2
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 5.22. Showing association between tourism industry and pilgrimage centres



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 76.2% respondents responded that there has been the relationship between the tourism industry and the pilgrimage centres, followed by 23.8% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 91.5% stated the association of tourism industry and the *Amarnath* shrine, followed by 8.5% disagree. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 83.8% asserted that there has been close relationship between the *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* shrine with the tourism industry, followed by, 16.2% not agree. In *Katra* town there has been opened hotels, restaurants, tour and travel as well as supported many project by tourism industry in association with the shrine board. The tourism board at *Amarnath* helps in the management of the entire pilgrimage journey. In this way the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* challenges the tourism industry. The below table has given the description of whether the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine are challenging the tourism industry or not.

Table No. 5.28. Showing respondents on whether shrine is challenging tourism industry or not

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	67	117	184	51.5	90.0	70.8
No	63	13	76	48.5	10.0	29.2
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2015

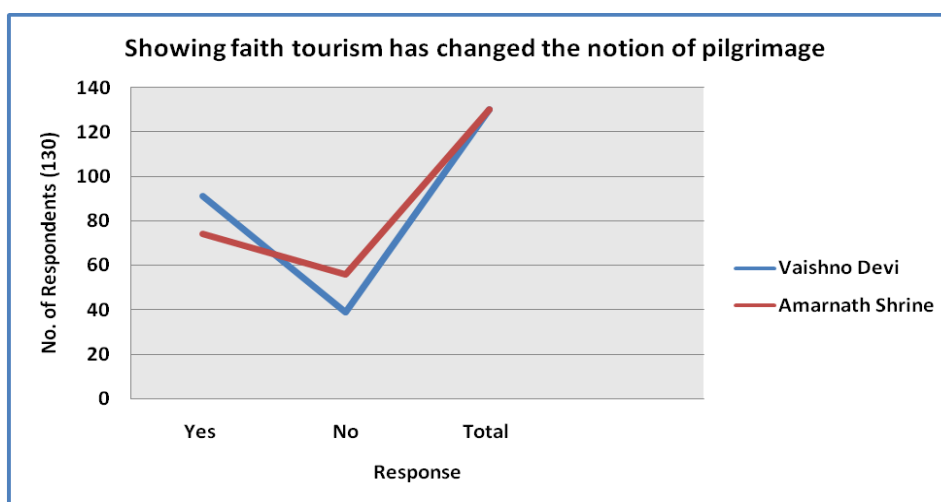
In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 51.5% respondents responded challenging the tourism industry, followed by 48.5% stated that tourism industry is not such challenge. But at *Amarnath* shrine 90% asserted challenging the tourism industry, followed by 10% not agree. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 70.8% asserted that the both the shrine are challenging the tourism industry, followed by, 29.2% not agree. It has been noticed that the *Vaishno Devi* shrine board itself explores various avenues to promote the shrine rather than *Amarnath* shrine, whom overall depends upon the tourism board during the pilgrimage journey. The rise of the role of tourism industry impacts the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The below table has show the whether the faith based tourism has changed the notion of pilgrimage or not.

Table No. 5.29. Showing faith based tourism has changed the notion of pilgrimage or not

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	91	74	165	70.0	56.9	63.5
No	39	56	95	30.0	43.1	36.5
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 5.23. Showing the faith based tourism has changed the notion of pilgrimage journey.



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 70% stated faith based tourism has changed the notion of pilgrimage, followed by 30% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 56.9% responded that the faith based tourism has impacted the sacred character of pilgrimage, followed by 43.1% not agree. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 63.5% agreed, followed by, 36.5% not satisfied. The below table has given the description of whether respondents like the association of Tourism industry with the pilgrimage centres or not.

Table No.5.30. Showing the respondents response whether they like tourism industry associated with pilgrimages or not.

Response	No of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	29	26	55	22.3	20.0	21.1
No	101	104	205	77.7	80.0	78.9
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 77.7% respondents disagree with the association of tourism industry with the pilgrimage centres, followed by 22.3% agree. In *Amarnath* shrine, 80% not agreed with the association between tourism industry and 20% agree.

Therefore, the concept of faith based tourism is both useful or as a challenge to the sacred character of the pilgrimage centres. The data has shown the there has been close association between tourism industry and the pilgrimage centres. Sometimes, it becomes difficult to categorise the pilgrimage centres and tourist places. It also has shown that the rise of global culture has increased the religious activities at the local place. It has resulted into the commercialization of the place. It also has shown that the rise of faith based industry has challenged the ecological phenomenon. The markets expansion, the rise of urbanization, the rise of floating population could become the great challenge to these shrines of *Vasihno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

In the contemporary time, both *Vaishno Devi* and *Vaishno Devi* have been affected by the local radical movements as well as the rise of terrorism in the state. The below section has discussed in detail about the security as an emerging challenge to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*.

5.4. Security as an emerging challenge to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*

Post 1990 both the shrines got affected due to the various societal issues. The state of Jammu and Kashmir always becomes the centre of attraction for security reasons. There are numbers of organizations actively participating in various movements that goes against the national interest. Timely the ministry of home affairs issues notification in the interest of the nation, its citizen's and for the safety of the pilgrims. Some radical elements in the state have been targeting the *Amarnath* since 1989 when the state was suffering due to the rise of terrorism and the terrorist activities. It had been noticed that whenever the shrine board issued notification for pilgrimage to *Amarnath* in the beginning of every year, some groups started had disrupt the pilgrimage.

The part on the security as an emerging challenge has been analyzed from two aspects . One; the socio-historical context of Jammu and Kashmir. Second; the rise of terrorism and the anti state moments in the state. The tension started in the state post 1947 when the Islamic radical groups started questioning the assimilation or the agreement signed by *Maharaja Hari Singh*⁸³ with the India. Like the other princely states the state also joined the mainstream. Thereafter the anti state, anti India movement started by some groups in the state. They started brainwashing Kashmiri Muslims which led to the creation of many groups in the state that speaks of hatred approach. The rise of terrorism and the radical groups in Jammu and Kashmir has great affected the pilgrimage to both *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi*. It forced the Kashmiri pandits to leave the valley. During 1985-1995 the Kashmir and the other hilly regions of Jammu division witnessed the rise of terrorism. There were thousands of incidents where people lost their lives. Thereafter the central government, the ministry of home affairs decided to impose the Armed forced special power Act (AFSPA) to control the situation in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Both the shrine had been received the terror threats. Therefore the central as well as the state government have done as well as doing extensive planning in the security management especially in the *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

At present there are millions of pilgrim’s visits to these shrines. The below table has shown the fear among the pilgrims due to the security reasons as well as the condition of the state in the wider context.

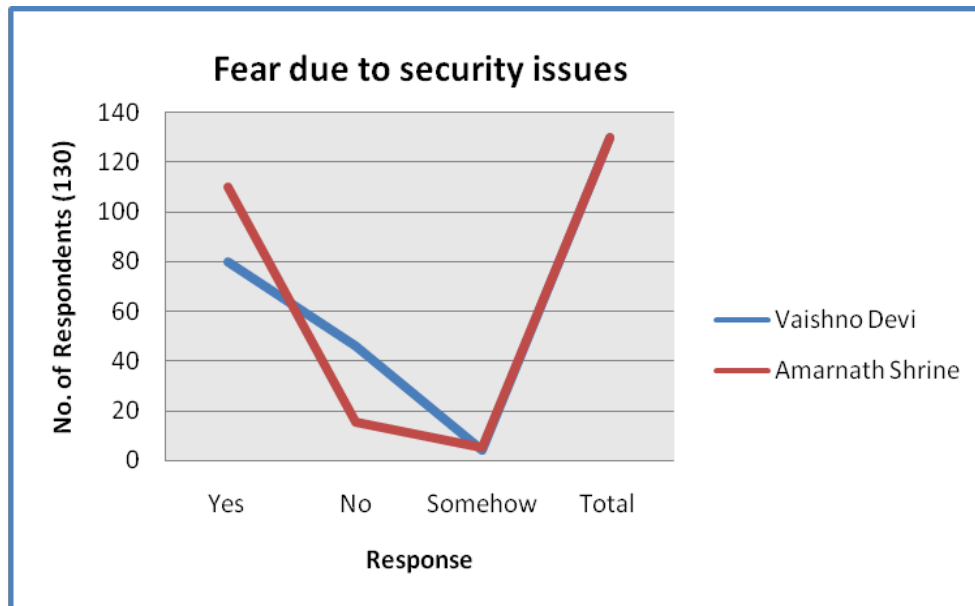
Table No. 5.31. Do you feel any kind of fear due to security reasons?

Response	Frequency			Percent		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	80	110	190	61.6	84.6	73
No	46	15	61	35.4	11.5	23.5
Somehow	4	5	9	3	3.9	3.5
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected from August 2014 to December 2015

⁸³ The last ruler of the princely state, Jammu and Kashmir

Chart No. 5.24. Showing the fear due to security issues



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 61.6% respondents responded that they felt fear due to the condition of the state, followed by 35.4% no fear reported, 3% neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 84.6% reported fear, followed by 11.5% no fear, 3.9% neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 73% asserted fear due to security reasons, followed by 23% no fear and 3.5% neutral. Comparatively, the *Amarnath* shrine has been affected more than *Vaishno Devi* due to the security threats. Second, the *Amarnath* shrine locates in Kashmir, which is affected by the local radical movements as well as the terrorism.

5.4.1. *Vaishno Devi* Shrine: Security Related Issues

The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* receives pilgrimage throughout the year. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been deployed to see overall the security measures. They have base camps at *Katra*, *Ardhkuwari* and the *Bhawan*. They are looking after the everyday activity related to the security. Along with that Jammu and Kashmir police also becomes part in the management of the pilgrimage as well as the safety of the shrine. I interviewed many CRPF personals at the base camp *Katra* as well as at *Bhawan*. On the journey track a pilgrim has to go through security check ups at least 5 to 6 places in between *Katra* and the *Bhawan*. Security is for the safety of pilgrim and the shrine. Security is considered as one of the important issue in the present time. Therefore a pilgrim has to complete all the formalities before preceding the

pilgrimage journey. The registration is the first step after that a pilgrim has to follow various do's and don'ts as well as has to cooperate in security. It's because in the past the *Katra* town had been targeted by the militants. Second, the growing popularity of the shrine considered as a major challenge before the shrine board.

5.4.2. Amarnath Pilgrimage: Security Challenges

The security forces have their viewpoint of pilgrimage. The shrine board has assigned them the whole task of security management from Jammu to the Cave of *Amarnath* during the pilgrimage. The security agencies especially have focus on all the internal and external threats during the pilgrimage. They started their preparation of handling the pilgrimage few months before the pilgrimage begins. The researcher have interviewed many security personal's, officers etc on the pilgrimage management. One CRPF Sub-Inspector ranked told that they have the responsibility to take care of the pilgrimage.

Image: Governor Reviewing a meeting with Director Generals of paramilitary, army and the intelligence on *Amarnath* Pilgrimage 2017



During the pilgrimage the security arranges things in such a way that no things could happen. Security agencies briefs do and don'ts to the pilgrims. There are proper checking points for pilgrims. The pilgrims have to go through the whole process. He also told that the local Muslim communities people earning money during the pilgrimage. All the security agencies meet before the commencement of the pilgrimage every year. The governor chairs the meeting with all the

departments, shrine board official to review the arrangements for the pilgrimage. The state government and the governor take more interest in looking after the management of *Amarnath* pilgrimage than the *Amarnath*.

But post 2012 the pilgrims to both the shrine had been decreased. There are many reasons behind that. One the rise of separatist in Kashmir and its effects in the Jammu region had affected both the pilgrimage places. Second, the Uttarakhand tragedy had also affected both the shrines. The tragedy was great shock to the entire nation and particularly the loss of peoples in huge numbers had started questioning to all the mountainous pilgrimages by the environmentalists. Peoples were thinking twice before making pilgrimage to any of the pilgrimage places. Third, the Kashmir floods also give setback to the *Amarnath* pilgrimage as well as *Vaishno Devi*. Because most of the pilgrims on return from *Amarnath* planned to visit the *Vaishno Devi* shrine. Fourth the radical rise of separatist movement after the formation of BJP government. It has been shown that post formation of government at centre and state in the 2014 there has been seen constantly the decline in the numbers of pilgrims either to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* or *Amarnath*. It's because the separatist or the radical organizations wanted to create the fear of terror. That could affect the overall pilgrimage.

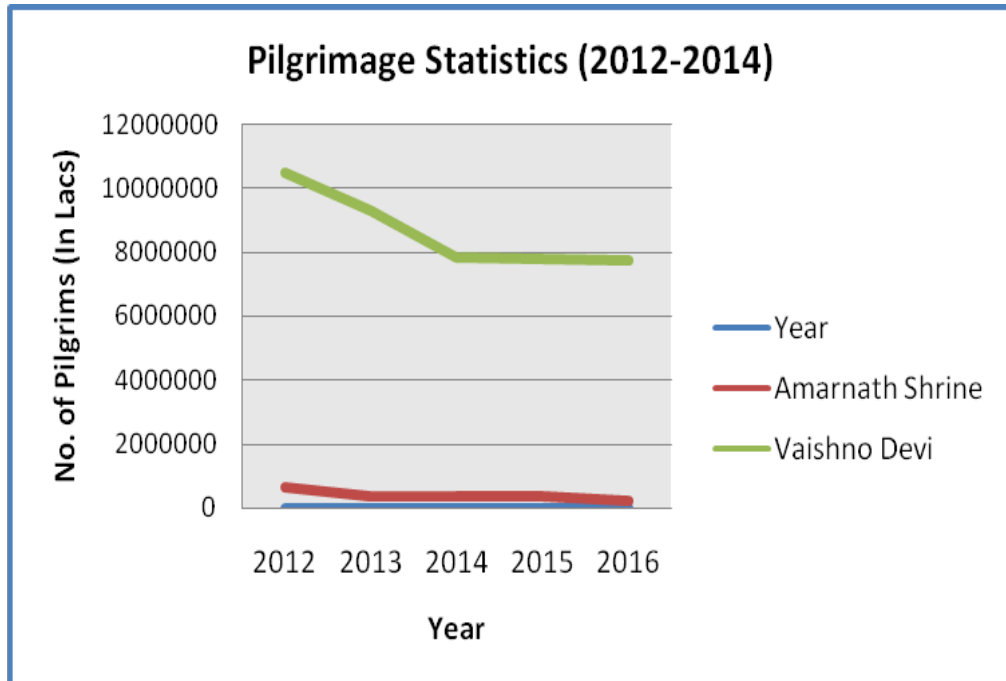
Table No. 5.32. Shows the *Amarnath* and *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage statistics (2012-2016)

Year	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>
2012	635000	10495000
2013	354000	9324000
2014	372000	7803000
2015	352771	7776000
2016	220490	7723000

In the table mentioned below it has seen the following years i.e. 1990, 1993, 1999, 2002 and 2008 had affected the *Vaishno Devi* pilgrimage. Jain (2007) has made a dummy assumption about some years that has been seen worst in context

of pilgrimage. It has always seen that any unrest in the state of Jammu and Kashmir have declined the numbers in the pilgrims.

Chart No. 5.25. Showing the decline in the pilgrims (2012-14)



There were many reasons where the pilgrims have been decreased at both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The below table has shown the various factors that has been responsible for the breakdown in the pilgrims. The rise of Insurgency, the Mandal commission protests, the rise of terrorism in Kashmir during 1990, the bomb blast in *Katra*, the worst weather conditions, the *Kargil* war, the *Amarnath* land controversy in the year 2008 triggered a huge protests in both Jammu and the Kashmir regions. The reason behind the controversy was the land at *Baltal*, a base camp to *Amarnath*.

The Kashmiri peoples especially the political groups were not in favour of the land for pilgrimage purpose. Later, the protests erupted in the Jammu regions and then it was agreed that the land could be use during pilgrimage journey only. The below table has given the accounts of year wise activities that has affected the *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

Table No. 5.33. Shows the events and their impact on the pilgrimage of *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath*⁸⁴

Year	Activity	Pilgrimage Effected
1990	Kashmir Insurgency	Both the shrines declined pilgrims
1990	Mandal Commission Protest	Only <i>Vaishno Devi</i> Shrine
1991-95	<i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage Banned	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage
1994	Bomb blast in Jammu <i>Katra</i> Passenger bus near Jammu	Only <i>Vaishno Devi</i> Shrine
1997	242 pilgrims lost lives due to bad weather in the year 1996	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage
1999	Kargil War	Both <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage & <i>Vaishno Devi</i>
2001-02	Massacre of 20 pilgrims at Pehalgham in the year 2000	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage
2002	Bomb exploded in <i>Katra</i> market	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage
2003	Bomb blast at Gulshan Kumar Lungar <i>Katra</i>	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage
2008	<i>Amarnath</i> Land Controversy of 2008	Both <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage & <i>Vaishno Devi</i>
2016	Ongoing Separatist Protest in Kashmir	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Pilgrimage
2017	Ongoing protests in Kashmir and the rise of militancy	Only <i>Amarnath</i> Shrine

Source: Table prepared on the basis of information given in the articles, newspapers, journals or the incidents happened and reported in the print or the electronic media.

Therefore, both the shrines were affected by various issues and challenges in the context of security. The following incidents have impacted the *Amarnath* shrine as well as the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* the Impact of Insurgency (1990), *Amarnath* Land Controversy (2008), Environmental destruction issue, *Amarnath* Tax controversy (2010) and the ongoing separatist's protests in Kashmir.

In 2017 the attack on the police in Anantnag district and the ongoing protest in Kashmir had raised the serious concerns. As per media reports the situation for *Amarnath* pilgrimage is not favourable. It's because it a very long route and to handle the security could be the biggest challenge. Another attack that happened on the *Amarnath* pilgrims on 11 July 2017 in which seven pilgrims died has raised serious questions towards the security of the pilgrims

⁸⁴ The table has been prepared on the basis of secondary sources.

and the pilgrimage. The similar kind of attack happened in 1993, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2006. In 2016 the Kashmiri separatists staged protest due to the killing of local militant Burhan Wani and thereafter the Kashmir has been continuously affected by the local terrorism that could impacts the pilgrimage to *Amarnath* in the near future.

Thus the local community issue, the rise of faith based tourism and the security aspect have become the major challenges to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The next section has discussed the role of state, NGO and the civil society in dealing with the various issues.

5.4.3. Role of State, NGO and the civil society in dealing with the Emerging Issues and Challenges

The shrine is looking after both the shrines. Governor controls the entire functioning of the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The state gives special attention to the *Amarnath* shrine due to the security threats it receives every year as well as situated in such disturbed and terrorism infected area. In 2016 when *Katra* town observed shutdown and had staged protest against the shrine board the state Dy CM and the local MLA visited the protest place and assured the protesting groups to take up the matter with the shrine board for proper disposal of the issue.

Table No.5.34. Respondents satisfaction with the facilities state provides in terms of connectivity, infrastructure etc.

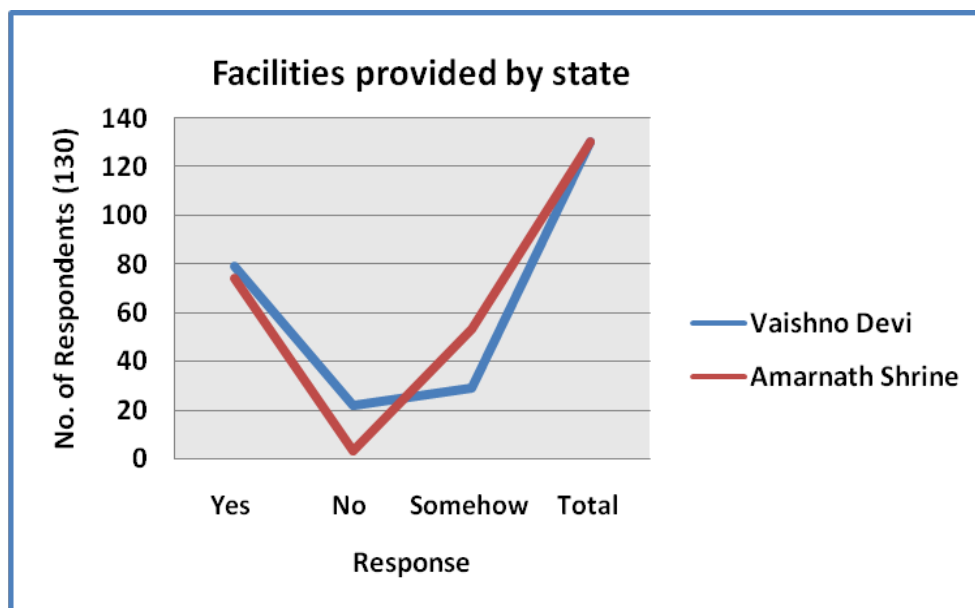
Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	79	74	151	60.8	56.9	58.0
No	22	3	25	16.9	2.3	9.6
Somehow	29	53	84	22.3	40.8	32.4
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 68.8% respondents stated that the state provides the connectivity and infrastructure facilities, followed by 16.9% disagree, 22.3 neutral. But at *Amarnath* shrine 56.9% satisfied with the state facilities, followed by 2.3% unsatisfied, 40.8 neutral. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and

Amarnath shrine 58% satisfied, followed by 36.5% not satisfied and 32.4% neutral responses.

Chart No. 5.26. Showing facilities provided by the state government



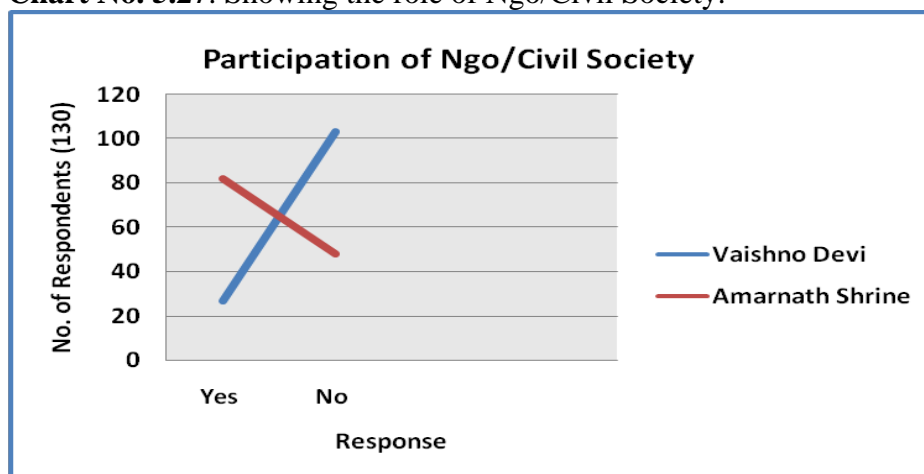
The below table has show the role of NGO/Civil society in highlighting the various issues and challenges.

Table No. 5.35. Showing the activities of NGO/Civil society

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	27	82	109	20.8	63.1	41.9
No	103	48	151	79.2	36.9	58.1
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

Chart No. 5.27. Showing the role of Ngo/Civil Society.



In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 79.2% stated that there has been no role of NGO/Civil society, followed by 20.8% disagree. But at *Amarnath* shrine 63.1% finds the role of NGO/Langar organizations, followed by 36.9% unsatisfied. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 58.1% asserted there has been no such role of NGO and the civil society, followed by 41.9% stated that some organizations like Gulshan kumar *Langar* and the various *Langar* organizations performs great role.

The below table has shown the perception of respondents whether there is a need of NGO/Civil society or not

Table No. 5.36. Showing respondents perception on whether there should be the role of NGO, Civil Society

Response	Numbers of Respondents			Percentage		
	<i>Vaishno Devi</i>	<i>Amarnath Shrine</i>	Total	V.D	A.S	Total
Yes	94	113	208	72.3	86.9	80.0
No	36	17	52	27.7	13.1	20.0
Total	130	130	260	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data collected during August 2014 to December 2015

In *Vaishno Devi* shrine, 72.3% respondents asserted that there should be the role of NGO, Civil society, followed by 27.7% not agrees. But at *Amarnath* shrine 86.9% stated that the need of more civil society and NGO, followed by 13.1% disagree. Overall percentage of both *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath shrine* 80% look for more role of NGO, Civil society, followed by 20% not agree.

The state government handles the management of both the shrines. The state had initiated various developmental initiatives for the smooth functioning of the pilgrimage. However, the state doesn't interfere in various decisions of the board, due to its autonomous status. But, the security and infrastructure challenge makes the state significant to these shrines. Thus, state indirectly helps in the shrine management. The role of Media and civil society could be stated low at both the shrine. But the effect of terrorism has forced the media agencies to report on the security aspect of these shrines. Infact various media agencies had/have been reporting about these shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* post 1990.

The chapter concludes by saying that these three factors great impacted the shrine in the present times. **One**, the issue of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine management; **Two**, The rise of Religious Tourism; **Three**, Security aspect. The political Economy has been seen as emerging challenges at both the shrines. Because, the local community issues are still unsettled in *Vaishno Devi* shrine and in *Amarnath*, the separatist and the radical movements has created a big hurdle for the pilgrimage management boards. The rise of faith based tourism is somehow changing the sacred character of the notion of pilgrimage. The security aspect has become an emerging challenge in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

Conclusion: Pilgrimage and the Emerging Challenges in India

The present study attempted to understand the issues and challenges the pilgrimage places are facing in the present times with reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. The present thesis has been divided into five chapters, besides introduction and conclusion. The introductory part gives an outline to the thesis. It has prepared synoptic guide for this research. The background of the research, research questions, objectives, significance, rationale, scope of the study has been discussed in this chapter. It also discussed the present research study, made comparison with the other shrines in India and also discussed the limitations of the present research. It argues that the pilgrimages in India are under various issues and challenges. In the present times *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* are facing many problems. It identifies three important challenges; One, political economy as a challenge; Two; the rise of faith based tourism; Three, the security issue. It says that religion has become a matter of global concern.

The **chapter one** on the literature review has critically evaluated the existing literature in the context of religion, culture and the social change as well as the contemporary challenges in the context of Pilgrimages. There are many debates regarding the '*pilgrimage and the emerging challenges*' both in Indian as well as in the western context. It has examined, reviewed all the literature in the field of pilgrimage, religion, culture, globalization, contemporary society etc. The chapter find out that there has been very limited literature available on *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. If there is any study available, that has spoken of one dimensional perspective. Therefore, there was need to conduct such study that speaks of holistic comparison between the two shrines. It says globalization has great impacted the local place of pilgrimage. It also find out that there had been may studies conducted on the religion and society, but there has not focus much on social policy dimension of shrine and the empirical analysis of pilgrimage places in India. It also admits that there has been available very limited literature on the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. Most of the

Indian scholars who had written on these shrines are influenced by the pilgrimage tourism or the belief and rituals of the pilgrimage. Second, the study of Jain (2007) could be seen significant because of field based study he conducted in *Vaishno* Devi shrine to understand the economic aspect of the shrine. But there is no such comprehensive that speaks about the contemporary challenges the pilgrimages places are facing. The works of western scholars could be better viewed in the religious and the mythical aspects. Therefore, literature review finds a deep lack of such studies that actually is needed to understand the present problem of pilgrimages.

The **chapter two** is on Research methodology has given the description of the field area, theory used in the research, approach and methods used. The data collection has been explained. The description on sampling has been given. The field experiences and challenges have been discussed. The chapter has discussed about the area of the research. The field has been explored and discussed in the study. It says that field is not something exploratory in nature, philosophically guided, historically shaped, socially and culturally connected and geographically expanded or constructs. The chapter has discussed all the variables like gender, age, profession, income, education, religion, caste, marital status, family and region. **Chapter three** examines the shrine in the Indian socio-religious context with special reference to *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* Shrine. The chapter discusses the Sacred Space, Sacred time, Performance of rituals, Symbolism. The chapter says that shrine has been part of civilization and played the role of spiritual in the society. It argues that Myth have meaning, like Levi Strauss in the present context of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath*. The chapter has given historical accounts of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath*. The notion of sacred geography has been discussed. The rituals worship at *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* has been explored. It finds that there have been happening many changes in the shrines of *Vaishno* and *Amarnath*. The various changes could be located post formation of shrine boards. It also has discussed the changing role of priesthood. The chapter find that the concept of shrine could be seen in the Indian socio-cultural and historical context. It also says that the *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* shrine is not a new phenomenon. But these shrines could be understood in the *Shakta* and *Shiva* philosophy. It find that there has been going various changes in the temple

of India and there has been seen the changing role of priest and priesthood in *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. Now both the shrines functions under the state government. The religious activities are getting more commercialized due to the intervention of bureaucracy. **Chapter Four** discussed about the pilgrimage in the contemporary society. The chapter has focus on three things. First; pilgrimage as a spiritual journey of one person or family. The spiritual part has linked the human thinking, human activities with the long journeys to the sacred. Due to the various engagements in our day to day life a person needs some kind of satisfaction. For that need a person needs spiritual environment and that we can get on a long journey to some sacred place or a pilgrimage place. Second; pilgrimage as a religious congregation of community of faithful (moral community) as defined by Emile Durkheim and pilgrimage as the central ritual of community of believers. Third; pilgrimage in Indian Society. The chapter finds that the contemporary pilgrimages are very different from the earlier one. Because of the various factors that had influenced the pilgrimage process. Both the pilgrimages have been impacted by the information technology period. Now a day's peoples across the world visits both the shrines. The study says that the traditional form of pilgrimage has been changed into the modern pilgrimage. The pilgrimage of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* has become more commercialized, democratic and secular. The study also finds that people from diverse communities visit the shrine for rituals worship or spiritual *Moksha*. Even the shrine boards had started appointing the priests beyond the caste bar. **Chapter five** has analysed the emerging Challenges with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. The chapter has highlighted three aspects. One; political economy of pilgrimage in the global village; Second; Pilgrimage as a Culture Industry; Third; Contemporary Challenges before religious tourism or pilgrimage industry in India with special reference to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath Shrine*. In the second part the chapter has discussed various issues and challenges with reference to the shrine of *Vaishno Devi and Amarnath*. The argument of the chapter was to understand the emerging challenges to *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. It find out that both the shrine boards of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* helps the local markets, the local community in terms of economic and job benefits and the pilgrimage management. It also says that

religious tourism has changed the notion of pilgrimage. It also explores the challenge in pilgrimage management and the issue of baridars community in Jammu and separatist movement in Kashmir. It also says that the security issue has become a big challenge for the state and the management boards.

The present has shown that the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* have become more sacred and secular. Due to the intervention of government, it has become more inclusive and democratic. It also has shown *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* pilgrimage has grasped the imagination of global religious markets. The traditional pilgrimage places are becoming modern. But, due to the commercialization of pilgrimages has created various issues and challenges. Like the pilgrimage management issue, pilgrimage tourism and the security challenge to the *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine.

Findings

The shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* is not confined to one community, class, religion or caste. But the study shows that pilgrims of diverse faiths visit these shrines. The reason could be many, like the democratization of religious space, the rise of faith based tourism and in other sense secular pilgrimage. The democratization of religious space comes into effect when the state government took over the management of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* shrine. The public trust had been converted into the public shrine. It finds that both the shrine of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath* could be better known as public shrines than just a temple or cave shrine. It's because post 1986 in *Vaishno Devi* and post 2000 in *Amarnath* there had been started changes in the internal premises of the temple. Slowly the shrine boards starts taking decision that could benefit the society, state at large. Therefore, such inclusive decision could be seen as one factor that influences the complex nature of society to visit more to the shrines of *Vaishno Devi* and *Amarnath*. It has been seen that the shrine recruits priests from any background. The basic qualification to become a priest is education or knowledge in the field of rituals worship. It has been observed that both the shrines issues notification for priest post that is applicable for all the diversities. Anyone having such qualifications can fill it and participates in the interview for final selection. Therefore, such kind of initiatives in the temples premises could

change the notion of Hinduism, where caste had been interpreted in a rigid manner. It finds that public shrines with inclusive policy could change the definition of caste in the Hinduism.

It observed that peoples from other religious communities help in managing the pilgrimage. There are more than two lacs labor class peoples, most of them belong to the Muslim tribal community. At *Amarnath* shrine the local Muslims/tribal's could be seen managing the shops, tents etc for pilgrims. The shrine board gives them permission to hold such things. It shows that the pilgrimage to the shrine of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* develops a bond of brotherhood among communities. It observed the various Muslims communities gives their space to langar organizations to construct temporarily carious sheds during the pilgrimage journey. Therefore, the pilgrimage to *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* helps the local communities to come and share together. Because, the study has shown that various communities are part of the pilgrimage process, helps in division of labor etc.

It finds that pilgrimage has been associated with sacred and profane in *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath*. The sacred journey has been seen among the peoples with age more than 40, but profane journey has been seen mostly among the adults. Pilgrims visits the shrines with family, community or with friends. The study also has shown that there has been seen the concept of elite pilgrimage. Pilgrims asks the shrine board for VIP passes. But, the study finds that most of the pilgrims are not in favour of the elite pilgrimage. Most of the respondents preferred it to be stopped and should be available only for the pilgrims who are in need or old age pilgrims. It shows that both *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* is centre of faiths and energy.

It finds that historical debate on *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* in the present times has located the history of Jammu and Kashmir post 12th century. But, there were studies, reports; ancient literature that speaks of the pilgrimage to the shrine could be seen since ages. Second, it becomes impossible to conceptualize the history of Jammu and Kashmir without understanding the *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* shrine.

It finds that global changes, the rise of information technology have shortened the pilgrimages distance. Now a day it becomes easy to have darshans

of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* due to time and space factor. The online services offered by the shrine board have given opportunities to millions of peoples to visit online to these shrines. But, it also has been seen that the religious spaces are becoming more cultural in form due to the increased interactions in the global time. Comparatively the shrine of *Vaishno* Devi has explored many online options to the pilgrims than the *Amarnath* shrine.

Both the shrine of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* boosts the local economy. Both the shrines have become an economic institution. It has given various jobs and economic opportunities to the local community peoples. But the study has explored local community viewpoint towards the shrine management. In *Vaishno* Devi shrine it finds that the baridar community, the local unions of *Katra* had many times in the past staged protest against the shrine board due to some decisions that goes against the local community peoples. It finds that the local community challenge could become the biggest hurdle in the management of shrine if not handle properly.

The faith based tourism has changed the notion of pilgrimage. It finds that the faith based pilgrimage is increasing day by day. It shows that it has great impacted the sacred nature of the pilgrimage. Faith based tourism has been seen as helping in the growth and development of the regions. But could be seen as a challenge to the ecology. The tourism and pilgrimage seems to be two sides of the same coin in the present times. It has been seen that the tourist agencies across the countries have focus on the pilgrimage to the shrine of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath*. It shows that these tourist agencies start various tour packages for pilgrims. But, the faith based tourism develops new markets, hotels, transportation, etc. That could impact the local place. It could be seen that there is need to maintain the ecological balance. Because, to reach such difficult terrain, throwing polythene at various spots could become the challenge to the ecology.

The security challenge has become one of the most challenging factors for the pilgrimage management. It finds that both the shrine has more focus on the security of the pilgrims. It shows that the shrine of *Amarnath* has great impacted by the internal and external threats than the shrine of *Vaishno* Devi. Every year the central and state security agencies become the part of pilgrimage

management. It finds that the terrorism and the Kashmiri separatist movement are the responsible factor that challenges the pilgrimage management. The data on security aspect of *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* shows that both the shrines plan more to handle various security threats. But the management of pilgrimage to *Amarnath* seemed more challenging than the *Vaishno* Devi pilgrimage. Therefore, the present study find out these three challenges, local issues, faith based tourism and the security challenge has been impacted the *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* pilgrimage.

The present study has proved all the research objectives on the structure and function of shrine, the pilgrimage in the contemporary society and emerging challenges. The data collected in the field highlighted the research objectives. Various theories and case studies have supported the argument of the present study. Therefore the thesis has discussed, debated and analyzed about the main challenges the *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* shrine is facing. In the contemporary India the pilgrimage places are facing the ecological and the security challenges. The government of India are taking certain measures to tackle such challenges. The present study shows that there is a great need to make a comprehensive policy on the pilgrimage places in India. Because we have seen the *Kedarnath* disaster where the management and planning were the important factors responsible for the loss of thousands lives. The religious tourism sector is growing very fast. Every day the religious market is expanding in multiple directions. Overall it's affecting the religious structure of the pilgrimage. Religious beliefs and rituals which are the foundational beliefs to any religious institutions are getting commercialized due to the uncertain rise of religious tourism. Therefore the present study recommends the policy based work the faith based tourism and the security challenge in *Vaishno* Devi and *Amarnath* context. There should be defined the role of local communities in the public policies documents of shrine boards. Because, local community participation could affect the overall pilgrimage and their involvement makes it more sustainable and inclusive. The *Amarnath* pilgrimage is the gateway of economy, peace and progress for Kashmiri communities and a journey of faith that symbolises brotherhood among diverse communities.

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Appendix
Appendix I

Showing the *Vaishno Devi: Accommodation Charges, 2016-2017*

LOCATION	COMPLEX	ROOM TYPE	TARIFF(Rs.)
Jammu	Vaishnavi Dham	Double Bedded, AC	Rs. 1100/-
		Suite, AC	Rs. 1500/-
		Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 100/-
	Saraswati Dham	Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 100/-
	Kalika Dham	Double Bedded AC Room	Rs.1500/-
		Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 150/-
Katra	Niharika	Double Bedded, AC	Rs. 1300/-
		Double Bedded Non-AC, Non-Carpetted	Rs. 850/-
		Four Bedded, AC	Rs. 1500/-
		Four Bedded, Non-AC, Non-Carpetted	Rs. 1100/-
	Shakti Bhawan	Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 100/-
	Trikuta Bhawan	Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 100/-
	Ashirwad Bhawan	Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 110/-
	Adhkuwari	Sharda Bhawan	Double Bedded
Shailputri Bhawan		Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 120/-
Sanjichhat	Mangla Bhawan	Double Bedded	Rs. 700/-
		Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs. 100/-
Bhawan	Main Bhawan Complex	Double Bedded	Rs. 1400/-
		Four Bedded	Rs. 2050/-
	Vaishnavi & Gouri Bhawan	Double Bedded	Rs. 900/-
		Four Bedded	Rs. 1300/-
		Six Bedded Hut	Rs. 1700/-
	Manokamana Bhawan	Dormitory (Per Bed Basis)	Rs.120/-
Extra Person Charges at Location			


Source: www.maavaishnodevi.org/2017

Appendix. II. Amarnath Service provider's rates, 2017

Contact Number's of different agencies, taken the contracts for Operation and Establishment of following jobs for Yatra – 2017 are mentioned hereunder;

S. No.	Name of work	Name of agency	Amount to be charged
1	Renting and Housekeeping of Prefab Huts along Pahalgam axis	Hotel Himalayan Discover Resorts, Pahalgam. Cell No. 9419007477	Tariff per Hut per night (24 hours) 08 bedded Nunwan = Rs 1600/room/night Extra Bed = Rs 200/bed. Sheshnag = Rs 2400/room/night Extra Bed = Rs 300/bed Panjtarni = Rs 2400/room/night Extra Bed = Rs 300/bed
2	Renting and Housekeeping of Prefab Huts at Baltal Camp.	Shri Altaf Hussain Kachoo R/o L. D.Colony, Srinagar. Cell No. 9596512341 Proprietor Hotel Poshwan, Gulmarg	Tariff per Hut per night (24 hours) 04 bedded Baltal = Rs 1200/room/night Extra Bed = Rs 300/bed
3	Establishment and operation of Cloakroom at Nunwan	Shri Mushtaq Ahmad Parry, S/o Ab Rashid Parry, R/o Nanil, Anantnag. Mob. No. 7006488315	Tariff per item per night (24 hours) Nunwan = Rs 10/item/night
4	Establishment and operation of Cloakroom at Holy Cave	Shri Feyaz Ahmad Dar, S/o Ali Mohd Dar, R/o Seer, Hamdan Anantnag. Cell No. 9469181018	Tariff per item per night (24 hours) Holy Cave = Rs 10/item/night
5	Operation and Management of Car Parking at Baltal Base Camp.	New Harmukh Traders, R/o Opp. Petrol Pump Nagbal, Ganderbal. Cell No. 8803040100.	Tariff per vehicle per night (24 hours) Two-wheelers = Rs 20/wheeler Light Motor Vehicles (LMV's) = Rs 50/ vehicle Medium Motor Vehicles (MMV's) = Rs 100/ vehicle
6	Managing and Running of Cafeteria's for Sale of Refreshment Items at Neelgrath Helipad during Yatra - 2017	Shri Sajad Ahmad Beigh, Siraj –u-din Beigh, R/o Mamer, Kangan. Mob. No. 9622580400.	
7	Sanitation of Toilet/ Baths, Camp & Track Cleaning, Operation & Management of STP's and Septic Tank at Neelgrath for Yatra – 2017 along both axis (Baltal and Pahalgam axis)	M/s Shah Electrical and Mechanical works, R/o Mehmoodabad, Buchpora, Srinagar. Mob. 9419088669	

Appendix III: Advertisement for Priest at Amarnath by the shrine board 2017

	<p align="center">SHRI AMARNATHJI SHRINE BOARD Chaitanya Ashram, Talab Tillo, Jammu (Nov – April) K-Villa Sohrawardy House, Shiv Pora, Srinagar (May- Oct) Phone: 0191-2555662, 0194-2501821, Telefax: 0191-2503399/ 0194-2468250</p>
<p align="center">NOTICE INVITING APPLICATION FOR THE ENGAGEMENT OF PUJARIS TO PERFORM POOJA DUTY AT HOLY CAVE SHRINE DURING YATRA 2017.</p>	
<p>1. Applications are invited from qualified and experienced PUJARIS who are willing to perform the Pooja DUTY at HOLY CAVE during Shri Amarnathji Yatra 2017, as per format given hereunder:</p>	
<p>APPLICATION FORMAT</p>	
Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Parentage:	
Permanent Residential Address:	
Address for Correspondence:	
Qualification (please attach attested copies of the qualification):	
Experience (please attach attested copies of the experience):	
Telephone / Mobile No. :	
Whether Pooja performed earlier at the Holy Shri Amarnathji Cave, If yes, the details thereof be specified with supporting documents.	
<p>2. The application form duly filled in should reach the office of the Additional Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Chaitanya Ashram, Talab Tillo, Jammu-180002 by or before 30th November, 2016.</p>	
<p>3. The shortlisted applicants shall be called for interview for final selection. The date of interview will be communicated separately.</p>	
<p>4. The selected Pujaris shall be paid an honorarium of Rs. 500/- per day during the period of their deployment at the Holy Cave for performing Pooja.</p>	
<p>5. Boarding and Lodging facilities to the engaged Pujaris near the Holy Cave Shrine shall be provided by Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board.</p>	
<p>Adv. No: SASB /2016/17</p>	<p align="right">Sd/-</p>
<p>Dated: 25.10.2016</p>	<p align="right">Additional Chief Executive Officer</p>

Source: <http://www.shriamarnathjishrine.com/Yatra2017/Careers2017.html>

Appendix. IV. List of Photographs



Shelter Sheds/Vishram Sthals at Vaishno Devi shrine



Shadus taking rest at Poshpatiri, Amarnath



Donations counter in Vaishno Devi Shrine



Registration card to undertake Amarnath Pilgrimage

Showing the important information on *Pindis* by the shrine board



Source: Clicked by Researcher on 5 April 2015 near *Charunpaduka, Vaishno Devi*

Image: Showing the first rituals being performed by *Amarnath* shrine board members at Chandanwari, *Amarnath*.



Source: <http://www.shriamarnathjishrine.com/Yatra2017/PhotoGallery/PrathamPooja/2.jpg>

Researcher with Pithu, Ponny labor at *Vaishno Devi* (10.10.2015)



Shops near *Amarnath Cave* (14.08.2015)



Palki service at Vaishno Devi Shrine (05.04.2015)



Vishal Bandhara Board at Chandanwari



Source: Clicked in the field.

Shrine of *Vaishno Devi*



Source: <https://www.maavaishnodevi.org/introduction.aspx/2016>⁸⁵

⁸⁵ The photograph had been taken from the official website of Shrin Mata Vaishno Devi <https://www.maavaishnodevi.org/>

Annexure No.VI. Interview Schedule

Personal Details of the Respondent

2. Gender (Tick)
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other

3. Age of the Respondent (Tick)
 - a. 15 to 30
 - b. 31 to 45
 - c. 46 to 60
 - d. 61 to 75
 - e. 76 and above

4. Occupation (Tick)
 - a. Government Job.
 - b. Private Job.
 - c. Business.
 - d. Other

5. Monthly Income (Tick)
 - a. 5000 to 20000
 - b. 20001 to 35000
 - c. 35001 to 50000
 - d. 50000 & Above

6. Education (Tick)
 - a. Illiterate
 - b. Up to 10th
 - c. Intermediate
 - d. Graduation
 - e. Masters and above
 - f. Other

7. Religion (Tick)
 - a. Hindu
 - b. Muslim
 - c. Sikh
 - d. Christian
 - e. Buddhist
 - f. Jainism
 - g. Other

8. Caste (Tick)
 - a. General
 - b. SC

- c. ST
- d. OBC
- e. Other

- 9. Marital Status
 - a. Married
 - b. Un married
- 10. Family
 - a. Joint
 - b. Nuclear
 - c. Other

- 11. Region/Country
 - a. North India
 - b. East India
 - c. West India
 - d. South India
 - e. North East India
 - f. Foreigner

INFORMATION RELATED TO PILGRIM JOURNEY

- 1. Mode of Travel from.....To.....

- 2. Accommodation
 - a. Jammu.....
 - b. *Katra*.....
 - c. Bhawan.....
 - d. Pehalgham

- 3. You did/doing yatra as (a). common pilgrim (b). on VIP quota

- 4. There should be VIP quota?
 - a. Yes b. No

- 5. How you travel to the shrine?
 - a. Footpath
 - b. Ponny
 - c. Horse
 - d. Helicopter

INFORMATION RELATING TO THE, PILGRIMAGE JOURNEY, NOTION OF PILGRIMAGE/CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

- 1. Do you think that the notion of pilgrimage journey has been changed?
 - a. Yes b. No

9. What was your purpose of visiting the shrine?

INFORMATION RELATING TO TOURISM BOARD, PILGRIMAGE TOURISM, FAITH BASED TOURISM

1. Do you think that tourism industry has been associated with pilgrimage centres?

a. Yes b. No

2. Do you think that faith based tourism has been increased in India?

a. Yes b. No

3. Do you think that the shrine is challenging the tourism industry?

a. Yes b. No

4. Do you think the impact of tourism on pilgrimage helps in economic growth, business establishment and increases local economy and states GDP?

a. Yes b. No

5. Do you think tourism industry have changed the notion of pilgrimage?

a. Yes b. No

6. Do you think tourism industry should have an association with pilgrimage centres?

a. Yes b. No

INFORMATION RELATING TO SHRINE BOARD

1. Are you satisfied with the facilities (Accommodation, Food, Health Services, Security, pilgrims up and down services) provided by shrine board?

a. Yes b. No

2. Do you aware of Shrine Board Act?

a. Yes b. No c. heard of it

3. Do you find shrine board rules, regulations satisfactory?

- a. Yes b. No c. May be
4. Do you think that infrastructural developments by shrine board have helped a lot?
- a. Yes b. No c. May be
5. Do you think that shrine board is eco friendly?
- a. Yes b.No c. May be
6. Do you find shrine board staff cooperative?
- a. Yes b. No c. Somehow
7. Are you aware of Dharmarth Trust?
- a. Yes b. No c. Heard of it

INFORMATION RELATING TO LOCAL ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

1. Do you think that shrine is boosting local economy?
- a. Yes b. No
2. Do you think that the shrine helps the local communities in terms of economic and job benefits?
- a. Yes b. No
3. Do you find local communities participation in the division of labor?
- a. Yes b. No
4. Where you find local communities participation in division of labor?
5. Do you find native communities participation in hotels/shops/business to this shrine?
- a. Yes b. No
6. Do you think local communities could be satisfied with the shrine board and state policy?
- a. Yes b. No
7. Is there is any job quota or economic generation initiative's for native communities given by shrine board?
- a. Yes b. No c. Don't know

INFORMATION RELATED LOCAL MARKETS/BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT

1. Is shrine helps in boosting local markets?

- a. Yes b. No c. May be
2. Do you think that the Shrine has grasped the imagination of global religious markets?
a. Yes b. No c. May be
3. What factors do you think helps in the expansion of local markets and various business?
4. Do you think that increases flow of pilgrims has created different business opportunities and employment?
a. Yes b. No c. May be
5. Are markets/hotels available on genuine cost?
a. Yes b. No c. May be
6. Are shopkeepers, hotel/guest house staff cooperative in nature?
a. Yes b. No c. May be
7. What's your opinion about markets, shopkeepers, guest houses, hotels?
8. Do you think the policy of shrine board helping in business expansion?
a. Yes b. No c. May be

INFORMATION RELATED TO STATE, NGO AND CIVIL SOCIETY

1. Are you satisfied with the road, transport and rail facilities provided by the state and central government?
a. Yes b. N c. Some how
2. Do you feel any kind of fear due to security reasons?
a. Yes b. No c. Some how
3. Do you think the shrine helps in State's GDP?
a. Yes b. No c. Some how
4. Do you think that state has a holistic vision in planning, coordination and execution of Shrine?
a. Yes b. No c. Some how
5. Do you find the any activities and role of NGO/Civil society in the at the shrine
a. Yes b. No
6. Do you think that ngo and civil society role should be there?
a. Yes b. No