



Sacred-Secular Tourism of Kashmir, Similarities, Continuity and Complementary: A Case of Baba Rishi Shrine

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Abstract

Sacred-secular tourism experiences appear deeply embedded among the visitors of the Baba Rishi Shrine of Kashmir. In this work, the researcher focused on the expressions of beliefs, feelings, motivations, behaviour and experiences of visitors. These attributes were identified through a review of the literature and direct conversations with the stakeholders of the shrine. The main objectives of the present study were to explore the Age, gender, residency, marital status and religion of visitors who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine, and their interest in other sacred and secular destinations of Kashmir. The study revealed that visitors of Baba Rishi shrine are interested in both sacred and secular places on the same day and schedule. They prefer to experience both sacred and secular tourism. The objectives of the study were achieved through the Survey method and in-depth interviews. The respondents were mainly the visitors of Baba Rishi shrine and other stakeholders (custodians and travel agencies). The final result of the study revealed that there is a close nexus between sacred and secular sites of Kashmir and visitors (pilgrims/ tourist) seeks common motives and interests. The sacred-secular activities of visitors are not dichotomous in nature; rather, they appeal for similarities, continuity and complementarity.

Keywords: Sacred, Secular, Shrine, Stakeholders, Tourism

1. Introduction:

There is a vast literature available on modes of travelling and tourism studies. Conventionally, pilgrimage is traditionally associated with religious values, whereas the mode of tourism refers to the profane world (Jirasek, 2014). Today's research focuses on the significance of what visitors themselves say about their travel, since they are the main source in the pilgrimage phenomenon (Kreiner & Kliot, 2000). Visitors' self-perception about their

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travel is considered the deciding factor in tourism discourse. Pilgrimage as a religious and cultural phenomenon is widely accepted in human society and is an important feature of the World's major religions (Kreiner, 2010).

Present research in tourism studies is more divergent and multifarious. It includes economic, political, social, psychological, emotional and other aspects of human life. Contemporary approach to religious tourism studies has changed a lot due to the noted development in academics post 1990's like Eade's (1992) concept of interaction between tourist and pilgrim, Rinschede (1992) typology of touristic use of pilgrimage sites, Vukoni's book (1996) about connection between religion and tourism and Nolans (1992) who introduced three tier typology of sites. Studies related to modes of travelling are abundant and vary immensely. The optics of miscellaneous discourses does not allow finding a united standpoint (Jirarsek, 2014, p. 46). But the traveller's observance of religion is used as the basic criterion of distinction. The religious-oriented travel is considered sacred, and the rest of the modes of travel are considered profane. The concept of pilgrimage is not linked solely with journeys which are supposed to enrich the religious dimension in the life of the pilgrims and which rely on supernatural agents (Nordin, 2011). The touristic journeys are often labelled as pilgrimage, which is why these two phenomena are heterogeneous combined in the form of terms such as pilgrimage tourism or religious tourism (Collins-Kreiner, Kliot, 2000). Religious tourism is related to the individual quest for shrines and locals where, in lieu of piety, the visitors seek to experience the sense of identity with the site of historical and cultural meaning (Nolan & Nolan, 1989).

1.1. Statement of the problem:

The work of Dean MacCannell (1973; 1976) and Nelson Graburn (1978) are important in the academic debates of tourism studies. Both were heavily influenced by Durkheim's work on differentiation. They were mainly confined to dichotomous notions as pilgrim/tourist, community/individual and sacred/profane, in order to make a distinction and classify motivations. Later, Turner and Turner (1978) claimed that a *"tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist"*. However, Pfaffenberger (1983) took a shift and argued *"both tourism and pilgrimage encompass, within their respective symbolic domains, movement towards the Centre and movement towards the other. It is not only the modern industrial society which alienates its members and causes them to seek respite and recreation in the other, but rather people believe in a wavering kind of faith"* Cohen (1979, 1991 & 2003) re-examined Turner's claim and argued *"there is no "general type" of tourism and those different forms of tourism coexist with each other. Thus, within the context of the pilgrimage, the experience of the pilgrim and his spiritual connection decide the form of tourism. "He concludes that tourism is a modern metamorphosis of both pilgrimage and tourism"*. Graburn (1983), in the *"anthropology of tourism"*, holds a more popular view that

"tourists and pilgrims are the same, though they are necessarily different, but they form a continuum of inseparable elements". Furthermore, Adler (1989) holds the view that "many others who identify tourism and pilgrimage as opposite end-points on a continuum of travel". Smith (1992) claims "a traveller who is more a tourist than a pilgrim, depends on whether his faith or the profane predominate in their motivations and activities". This broad spectrum reflects the multiple and changing motivations of travellers, whose interests and activities can vary from pilgrimage to tourism and vice versa.

The above highlighted studies are important in the context of sacred-secular tourism, similarities and continuity in the valley of Kashmir. This paper deals with sacred-secular tourism, resemblance and continuity, which appear deeply embedded in the visiting practices related to the Baba Rishi Shrine of Kashmir. In this work, the researcher focused on the expressions of beliefs, feelings, motivations, behaviour and experiences of visitors/pilgrims. These attributes were identified through a review of the literature and direct conversations with the stakeholders of the shrine. The present study explored "who are continuously visiting Baba Rishi shrine and their self-perception about their interest in other secular and sacred sites".

1.2. Study Site:

Baba Payam Uddin was born in a noble family around 1411 in the region of Zahand Village of Lar Ganderbal of Jammu and Kashmir. Baba Rishi was a person of repute and an able administrator. He was among the privy counsellors of Sultan Hasan Shah (Khan, 2007). Still, he liked the company of the Saints and Sages and sought their blessings. Baba Payam Uddin died on 3 Zil Hajj 889 Hijri (1480) and was interred at a place, 3 miles from Tangmargh, by the side of Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir. People from all the corners of Kashmir visit the Shrine in large numbers (Khursheed, 1994). The Baba Rishi Shrine is located at 45 km north of Srinagar (Summer Capital), at an elevation of 7000 feet above sea level. The shrine is situated in the village Ranbuah, about 7 km from Gulmarg (the World's famous secular tourist destination) (Dar, 2008; Rafiqi, 2001). It stretches over the Pir Panjal Range and the Ranbuah Hills. The surroundings of the shrine are covered by lush green forests. In spite of its cultural and religious importance, the shrine attracts thousands of visitors due to its natural beauty (Dar, 2007; Khan, 2008). Devotees participate in large numbers to celebrate the death anniversary of Baba Rishi, which falls in the second month of Zila Hajj (the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar). The festival is joined, not only by Muslims, but also by a big number of Hindus, who usually visit the shrine to take a pledge and dedicate some objects if their prayers are settled. Baba Reshi shrine is a sign of goodwill and communal harmony, and therefore, it is not astonishing that this shrine attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from all castes and beliefs (Rafiqi, 2001). The shrine is predominantly

well-known for a big fireplace, which is said to have been made by Baba Rishi himself. It is a shared belief among the visitors that whoever puts mud polish on this fireplace, the blessings of Baba Reshi confirm that his wishes are settled (Dar, 2008). The adjacent secular site to the Baba Rishi shrine is the world-famous Gulmarg tourist spot. It is at a distance of seven kilometres from the Baba Rishi shrine. Gulmarg has an ironic and unique tourist product that embraces the potential to be one of the most attractive traveller destinations for both leisure and sports tourism transversely the whole Kashmir Himalayan region (Kuchay & Bhat, 2013).

2. Research Methods, sampling and techniques of data collection:

Sociologists use various mixed methods of data collection in accordance with the needs of their studies. In this study, fieldwork was carried out in which observations, in-depth interviews, interview schedules, and oral histories played major roles, but the researcher cannot deny the fact that other methods also had an influence on this study. The main purpose of this research paper is to explore the self-perception of visitors about their travel to Baba Rishi shrine and their interest in visiting other secular and sacred destinations of Kashmir. The working hypothesis on which the research is based is that visitors who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine are willingly interested in visiting other adjacent secular and sacred destinations on the same day and schedule. First, one hundred thirty (150) people were purposively chosen at random from the study site. Due concentration was given to participants in terms of age distribution, gender, residential status, marital status and educational status. It should be noted that, though maximum efforts were made to choose a representative sample, the scarcity of information about the exact number or a near-exact number of visitors going to the Baba Rishi Shrine of Kashmir remained the major hurdle.

The current study's data collection process began after the researcher defined the problem to be investigated. Field work was carried out at the Baba Reshi of Kashmir. As there was not enough data available on the current phenomenon, it became necessary to explore information about this current development through primary tools and techniques of data collection. The researcher used surveys and in-depth interviews in order to extract first-hand information from study settings. Triangulating both methods of study has been used to explore and capture the motivations, experiences, and perceptions of custodians about the nexus between sacred-secular tourism in Kashmir. These techniques enable the researcher to contact a large number of participants available at the Baba Rishi shrine of Kashmir. Interviews are essentially directed conversations; whenever the researcher deems it necessary, he or she can ask supplementary questions to gain additional insights and information (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

In total, one hundred fifty interviews of respondents (including ten in-depth interviews) were conducted. The number includes both locals as well as visitors (custodians, pilgrims, scholars and priests) associated with this practice in Kashmir. In-depth interviews were quite helpful in generating categories about current development and broader contours. An interview schedule was used to describe the magnitude of attributes. All interviews were recorded, and subsequently, notes were taken for the purpose of analysis.

In this study, the Survey method and in-depth interviews were used for data collection. Overall, 150 interview schedules were filled during the course of fieldwork. The interview schedule was structured in nature, based on closed and partially open-ended questions. The respondents were picked randomly at the Baba Rishi shrine. The collection of data took five months, from the 28th of December 2021 to the 29th of May 2022. The majority of the respondents were from Jammu and Kashmir, and other States of India. The interview schedule stressed the expression of beliefs, feelings, motivations, interests and experiences of visitors whose self-perception was the basis for the study. Baba Rishi shrine receives every day thousands of visitors irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex or religion. Visitors travel there with varied motivations and experiences (cultural, aesthetic and religious).

In the first part of the interview schedule, the visitors were asked to reveal background information such as age, sex, country of origin, length of stay, marital status, religion and sectarian affiliation.

In the second part of the interview schedule, the visitors were asked how they would describe themselves and what motivates them to visit Baba Rishi Shrine. The aim of this part was to reveal what drives them to visit Baba Rishi's shrine (secular, sacred motive or both).

In the third part of the interview schedule, the visitors were asked about their general interest in visiting other sacred or secular places on the same day or on alternative days, such as interest in visiting other religious places, natural sites, archaeological sites and historical sites.

In the fourth part of the study, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews of custodians and other stakeholders of Baba Rishi shrine in order to make a deeper exploration and validation of the final results achieved through the Survey method. The experiences drawn through in-depth interviews are discussed in the Qualitative part of the study.

Finally, the analysis of first-hand information collected through the interview schedule and in-depth interviews at Baba Rishi shrine was carried out. The results shared in the form of findings are the outcome of visitors' self-perception of visitors, custodians and other stakeholders of the Baba Rishi Muslim shrine of Kashmir.

2.1. Results:

Tourism experts must acknowledge the diversity of heightened meanings, deep yet conflicting ideologies and means of interaction surrounding pilgrimage sites, which may conflict with the social, economic and political norms espoused by the tourism industry and other outside forces (Giovine & Elsner, 2015). Baba Rishi shrine resembles the character of a combination of touristic, pilgrimage festivals and cultic significance, which are visited throughout the year by a massive number of tourists and pilgrims. The final results are systematically and rigorously discussed below, keeping in view the objectives of the study.

2.2. Age:

Age is of sociological eminence as its sense varies from society to society and is a main characteristic of stratification (Giddens, 2014). Through this, the researcher explored different age categories of visitors who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine on a regular basis. The ages of 150 respondents are highlighted below in the form of a table.

Table 1: Age-wise frequency and percentage distribution of respondents (visitors) at Baba Rishi shrine

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
20-30	17	11.33
31-40	68	45.33
41-50	44	29.33
51-60	13	8.66
Above 60	08	5.35
<i>Total</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>100</i>

2.3. Source: Primary Data

Table 1 describes the age group of Visitors whom the researcher interviewed during the course of the field survey. Overall, 150 respondents participated in this research work across different age categories. The tables shown above show the age distribution of respondents in terms of frequency and percentage, and are classified into many categories. About 17 (11.33%) respondents fall in the age group of 20-30 years. Similarly, between 31-40 years, 68 (45.33%) respondents belong to this group, and 44 (29.33%) of respondents fall between the age group of 41-60 years. The figure indicates a 120 (30%) share of the age group of 41-50 years. Moreover, the figure shows 50 (12.5%) and 13 (8.66%) of respondents fall into the age group of 51-60 years, and 8 (5.35%) are above 60 years. It is important to mention here that the majority of the respondents share the age group of 31-40 years, and the minimum share goes to the age group of above 60 years.

2.4. Gender:

Gender represents the characteristics taken only by males and females as they encounter social life and culture through socialisation (Wharton, 2005). Making visits to Baba Rishi shrine of Kashmir is a routine practice among visitors. People, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex, religion and nationality, are allowed to visit the Shrine. There is limited gender based discrimination as for shrine visiting practices are concerned in the valley of Kashmir at Baba Rishi. The women cannot enter the main area of Tomb situated there (Khan, 2002).

2.5. Residency:

Kashmiri Society is predominantly agricultural in nature. The topography of Kashmir supports both agricultural as well as horticultural production (Qadri & Dar, 2020). The paddy cultivation is common among people of South, North and Central Kashmir (political divisions). Besides this, people grow fruits also and Kashmir is largest producer of apples in India and largest producer of Saffron in the World. As per the latest statistics about 72.62% of population of Kashmir resides in rural areas and 27.38% resides in urban areas (Census, 2011).

Table 2: Gender and Residency wise frequency and percentage distribution of Respondents (visitors) at Baba Rishi shrine

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	97	64.66
Female	53	35.33
Total	150	100
Residency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rural	107	71.33
Urban	43	28.66
Total	150	100

2.6. Source: Primary Data

The above table shows gender and residency-wise frequency and percentage distribution of respondents at the Baba Rishi Shrine. Out of 150 respondents, the data revealed that about 97 (64.66%) respondents were males and 53 (46.44%) were females. The respondents during the course of the survey mentioned only two categories of gender. The researcher did not find any respondents from the LGBT community at the shrine. The data highlights that the participation of Male persons is higher than that of females at the Baba Rishi shrine of Kashmir.

Out of 150 respondents, around 71.33 % show that they live in rural areas and respectively, 28.66% choose urban areas as their living places. It seems significant to mention here that the Baba Reshi shrine is located in a rural area. Therefore, the concentrations of people in rural areas are higher at the Muslim Shrines of Kashmir.

2.7. Marital status:

Marriage is a social institution in which a man and a woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitments and religious ceremonies (Fatima & Ajmal, 2012). The aim of this variable was to reveal the marital status of visitors who are continuously travelling to the Baba Rishi shrine.

Table 3: Marital status Frequency and percentage distribution of Respondents (visitors) at Baba Rishi shrine

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	78	52
Unmarried	57	38
Divorced	06	4
Widow	09	6
Total	150	100

2.8. Source: Primary Data

Table 3 depicts the marital status of respondents travelling to the Baba Rishi shrine of Kashmir in terms of Frequency and percentage distribution. The marital statuses of respondents were classified into four categories, namely married, unmarried, divorced and widowed, out of a total of 150 respondents collected through the field survey method. The table shows that 78 (52%) respondents were married, and 57 (38%) were unmarried. Besides that, it shows that 6 (4%) and 9 (6%) respondents were respectively divorced and widowed. It is pertinent to mention here that data indicates the highest percentage of married respondents visiting Baba Rishi and the minimum participation of divorced and widowed persons.

2.9. Religion:

Sociologist Durkheim argues that social life is impossible without the shared values and moral beliefs which form the collective conscience (Haralambos, 2012). Religion is the main component of Kashmiri society. Kashmir is a melting pot of cultures, religions, ethnicities and regional identities. The Kashmiri identity is contested and variegated (Sikander, 2018). The researcher in this study was keen to explore the religious identity of visitors spotted at the Baba Rishi shrine. The respondents of religious affiliations are depicted in the form of a table.

Table 4: Religion-wise frequency and percentage distribution of Respondents (visitors) at Baba Rishi shrine

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Muslim	114	76
Hindu	23	15.33
Christianity	04	2.66
Sikh	07	4.66
Other	02	1.33
Total	150	100

2.10. Source: Primary Data

Table 4 highlights the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents at Baba Rishi shrine in terms of religious affiliation. In accordance with the data shown above, the respondents who travel to the Muslim shrines of Kashmir are the largest from the Muslim religion, 114 (76%). The second largest number is the Hindu religion, 23 (15.33%). Moreover, 4 (2.66%), 7 (4.66%), and 2 (1.33%) respondents were respectively from Christianity, Sikhs and others. Pertinently to mention here, the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is a multi-religious society. There are about 68.31% Muslim population, 28.44% Hindu population, 1.87% Sikh population, 0.28% Christian population and another 0.19% (Census Report, 2011)

2.11. Sectarian Division:

The Sunni and Shia are the two main divisions in Islam (Iqbal, 2020). There are broadly two sects in Islam, the Sunni and the Shia (Blanchard, 2010). So the results revealed that Muslims constitute the largest number of respondents at the Baba Rishi shrine. It became important to highlight Muslim participation at the Baba Rishi shrine in terms of sectarian division, which is highlighted below.

Table 5: Sect-wise Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents (visitors) at Baba Rishi Shrine

Sect	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sunni	85	74.56
Shia	29	25.44
Total	114	100

2.12. Source: Primary Data

Table 5 represents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents at the Baba Rishi shrines in terms of sect affiliation. The above table indicates the sectarian affiliation of visitors. It was found that both sects are interested

in Shrine visitation of their respective shrines and sites. The primary data reveals that around 85 (74.56%) were Sunni, and 29(25.44%) were Shia.

2.13. Schools of Thought

The above table shows that the Sunni sect of Kashmir constitutes the majority of visitors at the Baba Rishi shrine. Within the Sunni sect, there are multiple discourses-oriented divisions like Deobandis, Barelwis, Salafis (Alhadees) and Jameetis in the Valley of Kashmir. They own their Mosques, educational institutions and trusts (Qayoom, 2012; Mir, 2012; Sikander, 2018). Therefore, the researcher shows interest in examining the representation of these schools of thought at the Baba Rishi shrine.

Table 6: shows the Schools of thought-wise Frequency and percentage distribution of Respondents (visitors) at Baba Rishi shrine.

Schools of Thought	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Barelwis	62	54.38
Deobandis	24	21.05
Alhadees	16	14.03
Jameetis	12	10.52
Total	114	100

2.14. Source: Primary Data

Table 6 depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents at Baba Rishi shrine in terms of denominational affiliation. There are many Schools of thought in Islam, especially in the context of South Asia. The main schools which emerged during the Colonial era are Deobandis, Bareli, Alhadees and numerous others. All the schools/Denominations have major followers in the valley of Kashmir. They have established their own Majids, Madrasas and Maqtab throughout the valley. Therefore, the researcher was keen to explore the presence of visitors at the Baba Rishi shrine of Kashmir in terms of denominational affiliation. The first-hand information mentioned above in the form of a table indicates that all the schools have an interest in tourism. The followers Bareli School shares the majority of respondents 62 (54.38%), similarly, Deobandis 24 (21.05%), Alhadees 16 (14.03%) and Jameeti (10.52%).

2.15. Sacred and Secular Sites:

If we seriously adopt the mode of experience as the key category for distinction between different patterns of travel, we need to have sufficient depth information of all modes of travel and their different dimensions (Jirarsek, 2014). Today, research focuses on the significance of what the

visitors themselves say about their travel, since they are the main elements in pilgrimage phenomena (Kreiner & Kliot, 2000). The aim of this question was to explore and understand the self-perception of visitors/pilgrims about their travel to the selected Muslim Shrines of Kashmir. Religious tourism and pilgrimage are substantial motives for the global movement of people (Griffin & Raj, 2017). The main purpose of this study was to explore the interest of visitors who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine in other sacred and secular sites of Kashmir. Kashmir is a world-recognised tourist area with both secular and sacred potential destinations (Kuchay & Bhat, 2013; Kumar, 2022). In this connection, through the survey method, the respondents were asked to reveal their interest in other secular and sacred sites of Kashmir. The respondent's interests are displayed below in the form of a table.

Table 7: shows the interest of visitors in other sacred and secular sites, who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine in Kashmir, in terms of percentage and frequency distribution.

Visitors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Only Sacred sites	19	12.66
Only Secular sites	21	14
Both	110	73.33
Total	150	100

2.16. Source: Primary Data

Table 7 represents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents in terms of visitors' interest in sacred and secular. The primary data revealed that around 19 (12.66%) of respondents showed interest in sacred sites only. Similarly, 21(14%) of respondents declared they visit only for secular purposes and secular sites. Further data indicate that 110(73.33%) of respondents showed interest in visiting both secular and sacred sites. The data clearly shows that self-perception of visitors is important for the exploration of visitors' motives for the purpose of travel to sacred and secular sites.

Table 8: shows the interest of visitors in other sites, who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine in Kashmir, in terms of percentage and frequency distribution.

Visitors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Interest in General sites	133	88.66
Interest in Archaeological sites	129	86
Interest in Historical sites	121	80.66
Interest in Heritage sites	126	84

2.17. Source: Primary Data

Table 8 indicates the frequency and percentage distribution of visitors who travel to Baba Rishi Shrine and their interest in other sites of Kashmir. Visitors who travel to the Baba Rishi shrine on a daily basis were asked about their interests in travelling to different secular and sacred sites. The information explored the diverse interests of respondents about visiting multiple sites. The table depicts that out of 150 respondents, about 133(88.66%) showed general interest in visiting other sites. Likewise, 129 (86%) of respondents declared a keen interest in visiting Archaeological sites and holy places of other religions. Furthermore, 121 (80.66%) of respondents answered that they too are interested in visiting historical sites. Moreover, 126 (84%) of respondents exhibited interest in visiting Heritage sites. The above figure evidently identifies the interest of visitors to diverse sites. It is important to mention here that visitors who visit the Baba Rishi Muslim shrine of Kashmir on a day-to-day basis are more flexible towards other travel destinations.

2.18. Qualitative part of the study:

The main aim of this study was to explore the deep links between sacred and secular tourism practices in the valley of Kashmir and to what extent the visitors of Baba Rishi shrine are promoting and interested in travelling to the other destinations of Kashmir. For the purpose of deeper understanding and exploration, the researcher conducted many in-depth interviews of stakeholders present at the Baba Rishi shrine about the current phenomena of tourism practice in the valley of Kashmir. The qualitative part of the study enriches and validates quantitative results achieved through the Survey method. The researchers have divided the perspective of stakeholders into two categories, which are discussed in detail below:

2.19. Perspective of Custodians:

The viewpoints of custodians are important in the context of sacred-secular tourist sites of Kashmir. The prominent sacred sites of Kashmir are administered by the Muslim Waqf Board (Awqaf Committee), and similarly, secular sites are under the tourism department of Jammu and Kashmir. The Awqaf Committee and the tourism department of Jammu and Kashmir are monitoring and managing the affairs of sacred and secular destinations of Kashmir.

The researcher conducted an in-depth interview with Imam Sahib of Baba Rishi shrine in order to reveal more information about the current phenomenon: The Imam Sahib has been performing his duty at Baba Rishi Shrine for thirty-five years. He is getting a salary from the Muslim Waqf Board (a government-recognised organisation that is responsible for the welfare and administration of Muslim shrines in Kashmir). The researcher asked many questions related to this study, and these are discussed below:

Question: Baba Rishi shrine?**Interviewee replied:**

“Baba Rishi shrine is one of the famous Muslim Rishi shrines of Kashmir. The shrine is associated with Rishi Baba Payam ul din. On the advice of his mentor (Baba Shakoor ul Din, he shifted this place from the Sopore area of Kashmir. The shrine is predominantly well-known for a big fireplace, which is said to have been made by Baba Rishi himself. It is a shared belief among the devotees that whoever puts mud polish on this fireplace, the blessings of Baba Reshi confirm that his wishes are settled. Besides that, the visitors prefer to make a pilgrimage to the burial place of Baba Rishi and Qadeem Masjid (Old Mosque), where Baba Rishi used to offer prayers.”

Question: Custodians?**Interviewee replied:**

“The shrine is under the jurisdiction of the Auqaf Committee. They are managing all its affairs. The number of employees is between 30 and 35, including permanent and need-based. The employees are responsible for the smooth functioning of the shrine visiting practice and the organisation of ritual performances. Visitors donate in the form of cash and kind at the Baba Rishi shrine. The administration has made a good arrangement of donation collection in the boxes and counters”.

Question: Visitors?**Interviewee replied:**

“People visit in large numbers to the Baba Rishi shrine. These include pilgrims and tourists from local, national and international areas. Most of them indulge in prayers and worship, perform rituals, click individual and group photos, and purchase souvenirs from the shrine market. They spent hours at Baba Rishi shrine”.

Question: Interest in other sites?**Interviewee replied:**

For two decades, we have been witnessing new trends among the visitors to the Baba Rishi shrine. The majority of the shrine visitors prefer to travel to a secular place (Gulmarg) on the same day. The world-famous tourist destination, Gulmarg, is at a distance of 6 km from the Baba Rishi shrine. Because of similar location points, visit irrespective of caste, colour, sex and religion visit both places. The outsider tourists and youth of Kashmir follow this practice. Sacred and secular tourist sites are complementing each other in terms of flow and attraction of visitors”.

Question: Season?**Interviewee replied:**

“The Baba Rishi shrine receives a large number of visitors during the spring and summer season (from mid-April to mid-September). These months in overall Kashmir receive the maximum number of tourists”. The seasons have a direct impact on the flow of visitors to the Baba Rishi shrine”.

2.20. Perspective of Travel Agents:

The tourism department of Jammu and Kashmir and other private stakeholders play a major role in the development and promotion of sacred and secular tourism in the valley of Kashmir. During the field studies, the researcher interviewed many travel agents about the sacred-secular site visitation of travellers.

The owner of the private travel agency quoted:

For decades, we have been working as tourist guides, transporters and hoteliers. Our main aims are to promote Kashmir as an international tourist destination. We mention in our packages both sacred and secular tourist destinations. We attract yearly lakhs of tourists to the valley. We instruct our tour guides and drivers to brand and make tourists visit both sacred and secular places. The openness of Muslim religious sites for people of other faiths in Kashmir is helping a lot in our mission. After all, tourism is our source of income, and we prioritise that tourists should reach every destination of Kashmir”

The travel agent quoted:

For seven years, I have been working as a tour guide. During peak season (April to September), I receive at least one customer or group a week. My priority is always to introduce our sacred places to tourists, also. Whenever I visit with tourists to Gulmarg, I make sure their presence at the Baba Rishi shrine is also ensured. I remember hundreds of Hindu and Christian tourists visiting Baba Rishi’s shrine and donating there. They feel peace at the shrine and indulge in leisure activities also”.

3. Conclusion:

The present study was carried out at the Baba Rishi Muslim shrine of Jammu and Kashmir. The objectives of the study were achieved through field work in which the Survey method and in-depth interviews played a major part. The results attained through quantitative as well as qualitative data showed that visitors of Baba Rishi shrine differ in terms of Age, Gender, Residency, Marital status, religion, Sect and School of Thoughts. But, the majority of the respondents showed interest in visiting other sacred and secular places

of Kashmir on the same day or schedule. The sacred and secular places of Kashmir complement each other and attract millions of visitors yearly. The role of custodians and other stakeholders is vital in the context of managing the affairs of visitors as well as of other stakeholders. The sacred and secular tourist sites of Kashmir are a source of livelihood to a large number of people (custodians, locals, travel agencies and transporters). The primary data expressed that Muslim shrines in Kashmir are open to all visitors, irrespective of any discrimination. People of all faiths visit the Muslim shrine of Kashmir, though the majority of visitors (pilgrims/tourists) are Muslims. Most of the visitors prefer to offer prayers and worship, donate cash or kind, perform rituals and indulge in leisure activities at the Baba Rishi Shrine. The study highlights that visitors of the Baba Rishi shrine are also interested in other sacred and secular places of Kashmir. They are willing to gain both secular and sacred experiences.

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