

KURUKSHETRA AS A SPIRITUAL LEARNING SPACE: A BHAGAVAD GITA BASED MODEL FOR PEACE-BUILDING THROUGH PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

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Abstract: Kurukshetra, the battlefield of the Mahabharata and the site of the revelation of the Bhagavad Gita, represents one of India's most significant spiritual heritage landscapes. Previous pilgrimage tourism studies have largely focused on sustainability, infrastructure development, and visitor satisfaction, while pilgrimage destinations as structured spiritual learning environments for peace-building outcomes have received limited empirical attention. Addressing this gap, the present study conceptualises Kurukshetra as a spiritual learning space and examines the application of Bhagavad Gita based ethical values Swadharma (righteous duty), Nishkama Karma (selfless action), compassion, and inner balance within the pilgrimage tourism experience. The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design and collected data from 1,000 pilgrims and visitors at major pilgrimage sites in Kurukshetra. Independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis. The findings reveal statistically significant differences in spiritual learning and peace perception across visitor categories and demonstrate that Gita-based ethical values exert a strong and positive influence on peace-building perception. The study contributes to heritage and pilgrimage tourism literature by positioning pilgrimage destinations as informal spiritual learning spaces capable of fostering ethical reflection, social harmony, and sustainable peace.

Keywords: Pilgrimage tourism; spiritual learning; Bhagavad Gita; peace-building; heritage tourism; Kurukshetra.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in heritage tourism are shifting away from a static representation of culture and heritage towards a living heritage landscape. In this setting, there is ongoing construction of meanings with tourists and interactivity of ritual, socio-cultural and economic. Those sacred landscapes have an important role to play in the evolving discourse as convergence zones of physical heritage monuments, water bodies, and ritual routes and intangible cultural and ethical values and beliefs. Destinations of pilgrimage are transformative spaces which facilitate processes of spiritual meaning-making, identity forging, and experiential learning. Kurukshetra is rightly called Dharmakshetra and occupies a unique place in India's spiritual and cultural geography. Mostly famous for the Ghrita, the Mahabharata war site, it is a complex ritual landscape comprising Brahma Sarovar, Jyotisar, Sannihit Sarovar and the historic 48-kos parikrama circuit. All these sites are visited on a regular pilgrimage and still shape the modern experience. Kurukshetra is not only a religious place but it also represents living moral world where a pilgrim learns to reflect and inquire ethically. The special context of the offering of the Bhagavad Gita takes it beyond theology and to a universal philosophy. In today's fragmented and

conflictual societies, the concepts of duty, selfless action, equanimity and compassion are very relevant. Given the above observation, 'pilgrimage tourism' in Kurukshetra could be predicted beyond ritual mobility as it can also be considered as experiential learning contributing towards peace-building and social harmony. Going on a pilgrimage has been around since times immemorial. Human beings have been travelling to sacred places on account of their faith traditions. Moreover, the journey undertaken with the sole motive of moral inquiry or a search for meaning also forms part of pilgrimage tourism. In recent years, heritage tourism scholarship has recognized pilgrimage locales as dynamic sites that combine tangible heritage, intangible values, and lived spirituality. Pilgrimage tourism is alluring to ethical intents, spiritual motivation, and reflective engagement. As result it is suitable for analyzing peace out come and value-based outcome. Kurukshetra holds a special place in India's spiritual geography. Aryavarta or Dharmakshetra is the place where God revealed the Bhagvad Gita. The most powerful philosophical text advocating the cause of duty and selfless action, it espouses compassion for the distressed and removal of imbalance within mankind. Tourism development at Kurukshetra, despite having a rich philosophical background, has not focused on structured spiritual learning or ethical interpretation; it has remained infrastructure oriented. Thus, the capacity of pilgrimage tourism to transform peace is still investigated. Most of the existing tourism studies on Kurukshetra have focused on infrastructure development, visitor management, and economic impact. There is lack of empirical studies that show how spiritually grounded pilgrim experiences help build ethical consciousness and peace-oriented perceptions. The current research study fills this gap using Kurukshetra as a spiritual learning space. The researchers will empirically test a Bhagavad Gita based model of peace-building through pilgrimage tourism using a large dataset.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The continuous and consistent increase in tourism in the world is responsible for economic. The growth of tourism is responsible for generating employment, diversifying income, and regional development.

At the same time, unregulated growth in tourism exerts enormous pressure on natural ecosystems, host communities and heritage resources, especially at tourist destinations with a fragile socio-cultural environment. The Recent studies in tourism suggest that if not carefully handled tourism development could lead to damaged environments, commodification of cultures and loss of authenticity at the destination thereby jeopardizing long-term sustainability and visitor satisfaction. The author Mbaiwa, 2019; Shinde, 2022 mentions this. These problems tend to arise during the pilgrimage trips. Pilgrimages essentially revolve around their spiritual meaning, the continuity of the ritual, and identity as cultural phenomena. Acceptance of pilgrimage tourism as a distinct and multi-dimensional form of tourism, which often overlaps with heritage tourism, spiritual tourism, and in some instances mass tourism, is gaining recognition. As per the recent literature, places of pilgrimage and destination need to be assessed as living heritage landscapes whereby the tangible heritage like temples, water bodies, and a ritual route interact with living and often changing intangible heritage like belief, ritual and ethical teaching to create a visitor experience (Qiu et al, 2022; Timothy & Iverson, 2021). The analysis of pilgrimage sites does not indicate that they are stagnant religions rather a dynamic force which shapes the formation of an identity. Pilgrimage tourism investigations now often refer to sustainability. Despite the perceived sensitivity of pilgrimage, scholars warn of the ecological stress, infrastructure strain and socio-cultural disruption from pilgrim inflows. Large pilgrim flows to certain shrines in India have been studied (Shinde, 2022). According to the research (UNWTO, 2018) Sustainable Pilgrimage tourism must be environmentally protective, socio-culturally preservative, economically viable and experiential quality. Studies reveal that Pilgrims can potentially be more open to ethical values, spiritual contemplation and pro-social behaviour. Hence, it can be safely assumed that Pilgrimage tourism allows for value and sustainable interventions. Yet, pilgrimage tourism does not necessarily guarantee positive contributions to sustainable development and social harmony.

This shows that the effectiveness of destination governance, collaborative efforts of stakeholders, and interpretive programming ensure that pilgrimage tourism benefits both the host community and the traveller.. If not, the commercialization of these pilgrimage sites will erode their originality. In this broader sense, the tourism and religious studies literature is increasingly observing the phenomenon of spiritual learning. Experiential processes of ethical reflection and self-awareness through meaningful transforming travel occur through inner spiritual learning (Heintzman, 2019; Moscardo, 2020). Studies have indicated that meaningful engagement with sacred texts and rituals can foster emotional stability, ethical reasoning and spiritual transformation among visitors (Shepherd, 2022). More and more studies show that places where pilgrims go on pilgrimage are informal learning spaces rather than sites of ritual consumption. The Bhagavad Gita still imparts relevant ethical philosophical guidance in today's world. In the view of and also of empirical studies infer that there are positive outcomes like better management of stress, moral reasoning and

pro-social attitudes. Academics further claim that Gita's values such as Swadharma, Nishkama Karma, compassion and inner harmony can be operationalised not just in formal educational ecology but delivered meaningfully in experiential settings like pilgrimage tourism (Singh, 2023). The relationship between peace and tourism is getting extensive attention. Recent studies reveal tourism has the potential to create peace through exchanges and cultural interactions. They are bringing shared narratives, ethics interactions and community engagements. However, socio-cultures scholars may warn that tourism could aggravate social tensions when heritage narratives are contested and the development processes marginalize local peoples (Causevic& Lynch, 2019).

Consequently, current tourism models being promoted are responsible and value-based which include ethics and participatory governance for a sustainable peace. Due to its reliance on shared rituals, collective experiences and moral teachings, pilgrimage tourism is particularly useful for peace-building. Research has shown that pilgrimage places can overcome the social distance and generate experience of communities, engendering feelings of empathy, respect etc. among visitors (Timothy and Iverson, 2021; Shinde and Gupta, 2022). The results provide a sound conceptual basis for linking pilgrimage tourism with peace perception and inter-communal harmony. Recent studies of Indian pilgrimage sites showcase both challenges and opportunities for sustainable as well as peace tourism. Many studies on temple towns and sacred landscapes have reported problems like overcrowding, waste generation and disposal, water shortage, and commercialisation of religious services. (Singh & Rana, 2023; Das & Mishra, 2024). Several successful experiences exist where cultural conservation initiatives are managed with community participation, interpretive centres and heritage education. This type of activism can be supported by pilgrimage tourism. Kurukshetra is very important in the spiritual landscape of India because it is the site of Mahabharata. While there have been studies of Kurukshetra mainly relating to tourism development and relevant infrastructural measures, there is little empirical material that looks at Kurukshetra as a structured space of spiritual learning. Thus, limited work has looked at the potential of Kurukshetra to play an active role in peace-making (Mann, 2023)

(Trimurti, 2022). Interventions need research to enable not only sustainable planning, but also spiritual and social responsibility in tourism planning.

A current pilgrimage tourism literature sees living heritage landscapes to which pilgrimage sites belong as sacred destinations, where intangible culture like belief systems, rituals and ethical teachings matter. The literature on the topic emphasizes that the sustainability of pilgrimage tourism can not only be studied from the environmental and economic aspect. It also requires a level of understanding which considers the spiritual atmosphere, moral meaning, and experiential authenticity.

Studies reveal that engaging with holy texts and practicing them in a structured way can help develop one's ethical reasoning, emotional regulation, and pro-social behaviour. Scholars have represented the Bhagavad Gita as a work that speaks of a universal ethics philosophy that is not confined to religion. Yet, studies at pilgrimage sites rarely employ Gita values empirically in tourism research.

The scholarship on the peace aspect of tourism suggests that ethical engagement and reflective learning will promote peace perception and social harmony. Growing viewpoint sees pilgrimage tourism as a process that contributes towards peace building outcomes because of its faith narratives. There has not been enough empirical integration of pilgrimage tourism, spiritual learning and peace-building- notably in Kurukshetra- thus making the present study relevant.

Landscapes of Religious Heritage for Pilgrimage Tourism

The practice of pilgrimage tourism is known to be one of the oldest forms of mobility exercised by human beings and still continues to hold nowadays. This movement is inspired by shares of religious beliefs, cultural norms and spiritual cravings. The goals of pilgrimage are not intended to be those of leisure tourism but rather ethical meditations and inner transformations. Modern-day tourism studies are increasingly viewing pilgrimage destinations as sacred heritage landscapes. Such landscapes comprise tangible heritage components like temples, water bodies, ritual paths, and monuments. At the same time, these heritage components offer connection points to intangible dimensions like belief systems, ethical values, collective memory, and living religions.

The approach of heritage tourism literature is gradually changing from one that is mainly based on monuments to one that is based on landscapes which highlights the importance of meaning and experience. Many scholars teach that sacred landscapes are not fixed historical pasts but living arenas shaped by the constant flux of ritual performances, pilgrimage flows, and many other forces. In this sense, pilgrimage sites can be seen as contextual settings for spiritual learning, identity construction and moral reflection.

Yet, current pilgrim travel-related literature is relatively doubtful about pilgrimages' ethical and peace-making capacities and continues to stress more on infrastructural development, visitor management and economic impact. There is a severe dearth of scholarly literature on Indian pilgrimage destinations in relation to two philosophical traditions, which hold out excellent conceptual resources for monitoring learning and transformation produced by tourism.

Spiritual Learning and Experiential Transformation in Pilgrimage

Tourism studies are increasingly recognizing the area of spirituality as an important conceptual lens of analysis. It involves the use of processes that enable people to acquire ethical insight, self-awareness and emotional balance through experience. Spiritual learning is largely informal, embedded and reflective, conditioned through an ecology of place, participating in ritual and developing contemplative practices, as opposed to formal learning. Research reveals that pilgrimage experiences initiate reflection in visitors who re-evaluate their values, purpose in life and moral responsibility. Visitor motivation, destination symbolic significance and the interpretive environment of the host community are some of the factors influencing this. A pilgrimage site that is intentionally designed to enable reflection through story, ritual guidance, and ethical interpretation will likely function as a space for transformation. The practical need for spiritual learning in tourism is increasingly well-known, but there are few empirical studies examining its measurable dimensions. The research consists of qualitative narratives mainly. The studies that may produce quantifiable results on the impact of this spiritual learning on concepts like, perceptions of peace, tolerance, inter-community understanding, and so on should also be undertaken.

Bhagavad Gita as an Ethical Framework for Tourism Studies

The Bhagavad Gita has carved out a distinctive niche in Indian philosophy and can also be regarded as a universal ethical document. The essential concepts of Swadharma, Nishkama Karma, Karuna and Sthitaprajna deal with fundamental issues of moral responsibility, emotional regulation, and social harmony. These are righteous duty; selfless action; and compassion and inner balance respectively. Philosophy, psychology and management studies experts have been utilizing Gita-based values increasingly to research certain facets like leadership ethics and much more. Nevertheless, not enough tourism studies utilize them. Embedding the value systems of the Gita, since Kurukshetra is traditionally believed to be the site of revelation, would provide a framework contextualized to pilgrimage tourism research. The incorporation of Gita values in the tourism framework can be an investigation of the pilgrimage experience which is not just a ritual performance but also an ethical learning process that can inculcate behavioral changes in peace perceptions.

Tourism, Peace-Building, and Ethical Encounters

There has been much analysis of tourism and peace in literature. Tourism offers intercultural contact and mutual understanding with tolerance that may help form peaceful conditions and support peace building. Critics warn that tourism promotes social inequality, culture disintegration and conflict between locals and outsiders on the contrary. The newest studies show that tourism can build peace, especially when experiences stimulate ethical thinking, empathy and other meaningful encounters. The pilgrimage tourism has a noteworthy potential in this regard by nature moral-spiritual. Sacred journeys endorse humility, compassion and belonging – vital ingredients for peace. There is still lack of empirical models in pilgrimage tourism linking ethical values, spiritual learning and peace perception. The current literature merely provides a descriptive account of a plethora of philosophical traditions which do not find expression in tourism. So, an absence of a theoretical framework is created.

Research Gap and Conceptual Positioning of the Study

The literature review demonstrates three major gaps that exist. Developments in pilgrimage tourism have under-conceptualized sacred destinations as places of structured spiritual learning. The ethical precepts of Bhagavad Gita find little resonance with tourism research, notwithstanding the contextual relevance of Indian pilgrimage space. Lack of sufficient empirical attention has been paid to the extent to which spiritually grounded tourism experiences may impact the way the individual perceives peace and social harmony.

This paper attempts to conceptualize Kurukshetra as an essential spiritual learning space in the heritage tourism space and empirically examine the Gita-based values or peace-building outcomes. The study aims to generate interdisciplinary knowledge by contributing to theory building and destination planning through pilgrimage tourism, spiritual learning and peace studies.

Conceptual Framework

The study will have a theoretical basis in heritage tourism, spiritual learning, peace-building literature and others. The references will be analyses from the ethical principles of the Bhagavad Gita. Through the framework that conceptualizes pilgrimage

tourism in Kurukshetra as a heritage-based experiential platform, Balakrishnan and Sharma highlight a clear message. As a result, visitors are involved with concrete sacred sites and abstract values. The physical and spiritual learning are integrated with due interaction, resulting in peace.

From this, it is understood that the pilgrimage tourism in Kurukshetra is not merely ritualistic travel but value-laden process. The holy sites of the place include Brahma Sarovar, Jyotisar and Sannihit Sarovar. This offers a physical and symbolic environment where through the message of the Bhagavad Gita. These events happen not only to the religious but also to the ethical, the self, and the experiential.

The outcomes for peace-building are centered on values of the Bhagavad Gita as core explanatory variables in the framework. Sum the values put into practice: Swadharma, Nishkama Karma, Karuna, and Sthitaprajna. An interrelated understanding of morality, emotion and pro-socialness will be instilled through the values. Through ritual, discourse, landscape and/or reflection, you experience these values on pilgrimage.

Spiritual learning plays an intermediary outcome in the framework. It has been recognized as an experiential and reflective process by which visitors internalize ethical values, enhance self-awareness and re-evaluate personal responsibilities to society and others. Learning at pilgrimage sites is not formal, but rather something that arises through being engaged for a longer duration with the sacred place and moral stories. According to experts, if visitors at Gita-based learning centre share a stronger engagement of values, they will have a deeper learning experience.

According to the framework, the ultimate outcome variable is peace-building perception and it is understood at the individuals' level as increase more peace awareness, emotional harmony, tolerance and feeling social connectedness. The framework has been informed by literature on tourism and peace. The paper argues that tourism benefits do not automatically lead to peace-building. When an experience can fosters ethical reflection, empathy and internal equilibrium, however. In this model, peace perception reflects impact of Gita-based values of decision makers.

According to this framework, pilgrimage tourism may increase exposure to Gita-based ethical values. Influence on spiritual learning and peace-building will follow. The model's specification accommodates the relationship between ethical values and peace; spiritual learning serves as a mechanism to strengthen the internalization of ethical values. Values likely to impact peace attitude/behaviour via broader internalization in society are Swadharma and other selfless action.

Overall, the framework designates Kurukshetra as a spiritual learning site within heritage tourism. It indicates the possibility of pilgrimage experiences with ethical mooring affecting one's perception of peace, social harmony and ethics, beyond a religious consumption. This paper builds an integrating framework through empirical investigation of this overarching model which relates philosophy, pilgrimage and peace-building in tourism context. The conceptual model suggests that pilgrimage tourism would help to learn about spirituality, which could mediate the correlations between Bhagavad Gita-based values of ethics and the perception of peace building. The visitor takes values like Swadharma, altruism, compassion and inner harmony through engagement in pilgrimage experiences and therefore increasing the perception of peace.

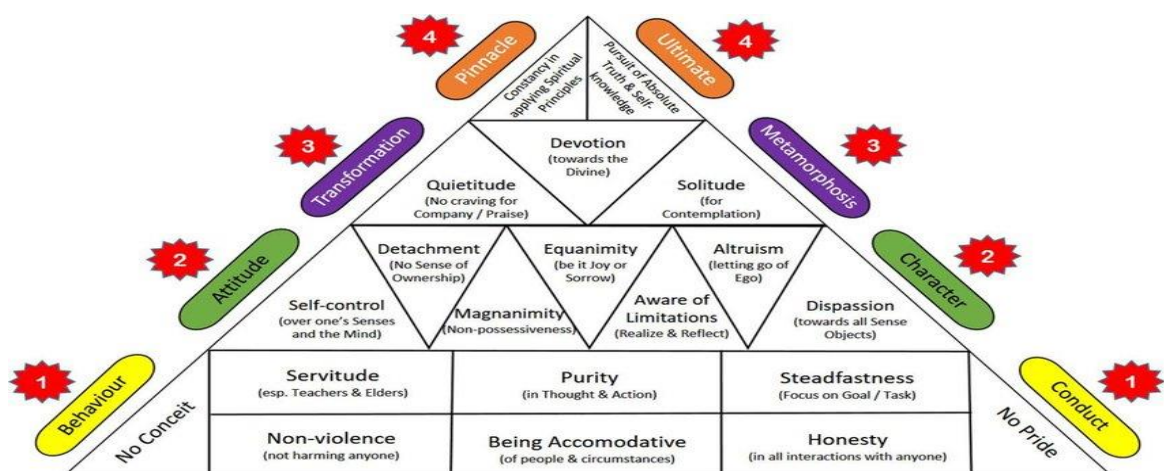


Figure 1. Conceptual framework linking pilgrimage tourism, Gita-based values, spiritual learning, and peace-building outcomes

Source: Authors' conceptualisation based on Bhagavad Gita principles and heritage tourism literature.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine differences in perceived spiritual learning between local and non-local visitors participating in pilgrimage tourism in Kurukshetra.
2. To analyse variations in peace perception among visitors based on their primary purpose of visit.
3. To assess the influence of *Swadharma* (righteous duty awareness) on peace-building perception among pilgrimage visitors.
4. To evaluate the combined predictive effect of selected *Bhagavad Gita* based values selfless action (*Nishkama Karma*), compassion, and inner balance on peace-building outcomes.

These objectives collectively seek to establish Kurukshetra's role as a structured spiritual learning environment and to empirically validate the proposed value-driven peace-building model within the heritage tourism framework.

Hypotheses

Based on insights drawn from pilgrimage tourism studies, spiritual learning theory, and ethical frameworks derived from the *Bhagavad Gita*, the following hypotheses were formulated for empirical testing:

- **H1:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceived spiritual learning between local and non-local visitors to Kurukshetra.
- **H2:** Peace perception significantly differs among visitors based on their purpose of visit (pilgrimage, spiritual learning, tourism, or education).
- **H3:** *Swadharma* awareness has a significant and positive influence on peace-building perception.
- **H4:** *Bhagavad Gita* based values selfless action, compassion, and inner balance significantly and positively predict peace-building outcomes.

The hypotheses are designed to test both group-level differences and causal relationships, ensuring alignment with the study's mixed-method exploratory design and enabling robust empirical validation of the conceptual framework.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research study design is a cross sectional quantitative method that aims at investigating the empirically connection among pilgrimage tourism, spiritual education and perception towards peace in Kurukshetra. This design is suitable in studying group differences and predictive relationships among variables within a large population at a single point in time.

Area of Study

The empirical study was done in Kurukshetra, Haryana, a significant heritage destination with the Mahabharata and revelation of the Bhagavad Gita. Data were gathered at the major pilgrimage locations such as Brahma Sarovar, Jyotisar, and Sannihit Sarovar, which are the collective embodiments of the ritual, symbolic and experience dimensions of the destination.

Sample and Data Collection

A survey consisting of 1000 pilgrims and visitors was carried out on a cross-sectional basis, a stratified intercept sampling method that will guarantee representation of the visitor categories and purposes of visit. The participants were sampled at key pilgrimage sites during the peak season and off-peak periods.

Research Instrument

The structured questionnaire consisted of three sections measuring:

1. Spiritual Learning spiritual introspection, self awareness and inward change out of pilgrimage experience.

2. Perception of peace - emotional harmony, tolerance, inner peace as well as social Connectedness.
3. Bhagavad Gita–Based Ethical Values – Swadharma, Nishkama Karma, initiates and drives the understanding of compassion, and internal equilibrium.

Measurement of all items was done on a five point Likert scale 1 (strongly disagree), to 5 (“strongly agree”). Construct validity was ensured through adaptation of items from established literature and review by experts. All constructs have internal consistency reliability passed desirable significance levels (Cronbachs 0.70 above).

Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data were analysed with the help of SPSS. Independent samples t-test was used to examine differences in spiritual learning between local and non-local visitors. The variation in perception of peace in terms of purpose of visit was evaluated using One way ANOVA. A multiple regression analysis was performed to explore the predictive effect of Bhagavad Gita, Ethical values based on perception to peace-building. Contextual qualitative observations of only ritual participation and visitor behaviour were used to assist interpretation of quantitative results and were not analyzed qualitatively.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 1000)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	575	57.5
	Female	425	42.5
Age Group	18–24	580	58.0
	25–34	280	28.0
	35–44	95	9.5
	45+	45	4.5
Marital Status	Unmarried	730	73.0
	Married	270	27.0
Education	Secondary or below	85	8.5
	Undergraduate	420	42.0
	Postgraduate	330	33.0
	Doctoral	165	16.5
Occupation	Student	560	56.0
	Service (Public/Private)	310	31.0
	Business/Other	130	13.0
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	420	42.0
	₹25,001–50,000	310	31.0
	Above ₹50,000	270	27.0
Visitor Type	Local	480	48.0
	Non-local	520	52.0
Purpose of Visit	Pilgrimage	420	42.0
	Spiritual learning	260	26.0
	Tourism/Education	320	32.0
Frequency of Visit	First-time	510	51.0
	Repeat visitor	490	49.0

The broadened demographic characterisation is an indicator of a heterogeneous sample in terms of socio-economic behavioural and tourism aspects. The addition of visitor type, purpose of visit, and frequency of visit gives a good analytical background to group comparisons using t-test and ANOVA. The big sample size and heterogeneity contribute to the generalisability and strength of the results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of inferential statistical analyses are depicted in this part. It explains the independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. A discussion of the findings in relation to the aim, objectives, and hypotheses of the study and the proposed conceptual framework, along with references to existing literature on pilgrimage tourism and peace building.

Differences in Spiritual Learning Based on Visitor Type

An independent samples t-test was conducted to see the difference between local and non-local visitors in terms of perceived spiritual learning. As shown in Table 1, non-local respondents had a higher mean score (M = 4.02, SD = 0.66) of spiritual learning than local respondents (M = 3.68, SD = 0.72). The significant difference (t = 6.12, p = <0.001) demonstrates support for Hypothesis H1.

Table 1. Independent Samples t-Test: Spiritual Learning by Visitor Type

Visitor Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Local Visitors	480	3.68	0.72		
Non-Local Visitors	520	4.02	0.66	6.12	<0.001

The study also suggested that pilgrimage which leads to physical and mental distance from everyday places can enhance reflection and experience. People from outside the state will be more alert and open to the pilgrimage experience and will more likely initiate deeper thinking and reflection on ethical issues and their own identity. The results resonate with the existing literature which states that emphasize the transformative possibilities in pilgrimage, when adherents interrupt their routine, social environments and get involved more with the divine landscape.

Variations in Peace Perception by Purpose of Visit

A One-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the perception of peace among the visitors regarding their main purpose. The summary results indicate that the perception of peace across the groups of visitors varies significantly. Thus, H2 is supported (F = 14.36, p = <0.001).

Table 2. One-Way ANOVA: Peace Perception by Purpose of Visit

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	58.42	3	19.47	14.36	<0.001
Within Groups	1348.21	996	1.35		
Total	1406.63	999			

An analysis of group differences reveals that pilgrims and spiritually motivated visitors demonstrate a significantly higher perception of peace than tourists and educational visitors. This shows that peace-building outcomes are linked to visitor motivation and degree of engagement. According to the theory, peace building occurs when one engages in a tourism activity which requires either a conscious and/or deliberate decision to visit a particular site where some form of spirituality is present.

Influence of Gita-Based Values on Peace-Building Perception

A study was made using multiple regression analysis to find the influence of their Bhagavad Gita-based values on peace-building perception Table 3 illustrates that regression model accounted on peace perception with R² = 0.58, Adjusted R² = 0.57; F = 341.22, p < 0.001, showing strong explanatory abilities. The predictor variables that is Swadharma awareness, selfless action, compassion, and inner balance produce a statistically significant and positive effect on peace-building perception (p < 0.001). Therefore, Hypothesis H3 and H4 are supported. Among these, Swadharma awareness emerged as the strongest predictor (b = 0.41), followed by selfless action (b = 0.36), compassion (b = 0.29) and inner balance (b = 0.24)

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Peace-Building Perception

Predictor	Unstd. β	Std. Error	Std. β	t	p
Swadharma	0.41	0.06	0.32	6.83	<0.001
Selfless Action	0.36	0.07	0.27	5.14	<0.001
Compassion	0.29	0.05	0.23	5.80	<0.001
Inner Balance	0.24	0.04	0.18	6.00	<0.001

Model Summary: R² = 0.58, Adjusted R² = 0.57, F = 341.22, p < 0.001

The study shows that ethical responsibility and duty consciousness are key to developing attitudes that promote peace. The Awareness Swadharma brings seems to store a higher sense of moral clarity and social responsibility which

contributes to peace perception. Self-less action and caring behaviour are positively beneficial towards developing the further trigger and reason of pro-social orientation. Although in a way weaker, still, inner balance exists a good predictor, suggesting that emotional regulation or equanimity is an important peace perception basis.

Validation of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is empirically validated as a result of the study findings. It confirms pilgrimage tourism in Kurukshetra as a heritage-based spiritual learning space generating peace-building outcomes. The result of the findings confirms that the Gita based-values act as essential instruments of ethics linking the two. The data were well explained by the regression model which suggests that there is nothing incidental about peace-building within pilgrimage environments; on the contrary, there is nothing incidental about peace-building in pilgrimage environments develops in deliberate ethical interaction and internalization of values. This supports modern tourism peace scholarship that indicates that reflection, empathy and ethical consciousness contributes to the creation and consumption of experiences as opposed to mere consumption.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The paper is a conceptual frame to guide the future research in pilgrimage tourism, philosophical use of values in tourism consumer behaviour is interrelated with. The notion of philosophical values is depicted with the help of the conceptual model that is introduced in this paper. The research also makes its contributions to the theory of spiritual learning in that he gives evidence to prove that pilgrimage. Sites are informal learning environments out of school that are characterized by a high-learning potential to have place-based learning to transform ethically and emotionally. In practical terms, inculcating moral meaning and introspective possibilities within the tourism experience can improve the results of peace-building, say the findings to destination planners and policymakers. Incorporation of values derived in Gita to interpretation, programming, and visitor directionally engagement strategies can help pilgrimage locations such as Kurukshetra to transcend ritual tourism and serve as the channels of moral awareness and social peace.

Statistically, it has been found that many differences exist in spiritual learning between local and non-local visitors that explains the amalgamation of detachment against worldly things and reflective engagement. Results indicate that pilgrims and spiritual learners are more at peace than tourists and educational visitors according to the results of ANOVA. Regression analysis confirms that Bhagavad Gita based values significantly and positively predict peace-building perception, with Swadharma emerging as the strongest predictor.

The research establishes Kurukshetra as a spiritual educational centre empirically. It also shows how peaceful results can be produced by using the ethical philosophy in this way extending pilgrimage tourism literature.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper reinvents Kurukshetra as a spiritual learning centre that can build on its heritage of making a contribution to peace by value pilgrimage tourism. By integrating Bhagavad ethics according to Gita Swadharma, unselfishness, compassion, inner harmony into the pilgrimage experience analysis. The research empirically supports a model that couples a pilgrimage experience to pilgrimage tourism with spiritual learning and peace perception. The findings demonstrate that visitors differ greatly in terms of spiritual learning and feeling of peace that the Gita-related ethical values have a positive and significant significance to the functioning of peace-building, with Swadharma coming out the best predictor. The results confirm that peace-building in pilgrimage situations does not happen by chance but is a product of ethical thinking, moral accountability, and emotional management integrated in pilgrimage experiences. The study promotes heritage tourism research by making pilgrimage sites informal learning settings and adds to tourism owning peace literature by offering empirical evidence of value-based pilgrimage tourism. Kurukshetra comes out as an exemplary tourist attraction spot ethical interpretation and spiritual learning are when the pilgrimage tourism is oriented towards peace, intentionally incorporated to destination planning and visitor interaction.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the empirical findings and conceptual knowledge of the research, the tourism authorities is not to incorporate the historical based interpretation nor the ritualistic based interpretation alone in the on-site interpretation in the museums and visitor canters but incorporate the Bhagavad Gita based ethical interpretation as well. Relating sacred space to the major concepts of such spheres as duty, compassion, selfless action and inner balance can contribute to the reflective experience at spiritual level in visitors. The ethical themes of Bhagavad Gita (structured pilgrimage programmer, spiritual walks and

heritage trail) should be modelled with the focus of Bhagavad Gita. Practices such as these will transform a pilgrimage into a constructive learning experience, enhancing the perception of peace and the emotional health. The local guides, tourism officials and the service providers must be trained in spiritual interpretation, ethical and peace-sensitive tourism communication. The reinforcement of stakeholder capacity will enhance consistency in fostering ethical values in all the visitor touch points in an authentic manner. The strategies of tourism branding and promotion that are to be used ought to present Kurukshetra as a centre of ethical reflection and philosophy of peace as opposed to a mere religious pilgrimage to the whole world. Education tourists, academics and spiritually oriented travellers who are after transformative experiences can be attracted to the site by repositioning it as a learning centre. The pilgrimage management practices such as crowd management, environment management and community participation as well as spiritual learning needs to be integrated to ensure that the pilgrimage maintains the sanctity, authenticity and sustainability of the heritage landscape owing to the increment in footfall. Future studies may be able to use larger and diverse samples, longitudinal designs, or cross-site measurements of multiple pilgrimage destinations in order to validate the proposed model. Qualitative research methods like narrative analysis or phenomenological approach can be used to further explain the lived experiences of pilgrims with regards to spiritual and peace-building.

Methodological Clarifications and Robustness Checks

The study will have a quantitative cross-sectional design of research. Although, field engagement involved contextual qualitative observations these were not subjected to formal qualitative analysis; they were only available to back interpretation of statistical results. As such, the paper is placed under the quantitative motivation category by virtue of which there is methodological clarity. The data is cross-sectional, which hinders making any causal inferences, but purposeful attention to predictive and explanatory associations is noted. The results are subsequently viewed in the context of statistically significant associations and not causal effects. Construct validity was additionally attained by adapting scale items to available literature and expert consultations to ensure the constructs of pilgrimage tourism, spiritual learning and peace-building aligned with the conceptual constructs. All constructs had internal consistency reliability that was above standardized thresholds (Cronbachs 0.70 and above). The multiple regression models integrate the conceptually different ethical dimensions basing on the Bhagavad Gita. Since there are many predictors (N = 1000) and a theoretical possibility of targeting differentiating among them, multicollinearity problems are downplayed.

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