

CHAPTER - VI  
=====

---

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

\*\*\*\*\*



=====

6.1 In this dissertation an attempt has been made to justify that pilgrimage tourism has emerged out from the human geography, as it fulfils the essential characteristics of Tourism Geography. Pilgrimage is a particular form of domestic as well as international tourism. The aim of pilgrimage is purely religious, but it is also linked with visiting of different places in addition to worship of sacred shrines which shows the interdependence of tourism and pilgrimage. The pilgrimage and other forms of tourism have much in common and also have a different characteristics. Both have a direct relationship with the glories of nature, seasonality, economic importance, local surplus in tertiary sector, high occupancy rate, camping capacity and good inter-regional connections in the spatial activities of travellers. Though the pilgrimage helps to develop the region, certain constraints arises for which remedies are suggested.

6.2 The Pandharpur has a history since 516 A.D. and was called by Pandurange or Pandura upto 1180 A.D. In 13th century the emergence of Varkari Panth and arrival Dnyaneshwar in Pandharpur was a great achievement, and since onwards it became a centre of culture and spitritual learning. During the 17th century Pandharpur had become a centre of pilgrimage. Saint Tukaram had given new impetus to the Varkari Sampradaya and created enthusiasim in the pilgrimage of Ashadhi and Kartiki.

6.2.1 The meandering river Chandrabhaga near Pandharpur has nine ghats of special significance to pilgrims, especially at the time of Ashadhi and Kartiki fairs. The Mahadwar, Uddhav, Chandrabhaga and the Vipra Datta ghats are more important but all the time these ghats remain dirty. Pilgrims who come for ablution make it dirtier by throwing peels of fruits, spitting etc. must be prohibited, therefore, it is suggested that these ghats should be cleaned and permanent provision of it should be made. Urinals should be constructed and dustbins may be placed on the sides of the ghats. These ghats also be saved from damage by floods in the rainy season.

6.2.2 The Pandharpur is a town of temples. Some temples are dedicated to Lord Vishnu, some are to Lord Siva and many others to various deities. But the temple of Lord Vitthal is most important and is a pivot of pilgrimage in Pandharpur.

6.3 Fairs in Pandharpur have cultural, religious, social and economic importance. But today, these are losing their importance due to commercial attitude of people. Ashadhi and Kartiki Ekadashis are the important fairs in Pandharpur. Palkhi procession on fixed routes is an important activity in Ashadhi Ekadashi, lakhs of people move along with the palkhis. Saint Dnyaneshwar Palkhi is the oldest one (Chapter III). Unfortunately there are no sufficient facilities to the varkaries on the route. Hauling places are also inconvenient. Therefore, it is

suggested that Government of Maharashtra should take lead in providing facilities to them. The provision of funds are necessary. At every halting place provision of temporary sanitation, drinking water, proper shelter and food should be made by social organizations and respective Gram Panchayats; but they must be supported by state government funds or local funds. Planned plantation on the palkhi route should be initiated by the villages on the route and supported by the Forest Department of Maharashtra. Inoculation must be compulsory to the participant in procession to avoid epidemic diseases like cholera. To control the traffic police force should be increased.

6.3.1 Every festival of the year is celebrated in Pandharpur. Dashhara, Navaratra and Makar Sankrant, festival of Gauri Gapapati, the birth of Gopal Krishna, the Chaturmass, the Kala Festival are more important festivals in Pandharpur.

6.4 Pandharpur receives good transport network from all over Maharashtra. It is connected by road and rail to important cities in Maharashtra and near by states. BLR plays dominant role in transportation of the people, especially at the time of four important fairs; but narrow guage route of BLR takes heavy time to reach Pandharpur, which causes to reduce the number of pilgrims. Declining trend of BLR for 2000 A.D., predicts the reduction in pilgrims traffic by 5.6 times than that of 1951. It is, therefore, suggested that this narrow guage should be converted into meter-

guage or Broad-guage at the earliest. The frequency and the speed of the trains should be increased. This will help to improve the number of pilgrims.

6.4.1 Because of good network of roads and reach of state road transport buses to every village in Maharashtra, movement of pilgrims to Pandharpur increased largely. Pandharpur is connected to all cities in Maharashtra by State Road Transport Buses. Provision of extra buses during fair times from those places caused increase of pilgrims. The growth trend of pilgrims indicates that the number of pilgrims may be increased, in 2000 A.D., by 1.88 times more than that of the year 1978. This change caused mainly due to the better services and safe journey given by MSRTC. This can be further increased if MSRTC may make provision of return journey. It is also suggested that at fair times MSRTC may provide buses on contract to improve the number of pilgrims and at the time of four important fairs there should be concession in the charges.

6.4.2 Accommodation facilities play vital role in promotion of tourism. In Pandharpur, Dharmashalas and Mathas, proved to be important destination facility. Rental houses are also available. Accommodation in hotels are found insufficient. Tourists, other than pilgrims need better facilities of residence, therefore, it is suggested that number of hotels should be increased. At the time of fairs temporary accommodation should be made in public

places like schools and colleges. The provision of better sanitation, drinking water supply and light facilities are not adequate, therefore, it is suggested that Pandharpur Municipal Bureau should take initiative in improving these facilities. They may take help of state government in this regard. Accommodation in dharmashalas are found inadequate. Many dharmashalas are lacking sanitation facility and sufficient drinking water facility. It is necessary to improve these basic facilities. At the time of important fairs dharmashalas are found insufficient, therefore, it is suggested that additional dharmashalas may be constructed with all prima facilities. Special fund may be made for this purpose. Such an amount may be collected from pilgrims for a few years and by taking government aid these dharmashalas can be constructed. If this becomes possible, number of pilgrims definitely be increased.

6.4.3 Devotional goods and articles are sold in Pandharpur which help to strengthen the economy and provide employment to the local people. Eatable goods like sugar candy, sugar balls, churmure etc. have a large market as these are supposed as 'Prasad' of Lord Vitthal. Musical instruments like Veena, Chipali, Pakwas, brass cymbals have also good market as these are required by varkaries for Bhajans and Kirtans. Religious literature is also available. At present production of all these items are sufficient. But prices are relatively high. To increase trade of devotional goods and articles, it is necessary to reduce the

prices as the main purchasers are the pilgrims who came from low income group.

6.5 The functional analysis of pilgrims, the chapter concerned with the actual survey analysis made by the author. In this chapter an attempt has been made to understand the views of the pilgrims and their behavioural attitude regarding the pilgrimage at Pandharpur. It is observed that highest number of pilgrims visit to Pandharpur are from Maharashtra (Chapter V). In Maharashtra highest number of pilgrims arrived from Solapur and Poona districts. Pilgrims classification reveals two categories of pilgrims, the Varkaries and Pilgrim tourists. The main purpose of Varkaris is to attend pilgrimage at Pandharpur and to pray God. The pilgrim tourists view is to attend the pilgrimage as well as to get pleasure from it. Age group classification reveals that middle age group people are more for pilgrimage to get peace of mind for some days from their daily routine. The pilgrims from all religions and castes came for pilgrimage but maximum number of pilgrims are from Hindu religion (Table 5.6). The BLR and MSRTC are the two important means of transport. About 92.16 percent of the transport is by these two means. At present, about 62.82 percent pilgrims prefer to go by MSRTC buses because of quick and safe journey. Accommodation facilities are provided by the dharmashalas and mathas in Pandharpur. About 69.79 percent accommodation is in dharmashalas and mathas. About 7.39 percent are accommodated in rental houses

and 1.96 percent in hotels. Stay of high income group people are found in hotels and pilgrims of low income group prefer dharmashalas and mathas. Interviews of the pilgrims conducted during the survey revealed that about 55.44 percent pilgrims are satisfied with the facilities and about 44.56 percent pilgrims showed their dissatisfaction. They feel that there must be improvement in accommodation facilities. Duration of stay of most of the pilgrims is from Dashmi to Dwadashi. Many pilgrims stay upto Kala Festival.

This analysis, generally, reveals the need of improvement in facilities in Pandharpur especially at the time of fairs. But it appears here that the people from all religions come together, stay for some days, exchange their views and go back which will help to strengthen the regional and national integration. During the period of fairs there is no need to know the person by his name, but he referred by the term 'Mauli' (Nick name of Dnyaneshwar).

IIIIIIII  
 IIIIIII  
 IIIII  
 I  
 .  
 .