

RELIGIOUS JOURNEYS AND TOURISM SECTOR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS FOR ZIYARAH TO MADINAH (S. ARABIA), AMPEL (INDONESIA) AND SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

A.A. Rahman

Asian Institute of Business and Technology/National University of Bangladesh,
email: mr_arah_man@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research uses a subjective observation of objective facts through the sociological research participation-observation method, in three pilgrimage sites-Madinah (S. Arabia), Ampel/Surabaya (Indonesia), and Sylhet (Bangladesh) suggest some hypotheses and corresponding policy recommendations, for further and empirical research for testing, corroboration, modification and or elaboration. These include, 1)A batch of religiously trained and sensitive volunteers or officials also trained in peace-keeping, as in place in Madinah Prophet's Mosque, might be a better instrument of maintaining law and order than normal police force or total or near total absence of any peace-keeping mechanism at all, as is the case with Surabaya's Ampel and Sylhet Dorgan; 2)A system of relatively inexpensive but clean and hygienically well-maintained and modernized inns within or attached to local family homes-than expensive hotel chains-in the immediate and near vicinity of the pilgrimage sites might be a better and more sustainable option for pilgrims' accommodation; 3)Health and hygiene concerns need utmost priority in such overcrowded sites with visitors from diverse sources, and preventive as well as curative measures with adequate toilets and bathing facilities, and adequate free clinics available on the sites, as place in the case of Madinah also need to be introduced in Ampel and Sylhet; 4)As a part of the health and hygiene concern, adequate preventive measures need to be introduced in all such sites, to fight short and long-term problems posed by odor and noise pollution. Further, empirical research suggested to test and corroborate, nullify or modify these hypotheses may start with simple survey-research quantitative analyses of data collected from these three sites. Further sites from other places may be added.

Keywords: sustainable, tourism, policy, business, management, culture

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan subjektif pada fakta yang objektif melalui pendekatan *sociological research participation-observation method*, pada 3 daerah wisata religi yaitu Madinah (Saudi Arabia), Ampel (Surabaya), dan Sylhet (Bangladesh). Penelitian ini menghasilkan suatu proposisi yang selanjutnya dapat diuji dengan pendekatan lain. Beberapa indikasi akan hasil dicapai melalui interview dan pendekatan partisipasi langsung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa diperlukan adanya petugas keamanan yang mampu menjaga perdamaian selain mengarahkan para turis misalnya di Madinah. Petugas resmi mempunyai persepsi otoritas yang lebih baik dibandingkan petugas tidak

berseragam resmi sehingga hukum dan ketertiban dapat ditegakkan. Selain itu penelitian ini menemukan bahwa di Ampel dan Sylhet, kebersihan menjadi hal yang langka dan mengganggu para turis. Kebersihan akan mengarah kepada persepsi akan kesehatan sehingga turis menjadi khawatir bila tempat yang mereka kunjungi kotor dan menyebabkan mereka sakit. Kebersihan menjadi semakin penting ketika tempat wisata dipenuhi turis atau pelancong dari berbagai bangsa, negara, dan daerah yang membawa budaya dan karakteristiknya sendiri. Dibutuhkan pelayanan kesehatan dan pencegahan penyakit yang lebih baik khususnya di Ampel dan Sylhet. Selain itu ketiga tempat wisata religi ini menghadapi masalah polusi udara dan polusi bau yang cukup parah. Hal ini menjadi kendala yang umum di ketiga tempat wisata religi ini. Penelitian ini dapat dilanjutkan dengan penelitian yang lebih konstruktif untuk menjawab temuan awal.

Kata kunci: *sustainable, tourism, policy, business, management, culture*

1. Research Background

Following upon my work, few years back, at MIT (Cambridge, Mass., USA) in International Development in South and Southeast Asia, and at Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass, USA) in Middle Eastern Studies, I became acutely aware of the fact that religious attitudes play an unavoidable role in popular behavior in such regions, and all development planning and processes for these regions need to include consideration for developments related to such attitudes. As a follow-up to that awareness, I moved to Asia, traveling across various countries there—in West Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Thereupon, over the years I have been engaged in collecting data, observing, formulating hypotheses, developing policy recommendation—underlining that, as well as other, cultural factors which would or might affect developments in such regions. Business and tourism are but one such area of development, which too, to be sustainable, needs to be culturally adapted, and related to religious attitudes that often lie at the roots of culturally expressed motivations. This paper is based on some tentative observations in that area admittedly and obviously, requiring much further work and research by myself and, hopefully other researchers. Of course, all tourism in these regions are not directly religious, but I choose religiously inspired tourism for the time being, because of the fact that—in the pre-industrial levels of socio-economic development, masses in these regions are likely to remain attached, largely, to religiously inspired tourism. This, with the expert understanding that, a study of religious tourism in such regions might offer insights for development strategies for tourism in general as well.

With unprecedented advances in transportation and information technology, advent of global news and information delivery, a general increase in income and cultural changes—tourism has become a mass-marketable product. It is no longer an exotic experience confined to a few adventurers like the Moroccan Ibn Battuta and Italian Marco Polo. Given this, tourism, globally, has become a commodity on sale on a large scale and, as such, indeed, an invariable

subject of business administration or management. Anyone involved in business administration or management from whatever angle—be it from the business, or the government, or the academia, has a responsibility to contribute, to whatever extent he might be able to, a proper development of this fast expanding new business sector and aspect of life. This responsibility is coupled by a further responsibility to give special attention to ecological sustainability of such development—this, particularly in view of the ecological consequences of the tremendous acceleration of numbers of visitors, particularly focusing on narrow pilgrimage sites which, in the past, were visited only by a few. This paper is a humble attempt in that direction from an academic policy recommendation angle with applied business implications.

Tourism *per se* is a vast area, and I do not propose to address it in its totality here: that will simply be unfeasible. Rather, I shall focus on a narrow area thereof—narrowed down, both conceptually, and geographically, to have a close look at only a certain aspect of the subject, leaving the multitudes of other aspects for other researches by myself in the future, and hopefully many others. The conceptual area I would focus here would be: spiritual journeys, i.e. "pilgrimages" as a subject requiring logistics-management by tourism sector of business.

To draw insights on this subject, I shall focus, geographically, on three different cases from three different, geographically and culturally widely separated, parts of Asia: Madinah in West Asia, Sylhet (Bangladesh) in South Asia, and Surabaya/Ampel (Indonesia) in East Asia.

While vastly different geographically and culturally, three cases have a common quality that makes them comparable in the same study: all of them are focal points of spiritual journeys by Muslim devotees who see their journeys as "pilgrimage" with virtue and other-worldly rewards—together with possible worldly benefits through spiritual blessings, e.g. "changing fate by prayers" as suggested by the Prophet. I shall not delve in to religious propriety or otherwise of visiting these places for such reasons—that is a matter for experts in the religious doctrines to discuss in papers devoted to that. I shall just take the given fact that large number of people visit these places to Madinah to a vastly greater degree than the other two with such or similar intentions, and that, this creates a situation where tourism sector business management issues, e.g. temporary accommodation, traffic control, health and sanitation issues, costs of services, transportation, etc. arise and need proper policy-formulation to deal with them. Working on these given secular facts, I shall try to discuss some of the issues that arise as such, in brief and make recommendations, both for empirical research, and government and business policies.

Being a paper as such, this will be a ground-breaking, pioneering if very rudimentary and simple work in the fields of Business Administration, Management, and Tourism. It will be a multidisciplinary work dealing with some issues related to tourism policies affecting what might be termed as the "religiously motivated" genre of tourism in Asia in particular, with possible implications for the same in general worldwide.

2. Literature Review

Like all ground-breaking, pioneering work – the work for this paper also found hardly any existing literature in the fields available to draw from. There is nothing, so to say, theoretically or conceptually on this in the literature. There is some rudimentary, fragmented information available on the sites noted – Madinah, Sylhet and Ampel (Surabaya), not quite conceptually related by the presenters of the information, to our conceptual focus here. We shall try to build on that, feeding that with this author's own personal expert observations of the phenomenon at the three locations. Much of the insight will be drawn through the Participation-Observation Research Methodology used as one of the classic methods in Anthropology. These observations were made and academically worked upon through repeated visits to the sites along with pilgrims-over more than 30 occasions over almost 20 years in case of Madinah, 30 years (bust on much lesser number of occasions) in case of the Sylhet Dargah, and few occasions over about 3 years in case of Surabaya's Ampel.

A review of whatever little, fragmentary, published literature I shall try to draw upon may be summed up into a rather short annotated list of titles, given below:

- a) Bill Bramwell and Bernard Lane (eds.), *Tourism Collaboration and Partnerships/ Politics, Practice and Sustainability* ("Aspects of Tourism" Series; Channel View Publications, 2003). Discusses diverse aspects of sustainable tourism – though not tourism-industry related aspects of religious journeys like "*ziyarah*". Insights from the various aspects of sustainability of tourism in general that this edited book discusses, covering areas as far apart as the Americas and Oceania, may be related to the subject of this paper.
- b) John Swarbrooke, *Sustainable Tourism Management* (CABI Publishing, 1999). While not discussing sustainability with reference to tourism-industry related aspects of religious journeys—"ziyarah" the book, nevertheless discusses many relevant aspects of sustainability in tourism in general. These can be related to *ziyarah* journeys. Some of the aspects discussed are controversial, and hence thought-provoking and thereby contributing to further research which too could be related to *ziyarah*-related tourism sustainability.
- c) Rob Harris, Peter Williams Tony Griffin (Eds.), *Sustainable Tourism* (2002) (Oxford, Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2002). This book discusses various aspects of sustainable Tourism, though not anything on sustainability of tourism sector related aspects of religious journeys. The aspects discussed in the book may be generally related to sustainability of tourism sector related aspects of religious journeys, and hence is useful—even if very marginally for the research for the present paper.
- d) David Edgell Sr., *Managing Sustainable Tourism: A Legacy for the Future* (N.Y.: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2006). While discussing sustainable tourism in a wide social, cultural, economic, political, and ecological context, and this book unrelated to religious journeys *per se* nor to the specific sites focused on in this paper. Nevertheless, insights from the book may be usefully related to the research for this paper in a general manner.
- e) V.T.C. Middleton, "Toward Sustainable Tourism-A Marketing Perspective",

Journal of Vacation Marketing 2 (2), 102-105 (1996). An article published as an editorial for the *Journal*, later developed in to a book (see below), is not directly relevant to the topic of this paper. But it sheds lights on aspects of marketing of such tourism-related facilities which may be related to the focus of this paper—sustainability of tourism-industry related aspects of religious journeys. In that sense, it is found useful for the present research.

- f) V.T.C. Middleton, *Toward Sustainable Tourism: A Marketing Perspective* (Wallingford, UK, 1997). This book does not focus—nor even touches upon the main theme of this paper, sustainability of tourism industry-related religious journeys, but is still relevant to the subject, as it does cover some general aspects of tourism sustainability relatable to the subject.
- g) M.J. Stabler, *Tourism and Sustainability: Principles to Practice*, (Wallingford, United Kingdom: CAB International, 1997). This practically relevant book on sustainable tourism, and contains some insight that may be generally related to the subject of this paper—sustainability for tourism-related aspects of business administration for religious journeys.
- h) David Weaver, *Sustainable Tourism: Theory and Practice* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005). A very useful book in terms of theoretical formulation on sustainable tourism in general. May be theoretically and generally related to the focus of the present research—sustainable tourism-sector aspects of religious journeys. However, no discussion of specifically religious journeys, or of the specific sites to be—Madinah, Surabaya and Sylhet discussed in this paper.
- i) Lars Aronsson, *The Development of Sustainable Tourism* (London: Continuum, 2000). An interesting study that engages in a time-space analysis assessing the environmental impacts resulting from tourists travelling from home to tourist areas that contrasts with much of the literature on sustainable tourism that focuses largely on impacts in tourist destinations only. Though not focusing on the subject of this paper, general insights from the book may be usefully related to some aspects of the subject of this paper—even if marginally.
- j) Bill Bramwell, *The Geographical Journal*, September 1, 2004. An interesting review article which has some ideas which might be generally related to the subject of this present paper. The article reviews the book by Lars Aronsson, *The Development of Sustainable Tourism* (London: Continuum, 2000) (see above).
- k) Shyam Mehta, *Spiritual and Religious Journey* (Adobe e-Books, n.d.). A philosophical-theoretical look into religious journeys in general—controversial in some aspects—but, nevertheless, generally relatable to the subject of this research. It does not discuss the specific focus of this paper – *ziyarah* to Madinah, Surabaya and Sylhet however.
- l) Clinging smith, D., Kawaka, A. And Kremer, M. (2008) “Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam’s Global Gathering”, [online], *Harvard Kennedy School of Government*, <http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP08-022>. Not exactly on the theme of this paper, but has a very little portions which give some insights which can be related to this paper's work.

- m) Berg P. Hyacinth, "Warning to Information Operations Planners: Ignore the information-seeking patterns and the legal protection of Information Warfare victims in the Middle East at your peril", University de Paris-Assays School of Law, CERSA-CNRS, France, Info sense Technologies and Research, Inc., USA, bph02@infosensing.com. Not exactly on the theme of this paper, but has a very small portions which give some insights which can be related to this paper's work.
- n) BBC, World News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3391833.stm. A factual description of a case of planned violence at the Sylhet *Dorgan*.
- o) Environmental Health Network, <http://users.lmi.net/wilworks>. Discusses odour-pollution related environmental health issues.
- p) Toxicology and Carcinogenesis Studies of Methyleugenol NTP Technical Report on the Toxicology Carcinogenesis Studies of Methyleugenol (CAS NO. 93152) IN F344/N RATS AND B6C3F 1 MICE (GAVAGE STUDIES) July2000 NTP TR491NIH PublicationNo. 00-3950, <http://ehis.niehs.nih.gov/ntp/docs/tr491/tr491abs.pdf>. Discusses environmentally induced cancer possibilities which may be related to environments perfumed by synthetic perfumes, such as objects religious tourism.
- q) A.A. Rahman, *Sickness in the Air: Globalising Environmental Law for Every Day Life & Business* (2007, forthcoming). A detailed discussion and analyses of perfume related odour pollution as a public health hazard, which may be related to the perfumed environments at holy, pilgrimage sites discussed in this paper.
- r) Betty Bridges, *Fragrance Products Information Network*, <http://www.fpinva.org> Includes discussion and analyses of perfume-related odour pollution as a public health hazard, which may be related to the perfumed environments at holy, pilgrimage sites discussed in this paper.
- s) Stephen Herman, Natural perfumes in *Drug & Cosmetic Industry*, May 1996 v158. Includes discussion of perfume-related issues, which may be related to the perfumed environments at holy, pilgrimage sites discussed in this paper.
- t) Laszlo P. Somogyi, Birgitta Rhomberg, Yasuhiko Sakuma, *Aroma Chemicals and the Flavor and Fragrance Industry, Chemical Economics Handbook*. Includes discussion of perfume-related issues, which may be related to the perfumed environments.
- u) Jennifer Westwood, *On Pilgrimage: Sacred Journeys Around the World* (Mahwa, N.J: Hidden Spring, Henry, Holt & Company, 1997). Though not exactly on the *ziyarah* category of neither religious journey, nor relating to the specific places of pilgrimage focused upon in this paper—the book nevertheless discusses aspects which may be usefully related to the research for this paper.
- v) Mohamed Amin, *Journey of a Lifetime-Pilgrimage to Makkah* (Interlink Publishing). This is a mainly a collection of photographic records a pilgrimage which, while named after Makkah, also includes a *ziyarah* to Madinah—by a photographer who was among the first ever to be given permission to photograph sections of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah—the major site included in the focus of this paper. Though not a research or

academic work, this book helps to visualize and get a feel of some aspects of the religious journey at the focus of the present research, and hence usefully relevant to this paper.

There are other titles which could be very remotely and related to one or other aspect of this paper, but as said at the very outset of this section, "the work for this paper hardly found any existing literature in the fields available to draw from". This paper is pioneering first step towards much more research on this topic for the time being, drawing much on original participatory-observation research notes, and little rudimentary fragments relatable to this paper.

3. Discussion

Ziyarah is special kind of pilgrimage, dedicated to visit holy sites associated with the holy lives and missions of holy persons of the past, mainly for "*salam*" ("greetings"- paying respect) to the holy person, hoping God's blessings as a reward for such acts of virtue towards His devotees like the holy persons, refreshing one's commitment to live by the ideals of their religious missions for spiritual enlistment, and partake of the *barakah* ("grace) associated as a gift from God, with their mission, person, place of activity or rest. These terminologies used here are taken from those usually attached to the three sites chosen for this study. At other places, in other religious traditions-e.g. Christian, Buddhist or Hindu-other terms might be used for essentially the same, or similar concepts.

The three sites chosen for this study - Madinah (Saudi Arabia), Ampel at Surabaya (Indonesia) and Sylhet (Bangladesh) are amongst major *ziyarah* sites in Southern Asia stretching from West Asia, through South Asia, on to Southeast Asia. Madinah is *ziyarah* site par excellence, and of global fame and importance. The Sylhet Dargah is the most important *ziyarah* site in its host nation-Bangladesh, and arguably possibly the second or third most visited *ziyarah* site in South Asia Ampel in Surabaya is the most important and most-visited *ziyarah* site in its host nation, Indonesia, and perhaps throughout Southeast Asia.

The *ziyarah* at Madinah is focused on visiting the "Prophet's Mosque" at the very heart of the city of Madinah-a visit to, and prayers in which were encouraged by the Prophet, Muhammad. Upon visiting the Prophet's Mosque, visitors visit the Prophet's resting place-placed within the Mosque-for *salam* (greeting, paying respect), as in accordance with the "*Sunnah*" ("customs") taught by the Prophet. The *ziyarah* to the Sylhet Dargah-"Dargah of Shah Jalal", as it is referred to in full-is focused on visiting the vast Mosque compound comprising the site where the great *Shaykh* Jalal had vanquished a polytheist, sorcerer-aided, oppressive king few centuries ago in the city of Sylhet. On their visit, the visitors visit *Shaykh* Jalal's resting place, within the Mosque compound for *salam* (greeting, paying respect), as in accordance with the "*Sunnah*" ("customs") taught by the Prophet. The *ziyarah* to Ampel in Surabaya is focused on visiting the vast Mosque compound comprising the site where the great *Shaykh* and Sultan, Raden Rahmat, normally referred to as "Sunan Ampel", had a few centuries ago successfully endeavored to transform a

mainly polytheistic, sorcery-ridden society into monotheist and freer one. On their visit, the visitors visit *Sunan Ampel's* resting place, within the Mosque compound-for *salam* (greeting, paying respect), as in accordance with the "*Sunnah*" ("customs") taught by the Prophet.

This is a basic sketch of the *ziyarah* at these three sites-quite similar, and that of the two latter-mentioned sites are modeled on the *ziyarah* at Madinah. There might be other religious activities involved, but this minimal is the core of the pilgrimage model at work in all these three sites.

Now, as times change fast, with advent of fast transports, increase in income, exacerbation of stress and anxiety, and other related factors, sociological circumstances of *ziyarah* have fast and drastically changed-as in Madinah or , apparently are about to do so as in Sylhet and Ampel. As *ziyarah*-related business dimensions emerge as an important sub-sector of tourism sector of business, business administration experts, leaders and personnel need to be aware of the problems that are posed in this area. We shall now engage in a discussion thereof.

The first and foremost point to consider is that numbers of pilgrims have increased, or going to be increased-not tenfold but thousands fold. And that generates many actual and or potential problems. Thus, for example, consider a Harvard University research project report, which notes:

"Every year, more than two million Muslim men and women from over a hundred countries gather in Mecca to undertake the Hajj pilgrimage. Although the Hajj takes place on five specified days each year, pilgrims often spend a month engaged in prayer and ritual in Mecca and Madinah. Pilgrims mix across the lines of ethnicity, nationality, sect, and gender that divide them in everyday life and affirm a common identity by performing the same rituals and dressing in similar garments that emphasize their equality" (Kwaja and Kremer, 2008).

Two million! That means, after and or before the 5 days of the yearly Hajj, a population the size of the whole of most cities of the world, converge on Madinah, until very recently a town as small as just a neighbourhood bloc in a large American city or even Indonesian one like Jakarta. And that is not only once a year-during the Hajj season as the quotation may seem to imply. More or less goes no throughout the year-season after season, for example, during the entire month of *Ramadhan*, shortly after the Hajj. And then, during the innumerable "*umrah*"-times, which continue thereafter, until the Hajj season comes returns.

While this is the picture of a spiritual journey *site par excellence*, similar exacerbation of popular advent seems to be taking place in other sites, e.g. the Sylhet Dargah and Ampel in Surabaya as well, though on a comparatively much smaller scale. The scale notwithstanding, the phenomenon remains the same qualitatively: fast, exhilarated exacerbation of popular advent to such sites which, historically, were not geared for such mass arrival. All such sites were, until recent past, visited by relatively few, spiritually trained or oriented, monk-like persons-each arriving perhaps only once in a life-time. They often stayed a

day or two, often in the yard of the focal mosque or shrine, hardly requiring any hotels or accommodation to rent. Often such journeys involved fasting as penance or acts of virtue, the devotees opening their fasts with holy water and the simplest meal they would often bring along or prepare themselves requiring no or very little of restaurants to eat at. As relatively fewer people arrived, sanitation and health or epidemic were not much of an issue. Crowd itself was much lesser, and arrivals being usually with previous spiritual training in self-control and compassion to others unruly mob-behavior and associated problems, too, were not much of an issue to worry of.

All that has changed with the advent of massive arrival of people of all walks and spiritual levels of training—from the ones with none at all to the advanced bringing along problems of accommodation, food, costs, law and order, security, hygiene and health, and stress. The scale as said—of course is vastly different, but the direction of the developments in these areas is the same. What already posed as vast problems in Madinah, though happily enough commendably handled by the Saudi Government is already showing signs of becoming bigger problems in future, in Sylhet and Surabaya.

3.1. Peace-Keeping

Problems that might arise for this fast and vast change in the circumstances of the religious sites could be many. One of them would be possible deterioration of law and order situation, and keeping peace at the sites where pilgrims come in search of inner peace in the first place. Stress, arrival of large numbers of people seeking religious blessings but not trained in religiously ordained etiquettes and patience, and over all vast numbers concentrated in one place where most are strangers to each other and to the locals as well may allow opportunities for petty but many inflammable brawls and conflicts, as well as for criminals or other sorts of violent people to slip in. One could take the incident of an attack on the Muslim British High Commissioner paying a pilgrimatic visit to the shrine of Saint Shah Jalal in the town of Sylhet in 2008, as an illustrative case of potentials for law and order problems at such pilgrimage sites. Thus, to consider the incident, we may note the following report:

“About 30 people were injured, some critically; in the explosion Bangladesh police have held 24 people for questioning following a bomb attack on a shrine in the city of Sylhet on Monday that killed three people. The bomb, which injured around 30, went off during a festival at the shrine of Muslim saint Hazrat Shah Jalal”.

“A 14-year-old boy and an unidentified man died instantly and another man died later in hospital”.

“Shrine officials said up to 50,000 devotees had gathered for the three-day Urs Sharif festival”.

“Police said the explosion was the first act of violence at the 700 year old shrine in Sylhet, 192 kilometres north-east of the capital, Dhaka”.

“Soldiers moved in quickly and cordoned off the shrine as panic spread among the devotees”.

"No one has admitted the attack and authorities have launched an investigation".

"By Tuesday, police said activities at the shrine had returned to normal with hundreds of devotees reciting from the Koran and praying".

"The entire town is in a state of shock", teacher Shahadat Hossain told the Reuters news agency.

"We never imagined such things can happen here. This is a holy place".

"Doctors have said the death toll may rise as some of the injured are in a critical condition".

"Last month, the shrine suffered an attack on its fish-one of the top attractions". "About 500 fish were poisoned in a pond".

"Legend says that Hazrat Shah Jalal, who came from Yemen to preach Islam, transformed the evil followers of the local king into fish".

"Authorities are still investigating how the tropical fish died last month".

"A year ago, seven people died when a bomb was thrown at the shrine of another Muslim saint in north-western Tangail district" (BBC news).

What happened in this one incident the relatively smaller pilgrimage site of Sylhet, could and did – happen in other incidences, both in Sylhet, and in the other two sites observed in this study, the much larger Haram al Madinah, and smaller Ampel in Surabaya. That could be generalized to pilgrimage sites in general in the changing global circumstances.

To be sure, one might mention an incident, as a yet another illustrative example–this one from Ampel, Surabaya. In 2008, during the Holy Month of Ramadhan, a young man returning from a local mosque in Holy Ampel, was stabbed to death by ruffians trying to snatch his wallet. The lesson is that, in the changing circumstances, law and order is likely to become increasingly a problem in pilgrimage sites in general, and need to be specially attended to. And this, in a more subtle, gentle manner than normal keeping in mind the sacrosanctity attached to the sites, and the general popular expectations corresponding thereto.

In Madinah, very commendably, law and order situation is handled quite subtly but effectively at the Prophet's Mosque, with special batch of religiously trained persons dedicated to maintaining law and order in the holy precinct. In Sylhet Dargah and Surabaya's Ampel, this is not the case though, fortunately enough; law and order have generally remained at good levels until and except the recent stray but trend-indicative incidents. If the incidents are indeed indicative, then, law and order management at Sylhet and Ampel need to be upgraded, and the historic example of Madinah would be a good place to learn.

3.2. Pilgrims' Accommodation

Apart from peace-keeping, and perhaps more pressing in general, would be the problem of temporary accommodation for pilgrim visitors to these sites. This is a very pressing problem of great magnitude in case of Madinah, while at both Sylhet and Ampel it is still insignificant as a problem. But both Sylhet and Ampel also have to learn from the case of Madinah - how accommodation could

become very fast a big problem, and how it could be solved and what pitfalls may involve such solutions.

In Madinah, over the last decade or so, the old system of temporary pilgrims' accommodation in inn-like houses have been almost totally replaced by a host of very classy and hence expensive hotels surrounding the holy precinct, popularly referred to as "The Haram", i.e. the Mosque's building and its vast yards. These have been supplemented by a range of multistoried apartment buildings, slightly further removed from the immediate vicinity of the Mosque, and generally reserved for renting out to pilgrims-visitors at much higher rates than normal for such apartments.

These developments have solved many potentially serious problems related to over crowdedness and hygienic concerns. But, sadly though, they have also generated a couple of serious side effects, viz.: a) The pilgrimage occasions have become somewhat commercialized, apparently losing its earlier, pristinely spiritual character specially those who can afford the expensive hotels next to the mosque come from Western locations, from socio-cultural backgrounds where subtleties of etiquettes, attitudes and manners originally attached to *ziyarah*/pilgrimages are hardly taught, or taken in by normal acculturation; b) The mass of potential pilgrims often from poorer nations e.g. Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Somalia, etc, can no longer afford the *ziyarah* and even those from such places who still can afford, they often end up in the outer circle of pilgrim-accommodating apartment complexes, rather than in the immediate vicinity of the Haram. Unlike the visitors from "richer" nations like Canada, US, UK etc., pilgrims from these sources are often old and infirm and being forced to stay in that "outer circle", epigrammatic activities at the Haram is often hard on them.

We might, still, reiterate that despite these side-effects, the pilgrims' accommodation measures taken in Madinah are likely to solve some potentially serious problems in other areas, and the overall plan has added great external beauty to the whole area. Sylhet and Ampel might be seen as very timidly, slowly, and perhaps without consciously intending to do so-moving in a similar direction. Some modern hotels though much smaller and lesser in luxury than the big hotels by the Mosque in Madinah, have emerged in the vicinity of the Ampel holy site, and within the "Religious Precinct" surrounding it. Important to note is that "The Haram" at the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah as the "Sacred Precincts" there, and the "Religious Precinct" surrounding Ampel in Surabaya are not similar in one important respect: The Haram in Madinah does not include any residential or shopping quarters; the Religious Precincts of Ampel is full of them, as old residents of the area continue to live and carry on business in cramped quarters surrounding the Ampel Mosque and its immediate holy precincts including the "Sunan Ampel" *ziyarah*-sites. In any case, hotels are coming up as temporary accommodation for visitors in Ampel, though they have not yet taken over. Interestingly, Ampel does not have any elaborate system of inns for temporary pilgrim accommodation to be replaced by emerging system of hotels, like in Madinah.

The case with Sylhet, at least in this respect, is similar to that of Ampel/Surabaya. The new mayor of Sylhet, elected in 2008, has expressly

declared his interest and policy of developing the city as a centre of spiritual tourism, referring to the city as the “spiritual Capital” of his nation, Bangladesh. Surabaya, centred on Ampel, too is a sort of “Spiritual Capital” of Indonesia. Like in the case of Ampel, in Sylhet too, while hotels are emerging as places for temporary accommodation for visitors to the holy sites in Sylhet, they are still very few, and do not replace any pre-existing system of inns.

In the matter of pilgrims’ temporary accommodation, both Sylhet and Surabaya/Ampel may learn a couple of very important lessons from Madinah’s past and present experience: a) Not to surround the holy sites with highly commercial hotels; and b) Develop a system of inexpensive, homely, clean, basic inns.

Madinah’s pilgrimage accommodation business administrators have done away with the inns which were posing great hygiene and over-crowding related problems. Inns cannot be brought back there, practically speaking, as the place has already oven over, physically and financially, by the large hotel chains and apartment complexes. But Sylhet and Ampel/Surabaya have still the choice to develop the system of inns as a substitute for expensive and somewhat impersonal hotel and apartment complexes.

A healthy business sector can flourish thereby providing profit, as well as caring, passionate involvement, for the local residents in the vicinity, and even beyond in the cities of Sylhet and Surabaya. But in developing the inns system along the lines of bread and breakfast inns common in Europe, UK and America-these two cities would have the benefit of learning from the problems posed by the inns’ system in Madinah, for which the whole system had to or was replaced by the new hotel and apartments complex. Madinah’s inn-system had grown really without any prior planning, and hence with the oncoming of overcrowding in recent years-had, kind of collapsed under the problems it brought along. But in case of Sylhet and Surabaya, with prior planning and foresight based on the Madinah experience and systematic research on Sylhet and Surabaya’s circumstances, these problems can be prevented right from the beginning.

3.3. Health and Hygiene

As numbers of visitors increase many many-folds than the sites originally and initially were visited by, normal hygienic arrangements e.g. provision of toilet and bathing facilities, preventative and curative fights against vast numbers of individual cases as well as epidemics of ailments as “lesser” as flue and diarrhea to more serious ones, and pollution control tend to threaten the serenity and, even sustainability of pilgrimage as a tourism sub-sector.

In this area too, like in peace-keeping discussed earlier, the Madinah faced great potential problems, and Government in Madinah has taken great strides forward in commendable problem-solving though some areas of potential problems remain, here too, still, unattended. The situation at the Sylhet Dargah and Surabaya’s Ampel has not become as dismal as it could, and potentially may be with increased traffic of visitors in the future. For this reason, administration at Sylhet and Ampel may learn the principles applied at Madinah, to thwart any future problem. Some aspects of the solution from

Madinah required replication at the Sylhet Dargah and Surabaya's Ampel are:

- a) Enhance the general hygiene-supporting conditions in the locality of, and around the holy precincts. In Madinah it has been done to the highest levels of efficiency at great cost and this need to be done at Sylhet and Ampel as well. However, among the costs incurred in Madinah for this included a drastic doing away with the old quarters. In case of Sylhet and Ampel, it might be more advisable to avoid that course, as that takes away a considerable portion of the nostalgic attraction which draws the pilgrims to such sites in the first place;
- b) Provision of ample free medical services outlets at, and very near to the holy precincts. At The Haram in Madinah, this has been done at a very commendable level. Though some restrictions, e.g. occasional barring residents visiting the holy site from availing of the medical services at these outlets/clinics, sometimes become problematic as visitors to the holy site, when fallen sick at the site, suffer and need attention in the same way, irrespective of their technical status as "residents" or "visitors". The general system introduced and maintained at Madinah of ample free medical services outlet at the holy precinct itself, and around it needs to be introduced at the Sylhet Dargah and Surabaya's Ampel. Any restrictions on the basis of the technicality of status as "resident" or "visitors" would be advisable, if possible, to be removed and avoided at all the holy pilgrimage sites.

In the new, but very important area of macro-management in public health maintenance and promotion pollution control-apparently remains unattended at virtually all the three sites. The problem, in certain specific aspects, e.g. odour pollution and noise pollution to a lesser degree-threatens to become a serious one with long-run problems for the visitors, in the case of Madinah. In the other two cases-these have not yet become as great a problem, but, nevertheless remain potential problems which need to be thwarted even before they emerge through proper policies.

It may surprise many to know that, "odour" pollution at these sites are not from unpleasant odours. To the contrary, it is from pleasant odours exuding from synthetic perfumes sold and abundantly used at these sites. While the use of sweet-smelling perfumes is regarded a part of the virtuous aspects of the pilgrimage, it seems yet not well-known amongst the residents, perfume-sellers and visitors to the sites that much of the synthetic perfumes are produced as based on "artificial musk". This product, while smelling pleasant, is also very cheap for the perfume manufacturers-allowing those large profit margins as compared to the real, natural perfumes. As such, artificial musk-based synthetic perfumes are relatively much, much cheaper and thus not affordable and attractive to all at those sites. But researches in the West suggest these to cause immediate acute breathing and other problems amongst some, and set the process of developing lung cancer in the long-run.

Adequate legislation to totally ban such synthetic perfumes and strict enforcement of the ban is an urgent requirement in this cases at all the sites Madinah, Ampel and Sylhet. Noise pollution is yet another problem at overcrowded pilgrimage sites where visitors not only generate much noise by their interpersonal communication, but also may add further sounds through loud chanting ("*dhikr*"), and sermons on microphones and or loud voice

delivered to their own visitors' group, etc. While at Madinah this is somewhat controlled by an apparent policy of not allowing loud chanting and sermons of that sort by visitors at Ampel and Sylhet this may not be the case. Noise by interpersonal communication sometimes quite loud remains a problem, at many places in all the three sites. Nothing short of widespread and rigorous public education for and amongst the visitors, encouraging them to curtail their voices while at the holy precincts as a religiously required show of respect and etiquette ("adab"), may be sufficient to curtail this problem. Special booths may be set up, right at the entrance of these holy sites, to teach the incoming visitors such aspects of *adab* (etiquette).

Apart from spiritual virtue and *adab*, preventing noise pollution is also a serious health concern. New researches suggest human auditory mechanisms can normally take a certain level of sounds-sounds beyond that erode, over time, auditory capacities. Keeping this in mind as well, it might be advisable to relinquish the use of microphones and loudspeakers altogether in such places, and revert to former, traditional methods of reaching to large gatherings such as use of "*mukabbirs*" and breaking up of large audiences of learners into smaller groups.

4. Conclusions

On the basis of the above discussion, we may conclude the discussion with the following tentative, hypothetical conclusions relating to policy-possibilities in business administration for the emerging, religiously inspired sub-sector of tourism industry: a) A batch of religiously trained and sensitive volunteers or officials also trained in peace-keeping, as in place in Madinah Prophet's Mosque, might be a better instrument of maintaining law and order than normal police force or total or near total absence of any peace-keeping mechanism at all, as is the case with Surabaya's Ampel and Sylhet Dargah; b) A system of relatively inexpensive but clean and hygienically well-maintained and modernized inns within or attached to local family homes in the immediate vicinity of the holy sites rather than expensive hotel accommodation be developed, where still possible (e.g. in Ampel and Surabaya), as the main accommodation sector for *ziyarah*; c) Abundant public facilities for toilets, showers and ablution be developed in the immediate vicinity of the *ziyarah*-related compounds in Ampel and Sylhet, in emulation of the excellent arrangements for these already put in place at the *Masjid al-Nabawi ziyarah* site compound in Madinah; d) Legislative, executive and public education strategies be formulated and implemented to make and keep all the three *ziyarah*-sites totally free from all kinds of pleasant or unpleasant odour pollutants as smoking and artificial-musk based perfumes, which is a long-term serious health risk specially in Madinah; e) Public education be vigorously promoted to cut down on any forms of sounds or voices raised by pilgrims and others present at the *ziyarah*-sites.

5. Suggestion for Future Empirical Research

The conclusions reached in this basically conceptual paper, are based on subjective observations of objective facts, through a personal participation-

observation method. These conclusions could and if possible should be verified, negated, or corroborated for further policy-oriented utility through empirical research.

This research suggest, that task to begin with a survey-research quantitative analysis in the area of stress and law and order situation at the pilgrimage sites during their intense over-crowding in special times on the pilgrimage calendars, pilgrims' temporary accommodation, and health and hygiene circumstances with special focus on pollution triggered breathing related epidemics. This research would look forward to opportunities for engaging in such researches in the future, and invite any and all other researchers from various sectors to either themselves independently initiate such researches or join me in this noble task. Noble indeed, for its applied implications for contributing to greater good in these areas for people pilgrims and their local host societies-who are likely to be more tuned to goodness than the ordinary.

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