

'Our 'Boss' to worship by Us': youth and youth religiosity in a popular pilgrimage site in Sri Lanka

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Youth constitute a fascinating site for exploring issues of religious and non-religious behaviours, experiences and cultural transmission, in general. How sociologists and anthropologists have neglected the supporting and active role of young people within society has been abundantly emphasized. From this small but growing body of knowledge, it is clear that anthropology is particularly well situated to offer an account of how young people around the world produce, contest, and negotiate cultural forms. Following this line of argument my inquiry on youth participation in the Sri Pâda (Adam's Peak) pilgrimage is based on two basic anthropological and Sociological questions: what do young people do when they come to Sri Pâda? What do they say about their journey to Sri Pâda? By inquiring those questions I want to show how youth studies can provide crucial insights into our understanding both religious and non-religious behaviours of youth in the age of globalization.

The "youth pilgrims", like other pilgrims come to Sri Pâda to worship and to ask for help. But as I will explain in my paper, their "sacred" intentions are equally combined with the achievement of maximum pleasure. Both the pleasurable and the religious dimensions of these specific pilgrim groups have been explored through the accounts of personal experiences (e.g., through case studies and memories of pilgrims). These "youth pilgrims" visit Sri Pâda with different motivations and intentions, both "religious" and "secular". My point here is that both religious attainment and non-religious experiences are equally important when understanding the behavior of pilgrim groups in general and youth groups in particular, at a popular religious site like Sri Pâda.

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