

# A Comprehensive Study on Religious Tourism In Uttar Pradesh

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## ABSTRACT

A lot of people come to India to visit religious sites, and Uttar Pradesh's holy towns like Varanasi, Ayodhya, Mathura, and Prayagraj are very popular. There are many religious places in the state, such as churches, ghats, and pilgrimage centers, which draw people of all faiths.

Tourism encompasses the actions of individuals travelling to and dwelling in locations beyond their customary environment for a duration not exceeding one consecutive year, primarily for leisure, business, and other obligations unrelated to employment within the destination. Uttar Pradesh is a prominent state in India renowned for its religious tourism, characterised by its rich cultural traditions and the presence of significant rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, alongside various sacred sites including Varanasi, Vrindavan, Mathura, Sarnath, Chitrakoot, Ayodhya, Hastinapur, Allahabad, and Vindhyachal. Uttar Pradesh is home to numerous Hindu religious sites, notably Varanasi, renowned for its location along the Ganges River, Allahabad, celebrated for the confluence of the mythical rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, Mathura, recognised as the birthplace of Lord Krishna, and Ayodhya, famed as the birthplace of Lord Rama. Uttar Pradesh is renowned not just for Hinduism but also for Buddhism. Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Saraswati, the site of Lord Buddha's inaugural sermon, is among the most renowned Buddhist pilgrimage locations globally. Uttar Pradesh is renowned for its Islamic holy sites, particularly the mazaars of Sufi saints, such as Hazrat Salim Chisti at Fatehpur Sikri and Dewa Sharif in Lucknow, which are prominent destinations for religious tourism. This study emphasises religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh, along with its existing policies and framework centred on the region's sacred attractions. The paper emphasizes that the religious tourism industry generates revenue for the state through the provision of religious services, transportation, and accommodation. However, it cannot be overlooked that deficiencies in understanding, policy, management, infrastructure, regulations, and environmental and cultural sustainability hinder the industry's progress at religious tourism destinations.

**KEYWORDS:** Traditions, Religious, Tourism, Industry, Centered

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Religion

Travelling for religious purposes is a way to feel God's presence. The human race holds the belief that all things in our universe are defined and controlled by an unseen force that acts in accordance with its own volition. Many religious traditions are ways that people who believe in God show their devotion. The idea that energy can only be changed from one form to another, and not created or destroyed, is strongly related to their belief in God and Einstein's theory of conservation of energy.

Many writers have put forth different theories about the essence of religion and how it facilitates communication with the divine. Religion, according to Stewart Elliot Guthrie, is "an attribution of human traits to non-human entities or occurrences." According to "Mircea Eliade," the general public's belief in religion is an illusion that serves mainly to legitimise and sustain the current social order. That "Religion exists to assist individuals in comprehending occurrences influenced by unseen, hidden forces" is the central thesis of "Tayler and Frazor." Religion is associated with ideas that are beyond the scope of human understanding, according to a number of theories put out by different writers..

### Religious Tourism

A difficult task lies in defining religious tourism. Definitions of religious tourism have been offered by numerous researchers. Travelling to holy places for purposes like worship, missionary work, or leisure is known as religious tourism. Travelling with the main purpose of experiencing and studying religious places, activities, or the cultural goods they inspire—like art and traditions—is known as religious tourism. A subset of religious tourism is wellness tourism, which includes all forms of health and healing tourism.

As one of the world's most spiritually significant sites, India attracts a large number of religious tourists drawn by its many faiths, healing powers, and cultural variety. A religious person is someone who seeks meaning and harmony in this life, and religious culture has a well structured perspective on the universe. Religion, in its broadest sense, is the human pursuit of harmony and purpose, and all humans share this need to unite. Depending on one's culture and personality, the strength of an impulse might vary greatly. In 2006, Monisha Chattopadhyaya highlighted Tuan's work from 1976.

### **Religious Tourism in India**

Religious tourism in India relies on two factors: the conviction of domestic tourists in the religious significance of their chosen destinations and the interest of foreign tourists in experiencing the spirituality and uniqueness of these sites. Numerous tourists from around the globe visit India to experience the spirituality of its sacred sites; even individuals who are non-religious explore these locations to understand their significance. There exists a diverse concealed history surrounding religious sites that individuals, regardless of their faith, are eager to uncover.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To study the scope of Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh

### **FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM**

#### **To Preserve Ourselves from Danger**

Embarking on a religious pilgrimage serves as a safeguard against injury and suffering, as well as a means of addressing life's challenges. It is prevalent across many faiths to visit sacred sites as a method of accruing spiritual virtue; in Buddhism, such visits are a pathway to enlightenment. A primary characteristic of religious tourism is that it is prevalent across all faiths, with older individuals predominantly visiting sacred sites to seek absolution for the sins accumulated throughout their lives.

#### **In Order to Express Gratitude or Admit Their Offences**

Challenges are an inherent aspect of life; everyone of us encounters difficulties that may seem insurmountable. In such moments, we often seek divine assistance. Occasionally, we visit places of worship to show our appreciation to God for delivering us from significant challenges, to acknowledge our transgressions, and to pledge that we would not repeat those sins in the future.

#### **To Worship**

The majority of individuals typically frequent various religious sites to venerate God.

#### **To Hear the Teachings of Righteous People**

Aims to participate in sacred gatherings and to hear the teachings and discourses of revered individuals regarding faith and religious truths. In contemporary society, almost all religious pilgrimages serve as social congregations for like-minded adherents.

### **RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH**

Uttar Pradesh is recognised as the country of temples and religion, characterised by a diverse array of castes and cultures, and is renowned for its religious tourism. Uttar Pradesh is renowned not only for religious tourism but also for its geographical beauty. Uttar Pradesh is home to significant pilgrimage centres for all major religions, attracting numerous pilgrims from around the globe annually. Uttar Pradesh is a significant tourism destination for the Hindu religion, housing a majority of Hindu sacred sites.

### **RELIGIOUS TOURIST DESTINATION IN UTTAR PRADESH**

#### **Varanasi**

Since the 11th century B.C., Varanasi has been a city in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Hindu tourists come to the city to perform funeral rites and bathe in the holy waters of the Ganges River. The city is known as the spiritual capital of India. There are about 2,000 temples in the city's winding streets. Kashi Vishwanath, also known as the "Golden Temple," is dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva.

The city of Varanasi sits on the banks of the sacred Ganges River and is famous for its many bathing ghats, where devotees take a dip in the river to wash away their sins. After taking a dip in the Ganges River, the faithful also pay homage to Lord Shiva. Panchganga, Dashashwamedh, Assi, and the southernmost ghat are the most famous holy sites in Varanasi. The Ganga aarti at the southernmost ghat will leave an impression on you that will last a lifetime. Varanasi is famous for two things: the legendary Banaras Hindu University, which

played a key role in India's fight for independence, and the Kashi-Vishwanath Temple, which is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas in India.

### **Allahabad**

Prayagraj, which used to be called Allahabad, is a big city in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is the seat of government for the Prayagraj division and the Prayagraj district, which has the most people in the state and is the 13th most popular district in India.

Because it was there that many important turning points in Pakistan's history took place, Allahabad is a place steeped in historical narratives. Allahabad was formerly known as Prayag but was renamed Allahabad in 1575 by Mughal Emperor Akbar. Every twelve years, Allahabad plays host to the Kumbh Mela, the biggest Mela in the world. Along with Nashik, Ujjain, and Haridwar, it is considered a sacred venue for the Kumbh Mela. Hsuan Tsang, a famous Chinese traveler, described Allahabad as being a part of Harshavardhan's Empire; the city is famous for its Hindu traditions and culture.

### **Ayodhya**

Ayodhya is a sacred site in Uttar Pradesh where many Hindus and Jains believe that Lord Rama was born. The classic Indian epic Ramayana, which features the heroic figure Lord Rama from Hindu mythology, is associated with Ayodhya. According to popular belief, God created Ayodhya, and the first man in the universe, Manu, is said to have discovered it. There are seven major Hindu pilgrimage sites in India, and Ayodhya is one of them. Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya after vanquishing Ravana in battle is said to have been the birthplace of the world-famous celebration Diwali. Not only is the contentious Babri Mosque located in Ayodhya, but the city is also well-known as the birthplace of five Jain Tirthankars, making it notable in both the Hindu and Jain faiths. Many visitors to Ayodhya come to worship at the world-renown Hanuman Garhi temple, which was constructed by the Nawab of Awadh and depicts Ganga-Jamuni culture. Other popular temples in the area include Kanak Bhavan, Nageshwar Nath, and Mani Parvat, which is thought to represent a portion of the hill where Hanuman discovered Sanjeevanibooti.

### **Lucknow and Dewa Sharif**

A well-known Sufi pilgrimage place, Dewa Sharif is in the Barabanki area, about 25–42 km from Lucknow. It is famous for the tomb of the Sufi saint Haji Waris Ali Shah, who is praised for working for peace and friendship between all people. A lot of people from all over the world come to the Urs holiday and Dewa Mela every year, which happen in October and November.

Find out more about Lucknow and Dewa Sharif:

Hi, Dewa Sharif.

The most important place to see in Dewa Sharif is the shrine of Haji Waris Ali Shah.

Love, peace, and spiritual unity were important to the saint's lessons.

The Urs festival is a big event that happens every year. It lasts for 10 days and includes a fair, culture shows, and qawwalis.

The capital of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow is well-renowned for its Shia Islamic architecture and religious institutions, such as Sanskriti University and Nadwa College of Islamic Studies. The city is also known as the Nawab's city. Lucknow is a popular religious tourist destination with many temples and shrines.

### **Sarnath**

Sarnath, a tiny village close to the mouths of the Ganga and Gomti rivers, is among the holiest sites in all of India. The Pali canon bestowed the name "Isipatana," meaning "the place where holy men landed," on Sarnath, but the city has been known by many other names throughout history. Sarnath is one of the four major Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Legend has it that this is where Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon and taught the first dharma. Other legends have it that Kandanna attained enlightenment and the Buddhist Sanga came into being. As the eleventh Tirthankar of Jainism, Sarnath is very well-known to the Jain community.

### **FTA (FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVAL) IN UTTAR PRADESH**

Uttar Pradesh had a huge surge of tourists in 2022, with 24.87 crore people, including 4.10 lakh foreigners. Uttar Pradesh gets a lot of visits from people inside India, but Maharashtra and Gujarat get the most visitors from

other countries. The government's work to market different sites and projects, like building the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and a temple in Vindhyachal, has helped the state's tourist industry.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh are the top five tourism destinations in India, attracting approximately 70% of all international tourists. Uttar Pradesh ranks fourth in terms of the number of international tourists that visit India, accounting for almost 10% of the country's total. With 13.2 lakh arrivals in 2002 and 20 lakh in 2012, a surge of 50% year-over-year, the number of international tourists visiting Uttar Pradesh more than quadrupled between 2006 and 2012.

Uttar Pradesh's tourism industry is booming. According to the ASSOCHAM report "Realising Tourism Potential of Uttar Pradesh," the state has the potential to bring in more than 28 lakh international tourists by the year 2018. The state of Uttar Pradesh is quickly becoming a popular destination for tourists from around the world. As a result, the hospitality industry, including both public and private sector establishments, is booming, providing even more opportunities for businesses to make money.

Among the many tourist attractions in Uttar Pradesh, Agra ranks highest at 59%, followed by Allahabad at 18.5%, and Sarnath at 17%. With an estimated 220 million Indian visitors passing through the state in 2013, accounting for over 20% of 1.14 billion domestic tourists in India, Uttar Pradesh is second only to New Delhi as a location that draws domestic travellers.

Uttar Pradesh is seeing a rise in Buddhist tourism. Tourist numbers were predicted to reach 3.3 million by 2018, up from 2.7 million in 2013, thanks to popular destinations such as Kaushambi and Sravasti, Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Sankasia.

### **ECONOMY OF UTTAR PRADESH**

Uttarpradesh is home to nearly 240 million people and has the third-largest economy among Indian states. It is also the most populous state.

Uttar Pradesh grows more food grains than any other state in India. In 2016–17, it made up 17.83% of the country's total food grain output. The state made 49,903.1 thousand tonnes of food grains in 2016–17 and 51,252.7 thousand tonnes in 2017–18.[9] Rice, wheat, corn, millet (bajra), gram, peas, and lentils are some of the main food items grown in the state

India's Uttar Pradesh is a popular tourist spot. Varanasi, which is thought to be one of the oldest cities still inhabited, is a holy place for followers of Lord Shiva, and Agra is home to the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world. There were 317.91 million local tourists who came to the state in 2022.[10] Some of the towns that got the most visitors were Varanasi, Agra, Ayodhya, Mathura, and Prayagraj. More than 550 million people came to the 2025 Prayag Maha Kumbh Mela, which was expected to bring in ₹3.50 lakh crore in money.

Noida, Meerut, Kanpur Nagar, Agra, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Prayagraj, and Ghaziabad are some of the state's most important business hubs.

This city has grown thanks to the Yamuna Expressway. The government now wants Meerut to become the next industrial hub, and the Ganga Expressway should help make this happen.

Uttar Pradesh provides a lot of food grains for the whole country. The state made 5.81 crores (58.10 million tonnes) of food grain in FY 2020–21, which was 18.68% of the whole country's production. This is because some parts of the Indo-Gangetic plain are very fertile and there are a lot of well-developed ways to water the land, like rivers and tube wells. From the 1950s on, it has been India's main source of food grains. This is because it has high-yielding seed types, more fertilisers, and more irrigation.

The farming industry is more developed in western Uttar Pradesh than in other parts of the state. The main source of income for most people in the state is farming. Some of the most important crops grown are wheat, rice, beans, oilseeds, and potatoes. In the whole state, sugarcane is the most important cash crop. When it comes to gardening, Uttar Pradesh is one of the most important states in India. A lot of mangoes are grown in the state.[1] Foreign exchange is generated through tourism. The tourism business helps a country generate foreign currency without depleting its natural resources or selling tangible goods. Earnings from tourists outpace those from exporting commodities to other countries. Among India's states, Uttar Pradesh has the second-largest economy. The yearly economic growth rate in Uttar Pradesh was 5.2% from 2002 to 2007, rising to 7% from 2007 to 2012. However, there was a little decline in growth from 2012 to 2013, with rates of 5.9% and 5.1% respectively, ranking among the lowest in India. With a GDP per capita income of ₹48,520 (US\$760) in 2017–18, the state ranked 31st when compared to other states in terms of GDP growth, which was 16%. While the agricultural sector accounts for 23% of GDP and the industrial sector for 28%, the service sector accounts for

49% of GDP in Uttar Pradesh in 2017–18. In the fiscal year 2017–18, the state's revenue reached ₹ 3.20 lakh crore, or \$50 billion.

### **GOVERNMENT ROLE TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH**

- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has stated that Uttar Pradesh has sufficient potential to attract religious tourists. He made the claim that Uttar Pradesh has all the makings of a world-renowned tourist destination at a seminar put on by the state's tourism department.
- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has launched tourism department portal 'one-stop-travel solution'
- Our chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, made the announcement to connect the pilgrimage sites with helicopter services during a seminar of the Department of Tourism in an effort to develop Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh.
- Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, has announced plans to provide low-cost air connections between Agra, Allahabad, Varanasi, and Lucknow. Our chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, has proposed 500 tourist policies to improve the state's infrastructure and foster greater cooperation with travellers.
- With the goal of encouraging people to travel for religious reasons Kaushambi (Prayagraj) Airport is now operational; it was inaugurated during the Ardh Kumbh, a well-known tourist destination, and the Uttar Pradesh government has indicated that a second airport, following Jewar Airport in Noida, will be constructed there.
- The government of Uttar Pradesh has done a lot of effort in Ayodhya to encourage religious tourism, including: installing CCTV cameras, building a police post, renovating ghats (particularly Gupthughat, where Lord Ram had taken Samadhi), and constructing a guest home for tourists.
- To encourage pilgrims to visit Mathura for the Parikrama of Govardhan, the Uttar Pradesh government has announced plans to launch helicopter services.

### **ADVANTAGE OF TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH**

There are many benefits to tourism in Uttar Pradesh, such as economic growth, job creation, and culture protection. Attractions in the state, such as historical landmarks and religious places, bring in people from all over the world, which helps local economies and creates jobs.

#### **Tourism Helps in Earning Foreign Exchange**

A country can generate foreign currency through tourism without depleting its natural resources or sending any products abroad; all it has to do is give services to foreign tourists.

#### **Tourism Helps in Generating Employment**

A wide range of jobs, from those in gift shops and restaurants to those in hotels and travel agencies, are available in the tourism business, which employs people with varying degrees of education and experience.

#### **Tourism Helps in Preserving Cultural Heritage**

Travelling as a tourist allows many people from different parts of the globe to immerse themselves in a new culture. A nation's historic landmarks stand as a testament to its rich cultural history. Because they serve as a window into a nation's history and culture, heritage sites benefit from tourism, which helps keep them in good repair.

The development and upgrading of infrastructural amenities, such as roads, airports, water supply, lodging, hotels, restaurants, etc., is one of the most significant advantages of tourism.

In addition to being an essential component in the growth of cultural, regional, and social ties across all nations in the globe, tourism is crucial in fostering and improving ties between other nations.

## **II. CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of this paper is to examine "The scope of Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh." The research reveals that the state sees a large influx of pilgrims from all over the globe during religious festivals, fairs, and events held at its many holy sites. However, the study also notes that there are a number of obstacles that limit the expansion of this industry in Uttar Pradesh. The Uttar Pradesh government is confronted with numerous challenges that hinder the expansion of religious tourism. These include inadequate management, infrastructure, and development of religious tourism sites. Additionally, the state is vulnerable to terrorist attacks, climate change, food insecurity, political instability, and other similar issues.

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