

## A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism is the activities of societies traveling to and residing in places outside their usual atmosphere for not more than one successive year for relaxation, business and other commitments not related to the application of a movement waged from within the place stayed. If we talk about religious tourism, Uttar Pradesh is one of the most famous states in India which is famous for its religious and cultural customs due to presence of famous religious rivers like Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati along with various religious places like Varanasi, Vrindavan, Mathura, Sarnath, Chitrakoot, Ayodhya, Hastinapur, Allahabad, Vindhyachal etc. There are many religious sites of Hindus in Uttar Pradesh among which Varanasi situated on the bank of river Ganges is very famous, Allahabad is famous for its mythical river Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, Mathura, famous for the birthplace of Lord Krishna, Ayodhya, famous for the birthplace of Lord Rama is another famous religious destination. Uttar Pradesh is not only famous for Hindus religion but for Buddhists too. Sarnath- Kushinagar –Saraswati, the place where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon is one of the most famous Buddhist religious destinations in the world. In terms of Islamic religious destination, Uttar Pradesh is famous for mazaars of Sufi saints, HazratSalimChisti at Fatehpur Sikri, Dewa Sharif in Lucknow are a famous religious tourist destination. This paper highlights the religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh, its current policy and framework which is based on religious sites of Uttar Pradesh. The paper highlights how religious tourism industry generates revenue to the state by providing religious services, transport facilities, accommodation service, etc. but it can't be ignored that due to lack of proper understanding, inadequate policy, proper management, proper infrastructure, absence of rules and regulation and proper environmental and cultural sustainability at place of religious tourism destination religious tourism industry is lacking behind.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Religious Tourism, Proper Infrastructure, Religious and Cultural Customs, Buddhist Religious Destination, Islamic Religious Destination, Hindus Religious Destination*

### INTRODUCTION

#### Religion

Religious tourism tells us about the existence of God. As human beings we believe that there is a supernatural power that defines and operates everything in this universe according to his/her own will. The people who believe in God express their devotion towards God through various religious practices. They believe in God is very much related to

Einstein law of conservation of energy which tells us that energy can neither be created nor be destroyed only can be changed from one form to another.

Religion is a way to communicate with God, many authors have given different-different theories of religion as “Stewart Elliot Guthrie” defines religion as “Religion is an attribute of human characteristics to non-human things or events,” “Mircea Eliade” defines “Religion is an illusion whose chief purpose is to provide reason and an excuse to keep society functioning as it is, religion is opinion of the masses” “Taylor and Frazor” defines “Religion exists in order to help people make sense of events on unseen hidden forces”.

Through various theories given by many authors explains that religion tells us about the thing which is beyond our understandings.

### **Religious Tourism**

Defining religious tourism is not an easy job. There are many authors who have given numerous definition of religious tourism. Religious tourism sometimes called faith tourism is tourism where people travel to unleash the power of religious places with the purposes of pilgrimage missionary or leisure,

Religious tourism involves traveling with a core motive of experiencing and exploring religious places, forms, or the products religious places induce like art, traditions, culture, wellness tourism (health and healing) is also considered as a part of religious tourism.

Religious tourism is mainly focused on destinations that have numerous religious links are well known for healing and spiritual powers and has diverse culture, India has been among highly spiritual places in the world.

“The religious person is one who seeks coherence and meaning in this world and religious culture is one that has a clearly structured world view. The religious impulse is to tie things together-All human being is religious religion is broadly defined as the impulse for coherence and meaning. The strength of impulse varies for enormously from culture to culture and from person to person,”-Tuan (1976, in Monisha Chattopadhyaya, 2006)

### **Religious Tourism in India**

Religious tourism in India depends on two aspects, first is the faith of domestic tourist who believes on the religious destination they visit and second is the foreign tourist who visits a particular religious destination in order to experience the spirituality, novelty of the religious places. Many tourists from all over the comes to India to experience the spirituality of holy place in India even the people who are non-religious visits these holy places to know about the importance of these places. There is a various hidden history behind the religious places which everyone wants to know whether the person is religious or non-religious.

A study conducted by Lokniti at Delhi-based center for the study of Developing Society (CSDS) finds that one of two Indians plans to visit the religious tourist destination in the next two year and many people are doing so in the past two years. In the year 2015 a study conducted by Lokniti on “Religious attitude, behavior and practice” shows that in all religious major section of the population have visited religious tourist destination in the past two years and one of two Indians are planning to visit the religious destination in the next two years. This shows that there is a vast opportunity in the growth of religious tourism in India in future. The rise of faith in religion in the country will increase the religious

tourism in the country in the coming year, various study has shown that more than 25% people in India have moved towards religious faith in the last 4-5 years. Among all tourists destination, religious places are on the top to attract tourist towards them.

According to the State of National Study Conducted by Lokniti in 2008 found that 39% of respondent preferred holy sites for their vocation. The NSSO report shows that the expenditure on religious trips has shown significant growth during these periods and is on the second rank in terms of household's person who visits these religious tourist destinations. According to these studies, it can be concluded that religious tourism in the country will grow at a rapid speed in the coming years.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To study the scope of Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh

## **FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM**

### **To Celebrate Certain Religious Events**

Every religion have some or other myths and rituals linked with it which the believers believe and have faith on it, many stories are written and documented in our mythologies which tells the history of every religion like the time when Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya, the date on which Jesus Christ was born, Lord Krishna was born, on the date when Prophet Mohammad was born in order to celebrate these events the religious people visit religious places.

### **To Save or Protect Our Self from Harm and Distress**

Going on a religious trip is a way to protect from harm, distress or to rescue from any problem in life, it is very common in all religion to visit a religious place is a means of gaining religious merits, in Buddhist a visit to a religious place is a way to enlightenment. One of the main features of religious tourism is that it is common in all religion that older people mostly visit religious place in order to make them free from all the sins they have committed during their whole life.

### **To Offer Thanks or To Except Their Sins**

Problems is a part of life every one of us have faced such problems in life when we think that now it is not possible to come out of this problem at that stage we always turn to God and ask for help. Sometimes we

Visit religious place in order to express our gratitude towards God from saving us from some huge problems or to except our faults or sins and to promise that in future that sins will not be repeated.

### **To Worship**

Most of us usually visit some religious places to worship God. Muslim visit holy place of Mecca, Jews visit the holy place of Jerusalem, and Hindu visit four Dhams as a holy place in order to get moksh.

### **To Listen To the Sayings of Holy People**

Religious travel is for the purpose of being a part of holy meetings and listen to the sayings of holy people giving knowledge and speech about religious faith and facts. In the present world, nearly all the religious tour is for a social gathering of fellow believers.

## RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH

Uttar Pradesh is known as the land of temples and religion, Uttar Pradesh is full of different casts and communities and known for its religious tourism. It's not just for religious tourism Uttar Pradesh is famous for it is also famous for its geographical beauty. Talking about religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh one can find all major religion pilgrimage center in Uttar Pradesh, these religious tourist destinations attract many pilgrimages from all over the world every year. Uttar Pradesh is a very important tourist destination for Hindus religion majority of Hindu religious tourist places are found in Uttar Pradesh.

Allahabad situated on the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati is famous for its Kumbh Mela which takes place every 12 years attracts millions of tourist from all over the world towards it. Mathura the birthplace of Lord Krishna, Ayodhya the birthplace of Lord Rama and Varanasi situated on the bank of river Ganges is the famous religious tourist destinations among the followers of all the sects of Hinduism. Uttar Pradesh is not only known for Hinduism tourist destination but also for Buddhist also the famous Sarnath-Khushinagar-Shravast is among the most famous Buddhist pilgrimage site in the world. The place where the first sermon given by Lord Buddha after he got enlightenment is in Sarnath, Talking about Islamic religion Uttar Pradesh is known for its shrines of Barelvi Sufi order, Dewa Sharif near Lucknow, HazratSalimChisti at FatehpurSikri near Agra, during Urs of Sufi Saints thousands of Muslim pilgrims visits these place every year.

## RELIGIOUS TOURIST DESTINATION IN UTTAR PRADESH

### Varanasi

Varanasi situated on the bank of river Ganga is famous for its several Ghats for bathing on the bank of river Ganga, with the believe that after taking bath in the river Ganga God will forgive all the sins which a person had done in his/her life. The religious people also pay their respect to Lord Shiva after taking bath in the river Ganga. The various attracting religious sites in Varanasi are, PanchgangaGhat, DashashwamedhGhat, AssiGhat and Southernmost Ghat where Ganga aarti will leave a life-time impression on your mind. Varanasi is also famous for Kashi-Vishwanath temple which is among the twelve Jyotirlingas in India and a very famous Banaras Hindu University which has its own history in India's Independence movements.

### Allahabad

Allahabad is a place of great historical stories as it witnesses many historical moments in the history of the country, earlier it was known as Prayag in 1575 when Mughal emperor Akbar came to Prayag he named it Allahabad which was later renamed as Allahabad. Allahabad is famous for its world's largest Mela known as Kumbh Mela which is held in every 12 years, it is also among the four religious destinations where KumbhMela is held the other three destinations are Nashik, Ujjain and Haridwar. Allahabad is a place of famous Hindu culture and tradition one can find the name of Allahabad in travel account of Hsuan Tsang a famous Chinese traveler who described Allahabad as a part of Harshavardhans Empire. The famous religious place in Allahabad is the Triveni Sangam which is a confluence of three river Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, many devotees from all over the world take bath here in order to get rid of their sins. Allahabad is also famous for Khusrobagh, Allahabad fort, the 35 ft. tall Ashoka pillar and Jodhabai palace inside the fort.

**Mathura-Vrindavan**

One of the most famous places of Hindu mythology's which is known as birthplace of Lord Krishna. According to Hindu mythology's, it is said that Krishna Janmbhoomi temple is currently located at the center of the place where Lord Krishna was born in Brij-Bhoomi, and it is believed that Lord Krishna had spent his childhood and adolescence in the area of Braj in Mathura-Vrindaban. Mathura situated on the bank of river Yamuna is also famous for its several Ghats it is one of the popular pilgrimage sites of India and is also famous for its prison cell called "GarbhaGriha" Chowk Bazaar and sweetly called Mathura Peda.

**Ayodhya**

Ayodhya is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama and is a popular religious place in Uttar Pradesh. Ayodhya is famous for its great Indian Epic Ramayana associated with Lord Rama a great Hindu mythology's heroic character. Ayodhya is believed to be found by the first men in the universe named Manu and is also believed that it was built by God. Ayodhya is among the seven most popular pilgrimage sites for Hindus in India. The famous festival Diwali was originated in the city of Ayodhya on occasion when Lord Rama returned home after defeating Ravana in the battle. Ayodhya is not only famous for Hindu religion but for Jain also as it is the birthplace of five Tirthankars, the famous disputed Babri Mosque is also in Ayodhya. The famous Hanuman Garhi temple, built by Nawab of Awadh which describe Ganga-Jamuni culture, the KanakBhavan temple, the NageshwarNath temple, the Mani Parvat which is believed that part of the hill on which Hanuman found Sanjeevanibooti are the major religious tourist destination in Ayodhya.

**Chitrakoot**

Chitrakoot is known for its natural beauty and it gets its name from its natural beauty. Chitrakoot is a part of both Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, it is famous for its Rajapur the birth place of Goswami Tulsidas on the bank of river Yamuna, Hanuman Dhara, Kamadgiri hill, River Mandakini, Bharat koop, it is also believed in Hindu mythology that Lord Rama stayed here for about 11 years for which Chitrakoot is famous for

**Lucknow and Dewa Sharif**

Lucknow is known as the city of Nawab's and is a capital of Uttar Pradesh is famous for Shia Islamic architecture and religious study by Nadwa College of Islamic studies and Sanskriti University. There is various religious destination found in the city of Lucknow, Baba NeemKarauri's Hanuman temple, Kalibari temple, Chandrika Devi temple and Mankameshwar temple a famous Deva Sharif a Shrine of Sufi Saint Sayed Haji Waris Ali Shah are the famous religious tourist destination in the city of Lucknow.

**Sarnath**

Sarnath is just a small village but is one of the most famous religious places in India situated near the confluence of river Ganga and Gomti. Throughout the history, Sarnath is known by several names the most famous among them was "Isipatana" which means "the place where holy men landed" this was the name given by Pali canon. Sarnath is among the four main Buddhist pilgrim destination and is famous for its believe that Gautam Buddha first taught dharma and deliver his first sermon in Sarnath, it is also believed that Sarnath is a place where Kandanna got enlightenment and Buddhist Sanga came into existence. Sarnath is also famous for Jains as the eleventh Tirthankar of Jainism. The DhamekStupa at

128 ft. which is a reminder of the ancient eraChaukandiStupa established by emperor Ashoka, Ashoka pillar, the Sarnath Archaeological Museum is the oldest museum of the Archaeological survey of India are the famous place in Sarnath.

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

The top five destinations that attract nearly 70% of tourist among all the destination of foreign tourist visiting India are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. According to various surveys, it is shown that Uttar Pradesh is on the fourth rank which attracts about 10% of total foreign tourist arrival in India. During the year 2006-12 the foreign tourist, arrival has increased by 1.5 times that is in the year 2002 the foreign tourist arrival in Uttar Pradesh was 13.2 lakh which increases to 20 lakh in the year 2012 showing the growth of 50% during the year.

With the growth of tourism in Uttar Pradesh ASSOCHAM study on 'Realising Tourism Potential of Uttar Pradesh,' has found that Uttar Pradesh can attract over 28 lakh foreign tourist by 2018. Uttar Pradesh is now becoming a hub of foreign tourist arrival, with the growth of the tourism sector the hospitality sector both private and public level is also increasing which is a source of generating revenue.

The three most attracting tourist destinations in Uttar Pradesh are Agra (59%), Allahabad (18.5%), and Sarnath (17%). Uttar Pradesh is on the second rank of attracting domestic traveler towards tourists destination, it is estimated that over 220 million Indian tourists visited Uttar Pradesh in the year 2013 that showed a share of about 20% of 1.14 billion domestic tourist visited all over India.

Buddhist tourism is increasing in Uttar Pradesh. The places like Kaushambi and Sravasti, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Sankasia, attracted nearly 2.7 million tourists in 2013with a CAGR of 5% and it was expected to rise to 3.3 million by 2018.

### **ECONOMY OF UTTAR PRADESH**

Tourism is the source of earning foreign exchange. Tourism is an industry that without exhausting its natural resource and without exporting any material good help to earn foreign exchange for the country. The income by tourism is at a higher rate than by exporting any goods to othercountry. The second largest economy of India is the economy of Uttar Pradesh. In 2002 to 2007 the annual economic growth in Uttar Pradesh is 5.2% which increases to 7% in the year 2007 to 2012 but there is slightly downfall in the economic growth in the year 2012-13 which is 5.9% and 5.1% one of the lowest in India. In the year 2017-18, the GDP growth is 16% and GDP per capital income is ₹ 48,520 (US\$760) in 2017-18 which is on 31<sup>st</sup> rank in per capital income compares to other states. The contribution of Agriculture sector to GDP is 23% whereas Industrial sector contribution is 28%, the highest contribution to the GDP of Uttar Pradesh is from service sector which is 49% as per the year 2017-18. The revenue generated in the state is ₹ 3.20 lakh crore(US\$ 50 billion) in the year 2017-18

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

- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that there is enough potential in Uttar Pradesh to promote religious tourism in the state. In a seminar organized by Uttar Pradesh tourism department, he said that Uttar Pradesh is having anal the resource which can make Uttar Pradesh a famous tourist destination.
- Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has launched tourism department portal 'one-stop-travel solution'

- In order to promote Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh, our chief minister Yogi Adityanath during a seminar of the Department of Tourism has announced to link the pilgrimage sites with helicopter services.
- Yogi Adityanath chief minister of Uttar Pradesh has announced to connect Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, and Agra for providing low-cost air service.
- For better facility and cooperation to Tourist coming to state our chief minister Yogi Adityanath has set a proposal of 500 tourist policies.
- In order to promote religious and historical places government of Uttar Pradesh has asked the Tourism Department to launch an advertising Campaign that could attract tourist.
- Chief Minister had announced that all facility will be provided to religious tourist in Allahabad during Ardh-Kumbh in 2019.
- To promote religious tourism Government of Uttar Pradesh has announced that after Jewar airport in Noida another airport will be built in Kaushambi, (Prayagraj) at present the Airport is functional and it was inaugurated during ArdhKumbh which is a famous tourist destination.
- A grand statue of Lord Ram on the bank of Saryu River in Ayodhya is built in order to promote religious tourism.
- A 'deepotsav' will be organized on 'Ram ki Paidi' where 1.7 lakh earthen lamp will be lit.
- In order to attract tourist from all over the world prominent buildings and ghats will also be illuminated, the purpose behind the programme is to promote Ayodhya the birthplace of Lord Ram as a religious tourist destination.
- An aarti of river Saryu will be performed by the Chief Minister and a laser show will be held on the bank of the river.
- A Ramlila show will be organized by Indonesia and Thailand artist during the programme to promote religious tourism.
- Union Tourism Minister has sanctioned Rs. 133.70 crore for making Ayodhya a tourism hub.
- Renovating of ghats, including Gupturghat, where Lord Ram had taken Samadhi, installing of CCTV cameras, making police booth, construction of the guest house for tourist is the major work done by Uttar Pradesh government in Ayodhya to promote religious tourism.
- Government of Uttar Pradesh has planned to begin helicopter services for Parikrama of Govardhan in Mathura to promote religious tourism.
- To promote religious tourism government has the plan to connect Gorakhpur airport to cities like Kolkata, Kathmandu, Singapore and Bangkok to promote Buddhist Tourist circuit.



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

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

Tourism helps in earning foreign exchange without disturbing its natural resource or without exporting any goods to another country, Tourism provide an opportunity to earn foreign exchange only by providing service to the tourist coming from another country.

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

The tourism industry is that industry which provides employment to every level of human whether he is unskilled, semi-skilled, or highly skilled in every sector like a gift shop, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, etc.

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

Many people from all over the world go to another country as a tourist in order to experience their tradition and culture. The heritage sites in a country are the symbol of the country's culture and tradition. Tourism helps to preserve these heritage sites from getting damage because these heritage sites are the source to show the tradition and culture of a country.

### **Tourism Helps in the Development of Infrastructure**

One of the most important benefits of tourism is the development of infrastructure and improvement of infrastructure facilities like road facilities, airport facilities, water supply, accommodation facilities, hotel facilities, meal facilities, etc.

### **Tourism Helps in the Development of a Relationship with another Country**

Tourism plays a vital role in promoting and enhancing a relationship between two different countries and plays an important part in the development of cultural, regional, and social relationship among the entire nation in the world.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The objective of this paper is to study "The scope of Religious Tourism in Uttar Pradesh" the study shows that there is a wide scope of religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh due to presence of various religious destinations like Varanasi, Ayodhya, Allahabad, Mathura, Chitrakoot, Sarnath, and Lucknow which attract millions of religious tourist from all over the world during any festivals, fairs, or when there is any religious events takes place, but besides the growth of religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh it can't be ignored that there are various issues that restrict the growth of religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh. Some of the major issues faced by the Uttar Pradesh government in the growth of religious tourism are lack of proper management, lack of proper infrastructure, development of religious tourism sites, threats of terrorist attack, climate change, food security, and political instability are the problems that restrict the growth of religious tourism in Uttar Pradesh.



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