

Religious tourism centres in North India

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Abstract

Religion is one of India's most popular tourist sites, bringing in thousands of visitors from all over the world every year. The desire for religious fulfillment is another motivation that leads to inner peace and happiness. Many people will visit any holy place. Some will be tourists who came for the experience and education, but most will be pilgrims who are there to perform their religious duties. In India, it's called a Tirth Yatra. This kind of travel has many positive and negative effects. The current study shows how some of these effects affect tourists. Emotional travel is related to religious tourism. India has many places, like Kurukshetra in Haryana, Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, and many others. People from all over India visit the many religious tourist sites in north India to fulfill their religious needs. Some of them want to meet their God face-to-face, while others want the new experience of a spiritual journey. It's not unusual to travel for faith reasons. It's as old as faith. Around the world, there were many cultures that only traveled long distances for religious reasons. Compared to other research on religious tourism, the current study doesn't add much.

Keywords: Tourism, religion, Motivation, Economy, Religious, Travel

Introduction

A new concept has entered the tourism lexicon: spiritual tourism. It is the result of combining the phrases "spiritual" and "tourism." Because responders are driven by concerns for world peace, spiritual tourism occupies a separate space (Gupta, 2017). This is a special kind of tourism where people travel to find tranquility and themselves. In religious tourism, a variety of variables are categorized as subjective and objective elements in order to quantify visitor satisfaction. (Gupta 2008)

A fort or crossing is what the word "pilgrimage" (Tirtha) actually implies. People visit Tirtha locations where they can bridge the Samsara River. Birth and death occur repeatedly in this cycle. Hindus practice certain rituals for their loved ones because they believe in the afterlife and in the existence of an afterlife. Along with other rites, they revere the Holy River Ganga. Any time these kinds of actions are carried out at a sacred location, it elevates the significance of the location (Goswami, 2016). The Indian state of Haryana, which is in the north, has the potential to develop into a popular destination for religious travelers. The name "Haryana" is made up of the words "Hari" and "Ayana," which together signify "home" and "God's abode," respectively. It is one of the states that best represents India because of its extensive culture and illustrious past (HTDC, 2020). This state has a lot of potential for tourism and offers several opportunities. Here, religious tourism is a source of growth and has the ability to create new jobs and opportunities (Kumar, 2014).

The Brahm Sarovar, which is located in Kurukshetra, one of this state's holiest cities, is one of the tourist attractions discussed by Singh & Sharma (2013). They claimed that tourism had a beneficial effect on local merchants' sales and even had an impact on the area's indigenous culture. Another issue that is emerging is sustainable tourism (Jackowski & Smith, 1992). Religious travel has existed for as long as religion itself. According to some studies, it may be the most traditional kind of travel (Terzidou, 2010). The purpose of a religious trip is traditionally to discover the truth, occasionally inner serenity, and inner beliefs (Vukoni 1996: 80). One of the most important components of visiting any pilgrimage destination is faith. Tourists and pilgrims are the two main categories of travelers. In these situations, pilgrims have stronger incentives to visit any religious place, whereas tourists are more likely to do so for leisure or cultural reasons (Nyaupane, Timothy, & Poudel 2015).

Destinations to Cover on a Pilgrimage Tour in North India: With its abundance of temples and other religious landmarks, which are now the focus of attention around the globe, India is one of the world's great spiritual centers. In addition to drawing pilgrims from all across India and the world, these spiritual locations also entice numerous scholars, researchers, and curious tourists who are eager to learn more about India's extensive spiritual and Vedic past.

(i) Amarnath Cave, Jammu & Kashmir: The holy "Amarnath Cave," one of the holiest sanctuaries for Hindus, is situated in a small canyon at the end of the "Lidder Valley" in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Snow-covered for the most of the year, pilgrims can only enter the cave in the summertime during the Shravani Mela festival in July and August.

The Lord Shiva's cave is accessible from Srinagar through Pahalgam or Baltal (Sonamarg) after a challenging hike. The main rest station on the Srinagar-Pahalgam-Chandanwari-Amarnath road is Chandanwari. On his trip to Amarnath, Lord

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Shiva is said to have dropped his moon (Chand) in Chandanwari, giving the location its name. From Srinagar, pilgrims can take a variety of road transportation choices to Chandanwari; it is from Chandanwari that one must do a challenging 16-kilometer ascent on foot or by pony to reach the Amarnath cave. The pilgrims are able to forget all of their exhaustion thanks to the beauty of the beautiful landscapes and an air of utter spirituality and divinity all along the path, which gives them an incomparable sense of drive and power to arrive at their destination. The itinerary for the Amarnath Yatra by Helicopter is available here.

The following are a few of the most significant places of worship that may be viewed when traveling from Chandanwari to Amarnath:

- a) **Pissu Top** –According to tradition, Pissu summit is located at the summit of the hill that was created from the Asuras' bones after they were killed by Devtas in a significant fight.
- b) **Sheshnag Valley** –It is thought that Lord Shiva left his Sheshnag in this valley before accompanying Goddess Parvati to the Amarnath Cave. According to rumors, genuine devotees can still see Sheshnag at Sheshnag Lake.
- c) **Mahagunas Pass** – The Mahagunas Pass, also known as the "Ganesh Top," is the next significant landmark after Sheshnag and is the pilgrimage's highest point. Lord Ganesha was left behind here as Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati traveled to the revered Amarnath Cave. With its massive boulders, jagged cliffs, and deep valleys, the road to Mahagunas Pass from Sheshnag is regarded as the Amarnath Yatra's most treacherous trek.
- d) **Panchtarni** – A descent begins from the Mahagunas Pass, and Panchtarni is 3.4 kilometers away. Panchtarni receives its name from the five rivers that are thought to have come from Lord Shiva's hair. Awe-inspiring views of the surroundings from this location at the base of Mt. Bhairav will live on in your recollections forever.
- e) **Amarnath Cave** – The sacred Amarnath cave may be found at a distance of 6 kilometers from Panchtarni. To honor the Swayambhu ice Shivlinga, pilgrims do Pooja within the cave. Your thoughts and souls can be drawn inside the cave by the powerful divine aura there.

(ii) **Vaishno Devi, Jammu & Kashmir:** Every year, the temple receives thousands of visitors from all around India and the rest of the world. In the cave of Mata Vaishno Devi, three versions of the goddess Durga are worshipped in the form of three naturally occurring rock formations known as "Pindies."

The sacred "Vaishno Devi Yatra" travels over 12 kilometers beginning at Katra's base camp. The distance must be covered on foot by pilgrims. Ponies and palkis can be rented from Katra for people whose health isn't at its best. Private helicopter flights are also available from Katra; these services operate up until "SanjhiChhat," after which the entire distance must be traveled on foot. The winding, mountainous roads leading to the holy cave are in excellent condition, and they are flanked with hotels, dhabas, and restaurants at strategic locations. You arrive at your destination to panoramic views, aesthetically pleasing natural splendor, and loud chanting of "Jai Mata Di" filling the air. Here are some other places in and near Katra that can be visited besides the famous Vaishno Devi temple.

- a) **Ban Ganga** – The genuine Vaishno Devi Yatra starts here in Katra as the first halt. At this location, the holy Ganga River runs, and pilgrims often begin their journey by bathing in the river's sanctified waters. The location is also known as "Bal Ganga" since Goddess Vaishno Devi used this water stream to wash her hair, which is referred to as "Bal" in Hindi.
- b) **Charan Paduka** – One mile from Ban Ganga, it is thought that Vaishno Mata halted here and turned to check behind her to see if Bhairav Nath was pursuing her. Here, her footsteps were inscribed, and the area became known as "Charan Paduka." On their route to the sacred cave, all pilgrims stop at this little temple, which is built here.
- c) **Ardhkuwari** – The halfway point of the voyage is Ardhkuwari. Legend has it that Goddess Vaishno Devi spent nine months living and praying in this womb-shaped cave. The Ardhkuwari cave is referred to as "Garbh Joon" because of its resemblance like a womb. The location serves as a significant rest point. Even the largest humans on earth are said to be able to pass through Ardhkuwari's confined space with ease.
- d) **Bhairav Nath Temple** – After paying their respects to Mata Vaishno Devi at her sacred shrine, travelers travel 5 kilometres to the Bhairav Nath Temple at BhairavGhati. If this temple isn't visited as part of the yatra, it's considered incomplete. Your hearts and spirits are captured by the Bhairav temple's views of the surrounding mountains and forests.
- e) **Patnitop** – In Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, Patnitop is a lovely hill station that draws a lot of visitors, particularly honeymooners going to the Vaishno Devi temple. This beautiful meadow's tranquility, which is bordered by mountains and dense pine forests, makes it the ideal place to unwind in Mother Nature.

(iii) **Yamunotri, Uttarakhand:** Yamunotri, (one of the four pilgrimage sites of Uttarakhand's "Chhota Char Dham Yatra," designates the sacred residence of the goddess "Yamuna." Numerous pilgrims travel here each year to see the location of the River Yamuna's beginning, one of the sacred rivers for Hindus. Hindu legend states that anyone who bathes in the Yamuna River's waters will pass away painlessly and peacefully. The important tourist destinations in and near Yamunotri are listed below.

- a) **Hanuman Chatti** – Hanuman Chatti, which is 6 kilometers away from Yamunotri, serves as the starting point for treks to Yamunotri. The walk begins from this location, or hikers can cut the journey by 2 kilometers by taking a

- vehicle or taxi until JankiChatti. Hanuman Chatti's tiny "Hanuman Temple" is a must see while traveling to Yamunotri.
- b) **JankiChatti** – This is where the true climb to Yamunotri begins. It is known for its hot water springs where pilgrims can bathe and ease their weariness. The location from which palanquins and horses can be rented.
 - c) **Kharsali** – A charming tiny town and the winter residence of Goddess Yamuna, Kharsali is just 1 km from Yamunotri. The primary deity of the Yamunotri temple is transferred to Kharsali and worshipped here for roughly six months during the winter months when the main Yamunotri temple closes. The area is also well-known for having an ancient "Shani Dev Temple" composed of wood, stone, and an unusual mortar made of urad dal.
 - d) **Yamunotri Temple** – This is Yamuna Ji's principal shrine. Goddess Yamuna's deity appears as a silver statue adorned with garlands.
 - e) **Surya Kund** – A natural hot spring named Surya Kund after the Sun God, the father of the Goddess Yamuna, is situated adjacent to the main Yamunotri temple. It is customary to first take a bath in the waters of this spring before going to the main shrine and preparing the rice and potato dish known as Prasad. The Prasad is subsequently presented to Yamuna Ji, the temple's patron deity.
 - f) **Divya Shila** – The Surya Kund is where Prasad is prepared, and before entering the Yamunotri Temple, pilgrims must first pay respect to this rock pillar.
 - g) **Champasar Glacier** – This is the primary source of the Yamuna River. Only a small number of daring pilgrims venture to the glacier, which is just a few kilometers higher up the Yamunotri Temple due to its difficult access and steep hike.

Gangotri, the second of the four pilgrimage sites of Uttarakhand's "Char Dham Yatra," designates the holy residence of Goddess "Ganga," the Hindu religion's most revered river. One of the holiest spots in the world for Hindus, it is where the Ganga River originates. It is thought that bathing in the Ganga's sacred waters will free you from the cycle of life and death. As you go towards Gangotri, the unspoiled beauty of the natural world, captivating picturesque views, and the crisp mountain air, along with the chanting of "Jai Ma Gange," make you feel linked to a higher force. These places in and near Gangotri are a must-see.

- a) **Ganga Temple, Mukhba Village** – In the winter, Goddess Ganga makes Mukhba, a small village in the town of Harsil not far from Gangotri, her residence. In this village, the main idol of Ganga is taken to the "Ganga Temple," where it is venerated for six months throughout the winter.
- b) **Bhairon Temple, BhaironGhati** – The picturesque valley, which is 10 kilometers outside of Gangotri, is well-known for housing the old "Bhairon Baba Temple." On their way to Gangotri, pilgrims make a point of visiting this temple to honor Bhairon Baba.
- c) **Gangotri Temple** – The primary shrine dedicated to Goddess Ganga is located here.
- d) **Submerged Shivalinga** – A naturally occurring rock Shivalinga that is immersed in water and is thought to have been Lord Shiva's seat when he carried Ganga in his matted hair to shield the land from destruction as a result of the floods of Ganga's ferocious flow.
- e) **Gaumukh Glacier** – This is where the River Ganga's primary emergence is located, 18 kilometers in advance of Gangotri. If you are in good health, you must embark on a challenging journey that is filled with picturesque landscapes and enchanting views of the Himalayas. Before beginning this trek, be sure to check the weather and obtain a permit from the Uttarakhand Forest Department.
- f) **Tapovan & Nandanvan** – A few more kilometers in front of the Gaumukh Glacier are the picturesque towns of Tapovan and Nandanvan, both of which provide magnificent views of the Shivaling Peak. Because the route is prone to mishaps and natural disasters, this walk is only appropriate for those with strong wills and fortitude.

(iv) **Kedarnath, Uttarakhand:** Untold numbers of pilgrims travel there each year in search of deliverance from the never-ending cycle of life and death and spiritual pleasure. The following list includes the key tourist destinations in and near Kedarnath.

- a) **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath** – Prior to Kedarnath, there is the picturesque town of Ukhimath. Due to the shutdown of the primary Kedarnath Temple, Lord Kedarnath makes his winter residence in the "Omkareshwar Temple" near Ukhimath, where he is worshipped.
- b) **Gauri Kund** – This is the starting point for the trip up to Kedarnath, which is located 20 kilometers away. Then, they travel to Kedarnath after taking a bath in the natural thermal springs of Gaurikund and paying respects to Goddess Parvati in the "Gauri Temple."
- c) **Kedarnath Temple** – This is Lord Shiva's primary shrine; he is worshipped as Kedarnath. For Hindus and followers of Lord Shiva, the temple has immense religious significance because it houses one of the 12 Jyotirlingas and is regarded as one of the "PanchKedars."
- d) **Vasuki Tal** – Lord Vishnu is thought to have taken a bath in the past at Vasuki Tal, which is eight kilometers from Kedarnath Temple.
- e) **Shankaracharya Samadhi** – Hindus follow Adi Guru Shankaracharya as their primary spiritual leader. At the age of 32, he attained enlightenment at Kedarnath. His physical remains were buried beneath the area that now houses his Samadhi. Massive flash floods in 2013 swept away the statue of Guru Shankaracharya, but the area has since been totally repaired.

f) **Bhairav Temple** – During the winter months, when everything is blanketed in snow, it is said that Lord Bhairavnath watches over Kedarnath Valley. A 1-kilometer hike from Kedarnath Temple will take you to the Lord Bhairavnath temple.

(v) **Badrinath, Uttarakhand:** Badrinath is the holiest residence of Lord Vishnu and the final of the four dhams in the "Chhota Char Dham Yatra" in Uttarakhand. Legends from the Puranas claim that Lord Vishnu carried out a severe penance here, and Goddess Lakshmi, his consort, appeared as berry plants to protect him from the scorching sun. The indigenous term for berries is "Badri," hence this location became known as "Badrinath." The following are some of the top tourist destinations in and near Badrinath.

- a) **Badrinath Temple** – Lord Vishnu, who manifests in the dual forms of Nar and Narayana, is worshipped at this primary shrine. The Vaishnavite temple, one of their holiest sanctuaries, is situated in Uttarakhand's Garhwal Hills along the Alaknanda River. The breathtaking splendor of the surrounds and the mesmerizing Himalayan vistas from the temple will temporarily stop your heart.
- b) **Tapt Kund** – a holy bathing spot where visitors can bathe in naturally hot water before approaching the main shrine. It is also thought that the water has healing qualities.
- c) **Mana Village** – This picturesque village is linked to Lord Ganesha, who assisted Sage Vyas in writing the Mahabharata in an amazing amount of time, and Rishi Vyas, the creator of the epic. The village's "Vyas Cave" and "Ganesh Temple" are worth visiting.
- d) **Vasudhara Falls** – These stunning falls, which are 6 km from Mana Village, provide enthralling views of the Himalayas covered in snow and the glaciers that feed the Alaknanda River.
- e) **Neelkanth Peak** – The Neelkanth peak, one of the tallest mountains in the Garhwal range, is located 9 kilometers to the east of Badrinath. The hill, which is thought to be Lord Shiva's home, provides a beautiful background for the Badrinath Temple.
- f) **Charan Paduka** – This enormous boulder with Lord Vishnu's feet etched on it is situated 3 kilometres from the Badrinath Temple.
- g) **Brahma Kapal** – Hindus perform rituals and offer prayers on a flat boulder near the Alaknanda River in order to save the souls of their departed ancestors.
- h) **Sheshnetra** – In this additional revered location in Badrinath, a sizable rock has the indelible impressions of a Sheshnag snake's eye. Sheshnag is the snake on which Lord Vishnu rests.
- i) **Mata Murti Temple** – The mother of Lord BadriNarayan, Mata Murti, is honored in this shrine. According to mythology, Lord Vishnu emerged from Mata Murti's womb in the shapes of Nar and Narayan to destroy a demon.

(vi) **Haridwar, Uttarakhand:** One of the holiest pilgrimage sites in India is Haridwar, often known as the "Gateway to God." Haridwar draws a large number of pilgrims, tourists, and vacationers from all over India and the rest of the world due to its prime location at the foot of the Himalayas and on the banks of the sacred Ganga River in the state of Uttarakhand. From far-off places, pilgrims come to this holy city to bathe in the hallowed river's waters in order to atone for their sins.

Har ki Pauri is one of the most well-known and respected places in Haridwar. It is where the beautiful evening Ganga Aarti takes place. When you see the lit diyas floating on the surface of the river, hear the prayers being sung in unison, and smell the incense, you feel like you've entered a whole new world. Also, it is the most famous place for pilgrims to bathe in the Ganga's holy waters to wash away their sins.

Mansa Devi Temple is on top of a hill, and it is a shrine to Goddess Mansa, who is known as the "Goddess of Wishes." When in Haridwar, pilgrims and tourists always stop by this temple to tie a thread to the branches of the sacred tree there to make their dreams come true.

Chandi Devi Temple is another one of Haridwar's most well-known temples. People go to the temple to ask the Goddess for her gifts, and it is also known as one of the Siddha Shaktipeeths.

Sapt Rishi Ashram is one of Haridwar's oldest and most beautiful ashrams. It is built on the holy spot where the Ganges River was split into seven channels so that the seven rishis who were in deep meditation wouldn't be disturbed by the roaring sound of the river's crashing waves. The Sapt Rishi Ashram, which is 5 kilometers from Har ki Pauri, is home to many saints, rishis, and teachers who come to Haridwar from all over the country. This ashram has daily yoga and meditation classes.

Patanjali Yogpeeth, which is known as Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Yogpeeth, is yet another popular place to visit in Haridwar. A lot of tourists, travelers, and yoga fans visit this place, which is one of the most important places in the world for yoga and meditation.

The Rajaji National Park is 10 kilometers from Haridwar. It is known for its local plants and animals, as well as its large number of wild animals and birds. After the Corbett National Park, this park is Uttarakhand's best tiger reserve. The Uttarakhand Forest Department can plan jungle safaris inside the park.

Rishikesh, Uttarakhand: In the Uttarakhand district of Dehradun, Rishikesh is another important Hindu pilgrimage site. It is located on the banks of the Ganga River at the base of the Himalayas. The area, which is home to various yoga and meditation centers, is also known as the "World's Yoga Capital." In addition to having many ashrams, Rishikesh is a centre for adventure sports like white water river rafting, mountain climbing, and river rappelling.

(vii) Mathura-Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh: Lord Krishna is connected to the Mathura and Vrindavan twin cities. Krishna was born at Mathura, which lies on the Yamuna River's banks in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, and spent his early years in Vrindavan. The locale of Vrindavan is a central theme in many Radha and Krishna folktales. Millions of pilgrims visit these sacred cities each year, especially during the festivals of Janmashtmi and Holi, making them one of the most important pilgrimage destinations for Hindus. Here are some well-known sights you shouldn't miss when you visit these sacred towns.

Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple, Mathura: The "Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple" is one of the most popular places to visit in Mathura. It is known as the place where Lord Krishna was born. It is well known that Devki and Vasudeva had Lord Krishna in a jail cell. The temple is still in the same place, and thousands of people come here to pray to the Lord for his benefits.

Mathura, Dwarkadheesh Temple –The walls of the building have beautiful carvings and paintings that are worth looking at.

Kansa Qila, in Mathura, is an old fort that was the home of Kansa, Krishna's maternal uncle, during the Vedic period. Maharaja Man Singh of Jaipur rebuilt the fort, and later Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Amer built a telescope inside the fort. The fort is in ruins now.

VishramGhat, Mathura: This is the most holy ghat in Mathura, and it is thought that Lord Krishna rested here for a while after killing his uncle Kansa.

Bankey Bihari Temple, Vrindavan: In this temple, you can't keep looking at the Lord because the blinds close every few seconds. This is because people believe that if you look at the Lord for too long, you'll lose your mind.

Rangaji Temple, Vrindavan: The Rangaji Temple is another famous temple in Vrindavan. Here, Krishna is worshiped as Lord Ranganatha. Lord Krishna, who is a form of Lord Vishnu, is shown here resting on the coils of Sheshnag with his wife, Goddess Lakshmi. This temple is a must-see because it was built in a South Indian style and has 8 tall gopurams with beautiful carvings.

Goverdhan Hill, Govardhan: The Govardhan Hill is 8 km from Vrindavan and has a lot of holy meaning for people who follow Lord Krishna. Everyone knows the story of how Lord Krishna lifted Govardhan Hill on his little finger to save the people from the damage that Indra God was going to do. Pilgrims come from all over the world to this spot to walk around this holy hill.

Kusum Sarovar, Govardhan: This calm body of water near Govardhan is worth a visit. Many Kadamb trees grow all around the Kusum Sarovar. Not many people know this, but this is where Radha and the other gopis used to meet Krishna after picking flowers. The place is worth seeing on your trip to Mathura-Vrindavan because it is quiet and peaceful.

(viii) Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh: Varanasi is a city in the state of Uttar Pradesh. It is known as the "City of Temples" and is thought to be one of the oldest towns in the world. Varanasi is the most holy city and spiritual center for Hindus. It was once called Benaras or Kashi. People believe that Lord Shiva himself made Varanasi, so many people come there to spend their last days and break the cycle of life and death. Pilgrims, tourists, people who want to learn more, and scholars all flock to the city. The sounds of the temple bells, the songs and hymns of the temple prayers, and the smell of incense in the air of the city will help you connect with your spiritual self. Without seeing the following places, a trip to Varanasi isn't complete.

One of the holiest spots in the city is the temple dedicated to Lord Shiva known as Kashi Vishwanath. Because it contains one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, the Kashi Vishwanath Temple holds great significance for Hindus. During the "Shivratri" and "MahaShivratri" festivals, when worshippers pray for divine blessings, visitors from all over the world go to this temple.

Kaal Bhairav Temple: Devotees believe that the dark aspect of Shiva, KaalBhairav, keeps a watchful eye over the city of Varanasi. Many believe that their sins will be erased if they sincerely pray to KaalBhairav. The temple of KaalBhairav is a must-see for any visitor to the holy city of Varanasi.

One of the 52 Shakti Peeths, the Vishalakshi Temple is believed to be the site where Mata Sati's eyes and earrings fell. Goddess Vishalakshi, a form of Parvati, is the focus of this work. Many believe that praying to Vishalakshi Mata can bring fertility to childless couples and a wonderful husband to unattached women. There are many worshippers at the temple during the Navratri and KajaliTij celebrations.

Maa Annapurna, a manifestation of Parvati, is worshiped as the temple's primary deity at the Annapurna Mata Temple. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple is right adjacent to this one. Annapurna, the temple's patron goddess, is represented by two statues. Both are beautiful, but the gold one is more expensive. The public only get to glimpse the gold idol for the annual Annakut festival.

The Dashashwamedh Ghat in Varanasi is the holiest and most beautiful of the city's many ghats. Many pilgrims visit the ghat every evening for the special aarti ceremony that takes place on the banks of the Ganga near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The sight of hundreds of lit diyas bobbing on the river's surface as the resounding sounds of aarti fill the air is one you won't soon forget.

Ghat is among Varanasi's oldest. It is the most common site for funerals and memorial services. The common belief is that if one's body is burned on this ghat, they will instantly enter heaven.

Panchganga Ghat is where the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Dhutpapa, and Kirana all converge. There are just two crematoriums in Varanasi, and one of them is PanchgangaGhat.

Located about 14 kilometers (km) from the city of Varanasi, the Ramnagar Fort is a famous tourist destination for those with an interest in history. Members of the Maharaja of Varanasi's family still reside in the fort. Its Mughal architecture features red sandstone. A museum and the 'Ved Vyasa Shrine' can also be found within the walls of the fort. During the Dussehra festival, this fort is the site of the concluding RavanDahan and Ramlila.

Various aspects of religious Tourism : Challenges and opportunities

Religious places are now some of the most popular places to visit, not just for pilgrims but also for frequent visitors. Tourists come for religious reasons, but also to learn and have fun (Griffiths, 2011). Shined (2008) points out in her study that religious tourism is changing now. There isn't a clear line between a pilgrim and a tourist because people move for different reasons. Some are going because of their religious views, while others just like to visit the place often.

Tourism is one of the things that has contributed a lot to economic growth and jobs in the first generation of the 21st century. Haryana's many tourist sites give it a lot of room for growth in the tourism sector. This state is also working to create jobs in the tourist industry and to become a popular landing spot by improving its natural, cultural, and technical resources. If the government helps the private sector, the tourism business can grow by a lot in the future (Kumar, 2014). The government of India has started a program called Swadesh darshan to encourage tourists. Haryana is a leader in highway tourism, but under this Swadesh, Darshan plan, the government has taken Kurukshetra for development from this state. Swadesh Darshan is made up of different circuits, but it doesn't include any Haryana tourism tools (Kumar, 2018). People in India follow many different religions, and they also accept each other's beliefs.

Every religion has its own religious place, which also gives other people a chance to learn about their religion and cultural beliefs. It is known that acceptance is a part of the Hindu cult and that non-Hindus also believe in Hindu culture. This helps strengthen the society and improve the economy. (Okumus et al., 2015). There are seven things that can get a tourist going. These are "spiritual fulfillment, inner peace, inner healing, faith exploration, congregational togetherness, personal fulfillment, and religious participation," according to Kruger and Saayman (2014). Terrorism has also hurt religious tourism, and in some places, like Palestine, it has had a very bad effect. Political changes also have bad effects on religious tourists. (Suleiman, Mohammad, 2011).

Economic impacts and scope: Due to an outline of mythology During the holidays, many people visit Brahm Sarovar in Kurukshetra. These are important dates on the Hindu mythological calendar, which gives vendors in this area a lot of business possibilities (Ravinder, Kaushik, 2017). Weidenfeld (2005) talks about the needs of religious tourists. For example, hotel rooms can be grouped by whether they have certain religious decorations, facilities (like a place of worship), services (like planned religious activities and religious items like a bible), etc. Religion and tourism are related because people want to visit holy sites all over the world. It is a big reason why targeted people come (Henderson, 2010). Religious tourism also affects the business of hotels and the growth of the economies of different places. (Egresi, Kara, and Bayram, 2012) The hotels have higher usage rates and more business all year long.

A big part of getting the word out about the sacred places is through marketing. Singh (2012) says that promoting an old religious site can bring in a lot of tourists and be one of the most important things you can do to promote a tourist

location. Religious tourism is a big part of building communities in many places. People want to visit holy places and enjoy the peace and quiet of the location (Kreiner & Gatrell, J. 2006). India is one of the countries with a lot of history and a lot of culture, so there are a lot of chances to build different kinds of tourist attractions there. India's tourism industry has become a big source of revenue (Singh, 2012).

Conclusion

There are both good and bad sides to religious tourism. Its bright side shows the good things about the tourism business, regional economic growth, and the development of destinations. During Geeta Jayanti Mahotsav, the government gives shops to different vendors. These shops are built on the banks of Brahm Sarovar, and vendors from different regions sell many different souvenirs that show the culture and traditions of that place. Not only are souvenirs from that state sold here, but monuments are also in demand. These kinds of events are both good for regional tourism and for religious tourism. But the bad side of religious tourism raises a lot of questions. When a lot of people go to the same place, the natural resources are hurt in a very dangerous way.

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