PLANNING INTEGRATED TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR AYODHYA

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Thesis Report Submitted by:

PAWAN KUMAR

Enroll No. – 12301520006

Roll No.- 1230152015

Master of Planning (Urban Planning)

Guided by:

Ar. Shalini Diwaker

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING, BABU BANARASI DAS UNIVERSITY FAIZABAD ROAD, LUCKNOW, U.P-226028

2024 - 2025

BABU BANARASI DAS UNIVERSITY, LUCKNOW

Name of Student:_____Roll No._____

Department:_____

Thesis Title:_____

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RECOMMENDED BY   ACCEPTED BY

_____   _____

Ar. Shalini Diwaker   **Ar. Sumit Wadhera**

Thesis Guide   Department of Urban Planning

Department of Urban Planning   Head of the Department

School Of Architecture & Planning,   School Of Architecture & Planning,
Babu Banarasi Das University   Babu Banarasi Das University

Lucknow- 226028   Lucknow- 226028

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I, **Pawan Kumar (1230152015),** hereby declare that this thesis titled **'Planning an Integrated Tourism Management Plan, Ayodhya'** submitted by me, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree **Master of Planning (with specialization in Urban Planning)**, by the School of Architecture and Planning, Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow is a record of my work. The matter embodied in this thesis is original and has not been copied, either in part or in full, or submitted to any other institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Wherever data, in full or in part, has been borrowed for this thesis, the Author/s of the same has been duly acknowledged.

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Place: Lucknow

Date:

Pawan Kumar

Enroll No. 12301520006

Department of Urban Planning

School of Architecture and Planning, Babu Banarasi Das University,

Lucknow, India- 226028

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The thesis on Planning an Integrated Tourism Management Plan, Ayodhya addresses the need for improved integrated tourism facilities in the city. Ayodhya holds immense religious significance as the birthplace of Lord Rama, attracting millions of pilgrims each year. However, the existing tourism options often fall short of meeting the diverse needs of the pilgrims.

The thesis explores the current state of integrated tourism facilities in Ayodhya and identifies the challenges pilgrims and local authorities face. It also examines case studies and best practices from other pilgrimage destinations to derive recommendations for enhancing integrated tourism management plan options in Ayodhya.

The key findings and recommendations include the importance of providing diverse tourism choices, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity, involving the local community, promoting sustainability, integrating technology, and prioritizing safety and security measures.

By implementing these recommendations, Ayodhya can significantly improve the Integrated Tourism Management Plan, offering them a more enriching and fulfilling spiritual journey. It will contribute to the overall pilgrim experience, ensuring comfort, accessibility, and satisfaction during their visit in Ayodhya.

The thesis emphasizes the need for collaboration among local authorities, policymakers, and stakeholders to implement these recommendations and continually monitor and evaluate the integrated tourism facilities. By prioritizing the needs of pilgrims and ensuring their comfort and convenience, Ayodhya can strengthen its position as a leading pilgrimage destination, providing a spiritually fulfilling experience for devotees from around the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe colossally to my thesis guide Ar. Shalini Diwaker, for his diligent guidance, support, inspiration, and trust in my capabilities throughout my research and working period. He continuously encouraged me to nurture ideas and made my thesis successful. I would also like to thank, Ar. Ankita Gupta for supervising and providing me with great insights during the reviews. I take this opportunity to thank all the professionals and academicians whom I consulted for my thesis. I am highly obliged to Prof. Mohit Agrawal for sparing time from their busy schedule to assist me in my research work. I thank Sunny Srivastava for their continuous support and brainstorming sessions. I thank my parents and sister for extending me moral support and encouragement. I am grateful to my family for always believing in me and inspiring me to move ahead in life.

Place: Lucknow

Date: _____

Pawan Kumar

Enroll No. 12301520006

Department of Urban Planning

School of Architecture and Planning, Babu Banarasi Das University,

Lucknow, India- 226028

UNDERTAKING

I, Mr. Pawan Kumar, the author of the thesis titled "**PLANNING AN INTEGRATED TOURISM MANAGEMENT PLAN, AYODHYA**", hereby declare that this is an independent work of mine, carried out towards fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Masters in Urban Planning at the Department of Architecture and Planning, BBDU, Lucknow. The work has not been submitted to any other organization / institution for the award of any Degree/Diploma.

………………………………………

Pawan Kumar

Enroll. No.12301520006,

M.Plan (Urban Planning) (2023-2025)

Department of Architecture and Planning

Date: June,2025

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Chapter- 01
INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

In cities where tourism is growing fast—especially in places with religious or cultural importance like Ayodhya—it's important to **plan properly**. An Integrated Tourism Management Plan (ITMP) helps the city grow in a way that's **organized, balanced, and beneficial for everyone**.

1. Everything is Planned Together

Instead of just focusing on tourism alone, ITMP looks at **all parts of the city together**—roads, transport, housing, environment, economy, and culture—so nothing is left behind.

2. Prevents Overcrowding and Problems

When too many tourists come without planning, cities face problems like **traffic jams, pollution, and pressure on water and waste systems**. ITMP helps **manage the number of visitors** and improves services.

3. Protects Culture and Environment

ITMP makes sure tourism **doesn't damage the city's heritage sites or natural areas**. It also helps keep the city's **culture and identity alive**.

4. Involves Local People

It brings **local people, businesses, and the government** together. Everyone helps plan how tourism should grow, and local people also **get jobs and earn from it**.

5. Supports the Local Economy

With better planning, more tourists stay longer, spend more money, and this helps **shops, hotels, and local workers**.

6. Makes Cities Safer and Cleaner

ITMP includes plans for **clean streets, better transport, safety during festivals or peak seasons**, and emergency planning for any problems.

An **Integrated Tourism Management Plan** helps a city **grow smartly with tourism**, without creating problems. It ensures that **tourists are happy, locals benefit, and the city stays clean, safe, and beautiful** for future generations.

Map 1.1 Map of Ayodhya
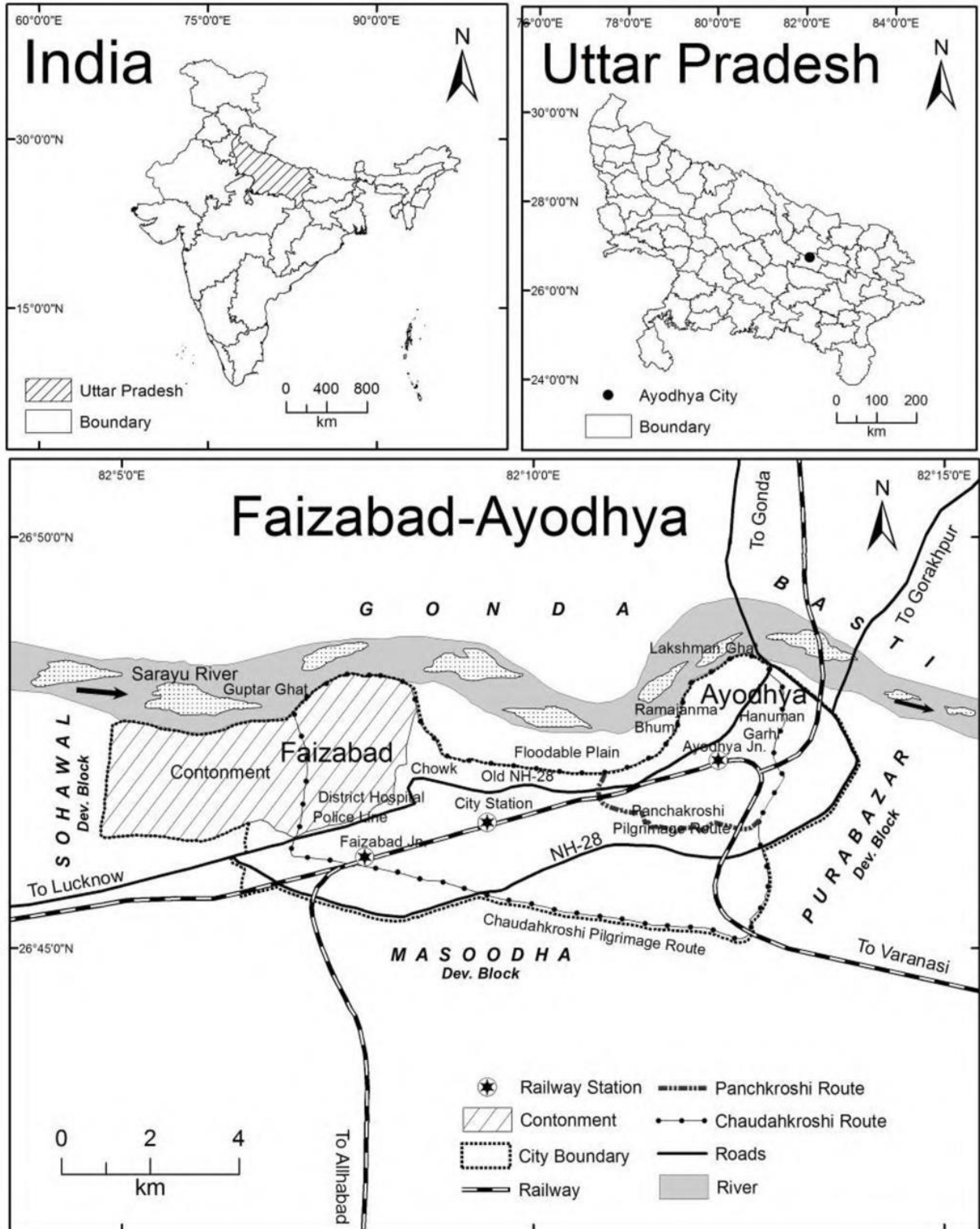
Source: Rana PB Singh. BHU. Varanasi (2020)

Need for the Study

Tourism is rapidly growing in many Indian cities, especially those with religious, cultural, or historical importance. Cities like **Ayodhya** are witnessing large-scale development after gaining national and international attention. While tourism brings economic benefits and global recognition, **unplanned growth can lead to serious problems**—such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, poor waste management, environmental degradation, and loss of heritage value.

There is a clear **lack of coordination** among various departments and stakeholders involved in tourism and urban development. Without a proper plan, the city may struggle to handle rising tourist numbers while also ensuring the comfort and well-being of its residents.

This study is important because it highlights the **urgent need for an Integrated Tourism Management Plan (ITMP)**—a planning approach that connects tourism development with urban planning, infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and community involvement.

By studying and proposing an ITMP, this research aims to:

- Provide a **balanced development model** for Ayodhya or similar cities,

- Ensure that tourism growth is **sustainable and inclusive**, and

- Help planners and decision-makers **prepare the city for the future**, without compromising its cultural, social, and environmental fabric.

Figure 1.1 Deep Mahotsav Image

Source: Ayodhya tourism

Figure 1.2 Entry Gate

Source: Ayodhya tourism

Aim

To develop an integrated tourism management plan for Ayodhya that ensures sustainable tourism, cultural heritage conservation, economic growth, and enhanced visitor experience.

Objectives

1. **To study:**

- **Tourism Potential & Attractions-** Identification of religious, cultural, and historical sites (e.g., Ram Janmabhoomi, Hanuman Garhi, Kanak Bhawan, Saryu River). Assessment of pilgrimage tourism, heritage tourism, and eco-tourism opportunities. Study of existing tourism circuits and potential for integration with other destinations.

- **Socio-Economic Impact of Tourism-** Employment generation and livelihood opportunities. Impact on local businesses and handicrafts. Involvement of local communities in tourism activities.

2. **To analyze/assess:**

- **Infrastructure Gaps and Challenges-** Deficiencies in transport, accommodation, and public services. Traffic congestion and pedestrian movement issues. Safety, security, and disaster management preparedness.

- **Economic and Investment Opportunities-** Potential for PPP (Public-Private Partnership) projects in tourism. Feasibility of new tourism initiatives (riverfront development, night tourism, heritage walks). Funding sources and financial sustainability of projects.

- **Policy and Regulatory Framework-** Review of existing tourism policies, zoning regulations, and land-use planning. Institutional coordination among government, local bodies, and stakeholders. Recommendations for policy improvements and governance mechanisms.

3. **Policy recommendations:** Develop guidelines for tourism governance and regulation.

Scope

Geographical Scope: Ayodhya city and surrounding heritage sites.

Tourism Scope: Pilgrimage tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, **and heritage tourism.**

Stakeholders: Government bodies, tourism departments, local businesses, communities, and tourists.

Time Frame: Short-term (0-5 years), Medium-term (5-10 years), Long-term (10+ years).

Limitation Of the Case Area

1. **Areas included in the case area**

The study will cover key tourism zones, infrastructure, and development areas in and around Ayodhya that directly impact tourism.

A. **Core Heritage and Religious Zone (Pilgrimage Circuit)**

Ram Janmabhoomi Complex – The main religious and tourism attraction.

Hanuman Garhi – A major pilgrimage site and a key part of Ayodhya's spiritual tourism circuit.

Kanak Bhawan – A historic temple attracting religious tourists.

Nageshwarnath Temple – An important Shiva temple linked to the city's mythology.

B. **Riverfront & Ghats Development Area**

Saryu River and Major Ghats (Ram Ki Paidi, Guptar Ghat, Raj Ghat, Laxman Ghat) – Focus on tourism along the riverfront, including spiritual and heritage tourism.

Ayodhya Dham Railway Station & Nearby Infrastructure – Assessment of transport connectivity and visitor facilities.

C. **Tourist and Pilgrim Amenities Development Zones**

Accommodation and Hospitality Sector – Hotels, dharmshalas, lodges, and homestays catering to tourists.

Public Infrastructure (Roads, Parking, Public Transport) – Study of connectivity and ease of movement for visitors.

Local Markets (Rikabganj, Naya Ghat, Chowk Area) – Analysis of economic impact, handicrafts, and cultural tourism opportunities.

D. **Extended Cultural & Historical Areas**

Treta Ke Thakur and Raja Mandir – Ancient temples contributing to Ayodhya's heritage tourism.

Ayodhya Research Institute & Ram Katha Park – Sites promoting cultural tourism and storytelling experiences.

Faizabad-Ayodhya Integration – Examining tourism impact on nearby Faizabad for extended tourism benefits.

2. <u>**Areas not included in the case area**</u>

The study will not cover areas that are beyond Ayodhya's immediate tourism influence or those outside the scope of integrated tourism planning:

A. **Peripheral Rural Areas**

Remote villages and agricultural areas surrounding Ayodhya, unless directly linked to eco-tourism or rural tourism initiatives.

B. **Non-Tourism Industrial & Commercial Area**

Industrial zones and business hubs that do not contribute to tourism development. Large-scale commercial centers unrelated to the city's cultural and religious identity.

C. **Ayodhya Urban Core (Beyond Key Linkages)**

While Ayodhya has historical relevance, the study will not include its entire urban development, except for zones that influence Ayodhya's tourism.

D. **Ayodhya Outer Ring Road & Future Urban Expansion**

Future residential townships and new urban expansion plans will be outside the core tourism focus unless they have a direct tourism impact.

Research Scope

Comparative Study: Analysis of successful tourism models in Ujjain, Jaipur, and global heritage cities.

Impact Analysis: Evaluating the social, economic, and environmental impact of tourism in Ayodhya.

Policy Framework: Reviewing existing government policies and suggesting improvements.

Methodology

Figure 1.3 Methodology

METHODOLOGY
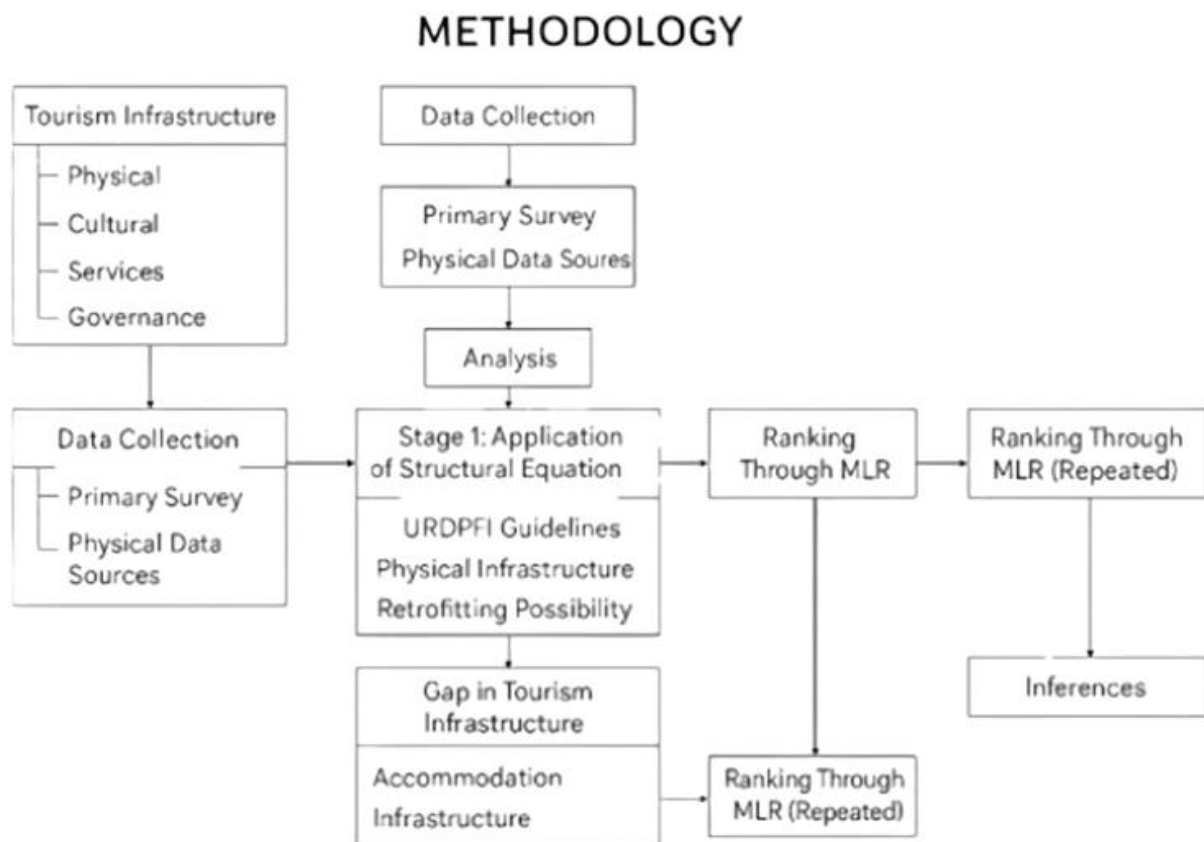
Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

Primary Surveys: Hotel occupancy, visitor flow, road usage patterns.

GIS-Based Mapping: Hotspot analysis, tourist zone demarcation.

Comparative Case Studies: Jaipur (heritage tourism), Ujjain (religious tourism), Thailand and Sri Lanka (integrated eco-tourism).

Statistical Modelling: Multilinear regression (MLR) and structural equation modelling to identify priority infrastructure needs.

Chapter- 02
CONCEPT

2. **Concepts**

Ayodhya, a city rich in history and revered as the birthplace of Lord Rama, holds profound religious significance for millions of people across the globe. Situated in Uttar Pradesh, northern India, it serves as a vital pilgrimage destination for devotees of Hinduism and people of other faiths. Over time, Ayodhya has experienced a growing influx of pilgrims seeking spiritual connection, enlightenment, and participation in sacred rituals.

With the city's religious importance steadily increasing, it is essential to provide pilgrims with adequate, comfortable, and accessible accommodation. However, the current housing infrastructure often fails to meet the varying needs of these visitors, resulting in inconvenience and discomfort during their stay. This challenge highlights the urgent need to identify and implement effective solutions aimed at improving and expanding accommodation facilities for pilgrims in Ayodhya.

Definition of Pilgrimage and Pilgrims

A pilgrimage is a journey that people take to a holy place, often with the hope of finding peace, spiritual growth, or divine blessings. These journeys can happen within one's own country or even across borders. Many people believe that going on such a journey brings them closer to the divine or helps them seek forgiveness and inner healing.

At the heart of every pilgrimage are two important things:

*   A sacred place people travel to

*   The journey itself, which is often seen as just as meaningful as the destination

In simple terms, a pilgrimage is a sacred journey, and the person who undertakes it is called a pilgrim. People go on pilgrimages for many reasons—faith, tradition, healing, or even curiosity—but what connects them all is a deep sense of purpose and belief.

In India, most of the major temples, shrines, and sacred sites are located along **riverbanks or in the hills**, blending nature with spirituality. One of the most significant spiritual gatherings happens at the **confluence of holy rivers**, known as the *Sangam*. Every year, millions of devotees come together at these sites to take a **holy dip**, especially during auspicious days like *Makar Sankranti*, believing it purifies the soul and washes away sins.

Adding a deeper spiritual and cultural layer, the great philosopher **Adi Shankaracharya** established **four major religious centres (Peeths)** across the country to promote unity and spiritual harmony. These are:

- **Badrinath** in the North,

- **Kanchipuram** in the South,

- **Dwarka** in the West, and

- **Jagannath Puri** in the East.

Figure 2.1 Sex Ratio of Pilgrims

Sex ratio of Pilgrims

Male 63%
Female 37%
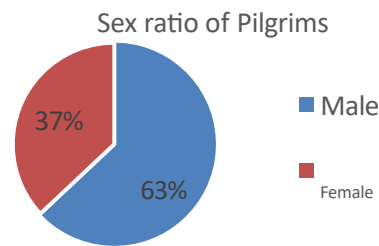
Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

In addition to these, **Sringeri Mutt** in Karnataka is also considered a sacred centre of learning and devotion, playing a vital role in preserving India's spiritual traditions.

In the spiritual life of an average Indian, **rivers have always held a special and sacred place**. From ancient times, rivers have symbolized **purity and life**, playing a key role in religious rituals and beliefs. Among them, the **Ganga (Ganges)** is regarded as the **holiest of all rivers** by Hindus. Flowing through time and tradition, the Ganga has become the heart of many sacred towns and pilgrimage sites such as **Gaumukh, Gangotri, Devprayag, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Garhmukteshwar,** and **Gangasagar**.

These places, situated along the river's banks, attract **millions of pilgrims** every year who come to bathe in her waters and seek spiritual cleansing. Similarly, the **Yamuna River** is also deeply revered, particularly for performing sacred rituals like the **Gayatri Jap**, which is believed to bring spiritual merit and inner peace.

Concept of Pilgrimage

The idea of **pilgrimage** is deeply woven into the spiritual and religious traditions of many cultures around the world. It refers to a **journey made to a sacred place**—a site believed to hold divine or spiritual importance. People undertake pilgrimages not just to visit these holy locations, but to seek **inner peace, spiritual growth, and a deeper connection with the divine**.

For many, a pilgrimage is more than just travel; it is a **soulful experience**—a time for reflection, prayer, and renewal of faith. It often symbolizes a personal transformation, where the journey itself becomes as meaningful as the destination.

Key Aspects of the Concept of Pilgrimage

1. **Sacred**   **Destination**
   A pilgrimage usually involves traveling to a place that is considered **sacred or holy**. These destinations can be natural locations like **rivers, mountains, or caves**, or they might be **man-made** structures such as temples, churches, mosques, or shrines. The sanctity of these sites often comes from their connection to **spiritual legends, historical events, or revered religious figures**.

2. **Spiritual**   **Quest**
   Pilgrimage is not just a physical journey—it's often seen as a **spiritual quest**. People

embark on these journeys in search of **a deeper connection with the divine**, **inner peace**, or even **personal transformation**. It becomes a time for **introspection, prayer, and self-reflection**, helping pilgrims reconnect with their faith and values.

1. Exploration of Faith and Belief

Pilgrimage is a journey inward as much as it is outward. Pilgrims often use this time to **explore their faith**, question or strengthen their beliefs, and engage in **prayer, meditation, and acts of devotion**. It offers a unique opportunity for **self-discovery** and spiritual clarity.

2. Rituals and Practices

Every pilgrimage is enriched with **religious rituals and customs** that reflect the tradition of the faith being followed. These can include:

- **Bathing in sacred rivers**

- **Circumambulating holy sites**

- **Fasting or offering prayers and sacrifices**

- **Charity and acts of kindness**

  Pilgrims may follow **predefined routes**, perform **ritual acts**, or **observe fasting** to receive blessings or fulfill spiritual vows.

3. Communal Experience

Although deeply personal, pilgrimage often involves a **strong communal element**. Many pilgrims **travel in groups** or join mass religious gatherings. These shared experiences foster:

- A sense of **unity and solidarity**

- **Collective prayer and worship**

- Sharing of stories, hardships, and joy with fellow travelers

  This bonding often transforms strangers into a spiritual family, connected by a common purpose.

4. Symbolic Journey

The pilgrimage is **rich in symbolism**. The physical act of moving toward a sacred site often represents:

- A **soul's journey toward enlightenment**

- **Tests of faith** through physical and emotional challenges

- The **pursuit of purity, salvation, or divine grace**

The destination may symbolize the **presence of the divine**, while the hardships of the journey reflect the **inner transformation** a pilgrim undergoes.

5. Spiritual Transformation and Blessings

Pilgrimage is believed to be a **life-changing experience**. Many see it as a chance to:

- **Purify the soul**

- **Seek forgiveness**

- **Receive divine blessings**

Pilgrims often return with a **renewed sense of peace, clarity, and spiritual strength**, feeling transformed by the experience.

Cultural and Social Relevance

Pilgrimage holds immense **religious, cultural, and social importance**. It is a **living tradition** that reflects humanity's universal desire to seek deeper meaning and connection. Whether through rituals, shared experiences, or personal insight, pilgrimage allows individuals to **step away from everyday life** and journey toward spiritual growth.

Pilgrimage vs. Tourism

Places of religious importance usually attract **both pilgrims and tourists** year-round. While **tourists may visit for leisure, history, or curiosity**, pilgrims travel with **faith-driven intentions**. However, in many sacred destinations, the **line between spiritual journey and tourism** often overlaps, especially in places like Ayodhya, where heritage, culture, and faith are deeply intertwined.

Pilgrimage and Urban Influence

Unlike regular tourist destinations that tend to attract visitors during specific seasons, **places of religious importance often experience a continuous or year-round influx of pilgrims**. These sacred sites become hubs of activity, influencing the **spatial, socio-economic, and cultural dynamics** of the surrounding areas.

As the number of pilgrims continues to rise each year, there is an increasing demand for **basic amenities** such as:

- Lodging and boarding facilities

- Clean water supply

- Efficient drainage systems

- Waste disposal and sanitation infrastructure

The **provision of these services** not only improves the experience for pilgrims but also acts as a **catalyst for urban development**. Once such infrastructure is introduced and maintained, the local area naturally begins to evolve—economically, socially, and physically.

Improved infrastructure and facilities tend to **attract even more pilgrims**, creating a **positive cycle of growth** that supports both **religious tourism and urban transformation**. In this way, pilgrimage becomes a significant driver of **planned urban development**, especially in cities like Ayodhya where faith, culture, and history are deeply interlinked.

Chapter- 03
CITY PROFILE

City Profile: Ayodhya

Geographical Location

Ayodhya is a historic city located in the state of **Uttar Pradesh**, northern India. Nestled along the banks of the **Sarayu River**, it is surrounded by lush greenery and numerous sacred sites. The city lies at an altitude of **26.9 meters above sea level** and covers a total area of **2,522 sq.km**, comprising **62.12 sq.km urban** and **2,459.88 sq.km rural** land.

Demographics

As per the 2021 estimate:

- **Total Population**: 24,70,996

    - **Urban Core (City area)**: ~76,000

    - **Male**: 12,59,628

    - **Female**: 12,11,368

- **Sex Ratio**: 763 females per 1000 males

- **Literacy Rate**: 78.15%

- **Work Participation Rate**: 31.44%

- **Population Density**: 460/km²

    During major religious festivals, the city sees a **dramatic increase in population** due to the arrival of pilgrims and tourists from across India and abroad.

Religious Significance

Ayodhya is one of the **seven holiest cities in Hinduism (Sapta Puri)** and is widely believed to be the **birthplace of Lord Rama**, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This sacred identity makes it a major pilgrimage destination. Besides Hinduism, the city holds spiritual significance for **Buddhists, Jains, and Muslims**, showcasing its **religious diversity and historical depth**.

Tourism and Pilgrimage

Ayodhya attracts **millions of pilgrims and tourists annually**. Key religious and cultural landmarks include:

- **Ram Janmabhoomi** (birthplace of Lord Rama)

- **Hanuman Garhi**

- **Kanak Bhawan**

- **Ramkot Fort**

- **Ghats of Sarayu River**, where pilgrims perform rituals and seek spiritual peace

    These sites draw not only devotees but also heritage and cultural tourists interested in India's spiritual legacy.

    Infrastructure Development

    To accommodate growing footfall, Ayodhya is undergoing significant infrastructure upgrades:

- Improved **road connectivity**

- Enhanced **railway and public transport systems**

- **Urban amenities** like clean water supply, drainage systems, and waste management facilities

- Ongoing projects aim to **expand lodging and hospitality services**, improving the overall experience for both short-term visitors and long-stay pilgrims

    Culture and Festivals

    Ayodhya's cultural fabric is rich with **traditional music, art, and folk practices**. The city is known for its grand celebrations of:

- **Diwali** – believed to be the day Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya

- **Ram Navami** – Lord Rama's birthday

- **Chhath Puja** – celebrated on the banks of the Sarayu

These festivals foster community participation and draw national and international attention.

*Figure 3.1 **City of celebration***
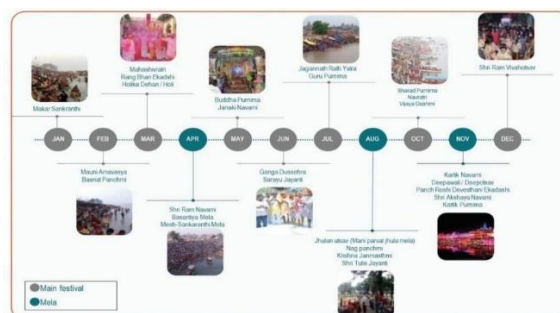
Source: Ayodhya Vision 2047, ADA

Local Economy

The **economy of Ayodhya is predominantly driven by religious tourism**, which supports:

- Local businesses selling **handicrafts**, **religious artefacts**, and **devotional offerings**

- **Food stalls and restaurants** serving traditional sweets and vegetarian dishes

- Growth in **transport, accommodation, and event-related services**

Tourism creates livelihood opportunities for many local residents and has the potential to drive **sustainable development** when managed strategically.

Urban Planning Challenges and Opportunities

Ayodhya faces challenges in:

- Expanding and modernizing **infrastructure**

- Managing **solid waste and sanitation**

- Maintaining a **balance between tourism development and heritage preservation**

However, these challenges also offer **opportunities for integrated urban planning**, including:

- Sustainable tourism management

- Public-private partnerships

- Community-based development

- Cultural conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage spaces

With proper planning, Ayodhya can emerge as a **model for spiritual tourism integrated with urban sustainability**.

The Ayodhya Dispute

The Ayodhya dispute is a long-standing and sensitive conflict over the ownership of a religious site in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. The controversy centres on the **Babri Masjid**, a mosque built in the 16th century by the Mughal emperor Babur, which is claimed by many Hindus to be located on the exact birthplace of **Lord Rama**, a highly revered figure in Hinduism.

Key Perspectives:

- **Hindu Claim:** Hindu groups argue that the Babri Masjid was constructed after demolishing a pre-existing temple marking Lord Rama's birthplace. They seek the construction of a grand Ram temple on this site to honour their religious beliefs.

- **Muslim Claim:** Muslim groups maintain that the Babri Masjid was legally built and contest the existence of any temple beneath it. They emphasize the mosque's religious and historical significance and advocate for its protection.

Legal and Social Impact:

The dispute has fuelled decades of legal battles, political debates, and communal tensions, sometimes escalating into violence. Both communities filed numerous court cases asserting their claims.

Supreme Court Verdict (2019):

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of India awarded the disputed land to a trust responsible for building the Ram temple. The court also directed the government to allocate an alternate site nearby for the construction of a mosque to address Muslim community concerns.

Figure 3.2 Disputes in Ayodhya over the years
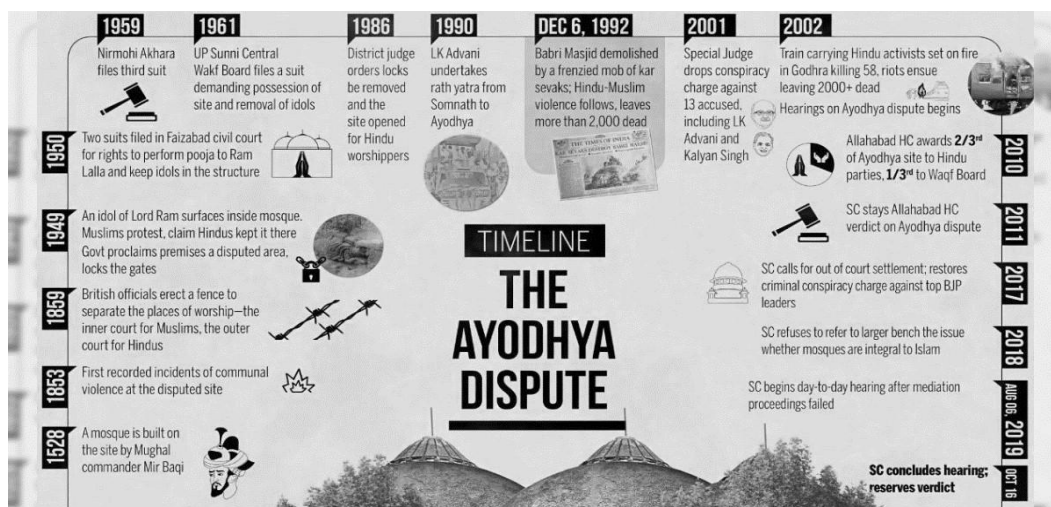
Source: (Ayodhya Verdict Key Highlights: Ram Lalla gets disputed site, 2019)

Timeline of the Ayodhya Dispute

- **1528:** The Babri Masjid is believed to have been constructed by Mughal emperor Babur.

- **1853:** The first recorded conflict arises when a religious structure dedicated to Lord Rama is built next to the Babri Masjid.

- **1949:** Hindu activists place idols of Lord Rama inside the Babri Masjid, leading to the mosque's closure. The government declares the site disputed and seals it.

- **1950:** Gopal Singh Visharad files the first legal suit seeking permission to worship the idols placed inside the mosque.

- **1959:** The Sunni Central Waqf Board files a suit claiming ownership and the right to offer prayers at the disputed site.

- **1984:** The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) launches a campaign demanding the construction of a Ram temple on the site.

- **1986:** The Faizabad district court orders the Babri Masjid locks to be opened, allowing Hindus to worship within the mosque premises.

- **1990:** The VHP begins the "Ram Rath Yatra," a nationwide procession led by L.K. Advani, calling for the construction of the Ram temple.

Timeline of the Ayodhya dispute (continued)

- **1992:** on December 6, the Babri masjid is demolished by Hindu activists, triggering widespread communal riots across India.

- **1993:** the central government passes the "acquisition of certain area at Ayodhya act," acquiring 67.703 acres of land around the disputed site and placing it under the control of a trust called the "ram Janmabhoomi Nysa."

- **2002:** the Godhra train burning in Gujarat ignites communal violence, further intensifying tensions related to the Ayodhya dispute.

- **2010:** the Allahabad high court delivers a verdict dividing the disputed land into three parts: one-third to Ram Lalla (infant lord Rama), one-third to the Sunni waqf board, and one-third to the nirmohi akhara. All parties file appeals to the supreme court.

- **2019:** on November 9, the supreme court of India rules that the entire disputed land be handed over to a trust for the construction of a ram temple. The court also orders the government to allot five acres of alternative land for building a mosque.

MAP 3.1 PLACES TO VISIT
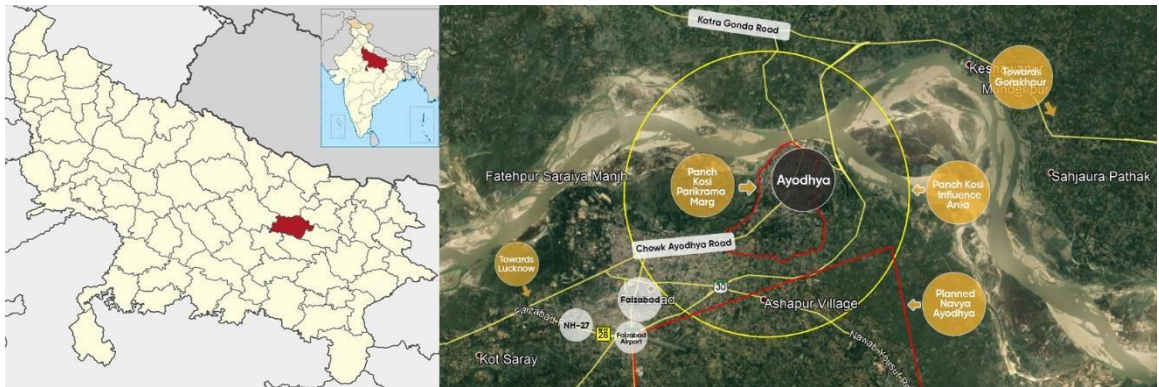
Source: (Thadani, 2022)

Places to visit in Ayodhya

Ayodhya, located in Uttar Pradesh, is a city of deep religious and historical importance for Hindus. Known as the birthplace of lord Rama and famously connected with the epic Ramayana, Ayodhya attracts millions of pilgrims and tourists each year. The city is home to numerous sacred temples, ancient monuments, and serene riverbanks that offer spiritual and cultural experiences. Below are some of the key places to visit in Ayodhya.

- RAMJANMA BHOOMI

- HANUMANGARHI

- KANAK BHAWAN

- NAGESHWARNATH TEMPLE

- TRETA KE THAKUR

- CHOTI CHAWNI

- SITA KI RASOI

- RAJA MANDIR

- RAMKATHA PARK

- MANI PARBAT

- DASHRATH BHAVAN

MAP 3.2 PLACES TO VISIT IN AYODHYA

Source: (THADANI, 2022)

Hanuman Garhi – This ancient 10th-century temple, built in the shape of a fort, is located at the heart of the pilgrimage town. Visitors reach it by climbing a flight of seventy-six steps. The temple features circular fortifications at each corner and is believed to be the place where lord hanuman lived in a cave, guarding and protecting the town.

Figure 3.2 Hanumangarhi Temple

Ramkot

Situated on elevated ground and surrounded by temples and shrines, Ramkot is one of Ayodhya's major attractions.

Historical and Mythological Significance: Ramkot is believed to be the exact location of the ancient city of Ayodhya and the site where Lord Rama's palace, known as Ram's Fort, once stood. It holds great importance in the epic Ramayana as the birthplace of Lord Rama and the centre of his kingdom. The platform at Ramkot offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and the Sarayu River.

Religious Importance: Ramkot is highly revered by Hindus as a sacred pilgrimage site. Devotees believe that visiting and praying here brings blessings, fulfilment of desires, and spiritual growth.

Ram Lalla Temple: Within Ramkot's premises lies the Ram Lalla Temple, which houses the idol of infant Lord Rama (Ram Lalla). This temple is the central place of worship for pilgrims, attracting large numbers of devotees seeking blessings.

Architecture and Structure: Ramkot features a fort-like structure with high walls enclosing the area traditionally associated with Lord Rama's palace. The broad platform provides a vantage point over the holy surroundings.

Figure 3.3 Ramkot

Kanak Bhawan

Kanak Bhawan is a beautifully adorned temple located near the Hanuman Garhi in Ayodhya. It was built in 1891 by Vrishbhanu Kuvari, the Queen of Teekamgarh (in present-day Madhya Pradesh).

This temple is dedicated to Lord Rama and Goddess Sita, and it is said to have been gifted to Sita by Queen Kaikeyi after her marriage to Rama. The temple houses magnificent idols of the divine couple richly decorated with gold ornaments, which is why it is called "Kanak Bhawan" – meaning "Golden Palace."

Known for its stunning architecture and intricate embellishments, Kanak Bhawan is a major attraction for devotees and tourists alike, offering a peaceful and spiritually uplifting atmosphere.

Figure 3.4 Kanak Bhawan

Nageshwarnath Temple

The **Nageshwarnath Temple** holds a special place in Ayodhya's spiritual and historical landscape. According to legend, the temple was established by **Kusha**, the son of Lord Rama, during his reign. This connection adds immense significance to the temple for devotees and historians alike.

The temple is dedicated to **Lord Nageshwarnath**, a revered form of **Lord Shiva**, known as the Lord of Serpents. Devotees visit this sacred shrine to seek protection, spiritual strength, and well-being. Worshipping Lord Nageshwarnath is believed to bring blessings and shield devotees from negative energies.

Architecturally, the temple reflects the traditional **North Indian style**, with beautifully carved pillars, sculptures, and depictions of various deities and mythological scenes. These intricate carvings not only highlight the artistic excellence of the region but also preserve the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of ancient Ayodhya.

Figure 3.5 Shri Nageshwarnath Temple

Ram ki Paidi

Ram ki Paidi, meaning *"Steps of Lord Rama"*, is a sacred ghat located on the banks of the **Sarayu River** in Ayodhya. According to local legends, Lord Rama himself is believed to have descended these very steps to take a ritual bath in the holy river. This belief lends deep spiritual significance to the site, making it one of the most revered ghats in the region.

A Sacred Pilgrimage Spot

Ram ki Paidi features a broad series of stone steps that lead directly into the river, offering easy access to the water for pilgrims. Devotees gather here to perform rituals, take a holy dip believed to cleanse sins, and offer prayers in devotion to Lord Rama.

Religious and Cultural Importance

The ghat becomes a hub of religious activity during major festivals such as **Diwali**, **Ram Navami**, and **Kartik Purnima**. The area comes alive with **aarti ceremonies**, devotional songs, and the light of countless diyas floating on the Sarayu, creating a mesmerizing spiritual atmosphere.

Architecture and Landscape

Ram ki Paidi is designed with an eye for both function and aesthetics. The steps are wide and carefully maintained, while the surrounding **lush green gardens** and nearby temples enhance the serenity of the environment. Recent renovations have preserved its historical charm while making it more accessible to visitors.

Surrounding Attractions

Close to Ram ki Paidi are several other important spiritual sites such as **Guptar Ghat**, **Saryu Aarti Sthal**, and many temples dedicated to various deities. Pilgrims often explore the entire riverfront area, soaking in the rich spiritual and historical heritage.

Spiritual Ambience

The ghat offers more than just a ritual experience—it provides a **peaceful space for reflection and devotion**. Whether one is participating in rituals or simply sitting by the river, Ram ki Paidi allows a profound connection with faith and tradition in the heart of Ayodhya.

Figure 3.6 Ram Ki Paidi

Treta Ke Thakur (Kaleram-ka-Mandir)

Treta Ke Thakur is a revered temple in Ayodhya dedicated to **Lord Rama** and his brothers — **Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna**. According to legend and sacred texts, this is the very spot where Lord Rama performed the **Ashvamedha Yagna** (horse sacrifice), a grand Vedic ritual symbolizing royal sovereignty and the expansion of dharma during his reign as king of Ayodhya.

Also known locally as **Kaleram-ka-Mandir**, the temple is an architectural gem that not only holds deep religious significance but also reflects the cultural and historical heritage of Ayodhya. Devotees and pilgrims visit this temple to pay homage to Lord Rama and relive the divine legacy associated with this sacred site.

Figure 3.7 Treta-ke-Thakur

Sarayu River

The Sacred Lifeline of Ayodhya

The **Sarayu River** is one of the most revered and historically significant rivers in **Uttar Pradesh**, deeply embedded in the cultural and spiritual fabric of India. This ancient river finds mention in sacred Hindu scriptures, including the **Vedas** and the **Ramayana**, underscoring its mythological and religious prominence.

Mythological Significance

According to Hindu mythology, the Sarayu River is believed to be a **celestial stream** originating from the divine **Lake Man Sarovar** in the Himalayas. It is said to have descended from the heavens to earth, bestowing purity and sanctity upon the land it touches.

Association with Lord Rama

The Sarayu River holds a deep and sacred connection with **Lord Rama**, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It flows along **Ayodhya**; the holy city regarded as Rama's birthplace and kingdom. The river plays a pivotal role in the **Ramayana**, and many key episodes of Rama's life are set on its banks. It is believed that Lord Rama eventually departed from the mortal world by entering the waters of the Sarayu, attaining *Jal-Samadhi*.

Pilgrimage and Rituals

The ghats of the Sarayu River are considered **spiritually purifying**. Pilgrims and devotees from across India visit Ayodhya to take a **holy dip**, believed to cleanse sins and bring spiritual merit. Rituals, *aartis*, and **ceremonial prayers** are commonly performed on the banks, especially during religious festivals like **Ram Navami**, **Diwali**, and **Chhath Puja**.

The Sarayu River is not just a natural waterway; it is a **symbol of divinity, purity, and timeless devotion**. Its flowing waters continue to nurture the cultural and spiritual life of Ayodhya, making it a vital part of the city's heritage and identity.

Figure 3.8 Saryu River

Suraj Kund

A   Sacred   Reservoir   of   Spiritual   Light
Location: Chaudah Koshi Parikrama Marg, Darshan Nagar, ~4 km from Ayodhya

Suraj Kund is a large and picturesque **sacred tank** situated on the **Chaudah Koshi Parikrama Marg** in the Darshan Nagar area near Ayodhya. Surrounded by beautifully constructed **ghats**,

this historic site offers a serene and spiritually uplifting experience to visitors and devotees alike.

Mythological Significance

Suraj Kund holds an esteemed place in **Hindu mythology**. As per ancient texts and local legends, it is closely associated with **Lord Rama** and **Goddess Sita**. It is believed that Sita would **offer her daily prayers to Surya Dev (the Sun God)** at this very location. Hence, the site was named **"Suraj Kund,"** meaning **"Pool of the Sun."**

A Sacred Water Body

This holy **Kund (pond)** is not just a visually enchanting reservoir but also a spiritually significant one. **Devotees believe** that taking a ritual bath here **purifies the soul**, cleanses sins, and may even **possess healing properties**. Over the years, it has become a focal point for religious rituals, meditation, and spiritual reflection.

Spiritual Ambience

With its calm waters, religious importance, and mythological links, Suraj Kund stands as a symbol of **divine energy, devotion, and tranquillity**. Whether visited for worship or solace, it offers a unique experience of **inner peace and cultural reverence**.

Figure 3.9 Suraj Kund

Guptar Ghat

A Sacred Site of Lord Rama's Final Journey
Location: On the banks of the Sarayu River, Ayodhya

Guptar Ghat holds a place of profound reverence in the religious and cultural landscape of Ayodhya. Situated on the serene banks of the **Sarayu River**, this sacred ghat is closely associated with the concluding chapters of **Lord Rama's earthly life**.

Mythological Significance

Guptar Ghat is believed to be the very site where **Lord Rama performed *Jal Samadhi*** — a ritual immersion marking his departure from the mortal world and his return to **Vaikuntha**, the divine abode of Vishnu. According to local legends, during his exile, Lord Rama, accompanied by **Lakshmana**, took a **secret dip (Gupt Snan)** in the Sarayu at this spot to purify himself after defeating the demon king **Ravana** and neutralizing the effects of the **Brahmastra** weapon. The name "Guptar" derives from the Sanskrit word *"gupt"* meaning **hidden or secret**, emphasizing the discreet and divine nature of Rama's visit.

Historical Background

The ghat, as seen today, was constructed in the **early 19th century** by **King Darshan Singh**, who recognized the site's religious importance and contributed to its architectural and cultural development.

Religious Importance

Guptar Ghat is considered one of the **most sacred pilgrimage sites** for followers of **Lord Rama**. Bathing in the holy waters of the **Sarayu River** at this ghat is believed to cleanse one's sins and bring about **spiritual purification**. It remains a popular spot for **prayers, rituals, and meditative reflection**.

Ram Ghat Temple

Adjacent to the ghat is the **Ram Ghat Temple**, a shrine dedicated to **Lord Rama**. The temple is an active site of worship and draws a large number of devotees throughout the year. The temple premises come alive with **devotional chants, aartis, and rituals**, particularly on auspicious occasions.

Pilgrimage and Festivals

Guptar Ghat experiences heightened activity during religious festivals such as **Ram Navami** (birth of Lord Rama) and the **Ramayana month** celebrations. The entire area is adorned with **lights, flowers, and banners**, and the ghats host **special poojas, cultural programs, and riverfront processions**.

Riverfront Devotion and Activities

The ghat is a hub for various devotional activities. Pilgrims light **oil lamps**, offer **floating diyas (earthen lamps)**, and perform **ritual baths** as part of their religious observance. These acts not only symbolize devotion but also create a visually enchanting spiritual ambiance along the Sarayu's banks.

Guptar Ghat stands as a testament to **Ayodhya's eternal connection with Lord Rama**, blending myth, history, devotion, and culture into a powerful centre of pilgrimage and peace.

Figure 3.10 Guptar Ghat

Master Plan of Ayodhya – 2031

Towards a World-Class Spiritual and Tourism-Oriented Urban Hub

The **Ayodhya Master Plan 2031** has been developed to guide the **integrated and balanced development** of the city, aligning with its rich spiritual heritage and increasing tourism demands. The plan emphasizes a **harmonious growth** of the physical, economic, and community dimensions, while preserving the city's **religious identity** and **natural assets**.

Key Objectives

- To promote Ayodhya as a **world-class spiritual tourism destination**

- To guide **sustainable urban development** with planned infrastructure

- To ensure **balanced land use** for residential, commercial, institutional, and tourism-related functions

- To manage the influx of an estimated **5 lakh daily visitors and migrants** in the near future

Development Strategy and Land Use Trends

The Master Plan has identified **three major growth corridors**, each reflecting distinct land use patterns:

1. **Lucknow Road Corridor**

   o Focus: **Industrial, commercial, and institutional development**

   o Role: Acts as a primary axis for economic and employment-generating activities

2. **Rae Bareli–Sultanpur Road Corridor**

   o Focus: **Mixed land use and emerging residential areas**

   o Role: Accommodates gradual urban expansion with flexible zoning

3. **Ambedkar Nagar Road Corridor**

   o Focus: **Mixed-use and residential development**

   o Role: Supports the spatial decongestion of the city core

In addition, a **200-meter control zone** around the **Ayodhya Airport** has been earmarked for **agricultural use**, ensuring controlled development near sensitive aviation infrastructure.

Tourism-Driven Urbanization

Recognizing Ayodhya's potential as a religious tourism epicenter, the Master Plan emphasizes the creation of facilities to support mass pilgrimages and religious gatherings. Proposals include:

- **Dharamshala's and hotels** for accommodation

- **Hospitals** for healthcare access

- **Public parking and transport hubs**

- **Large-scale residential housing projects**

- **Urban amenities** tailored to both residents and visitors

Spatial Planning and Expansion

- **Total Ayodhya Development Area:** 873 sq. km

- **Urbanizable Land Proposed:** 12.85% of the development area

- **Master Plan Prepared Area (Phase-1):** 133 sq. km

This expansion reflects the anticipated urban pressures and future needs of a global spiritual destination.

Vision Beyond 2031

Under the **Ayodhya Vision Document 2047**, the city is envisioned as a **global spiritual capital**. This long-term vision builds upon the 2031 framework and anticipates future urban, economic, and environmental challenges while preserving the sanctity and soul of Ayodhya.

Table 3.1 Decadal Population Growth

Decadal Population Growth		
Year	Population	Population Change
1961	83,177	-
1971	1,02,835	19,658
1981	1,32,373	29,538
1991	1,65,079	32,706
2001	1,94,122	29,043
2011	2,21,118	26,996

Source: (Census, 2011)

Map 3.1 Master Plan of Ayodhya 2031
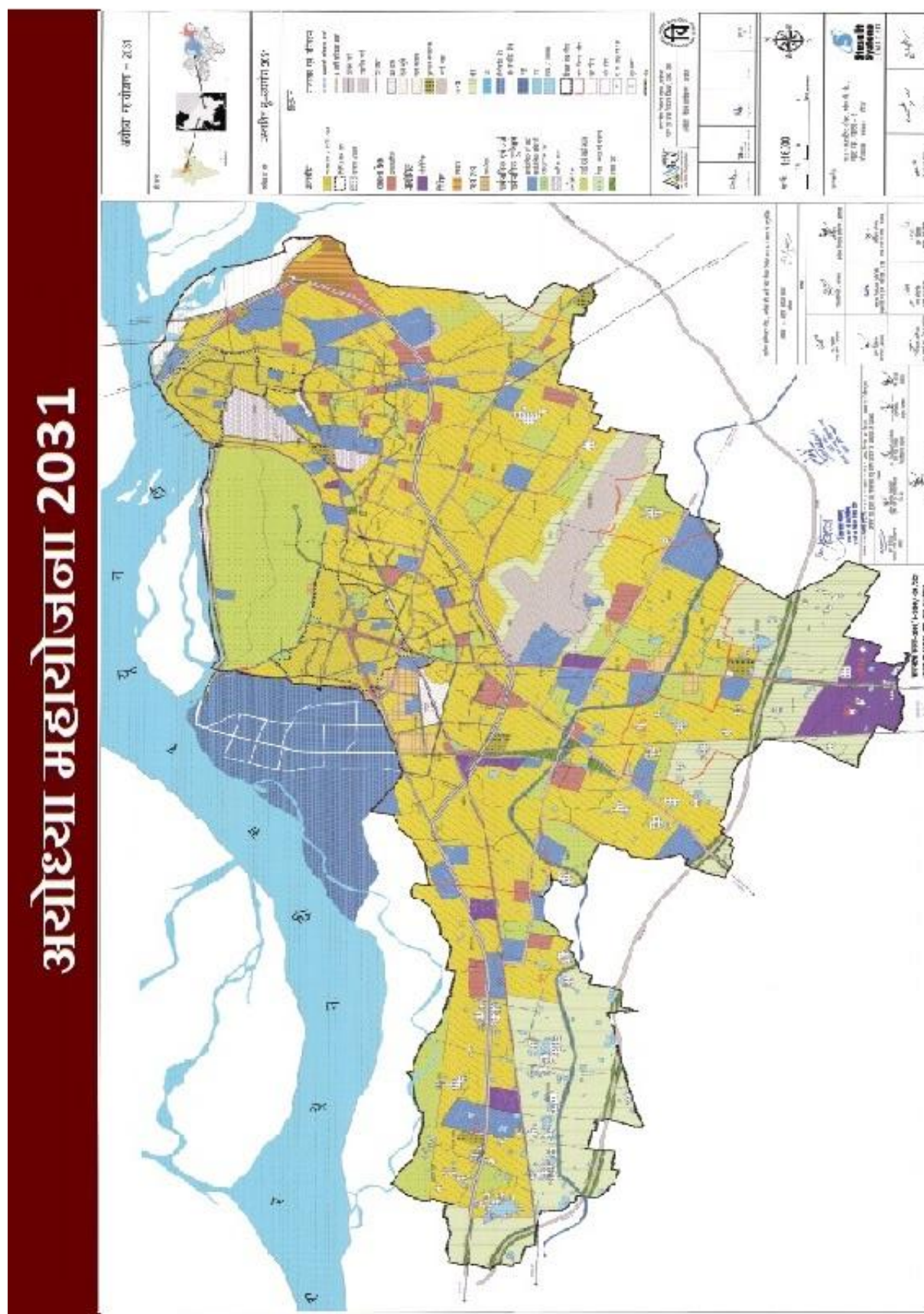
Source: (Authority, 2031)

Impact of Pilgrimage on Planning an Integrated Tourism Management Plan for Ayodhya

The Government of Uttar Pradesh is working extensively to transform Ayodhya into a **world-class spiritual and tourism hub** while maintaining its deep cultural and religious roots. Several major projects have been launched to improve infrastructure, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the city's heritage.

1. Ram Mandir Complex

One of the most important and iconic developments is the construction of the **grand Ram Mandir**, dedicated to Lord Rama. This temple is not only a spiritual center but also a symbol of the city's cultural pride. Designed with traditional Indian architectural features, the temple complex is built to accommodate **large numbers of devotees** and provide modern amenities while reflecting the city's rich religious legacy.

2. Development of Tourism Infrastructure

To support the growing number of pilgrims and tourists, the government is building:

- **Dharamshala's (pilgrim rest houses)**
- **Hotels and guesthouses**
- **Modern amenities such as public toilets, food courts, and waiting lounges**

This infrastructure aims to ensure that visitors have a **comfortable and meaningful experience** during their stay in Ayodhya.

3. Improved Connectivity and Transportation

Ayodhya is becoming more accessible than ever. Major improvements include:

- **Widening of highways and local roads**
- **New bridges and flyovers**
- **Development of Ayodhya Airport and railway station upgrades**

These efforts are designed to ensure **easy and smooth access** to the city for both domestic and international visitors.

4. Riverfront Development

Situated on the banks of the **Sarayu River**, Ayodhya is known for its spiritual ghats. The government is redeveloping the riverfront by:

- Building **well-designed ghats** for religious rituals
- Enhancing **landscaping and lighting**

- Creating **peaceful spaces** for spiritual reflection

This project is meant to protect the sacred river while providing a serene atmosphere for pilgrims.

5. Beautification and Urban Renewal

Ayodhya's public spaces are undergoing a major transformation to enhance the city's overall appearance and visitor experience. These efforts include:

- Creating **parks, gardens, and open spaces**

- Restoring **historic streets and buildings**

- Installing **smart signage, lighting, and urban furniture**

These beautification projects not only improve the **visual appeal** of the city but also help in **preserving its heritage character**.

Preservation of Heritage

Ayodhya's profound cultural and religious heritage is central to its identity as a spiritual destination. The government and local authorities have undertaken systematic efforts to **preserve and restore the city's historic landmarks and religious structures**. Conservation projects focus on **ensuring the structural integrity and aesthetic value** of temples, ghats, and ancient buildings. These efforts aim to balance development with sustainability, making sure that **future generations can continue to experience the rich spiritual legacy** of Ayodhya.

Restoration work is being carried out in alignment with traditional architectural styles, using locally sourced materials and craftsmanship where possible. Additionally, **awareness campaigns and tourism guidelines** are being introduced to protect heritage sites from damage due to overcrowding or neglect. By preserving its heritage, Ayodhya maintains its role not only as a religious center but also as a living museum of Indian spiritual and architectural traditions.

The Flow of Pilgrims in Ayodhya

The flow of pilgrims in Ayodhya fluctuates throughout the year, heavily influenced by the Hindu religious calendar and key festivals. As the birthplace of Lord Rama, Ayodhya holds immense spiritual significance, and **millions of devotees visit the city annually** to participate in rituals and celebrations.

Below are some of the **major religious events that lead to surges in pilgrim numbers**:

Ram Navami

Ram Navami marks the **birth of Lord Rama** and is celebrated with great enthusiasm on the ninth day of Chaitra (March–April). It is one of the **largest gatherings in Ayodhya**, with devotees arriving from across India and abroad to take part in religious processions, temple rituals, and prayers.

Diwali

Diwali, the **Festival of Lights**, holds special significance in Ayodhya as it celebrates **Lord Rama's return to the city after defeating Ravana**. During Diwali, the entire city is illuminated with diyas (lamps), and grand events such as **deepotsav**, cultural programs, and fireworks draw massive crowds.

Kartik Purnima

Falling in October–November, Kartik Purnima is considered **highly auspicious for bathing in the Sarayu River**. Thousands of pilgrims gather to perform sacred dips, offer prayers, and participate in spiritual events at prominent ghats like Ram ki Paidi and Guptar Ghat.

Chhath Puja

Chhath Puja, dedicated to the **Sun God**, is another major event where pilgrims gather at sunrise and sunset to perform rituals on the ghats. Ayodhya's riverfronts witness large gatherings during this period, especially at Saryu and Guptar Ghats.

Other Religious Observances

Other festivals such as **Hanuman Jayanti**, **Navaratri**, and the **Ramayana Month** also attract steady flows of pilgrims throughout the year. These occasions reinforce Ayodhya's identity as a **year-round pilgrimage destination**.

Table 3.2 Growth of Tourists in Ayodhya

YEARLY PILGRIMS FLOW IN AYODHYA			
YEAR	DOMESTIC	INTERNATIONAL	TOTAL
2015	1,54,32,558	19,077	1,54,51,635
2016	1,54,82,456	20,979	1,55,03,435
2017	1,75,49,633	23,926	1,75,73,559
2018	1,92,17,570	27,043	1,92,44,613
2019	2,01,22,436	26,956	2,01,49,392

Source: (Authority, 2031)

The Induced Tourist Inflow in Ayodhya

The opening of the **Ram Mandir** in Ayodhya marks a transformative moment in the city's spiritual and socio-economic landscape. As a site deeply rooted in religious tradition and national consciousness, the inauguration of the grand temple is expected to significantly **amplify tourist inflow**—particularly pilgrimage, cultural, and heritage tourism. The following are the key anticipated impacts:

1. Surge in Pilgrimage Tourism

Ayodhya has long been revered as a sacred city associated with **Lord Rama**, attracting millions of devotees annually. With the opening of the Ram Mandir, the city is expected to witness an **exponential rise in religious tourism**. The temple, as a national symbol of devotion, will act as a major pilgrimage hub, drawing visitors from every region of India as well as from the global Indian diaspora. This influx is likely to turn Ayodhya into one of the **foremost religious destinations in the world**.

2. Growth in Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Beyond its religious significance, the Ram Mandir is also a **monument of Indian heritage and architecture**. It appeals to cultural tourists, historians, and scholars interested in exploring India's **epic traditions, temple architecture, and mythological narratives**. Tourists visiting Ayodhya are increasingly expected to engage with the city's broader heritage ecosystem—such as ancient ghats, temples, kunds, and historical shrines—thus expanding the city's profile beyond religious tourism.

3. Infrastructure Development and Urban Renewal

The anticipated rise in tourist traffic has prompted state and local authorities to **invest heavily in infrastructure upgrades**. Key areas of focus include:

- **Enhanced transportation networks**: Road widening, new flyovers, rail connectivity, and Ayodhya airport expansion.

- **Accommodation facilities**: Hotels, dharamshalas, guesthouses, and budget lodgings are being planned and constructed at scale.

- **Tourist amenities**: Information centers, signage, digital guides, restrooms, drinking water stations, and medical support systems are being introduced for a seamless visitor experience.

- **Public utilities and urban design**: Riverfront beautification, smart lighting, walkways, parks, and urban mobility improvements (e-rickshaws, shuttle buses) are part of the integrated plan.

These developments aim not only to support tourism but also to **improve the quality of life** for residents and create **new employment opportunities** in hospitality, transport, and services.

Map 3.2 Parikrama Marg in Ayodhya
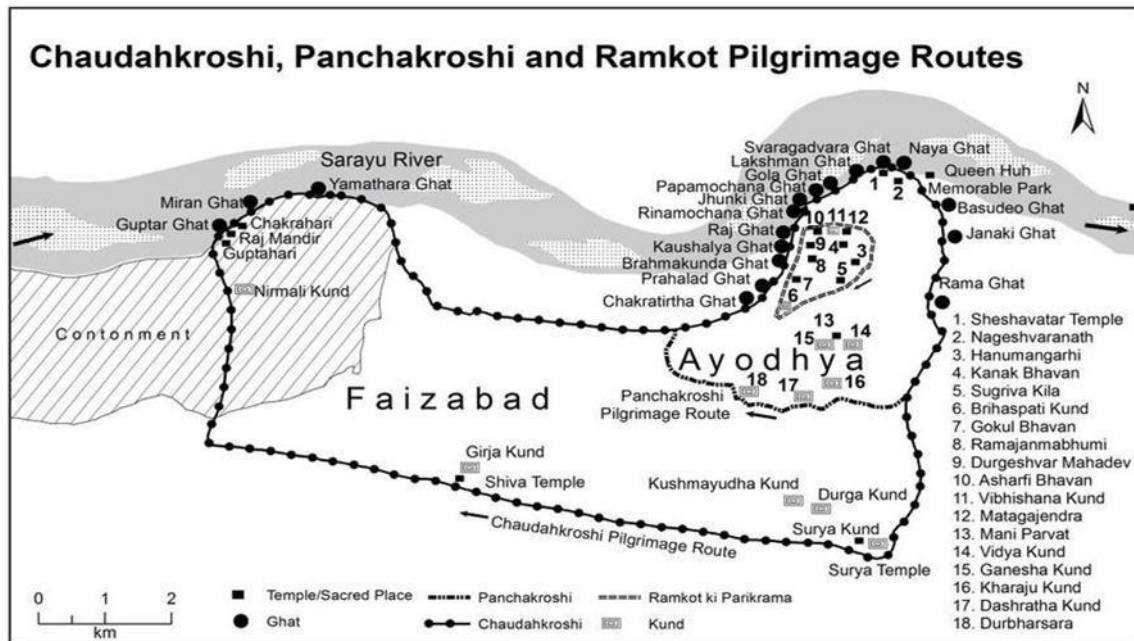
Source: (Kumar, 2017)

Socio-Economic Impact of Increased Tourism in Ayodhya

The rise in tourist footfall following the opening of the Ram Mandir is expected to bring several **positive socio-economic impacts** on Ayodhya and its local communities:

- **Employment Generation:**
  Tourism growth will create numerous direct and indirect employment opportunities. Sectors such as hospitality (hotels, restaurants), transportation (taxis, buses), handicrafts, retail, and local services are expected to benefit significantly. This employment boost will enhance the livelihood prospects of residents and reduce economic disparities.

- **Economic Development:**
  Increased tourist spending on accommodation, food, transport, and souvenirs will contribute substantially to the local economy. This influx of capital can support small businesses, artisans, and entrepreneurs, fostering overall economic growth in the region.

- **Cultural Exchange and Awareness:**
  The Ram Mandir's opening will attract visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds and regions. This can promote cultural exchange, enhance mutual understanding, and raise

awareness about Hindu traditions, mythology, and religious practices. Ayodhya can thus serve as a vibrant platform for intercultural dialogue and spiritual learning.

Advantages for the City

- **Enhanced Religious and Cultural Importance:** The Ram Mandir is a monumental religious and cultural symbol for millions of devotees across India and worldwide. Its construction solidifies Ayodhya's status as a major pilgrimage destination, drawing significant numbers of visitors year-round.

- **Boost to Tourism and Urban Development:** The increased inflow of pilgrims and tourists will catalyze urban development and infrastructural improvements, enhancing the city's facilities and public services.

- **Economic Growth:** With tourism acting as a key economic driver, Ayodhya is poised for sustained economic growth, benefiting both public revenue and private enterprise.

- **Global Recognition:** As Ayodhya gains prominence through the Ram Mandir, it will attract international tourists and scholars, increasing its global cultural and spiritual footprint.

Tourism Boost

Ayodhya, renowned for its rich historical and religious significance linked to Lord Rama, is set to witness a substantial enhancement in its tourism potential with the construction of the Ram Mandir. The temple's grandeur will attract tourists from across India and around the world, eager to experience its spiritual and architectural magnificence. This surge in tourist arrivals will not only spotlight Ayodhya as a premier pilgrimage destination but also encourage visitors to explore other nearby cultural and historical attractions. The resulting increase in tourist footfall is expected to drive economic growth and prosperity for the local community by boosting businesses, hospitality services, and related industries.

Figure 3.11 News Clip of Uttar Pradesh government identifies 1,1100-acre land in Ayodhya for development

Source: (Times, n.d.)

Infrastructure Development

The construction of the Ram Mandir and the consequent rise in tourist and pilgrim influx are expected to act as catalysts for extensive infrastructure development in Ayodhya. Significant improvements are anticipated in:

- **Transportation Facilities:** Enhanced road networks, better public transport, and new bridges to facilitate smooth access to major religious and tourist sites.

- **Accommodation:** Expansion of hotels, guesthouses, dharamshalas, and other lodging options to cater to the growing number of visitors.

- **Amenities and Services:** Development of restaurants, shopping areas, parking facilities, and other essential services to support tourism.

These infrastructure enhancements will not only bolster the tourism industry but also improve the overall quality of life for local residents by providing better connectivity and urban amenities.

Employment Opportunities

The Ram Mandir project, along with the anticipated tourism boom, is poised to generate a wide array of employment opportunities for the local population:

- **Hospitality Sector:** Growth in hotels, restaurants, and guest services will create numerous jobs.

- **Transportation Industry:** Increased demand for local transport services will open up jobs for drivers, guides, and logistics personnel.

- **Service Businesses:** Expansion of retail, handicrafts, tour operations, and other tourism-related services will further contribute to job creation.

This increase in employment will have a positive effect on the local economy and improve the livelihoods of Ayodhya's residents.

Socio-Economic Development

The construction of the Ram Mandir is expected to produce a ripple effect on Ayodhya's socio-economic landscape by:

- Stimulating business growth across various sectors due to increased economic activity.

- Improving living standards through better infrastructure and employment.

- Encouraging the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, which in turn strengthens community identity and pride.

- Attracting investments in urban development and public services.

Together, these factors will contribute to the sustainable socio-economic growth and modernization of Ayodhya.

Figure 3.12 News Clip of UP Government allows foreign countries to construct guest houses for pilgrims

National and International Recognition

The construction of the Ram Mandir will elevate Ayodhya's status as a prominent religious and cultural destination on both national and global stages. This development will:

- Draw attention from diverse communities worldwide, increasing pilgrim and tourist inflow from various countries.

- Promote cultural exchanges and foster international collaborations.

- Attract investments aimed at further developing the city's infrastructure and tourism facilities.

- Enhance Ayodhya's positive image as a heritage-rich spiritual hub, encouraging sustained interest and support for preserving its cultural legacy.

Real Estate Development

Ayodhya has experienced a notable surge in real estate activity, fueled by several key drivers:

- **Impact of Ram Mandir Construction:** The temple project has significantly increased investor confidence and demand for property in and around Ayodhya.

- **Tourism and Infrastructure Growth:** With expanding infrastructure and growing tourist inflow, the city has become an attractive destination for residential, commercial, and hospitality real estate projects.

- **Investor and Developer Interest:** Developers are actively acquiring land and initiating projects to cater to the expected influx of pilgrims and visitors, including hotels, guesthouses, retail spaces, and housing.

- **Economic Opportunities:** Real estate growth contributes to the local economy by creating construction jobs and increasing property values.

This real estate boom is closely tied to Ayodhya's transformation into a world-class spiritual and tourist city.

Figure 3.13 News Clip of Ayodhya as a new Real Estate boom
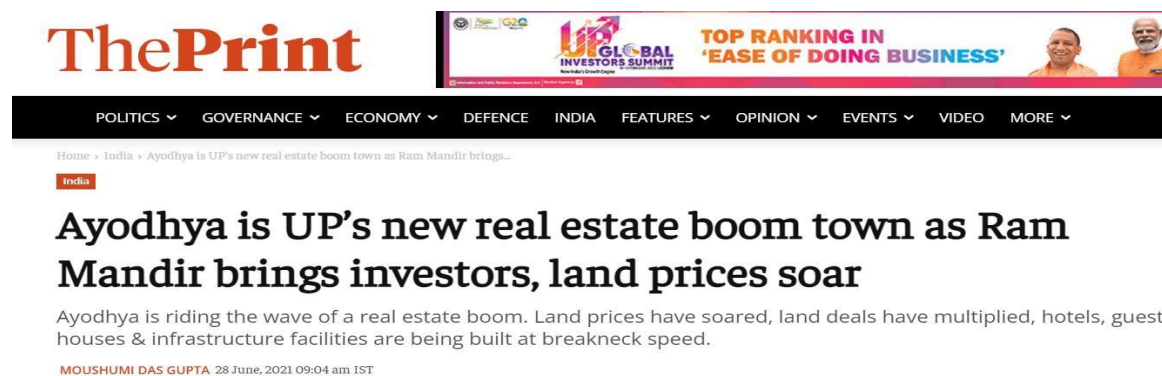
Source: (Gupta, 2021)

Infrastructure Development

Ayodhya has been prioritized for extensive infrastructure development to support the anticipated surge in tourist and pilgrim inflow. Key initiatives include:

- Upgrading and expanding road networks to improve connectivity within the city and with neighboring regions.

- Enhancing public transportation facilities to provide convenient and efficient travel options for visitors and residents.

- Developing public amenities such as sanitation, water supply, and healthcare services to meet the growing demand.

- Beautification and modernization of the cityscape to create a welcoming environment for tourists and promote Ayodhya's image as a world-class spiritual destination.

This robust infrastructure development acts as a catalyst for real estate growth by attracting developers and investors eager to capitalize on the expanding market opportunities.

Tourism and Pilgrimage Potential

Ayodhya's long-standing reputation as a sacred pilgrimage destination continues to draw a steady stream of devotees. The opening of the Ram Mandir is expected to substantially increase the number of tourists and pilgrims visiting the city, creating:

- Greater demand for accommodation facilities including hotels, guesthouses, dharmshalas, and residential properties.

- Opportunities for growth in hospitality and allied service sectors to cater to the diverse needs of visitors.

- Expansion of commercial spaces, retail outlets, and cultural venues to enhance the overall tourist experience.

This heightened tourism and pilgrimage potential is driving both short-term and long-term investments, fuelling economic growth and urban development in Ayodhya.

Figure 3.14 News Clip of Ayodhya turns into a property hotspot

Source: (Sinha, 2022)

Employment Opportunities

The real estate boom in Ayodhya has significantly contributed to the city's economic growth while generating numerous employment opportunities. The surge in construction and development activities has created jobs across multiple sectors, including:

- Construction and infrastructure development

- Hospitality and tourism services

- Real estate sales and marketing

- Ancillary services such as transportation, retail, and maintenance

These opportunities provide vital livelihood options for the local population, fostering community development and improving living standards.

Investment Potential

The rapid growth in Ayodhya's real estate sector has attracted considerable interest from investors eager to capitalize on the city's expanding economic and tourism prospects. Key factors driving investment include:

- Increasing demand for residential, commercial, and hospitality properties

- Appreciating property values reflecting the city's rising prominence

- Strategic infrastructure improvements enhancing connectivity and accessibility

- Government initiatives promoting urban development and tourism growth

Figure 3.15 News clip of Guest House to be built in Ayodhya
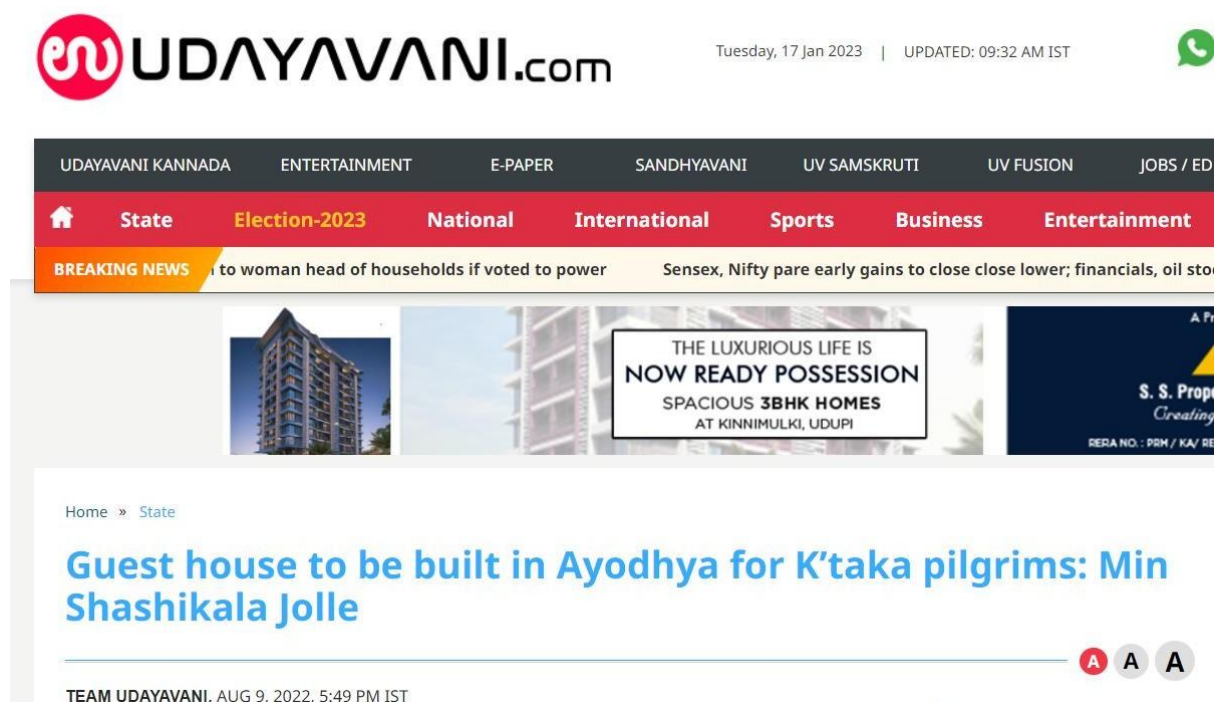
Source: (UDAYAVANI, 2022)

Highway Construction and Tourism Infrastructure Development

- The Government of Uttar Pradesh has permitted foreign countries to construct guest houses for pilgrims visiting Ayodhya. A dedicated land parcel of **12 acres** has already been allocated specifically for building accommodations for visitors from abroad.

- **Tourist Footfall Growth:**

    o In 2012, Ayodhya recorded a pilgrim footfall of approximately **1.2 crore**.

    o By 2019, this number increased to about **2 crore** visitors, reflecting the rising importance of the city as a pilgrimage and tourism hub.

- **Sapta   Puri   Circuit:**
  Ayodhya is part of the prestigious Sapta Puri circuit, which includes seven sacred pilgrimage cities:

  - Haridwar

  - Dwarka

  - Kanchipuram

  - Ujjain

  - Varanasi

  - Mathura

  - Ayodhya

These initiatives and developments aim to revive Ayodhya's historical and spiritual prominence.

- **Ayodhya   Development   Authority   (ADA)   Plans:**
  The ADA has outlined ambitious plans to transform Ayodhya into a world-class tourist destination by:

  - Developing state-of-the-art tourist facilities

  - Building five-star hotels

  - Revamping the railway station to accommodate more than **1 lakh visitors per day**

  - Establishing the **Ayodhya International Airport**, which will connect the city to major metropolitan areas across India and beyond.

- **Ramayana   Circuit:**
  Ayodhya is a key part of the Ramayana Circuit, which connects multiple significant sites associated with the epic Ramayana, including:

  - Nandigram

  - Shringverpur

  - Chitrakoot

  - Sitamarhi

  - Buxar

  - Darbhanga

  - Mahendragiri

- o Jagdalpur

- o Nashik

- o Nagpur

- o Bhadrachalam

- o Hampi

- o Rameswaram

This circuit attracts devotees and tourists interested in exploring the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Ramayana saga.

Figure 3.16 News Clip of New Highway to be built in Ayodhya

84 Kos Parikrama Marg in Ayodhya to be a national highway: Everything to know

Ayodhya has three parikramas – 5 kos, which is about 15 km, 14 kos, which is 42 km, and 84 kos which is around 275 km – and all of them are in relation to Lord Ram.

Written by **FE Online**

July 27, 2021 7:23:33 pm

Follow Us

Source: NHAI

NHAI Ring Road and Urban Development Initiatives in Ayodhya

- **65 km Ring Road Construction:**
The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is constructing a **65-kilometer ring road** around Ayodhya, stretching from **Sugriva Fort to the Ram Mandir**. This ring road will support the development of a **1,200-acre Vedic township**, featuring:

  - o Ashrams

  - o Star-category hotels

  - o State Bhawans (government guest houses)

  - o Foreign Country Bhawans (diplomatic accommodations), modeled after Delhi's diplomatic enclave.

- **Pilgrim Accommodation Plans:**
To accommodate the growing number of pilgrims, **dharamshalas (pilgrim rest houses)** are planned at **six key entrances** on the highway leading into Ayodhya. These facilities will collectively cater to **30,000 pilgrims**.

- **Land Acquisition:**
  The Uttar Pradesh government has acquired over **1,000 acres** of land under **Section 28 of the Land Acquisition Act** to support these development projects.

- **Projected Pilgrim Footfall:**
  On auspicious occasions such as **Ram Navami**, the city currently sees about **1 lakh visitors per day**. Post completion of the Ram Mandir, this number is expected to surge to **15 lakh visitors per day** during special occasions.

- **Majha Barhata Greenfield Township:**
  A large-scale township project is underway in Majha Barhata, spanning a **12,000-acre plot** with an initial investment of **Rs 10,000 crore**. Over **54% of the required land** has already been procured.

This township will be developed as a **solar city**, featuring:

- **80 state and international guest houses**

- **30 five-star and three-star hotels**

- **30 budget hotels**

These accommodations are planned to meet the demands of the increasing tourist and pilgrim influx.

- **Parikrama Routes in Ayodhya:**
  Ayodhya offers three traditional **Parikrama (circumambulation) routes** for pilgrims:

- **84 miles**

- **14 miles**

- **5 miles**

These routes hold religious and cultural significance and attract many devotees for spiritual journeys.

Chapter- 04
CASE & LITERATURE STUDY

JAIPUR

Introduction

Tourism plays a crucial role in Jaipur's economy, contributing significantly to employment generation and revenue. However, rapid urbanization, environmental concerns, and the need for infrastructure improvement call for a well-structured Integrated Tourism Management Plan. This case study analyzes the existing tourism scenario and proposes an ITMP to enhance Jaipur's appeal as a world-class tourist destination.

Jaipur's Tourism Profile

- **Major Attractions**: Amber Fort, Hawa Mahal, City Palace, Jantar Mantar, Nahargarh Fort, Jaigarh Fort, Albert Hall Museum, Jal Mahal.

- **Cultural Heritage**: Traditional arts and crafts, festivals (Teej, Gangaur, Jaipur Literature Festival), cuisine.

- **Tourist Influx**: Domestic and international tourist statistics.

- **Current Infrastructure**: Roads, transport facilities, hotels, and connectivity.

Key Challenges in Tourism Management

Figure 4.1 Hawamahal

Source: Govt. Rajsthan Tourism

- **Overcrowding and Infrastructure Strain**: High footfall in peak seasons causes congestion and stress on public amenities.

- **Heritage Conservation**: Degradation of historical monuments due to pollution, lack of maintenance, and encroachment.

- **Environmental Impact**: Waste management, water scarcity, and air pollution affecting
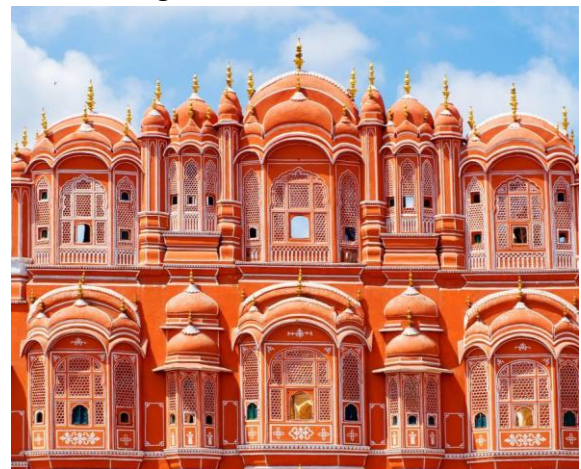
Challenges in Jaipur

Over-tourism pressure, leading to stress on historic sites.

Lack of urban infrastructure to handle rising tourist numbers.

Seasonal dependency, with high tourist influx only during winter.

Case Examples of Best Practices

- Successful conservation projects at Amber Fort and Hawa Mahal.

- Implementation of smart city initiatives improving tourist experience.

• Impact of Jaipur Literature Festival in promoting cultural tourism.

Map 4.1 Jaipur City
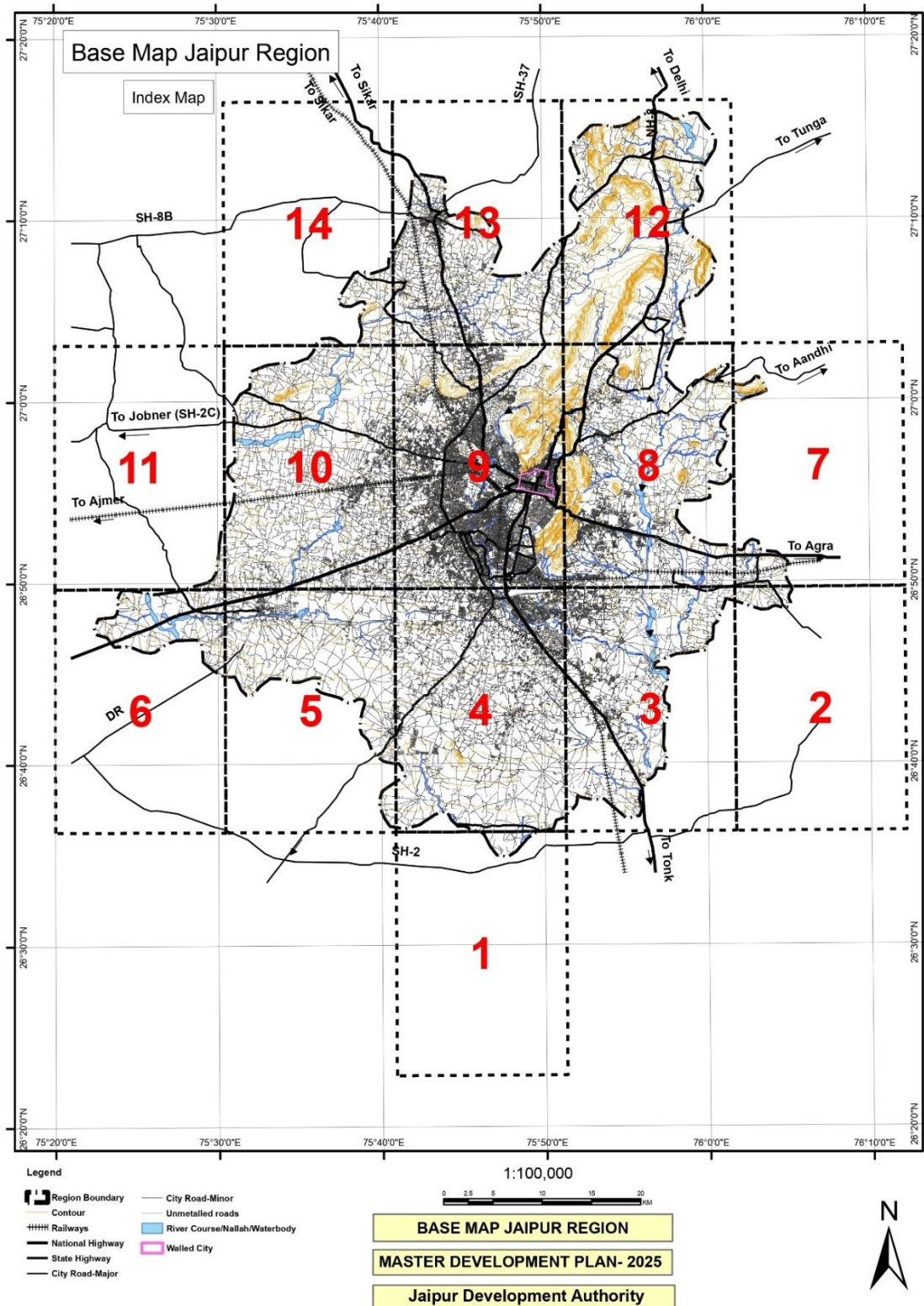
Source: JDA

1 Sustainable Tourism Strategies

2 Infrastructure and Connectivity Development

3 Heritage Conservation

4 Community Participation and Local Economy Enhancement

5 Smart Tourism and Digital Integration

Foreign and domestic tourist arrivals across Jaipur in India between 2010 and 2022 *(in millions)*

Graph 4.1 domestic tourist arrivals
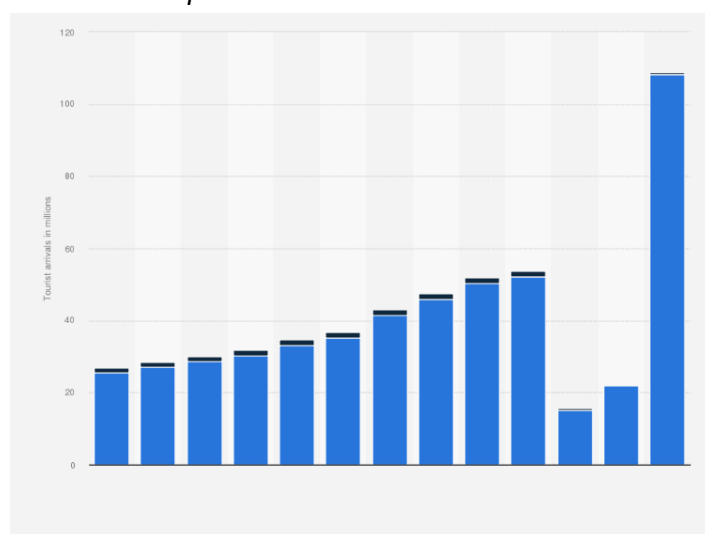
Policy Framework and Governance

- Role of Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) in policy formulation.

- Collaboration with private sector and NGOs for sustainable tourism.

- Legal frameworks ensuring responsible tourism practices.

City Population(2011)	30.73 Lac + 10% Floating
Area:	467 Sq. Km.
Number of Houses:	4.5 Lac (BPL Families : 26127)
Nigam:	City is divided into 2 Nigam
Zones:	Heritage Nigam is divided into 4 geographical zones

Source-Census 2011

UJJAIN

Introduction

- Ujjain is known as the temple city for its numerous temples from different eras

- The world's largest religious gathering, Simhastha (Kumbha Mela), is held on the banks of the Shipra River once in every 12 years

- Ujjain is considered the Greenwich of India, with the first meridian of longitude passing through it

- The Shri Ram Ghat, also known as Ram ghat, is the most ancient bathing ghat

- Legend has it that Lord Krishna did his schooling from Sandipani Ashram in Ujjain.

KEY CHALLENGES IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

- **Overcrowding and Infrastructure Strain**: High footfall during festivals and Kumbh Mela causes congestion and overuse of public resources.

- **Heritage Conservation**: The risk of structural damage to ancient temples and ghats due to unregulated development and environmental degradation.

- **Environmental Impact**: Pollution of the Shipra River, waste management issues, and ecological stress.

- **Community Involvement**: Limited local participation in tourism planning and benefit-sharing.

- **Sustainability Issues**: The need for green tourism initiatives and improved urban planning.

CASE EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES

- The role of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela in promoting Ujjain's global tourism appeal.

- Effective river rejuvenation projects and waste management initiatives.

- Smart city interventions improving tourist experiences.

Map 4.2 Ujjain City
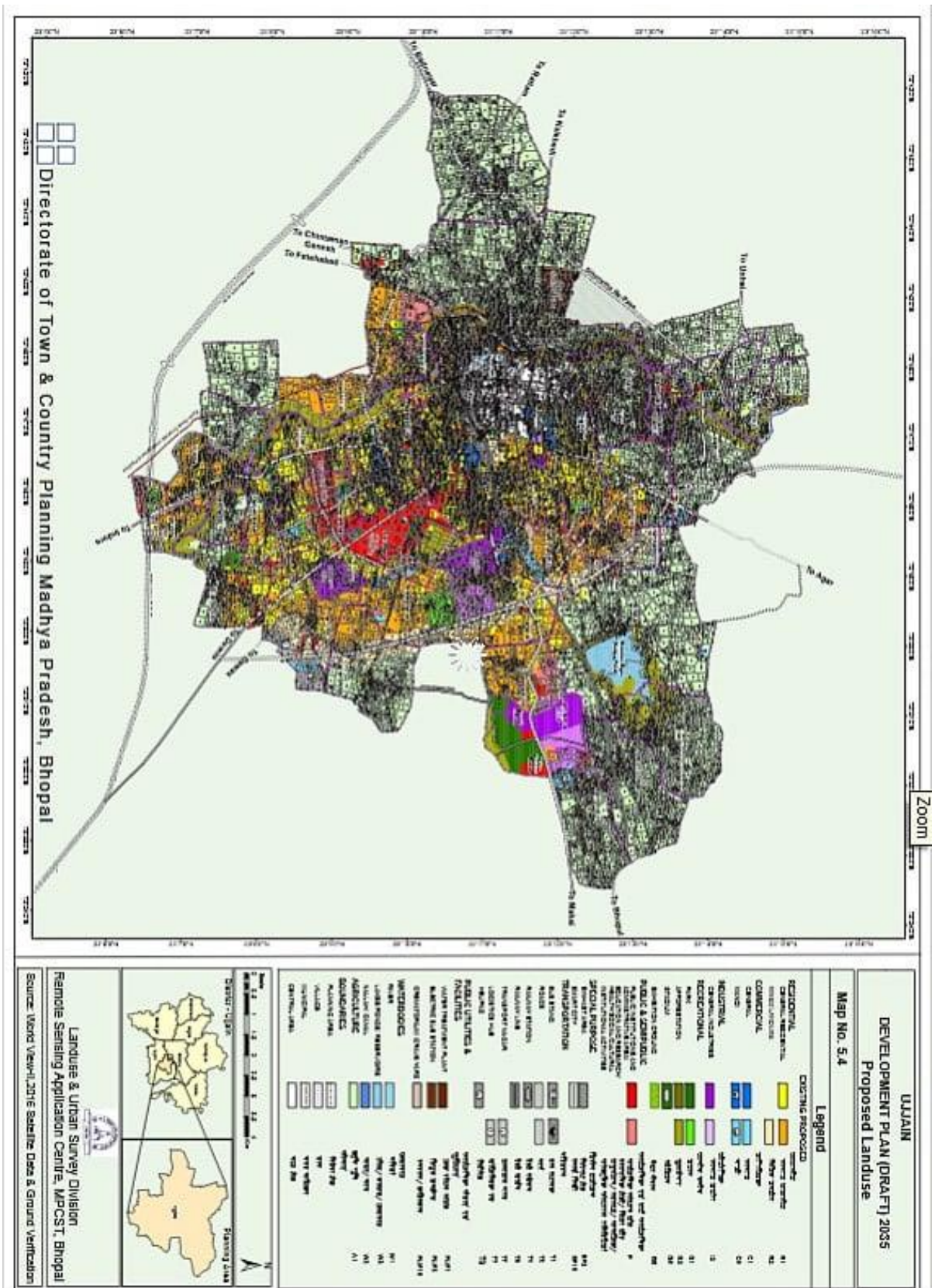
Source: UDA

Ujjain's tourism profile

- **Major Attractions**: Mahakaleshwar Temple, Kumbh Mela,

Kal Bhairav Temple, Harsiddhi Temple, Ram Ghat, Sandipani Ashram, Vikram Kirti Mandir.

- **Cultural and Religious Significance**: Ujjain's status as one of the seven Moksha-puris and a major site for Hindu religious tourism.

- **Tourist Influx**: Analysis of domestic and international visitor statistics.

- **Current Infrastructure**: Road connectivity, transport facilities, hotels, and amenities.

Foreign and domestic tourist arrivals across Madhya Pradesh in India between 2007 and 2022 *(in millions)*

Graph 4.2 domestic tourist arrivals
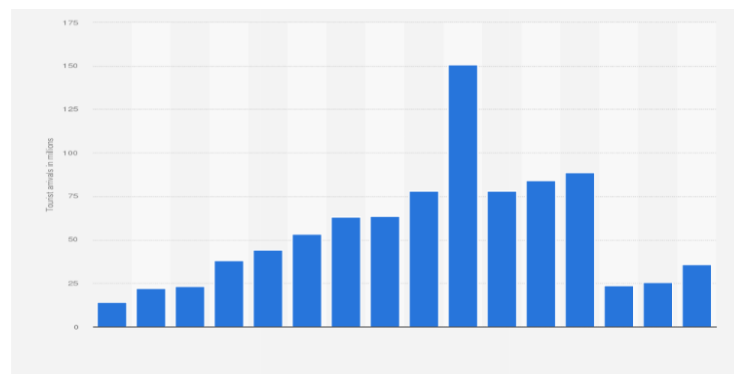
Source- www.statista.com/mp tourism

 GOVERNANCE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- **Madhya Pradesh Tourism Policy**: Provides incentives for tourism infrastructure development and heritage conservation.

- **Smart Cities Mission**: Ujjain's inclusion has led to the implementation of smart solutions for urban management and tourism services.

- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme**: Supports theme-based tourist circuits, with Ujjain being a part of the spiritual circuit.

THAILAND

Introduction

Thailand's tourism industry has evolved over decades, transitioning from traditional tourism models to an integrated approach emphasizing sustainability, digital transformation, and responsible tourism. Various national policies, such as the **Thailand 4.0 economic model**, have influenced tourism planning and management. This review explores academic studies, government reports, and global tourism frameworks to assess Thailand's ITMP.

Traditional Tourism Development

- Early tourism expansion driven by cultural and natural attractions.

- Focus on Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Pattaya as primary tourist hubs.

- Growth in mass tourism, leading to commercialization of destinations.

Shift to Integrated Tourism Management

- Emergence of the **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)** in tourism policies.

- Introduction of the **National Tourism Development Plan (2017-2021)** emphasizing sustainability and community-based tourism.

- Adoption of the **Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model** for responsible tourism.

Challenges Identified

- **Over-tourism and environmental degradation** in high-footfall destinations.

- **Infrastructure bottlenecks** despite government investments.

- **Lack of regulatory enforcement** in managing informal tourism sectors.

- **Balancing economic** benefits with cultural preservation

Policy Frameworks and Governance

- Overview of **Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS)** and its role in policy execution.

- Collaboration between the **Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)** and private sector stakeholders.

- Impact of global partnerships (UNWTO, ASEAN tourism agreements) on Thailand's policies.

Map 4.3 Thailand

Visitors' origin (1995)

Visitors to tourist destinations surveyed
by the TAT in 1995 and evolution (1988-1995)

Chiang Rai
Mae Hong Son
Chiang Mai
Nong Khai
Sukhothai
Udon Thani
Nakhon Phanom
Tak
Phitsanulok
Khon Kaen
Ubon Ratchathani
Lop Buri
Nakhon Ratchasima
Kanchanaburi
Ayutthaya
Nakhon Nayok
BANGKOK
Pattaya
Cha-am
Hua Hin
Rayong
Trat

Visitors
14,234,701
5,894,330
1,529,084
113,310
3,500 to 82,000

Thai
Foreign

Hotel capacity (1995)

Multiplying coefficient of number of visitors

[2.5 - 4]
[1.6 - 2.5 [
[1.3 - 1.6 [
[1 - 1.3 [
0.9
Places not surveyed in 1988

Ko Samui
Nakhon Si Thammarat
Krabi
Phuket
Trang
Hat Yai
Sungai Kolok

Visitors (1995)
20,265,384
2,741,532
178,896

Occupancy rate in percentage
[60 - 72]
[55 - 60 [
[45 - 55 [
[31 - 45 [

Rooms
48,801
3,687
473

Source: TAT (CIRCA 1989, 1996)

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Map 4.4 Thailand PASSANGE TRAFFIC

Inter-provincial rail traffic (1996)

Passengers in thousands

- 6,500
- 4,000
- 2,000
- 1,000
- 140
- < 100
- no registered passenger traffic
- 2.2 Traffic in million passengers
- o Province centers

0.6
0.8
2.2
6.5
1.9
1.1
0.4
0.9

Rail traffic within the provinces (1996)

21
35%
4.7

Internal traffic
as percentage of total rail traffic

- [57 - 69]
- [34 - 57 [
- [23 - 34 [
- [7 - 23 [
- [0 - 7 [

Traffic in thousand passengers

- 27,013
- 2,179
- 140
- □ 16 to 110

Domestic air traffic (1996)

Passengers in thousands

- [1,300 - 1,400]
- [205 - 520]
- [80 - 101]
- [11 - 45]
- [1 - 8.5]
- < 0.6

Airport traffic
in thousand passengers

- 6,530
- 539
- 45
- < 45

International air traffic (1996)

97
16,231
1,962
6,530
847
217
1,875
725

International traffic (scheduled flig

350 Passengers in thousands

percentage of passengers
for each airport

- Japan / Korea
- South Asia
- South-East Asia
- North-East Asia
- Europe
- Middle East
- Oceania
- < 4%

Domestic traffic

350 Passengers in thousands

Source: Ministry of transport and communications 1998a, 1998b

Key Themes in Integrated Tourism Management in Thailand

Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Conservation

- Studies highlight the impact of over-tourism on fragile ecosystems (e.g., Maya Bay closure for ecological recovery).

- Government initiatives promoting **eco-tourism** and **green tourism certifications**.

- Role of **marine conservation projects** and **forest restoration programs**.

**Infrastructure Development and Smart Tourism**

- Investments in **transport connectivity** (high-speed rail, airport expansions).

- Adoption of **smart tourism technologies** (AI-based tourist management, digital payment systems).

- Role of **sustainable urban mobility** in reducing congestion in major cities.

Heritage and Cultural Conservation

- Protection of UNESCO-listed sites (e.g., Ayutthaya Historical Park, Sukhothai).

- Integration of **cultural tourism** with local community experiences.

Legal frameworks and conservation policies preserving Thai heritage

Graph 4.3 International tourist arrivals
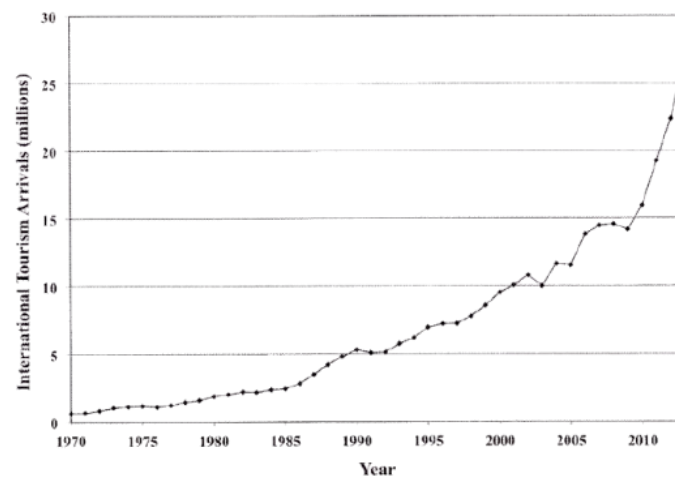
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

SRI LANKA

Introduction

Sri Lanka has a long history as a tourist destination, but its tourism industry faced setbacks between 2003 and 2009 due to political unrest and civil war. Since the war ended in 2009, tourism has grown rapidly, making Sri Lanka one of the top global travel destinations. This chapter provides an overview of Sri Lanka's tourism journey—highlighting what makes the country attractive to visitors, the evolution of its tourism policies, changes in tourist arrivals during times of conflict and peace, and the recent tourism boom driven by a national Tourism Development Strategy (TDS).

Concept of Integrated Tourism Management

Integrated Tourism Management (ITM) is a strategic approach that coordinates multiple stakeholders, including government bodies, private enterprises, local communities, and environmental organizations, to achieve sustainable tourism growth. According to Butler (1980), a **destination's tourism lifecycle must be managed carefully** to avoid environmental degradation and loss of cultural authenticity. Sri Lanka's ITMP aligns with this concept by integrating sustainability goals into its national and regional tourism strategies.

Challenges in Sri Lanka's Tourism Management

1. **Environmental Degradation** – Over-tourism in coastal areas threatens biodiversity.

2. **Climate Change Vulnerabilities** – Rising sea levels and extreme weather events impact tourism infrastructure.

Conclusion & Future Research Directions

Sri Lanka's Integrated Tourism Management Plan has **successfully merged economic growth with sustainability goals**, but challenges remain in climate resilience and equitable development. Future research should explore:

- **The impact of climate change adaptation measures on tourism infrastructure**.

- **Strategies to enhance local community participation**.
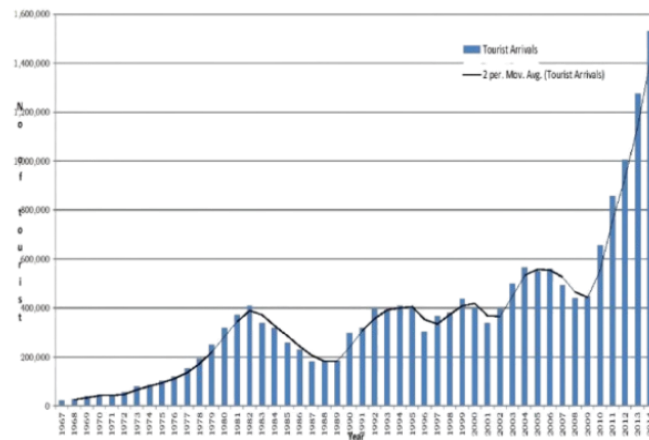
- **The role of AI and big data in tourism management**.

Map 4.5 Sri Lanka

Source: SLTDA

Tourist Arrivals to Sri Lanka and Year on Year Growth from 1966 to 2014.
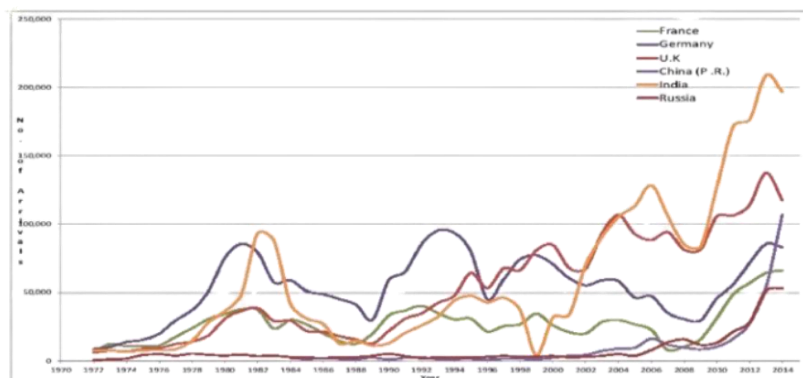
Graph 4.4 International tourist arrivals

Source: Based on various Annual Statistical Reports of Sri Lanka Tourism Sri Lanka

Major Tourist Generating Foreign Countries for Sri Lanka 1970 - 2014 in Terms of Number of Arrivals in Sri Lanka

Graph 4.5 Tourist Generating Foreign Countries

Source: Based on various Annual Reports of Tourist Board

The top tourist attractions in Sri Lanka

Some of the top tourist attractions in Sri Lanka include:

Beaches: Sri Lanka has some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, such as Mirissa Beach, Bentota Beach, and Negombo Beach.

Temples: Sri Lanka is home to many beautiful temples, such as the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy and the Dambulla Cave Temples.

National parks: Sri Lanka has several national parks, including Yala National Park, Udawalawe National Park, and Minneriya National Park.

Historical sites: Sri Lanka has a rich history, and there are many historical sites to visit, such as Sigiriya Rock Fortress and Polonnaruwa.

Figure 4.1 Sri Lanka

Source: SLTDA

Comparative analysis of integrated tourism management plans of Jaipur, Ujjain, Thailand, and Sri Lanka:

Parameters	Jaipur	Ujjain	Thailand	Sri Lanka	Ayodhya (Proposed)
Tourism Type	Heritage & Cultural	Religious & Festival-based	Coastal, Cultural, Medical	Eco, Heritage, Religious	Religious & Spiritual Tourism
Urban Issues	Traffic congestion, pollution	Overcrowding during Kumbh	Environmental degradation	Sensitive ecological zones	Over-tourism pressure, heritage risk
Planning Strengths	Historic site conservation, zoning	Mass gathering infrastructure	Integrated regional development	Community tourism, eco-zoning	Walkable core, riverfront, zoning
Transport	BRTS, heritage walks	Festival-time transit planning	Metro, smart mobility	National park access routes	Pilgrim shuttles, pedestrian paths
Heritage Strategy	Site restoration (Amber, Hawa Mahal)	Temple & ghats maintenance	Cultural tourism integration	Ancient city trail restoration	Ram Mandir precinct, Saryu ghats
Community Involvement	Moderate (top-down)	High (religious leaders involved)	Moderate	High (local artisans, homestays)	High (priests, locals, vendors)
Smart Tech Adoption	Limited to ticketing and branding	Low (temporary festival apps)	High (digital signage, apps)	Medium (branding, info apps)	High (AR tours, smart info centers)
Environmental Focus	Growing concern	Low priority	Central to policy	Integrated with tourism zones	Key focus: river, waste, open spaces
Branding	International festivals, pink city	Mythological-historic positioning	Thailand Smile, Amazing Thailand	Spiritual escape	Ramayana Capital of the World (proposed)

Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

References Relevant to Ayodhya Tourism Planning:

Aspect	Jaipur	Ujjain	Thailand	Sri Lanka	Relevance for Ayodhya Tourism
Tourism Focus	Heritage & cultural tourism	Religious tourism	Eco, cultural & beach tourism	Beach, cultural, and adventure tourism	Combines heritage, religious, and cultural tourism aspects
Management Approach	Heritage conservation + modern amenities	Pilgrim facilitation + sanitation	Sustainable tourism + community involvement	Safety, infrastructure upgrades + conservation	Balancing tradition and modernization, focusing on pilgrims
Infrastructure	Fort restoration, smart parking, tourist info centers	Improved roads, toilets, resting places	Eco-friendly resorts, transport connectivity	Airport expansion, road upgrades	Need for clean, accessible roads and modern facilities
Sustainability	Local crafts promotion, architectural preservation	Cleanliness drives, eco-friendly festival management	Wildlife conservation, community tourism	Natural park conservation, heritage site protection	Environmental and cultural sustainability
Tourism Marketing	Festivals, heritage walks, digital guides	Religious festivals (Kumbh Mela)	Digital marketing, community-based tourism	Festival promotion, safety awareness	Using festivals and digital platforms to attract visitors

Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

Recommendations for integrated tourism planning:

. Enhance sustainable tourism models by integrating eco-friendly policies and reducing environmental degradation.
. Improve smart tourism infrastructure to manage visitor experiences efficiently.
. Strengthen community participation to ensure local economic benefits.
. Develop resilience strategies to counter climate change and overcrowding challenges.

Govt policy support to tourism

TOURISM SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS IN THE UNION BUDGET 2023-24

Allocation: Rs24bn (~$300mn) allocated to Ministry of Tourism

50 tourist destinations to be developed under the 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' with enhanced connectivity and safety initiatives

'Vibrant Village Program' to develop tourism infrastructure and facilities in border villages

Official application to be developed covering all relevant aspects of tourism to

States to set up malls in the state capital as prominent tourist centers to promote state specific products.

Summary of findings:

Key Planning Direction	Inspired From
Heritage-core zoning	Jaipur
Festival-specific crowd planning	Ujjain
Smart tourism infrastructure	Thailand
Sustainable tourism and community homestays	Sri Lanka

Source: Pawan Kumar (2025), Primary Survey

"Tourism sector holds huge opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship for youth in particular.

Promotion of tourism will be taken up on mission mode, with active participation of states, convergence of government programmes and public-private partnerships" - Finance Minister, Smt. Nirmala Seetharaman

Key Government schemes

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Focus: Integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits in the country GOI Sanctioned 76 projects under the scheme since its inception under 13 themes for a total sanctioned cost of $670mn and has released ~$535mn (as of Dec 31, 2022)

Figure 4.2 Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Source: www.digitalindia.gov.in

PRASHAD Scheme

Focus: Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) seeks to enhance religious / pilgrimage tourism in India by developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across the nation

GOI sanctioned a total of 46 projects at a cost of Rs16bn ($200m) as of Dec 2023. Additionally, a total of 26 new sites have also been identified for development
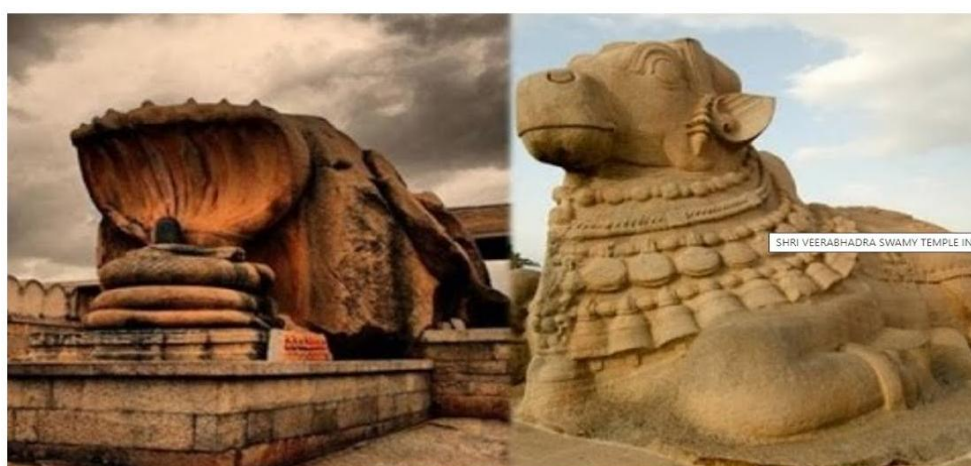
Source: www.digitalindia.gov.in

Adarsh Smarak Scheme

Focus: List of 100 identified monuments that will be redeveloped and upgraded to Model Monuments.

Monuments will be upgraded to include Wi-Fi, security, signage, encroachment-free area and interpretation centers, etc.

Figure 4.4 Adarsh Smarak Scheme

Source: www.digitalindia.gov.in

Conclusion:

Ayodhya, a city revered across India and globally for its deep mythological and religious significance, stands on the cusp of becoming one of the country's leading spiritual tourism destinations. The recent focus on the construction of the Shri Ram Mandir and the government's efforts to promote Ayodhya as a spiritual capital have drastically increased its tourism potential. However, this rapid rise in popularity has exposed several urban, infrastructural, environmental, and social challenges that could hamper sustainable growth if left unaddressed.

This thesis proposes a comprehensive and integrated tourism management plan that envisions Ayodhya as a sustainable, accessible, inclusive, and culturally enriched destination. The planning approach considers both macro- and micro-level interventions to tackle the city's needs and future demands. The conclusion highlights the following key insights and strategies.

1. Infrastructure Upgradation and Mobility Planning

There is a clear need to improve transport connectivity, especially last-mile connectivity for tourists arriving by road, rail, or air

Road widening, pedestrian pathways, shuttle services, designated parking zones, and wayfinding systems should be incorporated.

Smart mobility options like e-rickshaws, cycle tracks, and battery-operated buses can be introduced to reduce pollution and manage traffic flow.

2. Preservation and Enhancement of Cultural Heritage

Ayodhya's identity lies in its religious and architectural heritage—temples, ghats, and sacred ponds.

The plan emphasizes conservation of historic sites, regulating new constructions in sensitive zones, and promoting heritage walks and storytelling circuits to enrich tourist experiences.

Visual harmony between the old and new is essential, with policies to maintain architectural character.

3. Sustainable Tourism and Environment Protection

To minimize environmental stress, the report promotes:

Rainwater harvesting systems.

Waste segregation and disposal mechanisms.

Eco-tourism practices in natural and spiritual zones.

Enhanced green cover, buffer zones, and pollution control around water bodies like the Saryu River.

4. Inclusive Development and Local Participation

Local communities, especially artisans, shopkeepers, and small vendors, must be economically integrated into the tourism supply chain.

Skills training, microfinance support, and cultural promotion events should empower residents and prevent displacement due to tourism gentrification.

5. Zoning, Urban Design, and Visitor Facilities

Strategic zoning is necessary to prevent chaotic urban growth. A clear land use plan is suggested with zones for:

Religious and cultural use.

Hospitality and lodging.

Commercial and recreational activities.

Green and buffer zones.

Design guidelines should ensure aesthetic streetscapes, visitor-friendly amenities (public toilets, seating, shaded areas), and interpretive signage.

6. Smart Tourism and Digital Integration

Information kiosks, mobile apps for guided tours, QR codes at heritage sites, and virtual reality experiences can enhance tourist engagement.

Digitized ticketing, feedback collection, and visitor data analysis can help monitor tourism trends and manage footfall.

Chapter- 05
ISSUES & POTENTIALS

JAIPUR – Cultural Capital of Rajasthan

Key Issues:

1. Over-tourism Pressure: Overcrowding at heritage sites during peak seasons causes wear and tear.

2. Weak Urban Infrastructure: Roads, public transport, and sanitation systems are not sufficient to handle rising tourist volumes.

3. Heritage Degradation: Pollution, neglect, and encroachments damage historical sites.

4. Environmental Stress: Water scarcity, solid waste issues, and air pollution degrade the tourist experience.

5. Seasonal Tourism: Heavy dependence on winter months leads to imbalanced economic benefits.

Potential Opportunities:

1. Smart City Initiatives: Integration of digital tourism tools, smart signage, and apps to enhance visitor experience.

2. Cultural Festivals: Jaipur Literature Festival and local fairs offer excellent opportunities to promote cultural tourism.

3. Conservation Success: Projects at Amber Fort and Hawa Mahal can be used as models for other sites.

4. Eco-Tourism Potential: Sustainable tourism circuits and nature-based tourism can attract conscious travellers.

5. Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration for infrastructure and experience improvement.

UJJAIN – The Spiritual Hub of India

Key Issues:

1. Overcrowding during Events: Massive crowding during Simhastha (Kumbh Mela) leads to resource strain.

2. Risk to Heritage Sites: Unregulated construction and environmental degradation threaten ancient temples and ghats.

3. Pollution of Shipra River: Waste dumping and poor sewage management affect the river's sanctity and cleanliness.

4. Low Community Involvement: Locals are often excluded from tourism planning and profit-sharing.

5. Lack of Sustainable Planning: Green tourism and resilient infrastructure are lacking.

 Potential Opportunities:

1. Simhastha Mela Global Appeal: A religious event that can be developed into a world-class spiritual tourism attraction.

2. Smart City Features: Existing smart interventions like lighting, crowd management, and signage improve the experience.

3. Riverfront Rejuvenation Projects: Environmental restoration efforts offer replicable models.

4. Cultural Depth: Rich mythology and historical sites can be woven into immersive tourist experiences.

5. Spiritual Circuit Promotion: Under Swadesh Darshan scheme, Ujjain can be further promoted on the national religious map.

THAILAND – Southeast Asia's Tourism Powerhouse

 Key Issues:

1. Over-tourism & Environmental Degradation: Tourist hotspots like Maya Bay suffered ecosystem damage.

2. Infrastructure Bottlenecks: Despite investments, roads, airports, and cities get congested during peak times.

3. Weak Enforcement: Informal tourism operators often bypass regulations.

4. Cultural Dilution: Commercial tourism threatens local traditions and authenticity.

Potential Opportunities:

1. Thailand 4.0 and BCG Economy: Focus on Bio-Circular-Green models and responsible tourism.

2. Smart Tourism Adoption: Use of AI, digital payments, and data tools to manage crowds and personalize experiences.

3. UNESCO Heritage Sites: Integration of cultural heritage into tourism plans.

4. Community-based Tourism: Local participation is being promoted for inclusive growth.

5. Regional Cooperation: ASEAN tourism partnerships and UNWTO support offer global exposure.

SRI LANKA – The Island of Natural & Cultural Riches

Key Issues:

1. Environmental Degradation: Coastal over-tourism has harmed biodiversity.

2. Climate Change Threats: Rising sea levels and extreme weather events put tourism infrastructure at risk.

3. Post-conflict Recovery Challenges: While tourism has grown post-war, equitable development is still a concern.

4. Limited Community Involvement: Not all local areas benefit equally from tourism.

Potential Opportunities:

1. Tourism Development Strategy (TDS): Focus on sustainability and integration with other sectors.

2. High Natural Appeal: Beaches, temples, and parks offer a wide array of attractions for diverse tourist groups.

3. Integrated Tourism Model: Coordination between government, private sector, and NGOs is a working success.

4. Cultural Depth: Heritage tourism combined with local experiences offers authentic travel.

5. Digital and Green Tourism: Big data, AI, and eco-certifications are

increasingly being adopted.

Chapter- 06
RECOMENDATIONS

Sustainability recommendations

Figure 6.1 Procedure for Recommendation
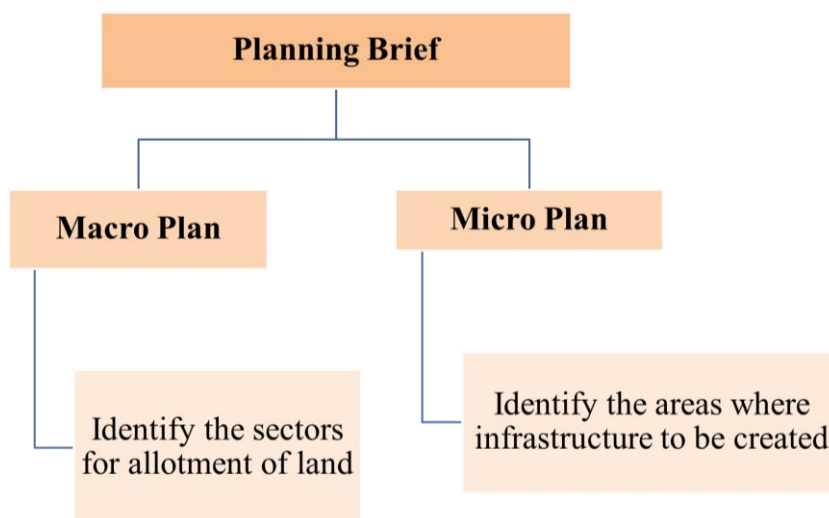
Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

1. Eco-Friendly Infrastructure Development

Use green building codes for hotels, homestays, and public buildings.

Mandate solar lighting along riverfronts, ghats, walkways.

Install bio-toilets and rainwater harvesting in all new developments.

Upgrade wastewater treatment plants near the Saryu River to protect biodiversity.

2. Green Mobility & Low-Emission Zones

Promote electric buses, e-rickshaws, and non-motorized transport (NMT) zones.

Create pedestrian circuits around major religious landmarks.

Offer free shuttle services from outer parking zones to core heritage areas to reduce congestion.

3. Heritage and Ecosystem Conservation

Cap footfall limits at sensitive sites (e.g., Ram Janmabhoomi, Hanuman Garhi).

Protect Saryu River ghats and create eco-zones with regulated access.

Launch a "Clean Saryu Mission" for regular cleaning and ecological monitoring.

4. Community-Based Eco-Tourism

Develop rural tourism clusters promoting local crafts, cuisine, and culture.

Provide training and microfinance for locals to run eco-lodges and guided tours.

Build tourism benefit-sharing models with local communities to reduce economic disparity.

Figure 6.2 Procedure for Recommendation

Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

Solid waste management strategy

Current Status:

Waste Generation: ~93.5 tons/day (ADA report)

Door-to-Door Collection: Only 35 out of 60 wards covered

High generators: Residential + Commercial zones

Issues: Lack of segregation, limited processing capacity, river pollution risk

Recommended Solid Waste Management Plan

Component	Recommendation
Segregation at Source	Mandatory 3-bin system: biodegradable, recyclable, hazardous waste
Collection Coverage	Expand Door-to-Door Collection to all 60 wards within 12 months
Processing Units	Install waste-to-compost and plastic recycling plants near city limits
Temple Waste Recycling	Setup flower composting and diya wax recycling units
River Waste Management	Floating trash barriers + manual cleaning + Saryu Aarti awareness campaigns
Digital Monitoring	GIS-based tracking of waste collection routes + QR code bins
Community Engagement	Local "Swachh Ambassadors", training camps, and school-level awareness drives
Event-Based Waste Planning	Temporary waste disposal stations during fairs like Ram Navami Mela

Figure 6.3 Procedure for Recommendation for Improve Tourism of Ayodhya
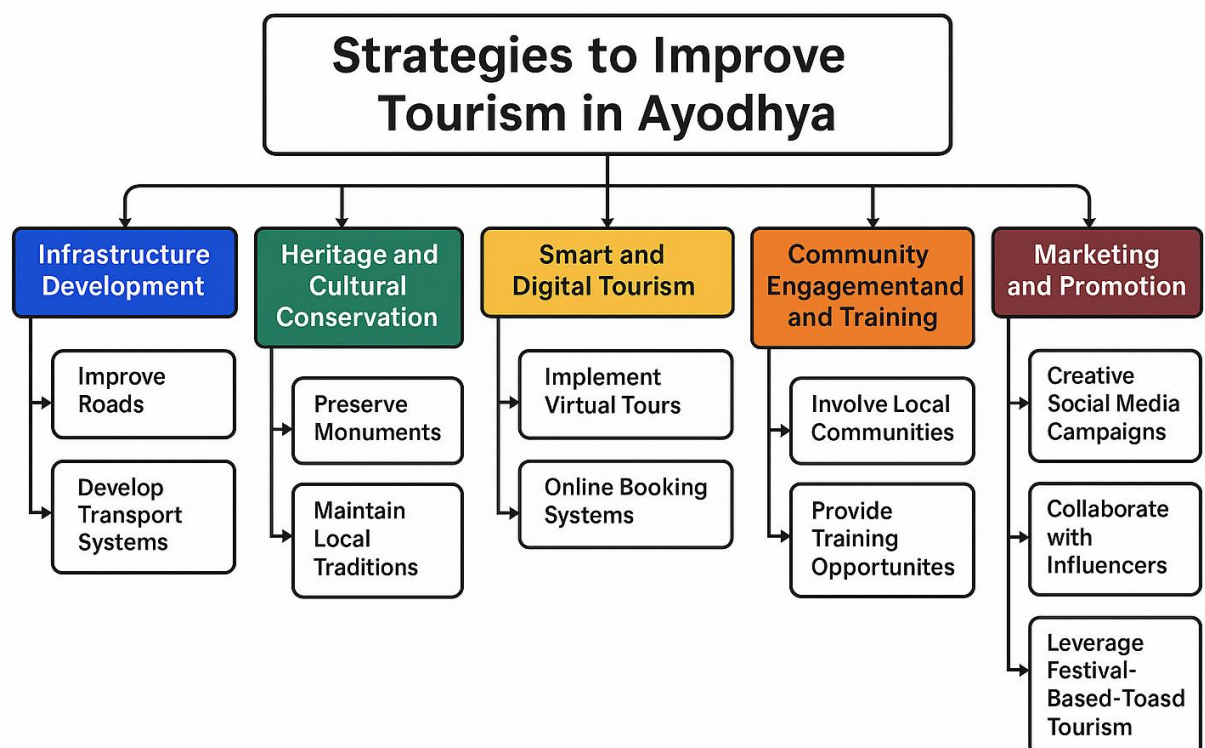
Source: Author (2025), Primary Survey

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Chapter- 07
ANNEXURE

Questionnaire for Ayodhya Tourism Management Plan: Current & Past Situation

Section 1: Respondent Profile

1. Are you a resident of Ayodhya? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Have you visited Ayodhya before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. If yes, how many times have you visited? ☐ Once ☐ 2–3 Times ☐ More than 3

Section 2: Past Tourism Experience (Before Major Developments, pre-2020)

8. What was your experience with Ayodhya's tourism infrastructure in the past?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor

9. Was public transport or access to religious/cultural sites convenient?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Somewhat

10. How would you rate cleanliness and sanitation around temples/ghats before 2020?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor

11. Were there sufficient facilities like toilets, water, and resting areas?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Inadequate

12. Did you feel safe during your past visit?
☐ Yes ☐ No

13. How well was the city promoted as a tourist destination in the past?
☐ Well-promoted ☐ Somewhat promoted ☐ Not promoted

Section 3: Current Tourism Management (Post-2020)

14. How do you rate the current state of tourism infrastructure in Ayodhya?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor

15. Are the roads, signage, and access points to key attractions improved?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Slightly

16. How would you rate the Ram Janmabhoomi and surrounding facilities now?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Needs Improvement

17. Are there adequate accommodations (hotels, guest houses, homestays)?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Limited

18. How effective are cleanliness and waste management efforts now?
☐ Very Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Poor

19. Are you aware of any new technology (apps, e-kiosks, digital guides) being used?
☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Are local traditions, artisans, and cultural programs promoted?
☐ Actively ☐ Minimally ☐ Not at all

21. Do you think Ayodhya can be developed beyond a religious destination?
☐ Yes, into a cultural hub ☐ Yes, eco-tourism too ☐ No, only religious

22. Do you feel safe and comfortable in today's Ayodhya?
☐ Yes ☐ No

23. Have government efforts improved your experience as a visitor or resident?
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree

Section 4: Suggestions & Future Planning

24. What facilities or services do you think are still missing?

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25. How can Ayodhya balance spirituality with modern tourism needs?

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26. Should Ayodhya involve local communities more in tourism (guides, crafts, etc.)?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

27. Would you support eco-friendly tourism (waste-free zones, electric buses, etc.) in Ayodhya?
☐ Yes ☐ No

28. Any ideas for improving tourism management or visitor experience?