

Impact of Religious Infrastructure on Economic Growth: Research on Ayodhya's Ram Temple and Uttar Pradesh's Economic Ambitions

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Abstract- This research delves into the impact of religious infrastructure on economic growth, focusing on the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and its implications for Uttar Pradesh's economic ambitions. The study explores the potential economic benefits of the Ram Mandir project, analyzing its role in attracting pilgrims and tourists, stimulating local businesses, and fostering cultural exchange. By examining the development of amenities such as a new international airport, upgraded railway station, and improved road connectivity in Ayodhya, the research highlights the strategic investments made to support the growing tourism industry. Through a comprehensive analysis of the economic, cultural, and historical significance of the Ram Mandir, this study underscores the transformative potential of religious tourism in Ayodhya and its broader implications for the economic landscape of Uttar Pradesh.

Key Words- Ram mandir tourism, Ayodhya, UP tourism growth, Ayodhya airport, Ayodhya Infrastructure, Religious tourism

INTRODUCTION

The construction of the Ram Mandir in Uttar Pradesh stands as a significant socio-cultural development that has not only captured the nation's attention but also sparked discussions about its potential economic impact. As the state gears up to witness the fruition of this long-standing project, there is a growing discourse on how the Ram Mandir's presence could contribute to the economic landscape of Uttar Pradesh and, consequently, influence the overall GDP of the country. This intricate interplay between cultural heritage, economic growth, and the broader implications for India's GDP requires careful

examination. A foreign stock market research firm has asserted that Ayodhya is poised to surpass the visitor numbers of other global pilgrimage sites. Ayodhya is expected to establish itself as a prominent tourism destination not just in Uttar Pradesh but across the entire country. The construction of the Ram temple, coupled with the provision of various amenities such as a new international airport, an upgraded railway station, a township, improved road connectivity, and new hotels, is transforming Ayodhya into a burgeoning hotspot for tourism. This development is anticipated to further solidify Uttar Pradesh's position as the second most significant tourist destination on India's map.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper (Choudhary, C.K. 2024), talks about the importance of pilgrimage tourism. Ayodhya's unique cultural and religious significance may make it a key player in the global pilgrimage landscape. The construction of Ram mandir and its importance to Sanatan dharma is expected to stand out in this trend due to India's large population and cultural diversity. It is imperative that the Destination Tourism Management Organization of Uttar Pradesh Tourism, along with the Ministry of Tourism under the Government of India, address the need for comprehensive tourism development in Ayodhya. To facilitate this, a focus on developing proper infrastructure, and superstructure, and implementing effective crowd management and monitoring systems at the destination is essential.

The comparative analysis between Ayodhya's verdict and the integration between religion and politics

(Manoj Bansal, 2023) is an analysis of about 213 news articles. It talks about how the Ayodhya dispute is a long-running legal battle over a piece of land in the city of Ayodhya in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Hindus believe that the site is the birthplace of the god Rama, while Muslims believe that it is the site of a mosque called the Babri Masjid. The mosque was demolished by Hindu mobs in 1992, which led to widespread rioting. The findings are consistent with the other research conducted which has found that the Indian media often frames religious conflict in terms of a clash between Hindus and Muslims and that this framing can contribute to social polarization. It also talks about how the verdict has been deeply intertwined with politics. Political parties, particularly Hindu nationalist groups, have used the Ayodhya issue to mobilize their bases and garner votes. The Indian government has taken steps that favor the construction of a Ram temple on the disputed site. This move has been criticized by opposition parties and some civil society groups who view it as discriminatory and politically motivated.

The study regarding the impact of religious tourism on the economy and tourism industry (Budovich, L.S., 2023) talks about how religious tourism fosters cultural connections, convergence, and economic growth. It highlights the importance of planning and using advanced tourism methods to promote cultural relations among countries. It affects countries in various ways, including their economy, society, culture, and politics. Economically, it is seen as a clean industry that can replace other sources of income. It has brought about positive impacts in the economic sector, including the generation of job opportunities, sales of agricultural products, income growth, enhanced purchasing power, and more. It initiates various economic activities, forming interconnected chains and preventing economic stagnation.

The study "Ayodhya of Ram" examines urban management and participatory heritage development in Ayodhya, India, focusing on its sacred sites and their significance for pilgrims and tourists. It deals with the historical and political context of Ayodhya and highlights the roles of various stakeholders in the administration of the city. The document also emphasizes the tasks of various administrative bodies in providing services and preserving cultural heritage.

It also mentions the Ayodhya Research Institute and its efforts to study and protect the region's cultural heritage. The chapter emphasizes the importance of succession planning and stakeholder engagement in promoting both tangible and intangible heritage. It also refers to the UNESCO and #039 definition of urban governance and key aspects of modern urban planning such as social justice, sustainability, and openness.

Urban governance and participatory heritage development in Ayodhya, India highlights holy places that attract pilgrims and tourists and are visited by around 1.9 million pilgrims every year. The city faced political conflict due to historical events such as the demolition of the mosque in 1992. The document highlights the importance of various interest groups in city administration, including the government, the public sector, and the private sector. The role of city governments in providing key services, organizing waste management, and preserving cultural heritage is also mentioned. It further addresses the objectives of the Ayodhya Research Institute in researching and preserving the cultural heritage of the region. The chapter emphasizes the importance of heritage planning and the role of city government in promoting material and spiritual heritage. The UNESCO along with the importance of stakeholder participation, quality of life improvement, social justice, and sustainability in urban planning are also discussed.

The study titled "Ayodhya: A Study of Urban Management and Inclusive Development of Cultural Heritage" examines urban governance and heritage-inclusive development in Ayodhya. It deals with the unique cultural and natural aspects of Ayodhya, such as the elongated shape of the city on the banks of the Sarayu River, traditional performances such as the Ramalila, and the spiritual significance of the city as a pilgrimage destination.

Kumar and Singh (2017) emphasize the importance of Ayodhya's cultural environment and the preservation of its spiritual and religious heritage. The article highlights the initiatives taken by the Ayodhya Nagar Palika Parishad and other voluntary organizations to preserve the sacred atmosphere of Ayodhya through cultural events and awareness campaigns.

The study highlights the importance of Heritage Inclusive Development (HID) policies in Ayodhya with special emphasis on the conservation of historically significant assets and sanctuaries.

The study emphasizes the importance of preserving cultural heritage, promoting sustainable tourism, and combining traditional practices with modern urban management. It also discusses the role of government initiatives such as the PRASAD program in promoting pilgrimage tourism and cultural heritage in Ayodhya and other holy cities in India.

Promoting Uttar Pradesh as a Center for Hindu Pilgrimage and Religious Tourism Yashaswi Pandey, Shrikant Pandey, and Professor A.K. Malviya's research highlights the country's cultural and religious heritage. The study highlights the main characteristics of religious tourism in the region, such as the celebration of holy days and the search for spiritual enlightenment and protection. Various religions mythology and historical events such as Lord Rams' return to Ayodhya, attract followers to holy places and inspire respect and connection.

Moreover, the presence of revered rivers such as the Yamuna, Saraswati, and Ganges enhances the religious tourism experience of Uttar Pradesh offering pilgrims opportunities for devotion and spiritual purification.

Finally, the studied literature emphasizes the versatility of religious tourism.

Ar. Sayan Munshi, Ar. Devesh Mani Tripathi, and Dr. Joydeep Dutta's research paper, "Reduction of Tourism Induced Indirect Waste: A Case of Restricted Temple Zone in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh," explores the crucial problem of managing tourism-induced waste in urban spaces, with a particular focus on Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh". To reduce the long-term effects of garbage generated by tourism on the environment and climate, the study emphasizes the necessity of efficient waste collection, segregation, and treatment methods. To address concerns about climate change and reduce garbage accumulation, the study will analyze the estimated solid waste creation in Ayodhya for the year 2031.

The study's recommendations include introducing RFID-based rubbish collection devices in the

restricted temple zone, encouraging waste reduction and recycling, adopting circular economy concepts, and increasing the frequency of waste collection. These tactics support worldwide initiatives to mitigate climate change and lower carbon emissions by promoting sustainable production and consumption methods. Additionally, the study highlights how crucial it is to implement appropriate waste management procedures, such as collection, transportation, disposal, and segregation, to safeguard environmental quality and public health. In small urban areas such as Ayodhya, the report recommends manual cart collection and emphasizes the need for effective garbage processing and disposal services involving the private sector. In summary, the study highlights the vital part that the tourism industry plays in producing solid waste and assisting in environmental degradation.

Kumar and Singh's (2015) study paper explores the topic of Cultural Heritage Tourism in Ayodhya-Faizabad and highlights the role that heritage, both natural and cultural, plays in shaping sustainable tourism. The writers stress how tourism and cultural legacy are intertwined, especially in Ayodhya. Known for its religious traditions and sacredness, Ayodhya is part of the twin city of Ayodhya-Faizabad and is situated on the banks of the Sarayu River. Due to the variety of religious sites in the area, which cater to Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs, it is a melting pot of various cultural influences. Sustainable tourism growth has been hindered by issues such as the inadequate integration of cultural heritage protection regulations, the absence of necessary tourist facilities, and abandoned heritage sites such as ghats.

In the future, the study emphasizes the opportunities and potentials for Ayodhya-Faizabad as a pilgrimage and tourism destination, considering its cultural importance and the significant number of pilgrims that visit the area each year. The study conducted by Kumar and Singh (2015) highlights the complex correlation between cultural heritage and tourism in Ayodhya-Faizabad. The authors recommend the implementation of sustainable policies and strategies to safeguard and preserve the region's rich legacy for the benefit of future generations. Ayodhya-Faizabad has the potential to become a well-known cultural heritage tourism destination in India if the problems

are resolved and the region's cultural richness is fully used.

The study (Kumar and Singh'2017) highlights the significance of pilgrims in Ayodhya, where 1.9 million people visit each year and participate in a range of ceremonies and holy treks along major pilgrimage routes like Panchakroshi, Chaudakhroshi, and Chaurasikroshi. Through an analysis of the mythological and historical significance linked to various elements of ritual landscapes, the writers hope to present Ayodhya as a city of international understanding and concord, where various religious traditions coexist and enrich the city's rich cultural legacy.

Moreover, the study illuminates Ayodhya's distinct cultural terrain, which includes ancient religious structures, artifacts, ghats, swimming pools, rituals, folktales, celebrations, pilgrimage paths, and multiethnic religious locations.

The writers draw attention to Ayodhya's aesthetic and symbolic value as a ceremonial city, highlighting the city's varied features that come together to create a colorful and dynamic ritual landscape.

The article also addresses the fact that Ayodhya is home to a large number of temples, each of which practices a unique set of rituals that add to the city's overall ritual landscape. The authors highlight the complex and sophisticated nature of religious practices that shape the ritual scapes of this hallowed destination by outlining eleven sequential steps of ritual activities that are frequently witnessed in the temples of Ayodhya.

Finally, "Ayodhya (India): a Study of Ritual Landscapes" concludes by providing a thorough analysis of the cultural, religious, and historical aspects of Ayodhya's ritual landscapes and emphasizing the interaction between human faith, landscapes, and rituals in forming this ancient city's sacred identity. The study adds important new perspectives to our understanding of the complex nature of ritual landscapes and their role in promoting intercultural understanding and harmony.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conducted research is qualitative in nature, aiming primarily to outline the characteristics of the Ram Mandir's impact on the economy of Uttar Pradesh. Supported by secondary data, the research is designed to conclude effectively. Additionally, it delves into how the Ram Mandir contributes to the growth of Uttar Pradesh's tourism and various other sectors.

The data collected is from a secondary source which has been published as public record. They are made available to the public and can be accessed for transparency, accountability, and informational purposes and are hence reliable for analysis.

DATA INTERPRETATION

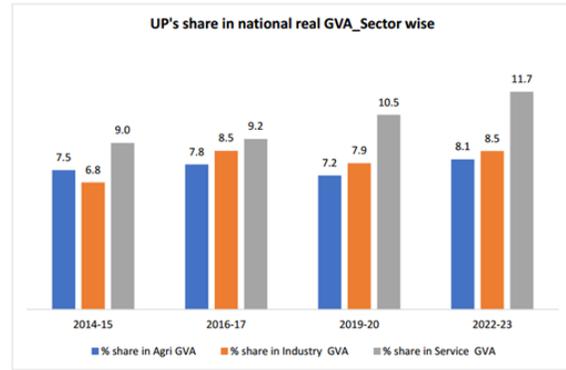
In its landmark 2019 judgment, the Supreme Court of India allowed for the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, settling a long-standing dispute. Since then, significant investments have been made towards this project. While exact figures may vary, the funds primarily come from donations made by individuals, organizations, and trusts across the country. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, tasked with overseeing the temple's construction, manages these funds. Investments cover various aspects including land acquisition, temple construction, infrastructure development, and associated expenses.

The Uttar Pradesh government has outlined an ambitious plan for investment in the development and festivities surrounding the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Among the key allocations are Rs. 3500 crores for donations towards the temple, Rs. 1800 crores for construction purposes, and a budget of Rs. 100 crores specifically designated for the Ramotsav celebrations over the next 24 years. These investments reflect the significant financial commitment towards the realization of the temple project and the cultural events associated with it, underscoring the government's dedication to the development and promotion of religious and cultural heritage in the region.

As per the SBI report, Spiritual tourism is poised to be the leading indicator of economic rise. Ayodhya, specifically holds immense spiritual significance for Hindus due to its association with Lord Rama.

Ayodhya attracts millions of pilgrims and tourists every year, particularly those who come to visit the Ram Janmabhoomi site, believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama. This influx of visitors leads to increased spending on accommodation, transportation, food, and religious offerings, contributing significantly to the local economy. Based on the expenditure provided by NSS (at all India levels), the total expenditure done by domestic tourists is around Rs 2.2 lakh crore. Including Rs 10,000 crore expenditure done by foreign tourists in UP, the total expenditure in UP by tourists is Rs 2.3 lakh crore. Given the completion of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and initiatives taken by the UP government to promote tourism, we believe that the total expenditure by tourists in UP may cross the Rs 4 lakh crore mark by the end of this year.

initiatives, digital transformation, agricultural modernization, and industrial development efforts. These increasing services have contributed to the state's economic growth and development, creating employment opportunities and improving the quality of life.



Ayodhya			
Month	2023		Total
	Indian	Foreigner	
January	959208	175	959383
February	1095058	156	1095214
March	1698260	149	1698409
April	1376144	110	1376254
May	1456582	281	1456863
June	1792508	190	1792698
July	1554127	30	1554157
August	5188553	272	5188825
September	5242273	271	5242544
October			
November			
December			
Total	20362713	1634	20364347

The increasing opportunities in Uttar Pradesh have resulted in higher employment rates, consequently driving economic growth. With the development of Ayodhya as a pilgrimage destination, there has been a surge in tourism-related jobs such as tour guides, hotel staff, restaurant workers, and souvenir vendors. Infrastructure projects related to the development of religious sites, hotels, roads, and other amenities have generated employment opportunities in construction, including roles like laborers, engineers, architects, and project managers. The increased religious activity in Ayodhya has led to job opportunities in religious services, including priests, temple staff, and volunteers involved in managing religious ceremonies and events. The growth in population and tourism has boosted the retail sector, leading to the establishment of shops, markets, and small businesses catering to the needs of residents and visitors alike.

Overall, there were 20,362,713 visitors to Ayodhya in 2023 with 20,364,347 total visitors. There were significantly more domestic visitors than foreign visitors in 2023.

There is an upward trend in the share of GVA for each sector. UP is witnessing growth across various service sectors, driven by infrastructure development, tourism promotion, healthcare expansion, education

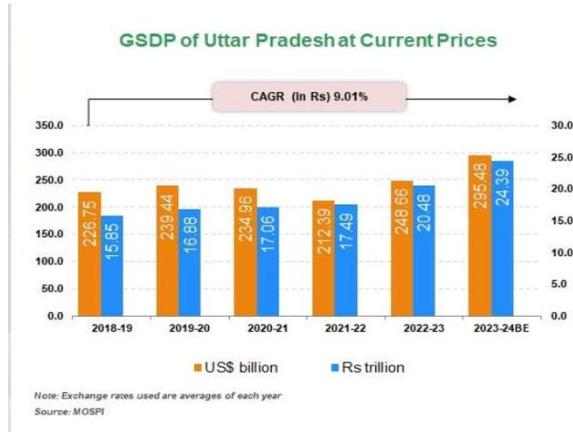
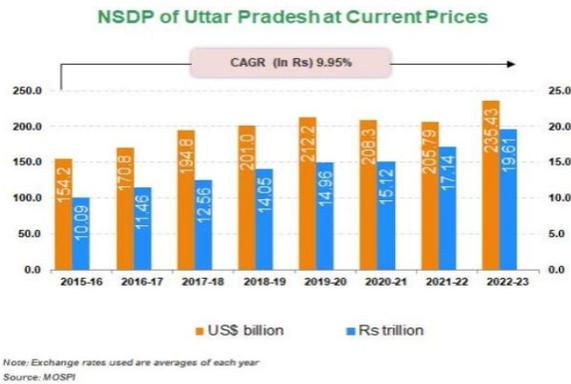
DATA ANALYSIS

Sector	2021-22 Actuals	2022-23 Budgeted	2022-23 Revised	2023-24 Budgeted	% change from RE 22-23 to BE 23-24
Education, Sports, Arts, and Culture	59,775	75,165	65,464	85,003	30%
Health and Family Welfare	23,360	40,991	39,379	47,404	20%
Energy	31,642	37,566	43,473	43,330	0%
Roads and Bridges	27,595	37,086	37,326	38,338	3%
Police	24,239	31,443	28,023	35,579	27%
Social Welfare and Nutrition	20,217	31,239	31,658	33,378	5%

Rural Development	21,054	29,541	28,095	32,771	17%
Urban Development	14,605	27,111	31,593	28,465	-10%
Water Supply and Sanitation	5,100	21,733	19,759	24,504	24%
Irrigation and Flood Control	12,501	21,431	19,881	22,083	11%
Agriculture and Allied Activities	17,612	16,133	15,468	18,688	21%
% of total expenditure on all sectors	63%	64%	65%	63%	-2%

A significant portion of the budget is allocated towards education (Rs 17,003 crore) and social welfare programs (Rs 1073 crore for widows, Rs 5041 crore for MGNREGS, Rs 1164 crore for Swarna Jayanti Gram Rozgar Yojana, Rs 3005 crore for PM Awas Yojana (Rural) and Rs 2490 crore for PMAY (Urban).

Investments in infrastructure are also evident from the allocation towards maintenance of tube wells under minor irrigation (Rs 1912 crore). The budget also allocates funds for police (Rs 4212 crore for Special Police and Rs 23475 crore for District Police).



		at current price		at base price 2011-12	
		gdp	nsdp	gdp	nsdp
1	2012-13	822393	732995	758205	673552
2	2013-14	940356	833825	802070	707469
3	2014-15	1011790	891798	834432	729686
4	2015-16	1137808	1009386	908241	792049
5	2016-17	1288700	1145620	1011500	888453
6	2017-18	1439925	1279619	1056399	922458
7	2018-19	1582180	1397986	1097353	949184
8	2019-20	1700062	1494739	1141630	980279
9	2020-21	1645317	1419958	1093168	918412
10	2021-22	1974532	1714265	1204660	1018963
11	2022-23	2257575	1961204	1304678	1104608
12	2023-24	2234486	1942146	1328661	1120717.091
13	2024-25	2367497	2055513	1380221	1160759.136
14	2025-26	2500508	2168880	1431781	1200801.182
15	2026-27	2633518	2282247	1483340	1240843.227
16	2027-28	2766529	2395614	1534900	1280885.273

NSDP and GSDP figures have been rising steadily over the years, however in recent years we can see exponential growth in GSDP and NSDP at current as

well as base prices. The construction of Ram Mandir led to an increase in Infrastructural development, Spiritual tourism, and growth of MSME's. This opened up doors for employment opportunities leading to an increase in the employment rate which gave rise to consumerism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research on the impact of religious infrastructure, particularly the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, sheds light on the multifaceted benefits and implications of this monumental development. The findings not only emphasize the significant economic potential but also underscore the deep-rooted cultural and historical significance of the Ram Mandir in shaping the identity of Ayodhya and its people.

The construction of the Ram Mandir stands as a symbol of faith and unity, drawing pilgrims and tourists from far and wide to experience the spiritual aura and sacredness of the site believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama. This influx of visitors not only boosts the local economy through increased spending on accommodation, transportation, food, and religious offerings but also creates a ripple effect of economic activities, generating employment opportunities in various sectors such as construction, hospitality, retail, and religious services.

Furthermore, the development of amenities such as a new international airport, upgraded railway station, improved road connectivity, and new hotels in Ayodhya signifies a strategic investment in infrastructure to support the growing tourism industry. These initiatives not only enhance the visitor experience but also position Ayodhya as a prominent tourism destination, poised to surpass other global pilgrimage sites in terms of visitor numbers.

As Ayodhya transforms into a bustling hub of religious tourism and cultural exchange, there is a clear opportunity for Uttar Pradesh to solidify its position as a significant tourist destination on India's map. By leveraging the rich cultural heritage and historical significance of Ayodhya, the region can not only boost its economic growth but also promote intercultural understanding, harmony, and sustainable development.

In essence, the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya represents more than just a religious edifice; it symbolizes a beacon of hope, prosperity, and unity for the region. Through careful planning, strategic investments, and inclusive development policies, Ayodhya has the potential to emerge as a model for harnessing the economic and cultural benefits of religious tourism, paving the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for the people of Uttar Pradesh

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