

# Spiritual Tourism Experience: A Study of Tourists Visiting Allahabad and Varanasi

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## Abstract

*Tourism has become one of the main cultural and economic forces in the globe in current time, and it is regarded as an obligatory means to benefit local groups and communities. India is known for its rich cultural heritage. Specifically, in Eastern U. P State we have Varanasi and Allahabad where we have experienced so many Spiritual Tourism Developments since a long period. There are many developmental projects carried out on these places while keeping one purpose that is to emancipate Spiritual Tourism Development. Investments by the government and private sector had significantly turned these places as the most popular target not only to experience ease but also to develop on the path of almighty. People accross the globe come to India having a few reasons which are inter-connected with incantation and spiritual growth. India is rapidly emerging as a health conscious and spiritual tourism destination. Since time immemorial, India is marked for its spirituality. India is also turning out as the valuable destination to get psychological peace, meditation and inner self while connecting with the Lord Shiva. Socio-cultural impacts of spiritual tourism of Varanasi and Allahabad were hardly brought into discussion. Therefore, a study on Varanasi and Allahabad was conducted to explore and identify Pilgrims inclination towards Spiritual Tourism Development in this region.*

## 1. SPIRITUAL TOURISM

Here we tried to figure out some important reasons why people look forward for spiritual tours and find out the places of saintly weight. There could be a reason that people meet with other saintly people who follow the path of spirituality by means of which they experience their way of living life. It helps to share religious experiences. This acts as the guiding principle to achieve self-realization

or rather self-actualization. It gives great opportunity for the people to have a positive journey of spirituality in lifetime.

## 2. PILGRIMAGE INCLINATION TOWARDS SPIRITUALITY

Pilgrimage is a holy and religious journey. It could be regarded as a process, which cannot be taken casually; it allows a person to experience, see, and encounter the delightful things and introduces to the divine self. It is only possible in the company

and association with the holy people at the holy land. In these holy places especially like Varanasi and Allahabad we have experienced and heard lot of stories of Lord Shiva and lord Hanuman.

### **3. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE AND PILGRIMAGE**

Whenever we are going in concordance with the divine, it isn't improbable that you will encounter unconstrained assistance from others when you may require it. It is transpired from multiple points of view and commonly. In such a condition of cognizance, appearing hindrances will rapidly vanish. In any case, different difficulties might be there to test our genuineness, however more often than not; it is zilch so incredible which keeps achieving objective.

This works as a divine directed path which insures we people in getting our personal target and fix us towards the higher achievement. The religious journey goes up against all the more significance the time when we get the actual fact.

**Research Objectives of the Study:** The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) To have a detailed insights of various places of tourist interest at Allahabad and Varanasi which are having spiritual importance
- 2) To highlight economic significance of pilgrimage tourism in Allahabad and Varanasi.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

**Sources of data:** The data used for the study are secondary in nature i.e. available literature, books, various previous studies etc.

### **5. VARANASI AND ALLAHABAD : A BRIEF OVERVIEW**

Community goes to religious trip for having several imaginations or visions. Very frequently we go on religious tour when some change takes place in our life or in our respective relationship if transformation has taken place. A few are there who wishes to achieve mental peace along with this they also want to get the spirituality in their life to be part of our Indian culture and religion. If someone has committed any mistake in their life for the same reason also they use to approach the religious place to have the forgiveness. With the view to meet the new people coming from different or diverse culture is also the prime demand of spiritual tourism in our country.

- To have the feeling of mighty god
- To get the assistance in the worse time
- To be associated to the truth and faith
- To feel as being the part of spirituality
- To be associated to the reality of this universe
- To be the part of some holy task associated to the all mighty

### **6. SPIRITUAL ATTRACTION IN ALLAHABAD**

Known as the second-most seasoned city of old India, Allahabad has affected the course of mysticism, religion, and culture in the nation for quite a long time. Investigating the juncture of real streams, the city is the seat of the mega Kumbh Mela, and was started the Garden of Allah (Allahabad) by Akbar. A city possessing large amounts of profound experiences, some vital Spiritual destinations are-

Map of Varanasi



Map of Allahabad



**Triveni Sangam-** The confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the now legendary Saraswati is a favorable spot of extraordinary criticalness in Hinduism. It is here that the Kumbh Mela and the Ardh Kumbh Mela are held 12 and 6 years separated individually. In Hinduism, it is trusted that taking a dunk in at this ‘blessed’ sangam can free a man of every common sin. Regardless of whether you are not exceptionally religious, seeing the reasonable waters of the Ganges converging with the greenish Yamuna is an incredible sight. Taking a watercraft ride, as you watch the sun go down out there, and viewing the intense aarti by the riverside is exactly what you have to rise above into the profound domain.

**Hanuman Mandir-** The grand Hanuman Mandir close to the Allahabad Fort with a transcending symbol of Lord Hanuman is another special sight known as much for its religious essentialness concerning its land idiosyncrasies. The sanctuary structure, alongside the 20-foot-tall and 8 far reaching Hanuman symbol, gets submerged in the water of the Ganges when the stream is at its full stream. Legend has it that the stream ascends to touch the feet of Lord Hanuman.

**Saraswati Koop-** An outing to the Allahabad Fort that is a short separation from the really popular Hanuman Mandir is un-missable. Aside from its transcending structure, heavenly exhibitions and high towers, the place is additionally home to the Saraswati Koop, which is accepted to be the wellspring of the old stream Saraswati. The waterway is said to have gone away about 4,000 years back, however keeps on being loved in the Hindu folklore. Another key fascination is the ages old fig tree known as the Akshaya Vat or the eternal tree. An ideal place to consider over the short lived

nature of human life and perpetual quality of the spirit.

## 7. SPIRITUAL ATTRACTION IN VARANASI

This antiquated city is the true otherworldly capital of India, holding incredible religious hugeness for Hindus and Buddhists, as well as pretty much anybody looking for that snapshot of celestial intercession. From sadhus to explorers and globe-jogging hikers, a wide range of individuals slide on this city—otherwise called Kashi and accepted to have been made by Lord Shiva himself—looking for an otherworldly arousing. You can encounter it, regardless of whether for a short lived minute, at these spots:

**Kashi Vishwanath Temple-** The sanctuary committed to Lord Shiva is one of the holiest, and furthermore the most established, spots of journey for Hindus. At the core of the sanctum sanctorum lies a brilliant dark Jyotirlinga of Shiva, one of the twelve found in various places of worship crosswise over India. The Jyotirlingas are viewed as an image of the interminable light of which Lord Shiva is a source. Seeing the Jyotirlinga exemplified in a gold edge, compared with the flimsy dividers that stand declaration to a very long time of history, can summon a feeling of profound delight, your own convictions in any case.

**Ganga Aarti on Dashashwamedh Ghat-** Seeing the amazing Ganga aarti in a watercraft moored close to the Dashashwamedh Ghat is a commendable stupendous finale to your profound stay. As the sun sets over the Ganga, the lowly of the city blurs away from plain sight and a break wins before the ghat emits with the brightness of several tinkering metal lights, songs of ringers,

cymbals and psalms. The 45-minute custom abandons you overflowed with a bizarre feeling of quiet, as though your extremely being has been scrubbed by the experience.

## **8. BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL TOURISM:**

There are many reasons for spiritual tourism by people at sacred sites and temples. One of the interesting reasons is to travel, experiencing and seeing foreign lands and for acquiring spiritual growth in life.

Most of the people want to move and explore fresh sights and inspirational places, among which a few destination have sacred meaning where history is associated in a positive manner.

Under the company of sanctified people at these spaces taking bath in the holy rivers purify the mind and soul. Such type of experiences purify us and give us deeper understanding for being spiritual and motivates us to be spiritual.

If anyone stays in such spiritual places even for short duration of time this is able to give an everlasting sense, experience and thought which will inspire them for many years to come, maybe it cannot be forgotten for throughout the lives. Such opportunity may not come very often, or it may even come after many lifetimes. So if such opportunities come then we have to take them seriously and take full advantage of it. We know that spiritual journey is a very long journey, sometimes it requires many lives to achieve self actualization. Pilgrimage is a holy and religious journey. It is a process which cannot be taken casually, it allow a person to experience, see, and encounter the delightful things and introduces to the Divine self. It is only possible in the company

and association with the holy people at the holy land.

At the land of lord Shiva people move as because lord Shiva is the main motivator for the people regarding their act of behaving and how they can get the acme of success in their life without hurting the other people in this universe.

## **9. SPIRITUAL TOURISM IN UTTAR PRADESH**

People from across the world now come to India for meditation and spirituality in Kashi, Mathura, Varanasi, and Allahabad which are situated in Uttar Pradesh. In fact India it is rapidly emerging as a health and spiritual tourism destination. Since time immemorial, India has been known for its spirituality.

Uttar Pradesh has endowed with a varied spectrum of tourism offerings. These range from one of the 7 modern wonders of the world (Taj Mahal – Agra) to unique cultural and religious hotspots like Varanasi, Braj (Mathura, Vrindavan, Goverdhan) and Awadh (Lucknow, Ayodhya), chiefly, amongst others. In this regard, Uttar Pradesh is also home to some very important Hindu pilgrim centres of India viz. Krishna Janmabhoomi (Mathura), Ram Janmabhoomi (Ayodhya), Sangam (Allahabad), Baba Vishwanath (Varanasi), Maa Vindhyavasani (Vindhyachal), including important destinations related to the life of Lord Buddha – Kapilvastu, Sarnath, Shravasti, Kaushambi, Sankisa and Kushinagar.

It goes without saying that for the spiritual seeker, there is no better destination than Uttar Pradesh to help explore the higher planes of belief and faith in the country. It is also with this in mind that the

U.P Department of Tourism introduced the now-popular Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc connecting the three most important tourism hubs of U.P. – Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi. This has naturally helped boost UP tourism as it covers the true essence of Uttar Pradesh, by offering a gamut of cultural, religious and heritage tourism assets.

Otherworldly existence in India gloats a palette of religions. Unexpectedly, the term ‘Hindu’ was utilized by the Arab brokers to distinguish the general population living east of the River Indus. Indus came to be known as Sindhu and the term Hindu was conceived. Uttar Pradesh, a state in the Indo-Gangetic fields had a prospering exchange, and turned into a political fortress too. Numerous beliefs and religions have blended and existed together in this land. Very like whatever remains of India, there are a great many blessed places here, set apart with the nearness of sages, diviners, enthusiasts and spiritualists, former and present.

**10. EMPLOYMENT GENERATION:**

As regards the employment generated by the Tourism industry including the Hotels and Restaurants, the available information indicates that there were 7727 Hotels and Restaurants in the state in 2000, employing over 15,600 persons in the private owned enterprises and regular establishments in the state. These figures, however, do not represent the latest positions and hence the numbers of Hotels and Restaurants as well as the persons employed there is expected to be much higher.

**Annual Tourist visits Statistics Allahabad and Varanasi**

S.NO.	YEAR	Allahabad			Varanasi		
		Indian	Foreigner	Total	Indian	Foreigner	Total
1	2014	35605966	107141	35713107	5202236	287761	5489997
2	2015	40001670	109281	40110951	5413927	302370	5716297
3	2016	41146674	109571	41256245	5600146	312519	5912665
4	2017	41764987	109675	41874662	5947355	334708	6282063
5	2018	44668662	146805	44815467	6095890	348970	6444860

*Source: www.uptourism.gov.in*

**11. CONCLUSION**

People from across the world now come to India for meditation and spirituality in Allahabad and Varanasi. In fact these places are rapidly emerging as a health and spiritual tourism destination.

Since time immemorial, these places has been known for its spirituality and the people who show their interest to have the time beyond the articulated environment along with worldly possessions, they must make strive to visit these holy places. These places are the origin for the immense of spiritual pleasure.

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