



# Navigating The Tourism Industry In Uttar Pradesh: Obstacles And Opportunities

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**Abstract:** Uttar Pradesh India is a land of rich history, cultural and geographical diversity. Being the home of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Uttar Pradesh also has huge plethora of flora and fauna spread across the state Boundary. Such an appealing features about the Uttar Pradesh culture and its diversity make it one of the best international tourist's destinations. Uttar Pradesh presents heritage and cultural tourism along with food (esp. street foods) and shopping tourism Uttar Pradesh offers shopping tours, including Chikankari and brass work tours. Tourism is expanding the fastest and is the most rewarding industry of the modern world. International tourism constitutes the invisible export trade. No wonder then that some more enterprising countries have turned this flourishing industry into a means of spinning money e.g. Maldives, Switzerland etc. In recent years, Uttar Pradesh too has woken upto this great reality and concerted efforts are being made to develop and promote this foreign exchange earning industry in a big way. Uttar Pradesh, with her rich cultural heritage, ancient monuments, world famous temples, architectural masterpieces, wild animal sanctuaries and scenic spots, holds a great attraction for the tourists on the move. This paper tries to know the Obstacles and Opportunities of tourism industry in Uttar Pradesh and government initiative for the development of tourism industry.

Keywords: Tourism, Obstacles, Opportunities, foreign exchange and Tourist.

## Introduction:

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which is related to the movement of people from source place to places outside their place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivational factor behind it usually pleasure. From this definition and the fact it is interpreted that temporary activity, and demand driven concept.

When tourists decide to visit a destination, they create additional demand for goods and services. This demand is met by the supply side, either through increased domestic production or by importing the necessary goods and services. Thus, while tourism is primarily driven by demand, it can also be analyzed from the perspective of supply.

Tourism industry is the largest service industry prevailing in the Indian economy. India's travel and tourism sector ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the world, in terms of its contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), generating INR 14.1 Trillion, equivalent to 9.6% of the India's GDP in 2016. It is forecasted to rise by 6.7% per annum to INR 28.5 Trillion which is approximately 10% of GDP in 2027. Additionally, the sector created 40.3 Million jobs in 2016, which ranks India 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world, in terms of total employment generated. Apart from this, the industry plays a huge role in the employment of the people of India and contributes more than 9.3% to the total employment in India. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India's Annual Report 2015-16 highlights the multiplier effects of investment in tourism, by stating that an investment of INR 10 Lakh creates 90 jobs in the tourism sector. The travel and tourism industry in India is projected to generate revenue of nearly \$16.92 billion in 2022, according to industry promotions body India Brand Equity Foundation. At an estimated annual growth rate of 9.6%, the industry is also expected to reach a market volume of \$34.25 billion by 2028. . This expectation would result in a growth of almost 9.5% annually for the industry. Uttar Pradesh catches the same success story. Uttar Pradesh is strengthening its foothold on the global tourism stage, reaching new milestones annually. In 2022, the state hosted 31.85 crore tourists. Uttar Pradesh is one of the most favoured state for visitors in India with a steady position amongst the topmost states in relations of tourist arrivals. In 2014 it was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of total tourist arrivals, 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of domestic tourist arrivals and 3<sup>rd</sup> in terms of external tourist arrivals amid Indian states. The Tourism industry in Uttar Pradesh has a noteworthy role to the state's financial growth. Uttar Pradesh becomes a hotspot for heritage and cultural tourism and emerging as an destination for wellness, MICE, adventure and eco-tourism in India. Irrespective of significant challenges such as a shortage of hotel rooms and inadequate infrastructure, Uttar Pradesh's tourism industry continues to face substantial hurdles, especially during peak times. As global economic integration advances, the Indian tourism sector, including Uttar Pradesh, still has a considerable journey ahead to achieve sustainable growth.

### **Distinctiveness of Uttar Pradesh in Terms of Tourism**

- **Cultural and Historical Significance**
  - **Taj Mahal:** The Taj Mahal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, is UP's most iconic landmark, attracting around 7-8 million visitors annually.
  - **Heritage Sites:** In addition to the Taj Mahal, UP hosts other UNESCO World Heritage Sites like Fatehpur Sikri and Agra Fort, which draw significant global attention. According to the Ministry of Tourism, these sites contribute substantially to India's cultural tourism, with Agra alone receiving 3.4 million foreign tourists in 2019.
  - **Religious Tourism:** UP is a cornerstone of religious tourism in India. Varanasi, one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, is central to Hindu pilgrimage and is visited by over 6 million tourists annually. Prayagraj's Kumbh Mela, which attracted over 240 million people in 2019, is recognized as the world's largest religious gathering. Similarly, Ayodhya, with its deep-rooted association with Lord Rama, is gaining international attention, especially after the construction of the Ram Temple.
- **Cultural Festivals and Events**
  - **Kumbh Mela:** The Kumbh Mela, held every 12 years at Prayagraj, is a UNESCO-recognized event and a global attraction. The 2019 Kumbh Mela generated a massive influx of pilgrims and tourists.
  - **Diwali in Ayodhya:** Ayodhya's Deepotsav, where millions of diyas (lamps) are lit along the Saryu River, has set world records and become a major tourist draw during Diwali. This event highlights the state's ability to merge religious traditions with tourism.

- **Ramlila Performances:** The traditional Ramlila performances, particularly in Varanasi and other parts of the state, attract tourists interested in experiencing India's rich cultural heritage during the Dussehra festival.
- **Diverse Landscapes**
  - **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** UP is home to diverse ecosystems, including Dudhwa National Park, which is part of Project Tiger and known for its population of tigers, rhinoceroses, and elephants. The state also houses the National Chambal Sanctuary, a haven for gharials, dolphins, and various bird species, making it a growing destination for wildlife enthusiasts.
  - **River Tourism:** The state's numerous rivers, particularly the Ganga and Yamuna, offer untapped potential for river-based tourism. Varanasi's boat rides on the Ganga and the Ganga Aarti are popular among both domestic and international tourists.
- **Crafts and Handicrafts**
  - **Traditional Artisanship:** Uttar Pradesh is renowned for its traditional crafts. Banarasi silk saree from Varanasi, Chikankari embroidery from Lucknow, and brassware from Moradabad are internationally recognized and contribute significantly to the state's economy. The government has been promoting these crafts through initiatives like the ODOP (One District One Product) scheme, which boosts local artisans and attracts tourists.

#### Objectives of the study:

- **To study role of tourism industry in Indian economy.**
- **To assess the problems faced by tourism industry.**
- **To know the tourism industry in Indian scenario.**
- **To evaluate the future opportunities of prospects of tourism industry.**
- **Suggestions and government initiative for development of tourism industry.**

#### Research Methodology:

The data and information has been collected through secondary sources such as published articles, magazines, periodicals and books and e-sources etc. The research is completely based on descriptive in nature and theoretical one.

#### Problems of the Tourism Industry in Uttar Pradesh:

Some of the major roadblocks or hurdles for the proper development of the industry are:

##### 1. Infrastructure Deficiencies

One of the major obstacles in the development of tourism in Uttar Pradesh is the inadequacy of infrastructure. While the state has made progress in improving road connectivity and developing new airports, many tourist destinations still suffer from poor infrastructure, especially in rural and remote areas.

- **Transportation Challenges:** Many tourist sites, particularly those in rural areas like Chitrakoot and Jhansi, are not easily accessible. This reduces the attractiveness of these destinations to tourists, particularly international visitors who rely on reliable and comfortable transportation.
- **Accommodation Shortfalls:** There is a lack of high-quality accommodations near several important tourist spots. According to a report by the Ministry of Tourism, the availability of budget

accommodations is particularly limited, which impacts the state's ability to attract a broader range of tourists, including backpackers and budget travelers .

## 2. Inadequate Promotion and Marketing

Despite its rich cultural heritage, Uttar Pradesh has not been able to market itself effectively on the global tourism stage. The lack of a strong, coherent marketing strategy has led to underutilization of the state's tourism potential.

- **Low International Visibility:** UP has not sufficiently leveraged digital marketing tools and global platforms to promote its tourist attractions. As per a study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), UP's tourism marketing efforts have been inconsistent, often focusing narrowly on a few key sites like the Taj Mahal and Varanasi, while neglecting other equally significant destinations resulting in lopsided growth in tourism.
- **Ineffective Branding:** The state's branding efforts have not created a distinct identity that resonates with global tourists. Unlike Rajasthan's "Incredible India" campaigns, which have successfully branded the state as a land of forts and palaces, UP lacks a similar unifying theme that encapsulates its diverse offerings.

## 3. Environmental and Sustainability Concerns

The rapid growth of tourism in some areas of Uttar Pradesh has led to significant environmental degradation, posing long-term risks to the sustainability of the industry.

- **Pollution and Overcrowding:** famous sites like Varanasi and the Taj Mahal struggling from overcrowding and pollution, which diminish the tourist experience and threaten the preservation of these cultural heritage sites.
- **Lack of Sustainable Tourism Practices:** There is limited implementation of sustainable tourism practices in the state. Waste management, particularly in pilgrimage cities like Varanasi and Prayagraj, is inadequate, leading to environmental degradation. Moreover, the uncontrolled growth of tourism infrastructure in sensitive areas has further exacerbated environmental issues.

## 4. Security and Safety Issues

Concerns about safety and security continue to affect tourism in Uttar Pradesh, particularly among international travelers.

- **Crime and Safety Concerns:** Although UP has made efforts to improve law and order, the state still struggles with perceptions of crime, especially against tourists. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has consistently highlighted UP as one of the states with higher crime rates, which impacts its image as a tourist-friendly destination .
- **Health and Sanitation Challenges:** Inadequate sanitation facilities and poor public health conditions in several tourist areas pose significant risks to visitors. Issues like the lack of clean drinking water, unsanitary public restrooms, and the prevalence of waterborne diseases are major concerns that need addressing to make the state more hospitable for tourists.

## 5. Insufficient Training and Skill Development

The tourism industry in Uttar Pradesh suffers from a lack of adequately trained personnel, which affects service quality and overall tourist satisfaction.

- **Skill Gaps in Tourism Services:** There is a significant shortage of trained guides, hospitality staff, and other tourism-related professionals in the state.
- **Language Barriers:** Many service providers, including guides and hotel staff, lack proficiency in foreign languages, which can be a significant barrier for international tourists.

On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh is at the threshold of looming opportunities. Tourism in Uttar Pradesh is one of the sectors which are currently witnessing widespread growth. Thanks to the increasing inbounds tourism by the burgeoning Indian middle class. Rising inflow of foreign tourist into the state along with successful government campaigns "U.P. Nahi Dekha to India Nahi Dekha" for promoting tourism stature has done a lot to develop to state tourism industry.

A growing concern in Uttar Pradesh's tourism industry is the unplanned and unrestricted growth of tourism, which is having a detrimental impact on the environment. The development of tourism in the state has been disproportionately concentrated around a few iconic destinations like Agra, Varanasi, Mathura, and Ayodhya, primarily due to the government's focused promotion and advertising of these sites.

This approach overlooks the importance of a holistic strategy for tourism development. As a result, these popular centers are now burdened with the overwhelming pressure of annual visitors, leading to environmental degradation and increasingly challenging conditions for both the sites and the tourists.

### Prospects of the Tourism Industry in Uttar Pradesh:

Uttar Pradesh holds significant potential for the expansion and diversification of its tourism industry. The state's rich cultural, historical, and spiritual heritage, combined with strategic government initiatives and infrastructural developments, positions it well for future growth. This section explores the various prospects that could propel UP's tourism industry to new heights.

#### 1. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure development is a key driver for the growth of tourism in Uttar Pradesh.

- **Improved Connectivity:** The construction of the **Jewar International Airport** and expressways like the Yamuna Expressway and Purvanchal Expressway, will enhance connectivity reduce travel time and improving accessibility. It will significantly boost international and domestic tourist arrivals.
- **Urban Development Projects:** Initiatives like the **PRASAD, AMRUT Smart Cities Mission** in Varanasi and Agra are improving urban infrastructure making these cities more tourist-friendly. The development of modern facilities, such as luxury hotels and convention centers, is also expected to attract high-end tourists and international events.

## 2. Diversification of Tourism Offerings

Diversifying the tourism places beyond the well-known sites can help Uttar Pradesh attract a broader range of tourists and reduce the pressure on few places.

- **Promotion of Lesser-Known Sites:** The state is working to promote lesser-known but culturally significant destinations like **Chitrakoot, Sarnath, and Jhansi**. Promoting these sites can alleviate pressure on overburdened areas like Agra and Varanasi .
- **Adventure and Eco-Tourism:** Uttar Pradesh's diverse geography, including its rivers, forests, and wildlife sanctuaries, presents ample opportunities for the development of **adventure and eco-tourism**.

## 3. Cultural and Religious Tourism

Cultural and religious tourism remains a cornerstone of UP's tourism strategy, with enormous potential for growth, particularly in the international market.

- **Enhanced Pilgrimage Experiences:** With the ongoing development of the **Ram Temple in Ayodhya** and the promotion of **Varanasi** as a spiritual hub, the state is likely to see a significant increase in religious tourism. These developments are expected to attract not only domestic pilgrims but also international visitors interested in Indian culture and spirituality.
- **Festival Tourism:** UP has a rich tradition of cultural festivals, such as the **Kumbh Mela, Diwali in Ayodhya**, and the **Taj Mahotsav**. These events can be further promoted on a global scale, attracting tourists interested in experiencing India's vibrant cultural heritage.

## 4. Technological Integration and Digital Marketing

The integration of technology in tourism is a significant prospect for enhancing tourist experiences and expanding the industry's reach.

- **Digital and Smart Tourism:** The state government is increasingly leveraging **digital platforms** to enhance the visibility of its tourism offerings.
- **Social Media and Global Outreach:** Effective use of social media and global digital campaigns can boost Uttar Pradesh's visibility on the world stage. Strategic partnerships with global travel platforms and influencers can further enhance the state's digital footprint ..
- **Film Tourism Promotion:** Uttar Pradesh has become a favored destination for film shoots. The promotion of **film tourism** is expected to attract fans to locations featured in movies, adding a new dimension to the state's tourism offerings.

## 5. Sustainability and Responsible Tourism

As global attention increasingly shifts towards sustainability, Uttar Pradesh has significant prospects in promoting eco-friendly and responsible tourism practices.

- **Eco-Tourism Development:** The government is focusing on developing eco-tourism circuits that promote **sustainable travel practices**.
- **Community Involvement:** Encouraging local communities to participate in tourism-related activities not only ensures the sustainability of tourism but also provides economic benefits to these

communities. The promotion of **homestays, local handicrafts, and traditional arts** can help integrate tourism with community development, creating a more inclusive tourism model.

### **Government Initiative for development of tourism industry:**

With a view to improve tourism and at the same time taking care of the environment, the central and state governments are coming forward with new development plans. Although tourism is the responsibility of the state governments, the Central Government also lends help to develop tourism.

The Uttar Pradesh Government design policy framework to promote Brand Uttar Pradesh for tourism in India and overseas. The strategy to translate the vision statement and guiding pillars in reality will be derived from the following actions:

- **Strengthening Tourism Infrastructure:** The state encourages private sector participation through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to develop essential tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, resorts, and public utilities at key tourist locations.
- **Promoting Investments and Employment Generation:** The government will establish a land bank to support the development of tourist spots and infrastructure. Additionally, it will promote the creation of hotels and Bed and Breakfast establishments in cities of religious and cultural significance.
- **Augmenting Brand Uttar Pradesh:** The Department will adopt a top-down approach to position Uttar Pradesh as a leading tourist destination. With the help of a branding agency, it will create and distribute ad films showcasing the state's folk dances and cultural heritage. Additionally, the Department will prioritize content for social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube to promote tourism attractions.
- **Focus on Religious/Spiritual Tourism:** The government will upgrade civic amenities at religious sites, establish shrine boards for better pilgrimage management, and encourage private sector participation in developing accommodations through PPP models.
- **Promoting Theme Based Tourism:**
  - A. **Eco Tourism:** The Department, in coordination with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation (UPFC), will enhance civic and tourist amenities in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Centralized management in Lucknow will oversee Nature Interpretation Centres, Nature Camps, Boating, and Nature Tour Programs. Local communities will be engaged for equitable benefit distribution and socio-economic upliftment. Additionally, bird sanctuaries at various locations will be actively promoted
  - B. **Heritage Tourism:** Recently recognized by UNESCO as the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity', 'Kumbh' will be promoted extensively in the national and the international markets. And all UNESCO world heritage sites will be promoted through dedicated marketing channels, summits, fairs, and road shows in select countries.
  - C. **Cultural Tourism:** To promote culture exchanges, the Department will release annual calendar for all religious/cultural events and organize events with the objective to promote tourism and establish Uttar Pradesh as a brand.

- D. Vedic Mini City Tourism:** The Department will promote Vedic science practices within the tourist area as a theme.
- E. Agri Tourism:** The Department will establish a government interface to support agri-tour operators by coordinating with regional and local government bodies. In collaboration with local agri-market players and tour operators, it will also develop special tour packages to promote agri-tourism.
- F. Craft, Handloom & Textile Tourism:** The Department will promote regional crafts such as Moradabad's craft, Bhadohi's carpet, Agra's inlay work and Zardozi, Varanasi's silk, Gorakhpur's terracotta, and Lucknow's Chikan. Shilpgram and Shilp Bazaar will be established to showcase Uttar Pradesh's handicraft legacy. Textile tourism circuits, including Khadi, will be developed, linking them to major tourist destinations. The Department will also organize thematic fairs and exhibitions, integrating special visits to handloom units into travel itineraries.
- G. Adventure Tourism:** The Department will capitalize on the diverse topography of regions like Bundelkhand, Sonbhadra, and Chitrakoot to create unique opportunities for adventure sports such as paragliding and zip-lining. It will assist in the administration, regulation, promotion, and infrastructure of these activities. Additionally, the Department will support the establishment of training institutes and an adventure sports academy.
- H. Caravan Tourism:** Owing to the immense natural beauty and historical significance of the Bundelkhand and Vindhya region, the Department and UPSTDC, in collaboration with private players, will identify sites and undertake projects to promote caravan parks.
- I. MICE Tourism:** Special mention of MICE hotels (More than 5,000 Sq. Ft. area) in social media and websites to promote the hotels.
- J. Wellness Tourism:** The Department will identify and collaborate with specialized AYUSH centers (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) to establish units in Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, it will organize an International Yoga Conclave and promote wellness centers to position the state as a wellness tourism destination.
- K. Water & Cruise Tourism:** The Department will have the authority to manage tourism activities in water bodies under the jurisdiction of the Development Authority, Jal Nigam, and the state government. A cruise boat scheme between Assi Ghat and Raj Ghat in Varanasi has been sanctioned. The Department will develop special tour packages for cruise tourism, including houseboats, motorboats, and water sports on the River Ganges, after conducting a feasibility study. Potential sites for water sports include Rihand Dam, Matatila, Rajghat Dam, Ramgarh Taal, Chittorgarh Taal, and various barrages in Uttar Pradesh.
- L. Tourism Festivals:** Uttar Pradesh, with its rich cultural heritage, is a hub of vibrant events and festivals. To position the state as a top tourism destination, the Department will organize national and international events such as Ayodhya Deepotsav, Rangotsav Barsana, Dev Deepawali, Gorakhpur Mahotsav, Bundela Mahotsav, Buddha Mahotsav, Ayurveda Mahotsav, Ganga Fair and Lucknow Mahotsav. A dynamic marketing campaign will further elevate the state's profile, attracting media and consumer attention with events like the Balloon Festival, Uttar Pradesh Travel Mart, Travel Writers Conclave, Taj Mahotsav, International Literature Festival, and International Ramayana Conclave

- I. **Tourism Circuits for Incentives:** Government developing various circuits which further boost tourism in state. Such of these circuits are The Ramayana Circuit, The Krishna/Braj Circuit, The Buddhist Circuit, Wildlife & Eco Tourism Circuit The, Bundelkhand Circuit, The Mahabharata Circuit, The Shakti Peeth Circuit, Gorakhpur Circuit etc..

It is needless to say that development in infrastructure holds the key to success for any industry and the economy as a whole. Infrastructure has a major role to play in the tourism Industry. Ministry of tourism has made consistent efforts to develop quality tourism infrastructure at tourist destinations and circuits. The government has allow 100 percent foreign investment under the automatic route in the hotel and tourism related industry, to improve the quality of tourism and help the industry grow at rapid pace.

Tourism industry in Uttar Pradesh has grown at rapid pace but in order to achieve a sustained growth a lot needs to be done and there exists plenty of ideas, plethora of opportunities for one to make the most of it. Government as well as private organisation along with the local community involvement should jointly adventure some plans to attracts foreign tourists. Heritage hotel scheme is one of them.

### **Conclusion:**

The tourism industry serves as a dynamic catalyst for both economic and social transformation. It drives job creation, fosters investment, and reshapes economic structures, making significant contributions to national and state GDP. To fully leverage this potential, the Government must prioritize enhancing Uttar Pradesh's global accessibility. This includes improving air transportation and developing superior rail and road connectivity within the country. Embracing innovative and unconventional strategies will be key to unlocking and maximizing the state's tourism potential.

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