Research Article

UTTAR PRADESH HERITAGE ARC: A MODEL OF HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

The main objectives of this research paper are to discuss the concept of heritage tourism, to survey heritage tourism destinations that are embedded on the Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc, and to comprehend the plans and programmes introduced by the Central Government and Uttar Pradesh government for promoting heritage tourism development.This research paper is purely based on the literature survey research methodology. Tourism is recognised as an important segment of tourism that facilitates inclusive economic growth. Heritage tourism can generate employment, foreign exchange, revitalize and rejuvenate the redundant historical buildings and monuments from decaying, and preserve the traditional and contemporary values of culture, and identity of the communities. Uttar Pradesh is the heartland of India where nature, culture, and faith converge. Uttar Pradesh links the mythology with the present day in continuity has been fostered by the mythological rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati and other tributaries.The natural and cultural resources attract the largest number of tourists from across the world. The Heritage Arc, which begins from the Agra region, through the Lucknow region and Varanasi region provides immense opportunities for travellers to explore the cultural, historic, and natural aspects of several exciting destinations. Uttar Pradesh government has recognised heritage tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic development. The government plays a proactive role in creating a structure for tourism development by formulating tourism plans and programmes, making the budget allocation, marketing and promoting various tourism products, adopting tourism-related legislation, and regulating and strengthening infrastructure development through public-private partnerships.

Key Words: Heritage tourism, Sustainable tourism, Tangible and intangible resources, Heritage Arc, Conservation and Management.

1. Introduction

Heritage tourism is defined as "travelling to experience the place, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories of the people of the past, and it can include visitation to cultural, historical and natural resources," NTHP (2014). Heritage tourism integrates physical heritage, cultural heritage, and intangible heritage which together make as major drivers of

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tourism interest and development activity. Heritage tourism is recognised as an important segment of tourism that facilitates inclusive economic growth in the economies of developing and underdeveloped countries. It contributes to precious foreign exchange earnings, generation of employment opportunities, providesresources for protection and conservation of environment, social and cultural heritage. Heritage tourism revitalizes and rejuvenates the redundant historical buildings and monuments andpreserves the traditional and contemporary values of the traditions and culture, which represent the identity of the community. It also integrates people from all over the world by giving space to understand and exchange each other's culture and traditions. Heritage tourism teaches mutual respect and tolerance and fosters universal brotherhood. Heritage is an important element of contemporary tourism and all the stakeholders of tourism should contribute to the protection, conservation, and management of a wide spectrum of heritage including culture and traditions. Brooks (2011)

India is bestowed with a rich natural and cultural heritage, which attracts millions of tourists. The cultural heritage is manifested in the form of temples, palaces, monuments, forts, etc. have abundantly contributed to the growth of tourism in India. The government of India has taken several plans and programmes to boost the tourism sector. However, the heritage sites are facing numerous challenges primarily concerningthe creation, operation, and maintenance of infrastructure and heritage resources. There is a need to develop a robust mechanism for the provision of basic amenities in the short-term and advanced amenities on a long-term basis at all heritage sites, Ministry of Tourism (2020). The Central Government and State Governments play a critical role in determining sustainable tourism policies and introducing legal enactments surrounding sustainable tourism. Through positive intervention, the governments have been creating an environment that enables both the public sector and private sector to operate more sustainably by influencing the pattern of visitor flows and behaviour for optimizing the impact of tourism. National Tourism Policy, Incredible India campaigns, Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Bharat Dharshan, and Atithi Devo Bhava campaign,Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD,Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, make in India, Paryatan Parv, etc. are some of the manifestations of sustainable tourism development in India. Venugopalan (2018)

The principles of sustainability have been recognised by the Government of India and State Governments as the basic philosophy of the development process. The governments have implemented various plans and programmes for achieving the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of heritage tourist destinations. A review of literature has revealed that a limited number of researches undertaken to study the various facets of planning, formulation, and implementation of sustainable heritage tourism strategies. Similarly, there isa limited number of studies available which provide the potential heritage tourism resources which can be protected, managed, and market effectively and efficiently in both domestic and international markets. Thus, there is a wide gap in the theoretical and empirical literature about the potential heritage tourism resources and the tourism plans and programmes introduced by the Central Government and Uttar Pradesh Government for promoting sustainable heritage tourism development.

The main objective of the research paper is to make a profiling of the heritage tourism resources in the Heritage Arc of Uttar Pradeshand investigates the tourism potentials of these heritage destinations. This paper also discusses various plans and programmes introduced by the Government of India and the Uttar Pradesh state government to promote heritage tourism for

achieving economic, environmental, and social sustainability. This research paper has utilized literature survey researchmethodology for exploring the potential heritage tourism resources in the Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 1 provides an overview of the research paper. Section 2 gives a brief review of previous researches on heritage tourism. Section 3, discussion, provides a discussion about the heritage tourism resources and the plans and programmes of Central and State Governments. Section 4, Conclusion, concludes the research paper and guides future research on heritage tourism.

2. Review of Literature

This section provides a brief discussion about heritage tourism, sustainable heritage tourism, Uttar Pradesh heritage tourism resources, and government initiatives for promoting tourism development in Uttar Pradesh.

Heritage tourism: Heritage tourism is defined as the experience sought and consumed by tourists at sites of heritage importance, specifically at historic places, landscapes, and culturesthat have historic value at the national level and also possess personal, emotional, symbolic, and aesthetic value. Heritage tourism is an operational, engaging, and ongoing process that involves inhabitants, social groups, civic institutions, and governments working together. (Tweed and Sutherland (2007), Trinh (2013), Sharma and Sharma (2017))Heritage means inheritance, something transferred from one generation to another, Nuryanti (1996).Heritage is what we inherit from the past through historical buildings, artworks, and beautiful scenery,which are passed from one generation to the next and are part of the cultural tradition of a society. (Richards (1996), Sharpley (1994))Heritage resources may be natural, cultural, and built environments. World heritage sites can be categorized into a geological formation, wildlife habitat, natural landscape, religious structure, archeological site, urban landscape, secular structure, and human activity.(WHC-UNESCO (2014))The meaning of the heritage has expanded outside the traditional definition of heritage: historical buildings and monuments, archeological sites, museums, and spectacular landscapes into every aspect of daily life and community memory. Heritage places cover the historical and religious places, former industrial works, defense complexes, railway and water transportation corridors, historic battlefields, and places of confinement and punishment, Brooks (2011).

Heritage tourism and cultural tourism are used synonymously. However, both concepts differ from each other. Cultural tourism is defined as the "tourism when tourists visit from outside the host community are motivated wholly or in part by an interest in or experiencing the historical sites, monuments, buildings, artistic, scientific or heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution," Silberberg (1995). Cultural tourism includes the movement of travelers outside their normal place of residence to specific cultural attractions such as heritage sites, cultural manifestations, performing and visual arts, crafts fairs and festivals, museums outside visitors' normal place of residence, Richards (1996).Culture and cultural heritage tourism have been perceived as important contributors to sustainable development. Tourism provides an opportunity to emergelocal markets for cultural goods and services. It preserves and maintains local indigenous traditional knowledge and community practices, and promotes capacity building at all levels for the development of dynamic cultural and creative sectors. It also encourages

creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, Brooke (2011). When managed sustainably, the heritage properties can materialize economic benefits and help in understanding, conserving, and protecting the original universal values of heritage properties without leading to the commercialization of heritages. Zhag et al. (2017)

World Heritage Committee (2010) advocated the development of a new and inclusive programme on world heritage and sustainable tourism. Heritage tourism development should contribute to the protection, conservation and presentation, and transmission of their heritage values. Tourism generates sustainable socio-economic benefits and distributesthese tangible and intangible benefits equitably among the local community. Heritage tourism development should integrate all the stakeholders through effective partnerships for maximizing the conservation and presentation while minimizing the adverse impacts of tourism. Heritage resources should be promoted, presented, and interpreted authentically and comprehensively in the national and international tourism markets for their protection, conservation, and sustainable utilisation.

Uttar Pradesh Heritage Tourism: Uttar Pradesh is recognized as the jewel in the crown of India in terms of both natural and cultural resources, which attract alarge number of tourists from across the world. It is the heartland of India where nature, culture, and faith converge that created attractive tourist destinations with distinctive features. Uttar Pradesh is located in the Indo-Gangetic plain. Uttar Pradesh is the land that links the mythology with the present day in continuity, has been fostered by the mythological rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, and other tributaries.Uttar Pradesh, the cradle of Indian civilization, witnessed the emergence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, and the rise and demise of great kingdoms such as Kosala, the Magadha empire, Nanda Dynasty,Maurya, Muslim rule, and the British empire. Undulating history is manifested in the art, culture, heritage, tradition, and monuments thathave enriched the civilization over millenniums.

The tourism assets of Uttar Pradesh include its diverse and distinct natural, social and cultural diversities. Uttar Pradesh tourism offers products such as cultural and heritage tourism, leisure and entertainment, ecotourism, culinary, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions), and rural and health and wellness tourism. Uttar Pradesh government has identified heritage tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and development by creating a sustainable, pro-poor and pro-growth, and pro-poor ecosystem.

Uttar Pradesh is the fourth largest state in India, with an approximate area of 2,40,928 sq. km. It is also the most populous state in India with a population of 199.5 million (2011). Uttar Pradesh is one of the most popular tourist states for tourists in India, with a consistent ranking among the top states in terms of tourist arrival. In 2019, Uttar Pradesh ranked 3rd state in terms of tourist arrival, 2nd in terms of domestic tourist arrival, and 3rd in foreign tourist arrival (FTA). The tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh has made a significant contribution to the gross state domestic product (GSDP). (www.uptourism.gov.in)

Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc: The heritage Arc, which begins from the Agra region, through the Lucknow region and Varanasi region providesimmense opportunities for travellers to explore the cultural, historic, and natural aspects of numerous exciting destinations. The Heritage Arc is embedded with historical monuments, architectural wonders, pilgrimage centers, spiritual

experiences, and wildlife. The genuine and authentic cultural and natural heritage resources entrenched along the heritage arc provide wonderful experiences to tourists and give glimpses at the past and present celebration of the life of people. (www.uptourism.org)

Agra: Agra is the virtual gateway to the magnificent epoch and the mythological Braj region, the land of Lord Krishna. The golden era of Agra has begun when the Mughal Emperor Babar captured the Agra from Ibrahim Lodi in the battle of Panipat. As a patron of the arts, the emperor Babar transformed the character of Agra, the capital city of the Mughal empire. The emperors Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan bestowed the fabled city with their love and richness to transform the land into one of the great centers of art, culture, learning, religion, and commerce. Agra is an important tourist destination because of its many splendid Mughal-era buildings, most notably the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri. Agra is included on the Golden Triangle tourist circuit, along with Delhi and Jaipur. Taj Mahal is one of the new seven wonders of the world. It epitomizes Indo-Islamic architecture. The important heritage sites are Buland Darwaja and Panch Mahal of Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar Tomb of Sikandra ,Daya Bagh Temple, Tomb of I'timad-ud,Daulah, Chini Ka Rauza and Keetham Lake. Agra hosts many religious and cultural festivals. Janmashtami commemorates the birthday of Lord Krishna. The annual Taj Mahotsav is a 10-day carnival of arts, crafts, and music is organized by Uttar Pradesh tourism to promote the art and craft of the local craftsmen. (www.uptourism.gov.in)

Mathura is one of the most famous places of Hindu mythology, which is known as the birthplace of Lord Krishna. Mathura is situated on the bank of the river Yamuna. It has several Ghats which are popular pilgrimage centers. Agra region is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Uttar Pradesh. In 2018, the number of domestic and international tourists were 764,82,928 and 20,19,336 respectively visited in Agra region in 2018 as compared to 81,49,2229 domestic tourists and 20,50,659 and international tourists in 2019. India Tourism Statistics-at a Glance (2020)

Lucknow: Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. The Lucknow culture is epitomized in the architecture, language, and literature, performing arts, attire, food, folklore, music, and life of its people. The historical and religious monuments depict the Indo-Sahara scenic architecture style. The Nawabs of Lucknow patronized art and culture. It became famous for Urdu poets and literature. Lucknow is the birthplace of the *Lucknow Gharana* of traditional dance form Kathak, which was patronized by the Nawabs of Lucknow during the pre-colonial era. Lucknow had the glorious past of being the hub of unique clothing and handicrafts. It is also famous for Shia Islamic Architecture and the centre of religious studies such as Nadwa College of Islamic Studies and Sanskriti University. The Hanuman temple, Kalibari temple, Chandrika Devi temple and Mankameshwar temple, Deva Sharif, etc. are some of the religious places of Lucknow. Tourism is flourishing in Lucknow. The number of domestic tourists visited in the Lucknow region was 298,94,682 and international tourists were 1,24,3781in 2018 and 2019 the domestic and international tourist inflow were 278,94,322 and 1,09,491 respectively.India Tourism Statistics-at a Glance (2020)

Varanasi: The Varanasi or Banaras, the legendary city is situated on the banks of river Ganga.

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Varanasi became an immortal city due to the convergence of the great city Kashi, river Ganga, and Lord Shiva. Varanasi is the centre of spirituality and intellectual thoughts and beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The Panchaganga Ghat, Dashashwamedh Ghat, Manikarnika Ghat, Kashi Vishwanath temple of Lord Shiva, Sankat Mochan temple of Lord Hanuman, and Durgakund temple of Maa Durga, etc. are some of the important places of pilgrimage. It is also centre of convergence where ancient culture and modern culture which is manifested in learning, religion, philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda, music, literature, and spirituality. It is estimated that there are 80 Ghats in the city of Varanasi where pilgrims make offerings in river Ganga. The Dashashwamedh Ghat is the main Ghat of Varanasi close to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

The Manikarnika Ghat is the primary site for cremation in the city. Around 23,000 temples are spread across the city of Varanasi. The Kashi Vishwanath temple of Lord Shiva, Sankat Mochan temple of Lord Hanuman, and Durgakund temple of Maa Durga are famous temples situated in Varanasi. Sarnath is one of the most revered Buddhist pilgrimage centres in India which is situated in Varanasi. The Deer Park in Sarnath is also the main Buddhist pilgrim destination, where Gautam Buddha first taught Dharma and preached his first sermon. Varanasi is one of the most popular pilgrimage centres of Uttar Pradesh. The total number of both domestic and international tourists visited in the Varanasi region were 192,78,506 and international tourists 7,08,878 in 2018 as compared to domestic tourists of 200,52,629 and international tourists 8,05,472 respectively in 2019. India Tourism Statistics-at a Glance (2020)

Prayagraj: Allahabad or Prayagraj is a unique place of Sangam or confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati, which place mentioned in ancient Hindu scriptures including Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Triveni Sangam or confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati which is a confluence of three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi, where many devotees from all over the world for taking bath to wash away all their sins. Kumbh Mela is considered the largest human congregation on the earth, which is a fascinating amalgam of religion, social communication, recreational elements celebrated for many centuries. The Kumbh Mela, the religious congregation has been recognized by UNESCO as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The term Kumbh Mela is derived from the Sanskrit word Kumbh meaning 'urn' and Mela meaning fair or gathering. It is celebrated at one of the four different locations namely Prayagraj, Nasik, Ujjain, and Haridwar cyclically after every 3 years, Meghna and Sarangi (2019).During the Kumbha Mela, the Varanasi city becomes a human ocean. Prayagraj is also famous for Khusrobagh, Allahabad fort, Asoka pillar, and Jodhabai palace inside the fort. (Ahmed et al. (2019)) ThePrayagraj is the most sought out pilgrimage centre in Uttar Pradesh.The total number of both domestic and international tourists visited in the Prayagraj region were 493,28,004 and international tourists 1,70,338 in 2018 as compared to domestic tourists of 453,64,389 and international tourists 1,32,221 respectively in 2017. (India Tourism Statistics-at a Glance (2020))

Ayodhya: Ayodhya is famous for its great Indian Epic Ramayana associated with Lord Rama, the great Hindu mythology's heroic character. Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Rama. It is the most popular pilgrimage center for Hindus in India. The festival Diwali was originated in the city of Ayodhya on the eve when Lord Rama returned home after in exile for 14 years and defeating Ravana in the battle. The famous Hanuman Garhi temple, built by Nawab of Awadh which described the Ganga-Jamuni culture, the Kanaka Bhavan temple, the Nageshwar Nath temple,

the Mani Parvat which believes that part of the hill on which Hanuman found Sanjeevanibooti are the major tourist destination in Ayodhya. Ayodhya is also important for Jains because it is the birthplace of five Thrithankars. Ahamad et al. (2019)

Diwali is the festival of lightsthat is celebrated to commemorate the homecoming of Lord Rama. People of Ayodhya illuminated the kingdom for welcoming Lord Rama which is reminiscent of the triumph of good over evil. The department of Tourism organizes many cultural events during the Diwali celebrations such as Deepotsav, Ramleea, grand arti, and heritage walk. (www.uptourism.org)The number of domestic tourists visited in the Ayodhya region during 2018 was 302,63,819 and international tourists 2,02,127 as compared to 302,63,819 domestic tourists and 2,02,127 international tourists in 2019. (India Tourism Statistics-at a Glance (2020))

Impacts of Tourism: Though the tourism development in Uttar Pradesh is contributing economically. However, the pressure exerted on the environment, economy, and society cannot be ignored. The adverse environmental impact is more severe, and irreversible damages have already been inflicted onthe ecology of many heritage tourism destinations.Tourism is putting huge pressure on the infrastructure and basic services such as water supply and transportation. It is causing air pollution and water pollution, degradation of agricultural land, depletion of natural resources, and extinction of wildlife. (Yogesh et al. (2019)) Water pollution and land degradation has been happening due to the dumping of large quantities of waste excreted from religious places that have degraded the precious aquatic life and riverine ecosystem and deforestation. (Yogesh et al. (2019)) Open dumping of solid waste such as plastic, food items, garlands of flowers and sand and silt from sweeping streets, etc., at the nearby landfills or in water bodies has been destroying the environment. The biggest challenge during the festival is the construction, maintenance, and dissemble of makeshift shelters on floodplains of rivers. When the congregation is over the banks of rivers are clogged with garbage, mainly flowers and garlands, food, and plastic bottles. The preservation and protection of monuments and other historical and religious structures of importance is also a formidable task, Harsimran et al. (2015). The continuous environmental pollution and water pollution is gradually having turned the grand marble edifice of the iconic Taj Mahal into brownish-yellow. Arnab and Priyakrushna (2018)

The river Ganga has become polluted beyond recuperation as the pollutants are discharged directly from the sewages, industrial units, agriculture activities, religious bathing, cremation,and festivals. before the implementation of the Ganga Action Plan, over 50% of the pollutants are discharged from the state of Uttar Pradesh. More than 50 drains carrying raw sewage to Ganga Yamuna waters directly. The bathing Ghats between river Varuna and Assi in Varanasi have become sewage drains. The large-scale discharge of sewage waste into Ganga and its tributaries has gradually lostits sanctity. Large scale discharge of liquid and solid industrial wastes, human waste, partly burned dead bodies and animal carcasses, chemicals, and fertilizers from agricultural lands result in shortages of dissolved oxygen levels in the water which have been adversely affecting aquatic life. The low water level in the rivers has increased the destruction of fauna and flora, and biodiversity of the river ecosystem. Many species of marine animals and fishes are on the verge of extinction. The World Wildlife Fund has considered Ganga as one of the world's top ten rivers at risk. Tandon (2012)

Transportation infrastructure is another bottleneck that has to be improved. The high road density among the large state makes the tourist transfers convenient. Generally, tourists depend heavily on road and rail transport which are well networked. Similarly, many tourist destinations in the state are lacking the availability of quality accommodations, branded hotels, and restaurants as compared to the general tourism attractiveness of the state. The poor quality of tourism-related infrastructure and services are major hindrances to the development of tourism in the state.

3. Discussion

Heritage Tourism and Government of India: India is bestowed with rich natural and cultural heritage, which attracts millions of tourists from the domestic and international tourism markets. Temples, mosques, churches, palaces, monuments, forts, etc. which are the manifestation of cultural hesitates have abundantly contributed to the growth of tourism in India. The government of India has introduced and implemented several plans and programmes to boost the tourism sector. However, the heritage sites are facing numerous challenges primarily in respect to the creation, operation, and maintenance of heritage resources and infrastructure facilities. A robust mechanism has been developed for providing the basic amenities and advanced amenities at all heritage destinations on a short-term and long-term basis for all heritage tourist destinations. Ministry of Tourism (2020)

The Central government has formulated and introduced various tourism plans and programmes coupled with necessary legal enactments for fulfilling the objective of achieving sustainable heritage tourism development. For creating tourism infrastructure, the ministry of tourism has launched Swadesh Darshan (integrated development of theme-based tourist circuit) and PRASHAD (pilgrimage rejuvenation and spiritual, heritage augmentation drive) schemes for the development of tourism infrastructure in the country including historical places and heritage cities. The Swadesh Darshan Scheme is a theme-based integrated tourist circuit development programme launched in 2014-15. The Government of India envisioned this scheme in collaboration with other government programmes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India, etc. for enabling the tourism industry to materialize its potential by positioning tourism as an engine of economic growth through the creation of employment opportunities and achieving synergy with other sectors. Ministry of Tourism (2020)

Adopt AHeritage, is a project envisioned to synergize with other infrastructure development schemes in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Survey of India, State Governments and other Ministries to ensurethe provision of amenities and facilities across the potential heritage sites for enhancing the overall tourist experience and providing the necessary momentum to the economic development of these regions. The main objectives of this project are developing basic tourism infrastructure facilities and amenities to improve the tourist experiences, promote cultural and heritage values, create awareness about heritage sites, develop and promote sustainable tourism, generate employment opportunities, and support the livelihoods of local communities. (Ministry of Tourism (2020)) the Adopt a Heritage Scheme envisages the transfer of heritage sites for development, construction, and up-gradation of facilities and amenities to private and public sector companies, trusts, individuals and NGOs called "Monument Mitras." (www.adoptaheritage.in)

The Swachhta Action Plan was introduced for introducing the importance of swachhta in the tourism sector, which involves different activities of creating cleanliness awareness among the stakeholders such as tourists, local community, tourism business operators about the need for making the pilgrimage centers, famous archaeological monuments, etc. clean and safe.The ministry of tourism and the Eco-Tourism Society of India (ESOI) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to inform and educate the tourism stakeholders about the importance of Sustainable and Responsible tourism practices. The 'Paryatan Parv' has been celebrated to draw focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing the principle of tourism for all. India Tourism (2020)

Heritage tourism and Uttar Pradesh Government: The Uttar Pradesh government has identified tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and development. The Uttar Pradesh government plays an active role in creating a structure for tourism development by formulating objectives and policies, making budget allocation for tourism development, marketing, and promotion, adopting tourism-related legislation and regulation, and strengthening infrastructure development through public-private partnerships. Tourism policies and programmes are directed to achieve the objectives of economic, environmental, and social sustainability of tourist destinations by balancing the cost and benefits of tourism.

Tourism policy 2018 is a comprehensive document that proposed dynamic approaches and strategic measures to develop Brand Uttar Pradesh as an important preferred tourism destination in both domestic and international tourism markets.Tourism policy establishes six strategies to be pursued for building the brand Uttar Pradesh. These six pillars of tourism development are; strengthening the infrastructure, promoting investment and employment generation, augmenting brand Uttar Pradesh, focusing on religious and spiritual tourism, promoting theme-based tourism, ensuring sustainable tourism through community growth and empowerment, Tourism Policy (2018). Department of Tourism is authorized to implement the tourism policy 2018. Tourism policy 2018 envisioned to achieve the targets such as to become the most preferred destination by 2023, 15% increase in the domestic tourists and 10% increase in the foreign tourists, provide 5,00,000 jobs annually, and Rs. 5,000 crores of investments annually, attain regional connectivity through air, road, and water, and elevate the quality of public services, UP Tourism Policy (2018). The Operational Guidelines (2019) were formulated for guiding the implementation of tourism policy 2018.

Directorate to Tourism, Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Department Corporation (UPSTDC), World Bank Pro-poor project, andBrajTeerth Vikas Parishad are the major institutional system for developing, promoting, and managing tourism resources and tourist destinations. The objective of the BrajTeerth Vikas Parishad is entrusted with the task of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the plans for evaluating harmonious policies for integrated tourism development. It provides guidance and advice to various departments, local governments, and authoritiesaboutthe development of heritage tourism resources in the district of the Mathura or Braj region. Tourism Policy (2018)

The government of Uttar Pradesh has been taking several measures to develop, promote and market brand Uttar Pradesh in both international and domestic tourism markets vigorously through dedicated marketing channels. The meticulously designed heritage walks provide

visitors to watch and experience the rich architectural heritage, living traditions, cultural festivals, folklores, and traditional Indian cuisines, etc. in the living rustic environment. The Mughal Walk, Agra walk, colonial walk, Lucknow heritage walk, Prayagraj heritage walk, Varanasi heritage walk, Sangam walk, Madhav, and Parikrama path are the heritage Walks designed for tourists to experience the historical, religious and architectural heritages under natural settings by walking through the lanes of heritage sites. Agra fort show and Jhansi fort show, the light and sound shows are arranged to entertain and educate the tourists. (www.uptouirsm.gov.in)

The tourism department also made elaborate arrangements for paying guest facilities, homestay accommodations, privileged cards and discounts for visitors in hotels and restaurants, and ticket booking. The tourism department also launched an online portal, mobile apps, and online customer guidance for making booking of tickets, hotels, restaurants, etc. Moreover, the state government has planned and implementing numerous plans and programmes and projects for the development, maintenance, and management of tourism resources. The flagship projects such as the Tajganj project, heritage arc, eco-tourism, theme-based tourism circuits, wildlife tourism, etc. have propelled the tourism development in the state to a higher level.

The tourism industry has developed an integrated approach for creating tourist circuits on specific themes to attract both domestic and international tourists having a special interest in visiting such destinations. Unique and specific themes are developed around the areas such as culture, heritage, wildlife, beaches, etc. as tourism circuits. These tourism circuits are designed to support communities by providing employment and to foster social integration, provide a unique experience to the tourists without compromising the environmental concerns. Ministry of Tourism (2020)

However, the many tourist destinations in the state are lacking the availability of quality accommodations, branded hotels, and restaurants as compared to the general tourism attractiveness of the state. Hence, there is immense scope for investing in the hotels and accommodation sector which can enhance the quality of the hospitality and tourism industry.The government of Uttar Pradesh has undertaken huge investment projects in the tourism sector and infrastructure development. These projects will make the destination more accessible as they are well networked through air, road, and rail. The proximity to Delhi and the established and upcoming airports such as Lucknow, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Hindon, Agra, and Kushinagar are going to attract more tourists. Thus, the low-cost airlines and reduction in the transportation cost will increase the stay and less time will be spent travelling to reach different tourist destinations.

Ganga Action Plan (1986) under the national mission for clean Ganga has implemented pollution abatement from river Ganga. The government implemented the integrated Ganga conservation mission called the NamamiGange Plan (2014) for reducing the pollution of Ganga. (NMCG (2014)) For protecting and preserving both manmade and natural tourism resources and infrastructure for mitigating the negative impacts of tourism and preserving the resources for future generations, the plans and programmes of the government departments, voluntary organisations, the private sector should be systematically integrated. (Yogesh (2019)) All tourist destinations should have appropriate and effective waste disposal management systems, which can resolve the disposal of wastewater and sewage directly into the natural ecosystem.

4. Conclusion

The main objectives of this research paper are to discuss the concept of heritage tourism, to make a profile of heritage tourism destinations that are embedded on the Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc, and to identify the plans and programmes introduced by the Central Government and Uttar Pradesh government. This research paper is purely based on the literature survey research methodology. Heritage tourism is recognised as an important segment of tourism that facilitates inclusive economic growth, revitalizes and rejuvenates the historical monuments from decaying, and preserving the traditional and contemporary values of the traditions. The Heritage Arc, which begins from the Agra region, through the Lucknow region and Varanasi region provides a rare opportunity to travellers explore the cultural, historic, and natural aspects of several exciting destinations. Uttar Pradesh government has identified heritage tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and development and plays an active role in creating a structure for tourism development by formulating tourism plans and programmes, making the budget allocation, marketing and promoting various tourism products, adopting tourism-related legislation, and regulation and strengthening infrastructure development through public-private partnerships.

This research paper has attempted to document the literature available on the various heritage tourism resources and the plans and programmes introduced by the Government of India and the Uttar Pradesh government for promoting heritage tourism. The findings of this research help to understand the potential heritage tourism resources while framing tourism plans. This research paper also helps future researchers by providing basic knowledge about the tourism potentials of the Heritage Arc of Uttar Pradesh. This research paper suggests that the research may be undertaken to evaluate the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability of heritage tourism in the Heritage Arc.

Acknowledgment

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