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**Unit-1**

**Hinduism: Main Teachings and Philosophy**

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**Structure:**

**1.0 Introduction**

**1.1 Objectives**

**1.2 Origin of Hinduism**

**1.3 Sacred Symbols of Hinduism**

**1.4 Holy Books of Hinduism**

**1.5 Gods and Goddesses**

**1.6 Places of Worship**

**1.7 Check Your Progress**

**1.8 Summary**

**1.9 Glossary**

**1.10 Self-Assessment Questions**

**1.11 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**1.0 Introduction:**

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According to many academicians, Hinduism is considered the world's oldest religion, with roots and customs that date back thousands of years. Over 4,000 years. With approximately 900 million followers today, Hinduism is the third-largest religion after Christianity and Islam. Approximately 95 per cent of the world's Hindus reside in India. Tracing its origins and history is complicated because the religion has no specific founder. Hinduism is distinctive because it encompasses a multitude of traditions and philosophies rather than being a singular religion.

**Hinduism Beliefs:**

Some basic Hindu religion concepts include:

- Hinduism encompasses a diverse range of religious ideas and is often referred to as a "way of life" or a "family of religions" rather than a single, organized religion.
- Most Hindu forms are henotheistic, worshipping a single deity, Brahman, while acknowledging and recognising other gods and goddesses. Followers believe there are multiple paths to reaching their god.
- Hindus believe in samsara (the continuous cycle of life, death, and reincarnation) and karma (the universal law of cause and effect).
- A key belief in Hinduism is "atman," or the soul, which holds that all living creatures have a soul and are part of the supreme soul. The goal is to achieve "moksha," or liberation, thereby ending the cycle of rebirth.
- People's actions and thoughts directly determine their current and future lives.
- Hindus strive to achieve dharma, a code of living that emphasises good conduct and moral principles.
- Hindus revere all living creatures and consider the cow sacred.
- Food is an integral part of Hindu life; most Hindus do not eat beef or pork, and many are vegetarians.

- Hinduism is closely related to other Indian religions, including Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism, because these religions have emerged from Hinduism.

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**1.1 Objectives:**

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Some important objectives of the present unit are listed below:

- To know the origin and features of Hinduism
- To understand the royal history of Hinduism

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**1.2 Origin of Hinduism:**

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Most scholars believe Hinduism started between 2300 B.C. and 1500 B.C. in the Indus Valley, near modern-day Pakistan. However, many Hindus argue that their faith is timeless and has existed since ancient times.

Unlike other religions, Hinduism has no founder but is a fusion of various beliefs.

Around 1500 B.C., the Indo-Aryan people migrated to the Indus Valley, and their language and culture blended with that of the indigenous people living in the region. There is some debate over who influenced whom more during this time.

The period during which the Vedas were composed became known as the “Vedic Period” and lasted from approximately 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C. Rituals, such as sacrifices and chanting, were integral to daily life in the Vedic Period.

The Epic, Puranic, and Classical Periods spanned from approximately 500 B.C. to 500 A.D. During this time, Hindus began to emphasize the worship of deities, particularly Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi.

The concept of dharma was introduced in new texts, and other faiths, such as Buddhism and Jainism, spread rapidly.

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**1.3 Sacred Symbols of Hinduism:**

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Two primary symbols associated with Hinduism are the om and the swastika. The word swastika means "good fortune" or "being happy" in Sanskrit, and the

symbol represents good luck. (A diagonal version of the swastika later became associated with Germany's Nazi Party when they made it their symbol in 1920.) The Om symbol is composed of three Sanskrit letters and represents three sounds (a, u and m), which are considered sacred sounds when combined. The Om symbol is commonly seen at family shrines and in Hindu temples.

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#### **1.4 Holy Books of Hinduism:**

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Hindus value many sacred writings as opposed to one holy book. The primary sacred texts, the Vedas, were composed around 1500 B.C. This collection of verses and hymns was written in Sanskrit and contains revelations received by ancient saints and sages.

The Vedas are made up of:

- The Rig Veda
- The Samaveda
- Yajurveda
- Atharvaveda

Hindus believe that the Vedas are timeless and have no beginning or end.

The Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the 18 Puranas, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata are essential texts in Hinduism.

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#### **1.5 Gods and Goddesses:**

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Hindus worship many gods and goddesses besides Brahman, who is believed to be the supreme God force present in all things.

Some of the most prominent deities include:

- **Brahma:** The god responsible for the creation of the world and all living things
- **Vishnu:** The god who preserves and protects the universe
- **Shiva:** The god who destroys the universe to recreate it
- **Devi:** The goddess who fights to restore dharma
- **Krishna:** The god of compassion, tenderness and love
- **Lakshmi:** The goddess of wealth and purity
- **Saraswati:** The goddess of learning

**1.6 Places of Worship:**

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Hindu worship, known as “puja,” typically occurs in the Mandir (temple).

Followers of Hinduism are welcome to visit the Mandir at any time.

Hindus can also worship at home; many have a shrine dedicated to specific gods and goddesses.

The giving of offerings is an integral part of Hindu worship. It is a common practice to present gifts, such as flowers or oils, to a god or goddess.

Additionally, many Hindus take pilgrimages to temples and other sacred sites in India.

**Sects of Hinduism:**

Hinduism has several sects, which are mentioned below:

- Shaivism (followers of Shiva)
- Vaishnava (followers of Vishnu)
- Shaktism (followers of Devi)
- Smarta (followers of Brahman and all major deities)

Some Hindus venerate the Hindu trinity, which comprises Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Others believe that all the deities are a manifestation of one.

**1.7 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss in detail the glorious past of Hinduism:**

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- **How does the Hindu religion differ from other religions of the World?**

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**1.8 Summary:**

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Thus, based on the above-detailed study, it can be concluded that Hinduism is the great religion of the world that originated in the Indian subcontinent and comprises several varied systems of philosophy, belief and ritual. Although the name Hinduism is relatively new and was coined by British writers in the first decades of the 19th century, it refers to a rich cumulative tradition of texts and practices, some of which date to the 2nd millennium BCE or possibly earlier.

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**1.9 Glossary:**

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- **Hindu:** A person who follows Hinduism religion is known as a Hindu
- **Ritual:** According to Cambridge University, a ritual is a set of fixed actions and sometimes words performed regularly, especially as part of a ceremony.

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**1.10 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Examine the holy books of Hinduism.
- Write an essay on important religious tourist attractions associated with Hinduism.

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**1.11 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hinduism>
- [https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialsciences/ppecorino/phil\\_of\\_religion\\_text/chapter\\_2\\_religions/hinduism.htm](https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialsciences/ppecorino/phil_of_religion_text/chapter_2_religions/hinduism.htm)
- <https://www.commisceo-global.com/blog/a-brief-introduction-to-hinduism>
- <https://www.hinduismtoday.com/>

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**Unit 2**

**Buddhism: Main Teachings and Philosophy**

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**Structure:**

- 2.0 Introduction**
- 2.1 Objectives**
- 2.2 History of Buddhism**
- 2.3 Buddhism: Basic Belief**
- 2.4 Founder of Buddhism**
- 2.5 Different Forms of Buddhism**
- 2.6 Dharma**
- 2.7 Four Noble Truths**
- 2.8 Eightfold Path**
- 2.9 Buddhist Holy Book**
- 2.10 Check Your Progress**
- 2.11 Summary**
- 2.12 Glossary**
- 2.13 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 2.14 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**2.0 Introduction:**

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Buddhism is a faith that was founded by Siddhartha Gautama ("the Buddha") more than 2,500 years ago in India. With approximately 470 million followers worldwide, scholars consider Buddhism one of the world's major religions. It is primarily practised in East and Southeast Asia, but its influence is also expanding in the West. Many Buddhist ideas and philosophies overlap with those of other faiths.

**2.1 Objectives:**

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The following are the primary objectives of the present unit:

- To know the historical features of Buddhism
- To learn the different forms of Buddhism

**2.2 History of Buddhism:**

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According to some scholars, Buddha was born in the 6th century B.C., or possibly as early as 624 B.C. Other researchers believe he was born later, even as late as 448 B.C. Moreover, some Buddhists believe Gautama Buddha lived from 563 B.C. to 483 B.C.

However, virtually all scholars believe that Siddhartha Gautama was born in Lumbini, in present-day Nepal. He belonged to a large clan called the Shakyas. Siddhartha ("he who achieves his aim") Gautama grew up the son of a ruler of the Shakya clan. His mother died seven days after giving birth.

A holy man, however, prophesied great things for the young Siddhartha: He would either be a great king or, a great military leader or a great spiritual leader.

To protect his son from the miseries and suffering of the world, Siddhartha's father raised him in opulence in a palace built just for the boy, sheltering him from knowledge of religion, human hardship, and the outside world.

According to legend, he married at the age of 16 and had a son soon thereafter, but Siddhartha's life of worldly seclusion continued for another 13 years.



When Gautama passed away around 483 B.C., his followers began to organize a religious movement. Buddha's teachings became the foundation for what would develop into Buddhism.

In the 3rd century B.C., Ashoka the Great, the Mauryan emperor of India, made Buddhism the state religion of India. Buddhist monasteries were built, and missionary work was encouraged.

Over the next few centuries, Buddhism began to spread beyond India. The thoughts and philosophies of Buddhists became diverse, with some followers interpreting ideas differently than others.

In the sixth century, the Huns invaded India and destroyed hundreds of Buddhist monasteries, but the intruders were eventually driven out of the country.

Islam began to spread quickly in the region during the Middle Ages, forcing Buddhism into the background.

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### **2.3 Buddhism: Basic Beliefs:**

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Some key Buddhist beliefs include:

- Followers of Buddhism do not acknowledge a supreme god or deity. They instead focus on achieving enlightenment – a state of inner peace and wisdom. When followers reach this spiritual echelon, they are said to have experienced nirvana.
- The religion's founder, Buddha, is considered an extraordinary man but not a god. The word Buddha means "enlightened."
- The path to enlightenment is attained by utilizing morality, meditation and wisdom. Buddhists often meditate because they believe it helps them awaken to the truth.
- Buddhism encompasses a diverse range of philosophies and interpretations, rendering it a tolerant and dynamic religion.
- Some scholars do not recognise Buddhism as an organised religion but rather as a "way of life" or a "spiritual tradition."

- Buddhism encourages its followers to avoid both self-indulgence and self-denial.
- The Buddha's most important teachings, including the Four Noble Truths, are considered essential to understanding this religion.
- Buddhists embrace the concepts of karma (the law of cause and effect) and reincarnation (the continuous cycle of rebirth).
- Followers of Buddhism can worship in temples or at home.
- Buddhist monks, or bhikkhus, follow a strict code of conduct, which includes celibacy.
- There is no single Buddhist symbol, but several images have evolved that represent Buddhist beliefs, including the lotus flower, the eight-spoked dharma wheel, the Bodhi tree and the swastika (an ancient symbol whose name means "well-being" or "good fortune" in Sanskrit).

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**2.4 Founder of Buddhism:**

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Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of the Buddhist religion, who later became known as "the Buddha," is believed to have lived during the 5th century B.C. Gautama was born into a wealthy family as a prince in present-day Nepal. Although he had an easy life, Gautama was moved by suffering in the world. He decided to give up his lavish lifestyle and endure poverty. When this did not fulfil him, he promoted the idea of the "Middle Way," which means existing between two extremes. Thus, he sought life without social indulgences but also without deprivation.

After six years of searching, Buddhists believe Gautama found enlightenment while meditating under a Bodhi tree. He spent the rest of his life teaching others about how to achieve this spiritual state.

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**2.5 Different Schools of Buddhism:**

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Today, numerous schools of Buddhism exist worldwide. The three primary schools that represent specific geographical areas include:

- **Theravada Buddhism:** Prevalent in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and Burma
- **Mahayana Buddhism:** Prevalent in China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and Vietnam
- **Tibetan Buddhism:** Prevalent in Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, Bhutan, and parts of Russia and northern India

Each of these schools reveres specific texts and has slightly different interpretations of Buddha's teachings. There are also several subsets of Buddhism, including Zen Buddhism and Nirvana Buddhism.

Some schools of Buddhism incorporate ideas from other religions and philosophies, such as Taoism and Bon.

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## **2.6 Dharma:**

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Buddha's teachings are known as "dharma." He taught that wisdom, kindness, patience, generosity and compassion were important virtues.

Specifically, all Buddhists live by five moral precepts, which prohibit:

- Killing living things
- Taking what is not given
- Sexual misconduct
- Lying
- Using drugs or alcohol

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## **2.7 Four Noble Truths:**

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The Four Noble Truths, which Buddha taught, are:

- The truth of suffering (dukkha)
- The truth of the cause of suffering (samudaya)
- The truth of the end of suffering (nirhodha)
- The truth of the path that frees us from suffering (magga)

Collectively, these principles explain why humans hurt and how to overcome suffering.

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## **2.8 Eightfold Path:**

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The Buddha taught his followers that the end of suffering, as described in the fourth Noble Truth, could be achieved by following an Eightfold Path.

In no particular order, the Eightfold Path of Buddhism teaches the following ideals for ethical conduct, mental discipline and achieving wisdom:

- Right understanding (Samma ditthi)
- Right thought (Samma sankappa)
- Right speech (Samma vaca)
- Right action (Samma kammanta)
- Right livelihood (Samma ajiva)
- Right effort (Samma vayama)
- Right mindfulness (Samma sati)
- Right concentration (Samma samadhi)

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## 2.9 Buddhist Holy Books:

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Buddhists revere many sacred texts and scriptures. Some of the most important are:

- **Tipitaka:** These texts, known as the “three baskets,” are thought to be the earliest collection of Buddhist writings.
- **Sutras:** There are more than 2,000 sutras, which are sacred teachings embraced mainly by Mahayana Buddhists.
- **The Book of the Dead:** This Tibetan text provides a detailed description of the stages of death.

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## 2.10 Check Your Progress:

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- **Write a detailed note on the founder of Buddhism.**

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- **How does Buddhism differs from other religions of the World?**

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### **2.11 Summary:**

Buddhism emerged in India, but its founder was born in Nepal. Buddhism is considered one of the most peaceful religions in the World. At present, its followers belong to different nations around the World, but most believers are associated with East and South-Eastern countries. Millions of people follow the teachings of Lord Buddha in order to find peace in their weary minds. Tourists visit different pilgrimage centres for meditation.

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### **2.10 Glossary:**

- **Meditation:** It is an effort to give full attention to an object, person, or incident.
- **Buddhist:** A person who follows Buddhism is known as a Buddhist.

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### **2.11 Self-Assessment Questions:**

- Write a short note on different forms of Buddhism.
- Write an essay on the historical features of Buddhism.

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### **2.12 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/buddhism#:~:text=Buddhism%20is%20a%20faith%20that,of%20the%20major%20world%20religions>.
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism>
- <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/buddhism>
- <https://asiasociety.org/education/origins-buddhism>

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**Unit-3**  
**Sikhism: Main Teachings and Philosophy**

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**Structure:**

**3.0 Introduction**

**3.1 Objectives**

**3.2 History of Sikhism**

**3.3 Ten Gurus of Sikhism**

**3.4 Festivals and Other Events of Sikhism**

**3.5 Ceremonies and Customs**

**3.6 Check Your Progress**

**3.7 Summary**

**3.8 Glossary**

**3.9 Self-Assessment Questions**

**3.10 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**3.0 Introduction:**

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Sikhism was founded in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent in the late 15th century by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first among the ten Sikh Gurus. Its followers are known as Sikhs. The Sikhs call their faith Gurmat. According to Sikh tradition, Sikhism was established by Guru Nanak Ji (1469–1539) and subsequently led by a succession of nine other Gurus. According to Sikhism, all 10 human Gurus were inhabited by a single spirit. Upon the death of the 10th, Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), the spirit of the eternal Guru transferred itself to the sacred scripture of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib, also known as the Adi Granth, which thereafter was regarded as the sole Guru. Today, the Sikh population is estimated to be approximately 30 million worldwide, with the majority residing in the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana. You will rarely find any country with no Sikh population residing or working there.

**3.1 Objectives:**

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After reading the present unit, the learners will be able to:

- Understand the glorious past of Sikhism
- Know the important rituals and customs of Sikhism

**3.2 History of Sikhism:**

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Sikh in Punjabi means “learner,” and those who joined the Sikh community, or Panth (“Path”), were people who sought spiritual guidance. Sikhs claim that their tradition has always been separate from Hinduism. Nevertheless, many Western scholars argue that in its earliest stage, Sikhism was a movement within the Hindu tradition; Nanak, they point out, was raised a Hindu and eventually belonged to the Sant tradition of northern India, a movement associated with the great poet and mystic Kabir (1440–1518). The Sants, most of whom were poor, dispossessed, and illiterate, composed hymns of great beauty expressing their experience of the divine, which they saw in all things. Their tradition drew heavily on the Vaishnava bhakti (the devotional movement



within the Hindu tradition that worships the god Vishnu), though there were important differences between the two. Like the followers of bhakti, the Sants believed that devotion to God is essential to liberation from the cycle of rebirth in which all human beings are trapped; unlike the followers of bhakti, however, the Sants maintained that God is nirgun ("without form") and not sagun ("with form"). For the Sants, God can be neither incarnated nor represented in concrete terms.

Certain lesser influences also operated on the Sant movement. Chief among them was the Nath tradition, which comprised a cluster of sects, all claiming descent from the semi-legendary teacher Gorakhnath and all promoting Hatha Yoga as the means of spiritual liberation. Although the Sants rejected the physical aspects of Hatha Yoga in favour of meditation techniques, they accepted the Nath's concept of spiritual ascent to ultimate bliss. Some scholars have argued that the Sants were influenced by Islam through their contact with the Mughal rulers of India from the early 16th century, but there is little indication of this, though Sufism (Islamic mysticism) may have had a marginal effect.

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### **3.3 Ten Gurus of Sikhism:**

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Details on ten Sikh Gurus are mentioned below:

#### **1. Guru Nanak (1469 - 1539):**

Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and was the first human guru. He was born in 1469 in a place that is now called Nankana Sahib in Pakistan.

He did not claim to be Hindu or Muslim, but as someone who believed in God and truth. He also preached to people that Hindus, Muslims and all people who believe in God are equal.

Guru Nanak travelled all over India and the Middle East speaking out against religious rituals, pilgrimages and the caste system. The caste system was how society was divided into different groups based on wealth or what people did as a job. He spoke to many different people, from Muslims and Hindus to

Buddhists and Jains. When he spoke to people he never asked them to follow him, instead, he told them to remain true to their faiths and to carry on believing in their God.

**2. Guru Angad (1539 - 1552):**

Guru Angad was born in 1504. He created the Gurmukhi, which is the written form of the language Punjabi and taught this to many Sikhs throughout his life. Soon, this became very well-known among people.

A firm believer in education, Guru Angad founded many schools for children and helped to improve people's ability to read and write. He also began the tradition of Mall Akhara - which was a form of physical and spiritual exercise.

**3. Guru Amar Das (1552 - 1574):**

Guru Amar Das was born in 1479 and also fought against caste prejudice. He wanted everyone in society to be equal and did not think it mattered if someone was rich or poor.

He also built on Guru Nanak's idea of the 'free kitchen' which was an idea that said that all followers should eat together in the same place, no matter how rich or poor they are or where they come from. Guru Amar Das was quite successful at this and managed to create more equality for people.

He also introduced Anand Karaj - which was a special kind of marriage ceremony and created some new customs that meant women had more independence and equality.

**4. Guru Ram Das (1574 - 1581):**

Guru Ram Das was born in 1534. He founded the city of Amritsar in northwest India, which is now the holy city for the Sikhs and also started construction of the Golden Temple. This is a very important temple for Sikhs, and still stands today! It is open for anyone to visit - every day of the year. It even stayed open during the Coronavirus pandemic.

**5. Guru Arjan (1581 - 1606):**

Guru Arjan was born in 1563. A great scholar, Guru Arjan compiled the scriptures of the Sikhs, known as the Adi Granth. He tried to teach as many

people the scriptures as possible, so included them in hymns about Muslim saints too.

He also finished the construction of the Golden Temple in Amritsar that Guru Ram Das has started. They constructed it with four doors facing in four opposite directions, to show that they welcomed people into the temple from anywhere and from any background.

Guru Arjan was ordered to be executed by the Emperor. This was because the Emperor was Muslim, and believed that Guru Arjan shouldn't include Islamic references in the Sikh holy book.

#### **6. Guru Hargobind (1606 - 1644):**

Guru Hargobind was born in 1595 and was the son of Guru Arjan. Known as the 'soldier saint', Guru Hargobind was the first guru to teach people that sometimes it was necessary to take up arms and go to war to defend the faith. This was because he believed that no violence could encourage other evils to come about. He also believed that this was a way that people could protect the weak and needy, so he organised a small army.

#### **7. Guru Har Rai (1644 - 1661):**

Guru Har Rai was born in 1630 and was a very peaceful leader. He devoted himself to spreading the teachings of Guru Nanak and taking on missionary work. This means that he travelled around spreading the messages of the Sikh faith. He also meditated a lot and encouraged people to do the same.

Although he was a very peaceful man, he didn't abolish the army that his grandfather - Guru Hargobind - had created. Instead, he distanced himself from it physically and never used it himself to solve conflicts with the Empire.

#### **8. Guru Har Krishan (1661 - 1664):**

Born in 1656, Guru Har Krishan was installed as a guru at the very young age of five! He was the youngest of all the gurus.

Guru Har Krishan was a humanitarian, which meant that his main aims were to help people. Throughout his short life, he mainly helped heal people in Delhi

who were suffering from a smallpox epidemic. He helped many people, no matter where they came from or what their religion was.

Sadly, Guru Har Krishan gave his life helping people, as he soon contracted smallpox himself and died before he turned eight.

#### **9. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1665 - 1675):**

Guru Tegh Bahadur was born in Amritsar in 1621.

Guru Tegh Bahadur believed strongly that people should be allowed and have the freedom to worship whatever religion they wanted. For this reason, he defended the Hindu religion to try and protect Hindus from being forced to convert to Islam. He also refused to convert to Islam and was executed and martyred as a result.

#### **10. Guru Gobind Singh (1675 - 1708):**

Guru Gobind Singh was the last of the human gurus. He was born in 1666 and was the son of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

He introduced the Khalsa, or 'pure ones' and the 'five Ks'. Just before he died in 1708, he proclaimed Guru Granth Sahib - the Sikh scripture - as the future guru.

This is why the Guru Granth Sahib means so much to people of the Sikh faith. They see it as more than a holy book, but as another guide that they respect in the same way, and a teacher showing them how to live their lives fully. Guru Granth Sahib is often classed as the 11th Sikh Guru.

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### **3.4 Festivals and other Events of Sikhism:**

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Guru Amar Das chose festivals for the celebration by Sikhs like Vaisakhi, wherein he asked Sikhs to assemble and share the festivities as a community.

Vaisakhi is one of the most important festivals of Sikhs, while other significant festivals commemorate the birth, and lives of the Gurus and Sikh martyrs. Historically, these festivals have been based on the moon calendar Bikrami calendar. In 2003, the SGPC, the Sikh organisation in charge of the upkeep of the historical gurdwaras of Punjab, adopted the Nanakshahi calendar. The new

calendar is highly controversial among Sikhs and is not universally accepted.

Sikh festivals include the following:

- **Vaisakhi** which includes Parades and Nagar Kirtan and occurs on 13 April or 14 April. Sikhs celebrate it because on this day, which fell on 30 March 1699, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, inaugurated the Khalsa, the 11th body of Guru Granth Sahib and leader of Sikhs until eternity.
- **Nagar Kirtan** involves the processional singing of holy hymns throughout a community. While practised at any time, it is customary in the month of Visakhi (or Vaisakhi). Traditionally, the procession is led by the saffron-robed Panj Piare (the five beloved of the Guru), who are followed by the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture, which is placed on a float.

Nagar Kirtan crowd listening to Kirtan at Yuba City, California.

- **Band Chor Diwas** has been another important Sikh festival in its history. In recent years, instead of Diwali, the post-2003 calendar released by SGPC has named it the Bandi Chhor divas. Sikhs celebrate Guru Hargobind's release from the Gwalior Fort, with several innocent Raja kings who were also imprisoned by Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1619. This day continues to be commemorated on the same day as the Hindu festival of Diwali, with lights, fireworks and festivities.
- **Hola Mohalla** is a tradition started by Guru Gobind Singh. It starts the day after Sikhs celebrate Holi, sometimes referred to as Hola. Guru Gobind Singh modified Holi with a three-day Hola Mohalla extension festival of martial arts. The extension started the day after the Holi festival in Anandpur Sahib, where Sikh soldiers would train in mock battles, and compete in horsemanship, athletics, archery and military exercises.
- **Gurpurbs** are celebrations or commemorations based on the lives of the Sikh Gurus. They tend to be either birthdays or celebrations of Sikh martyrdom. All ten Gurus have Gurpurbs on the Nanakshahi calendar, but it is Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh who have a Gurpurb that is widely celebrated in Gurdwaras and Sikh homes. The martyrdoms are also known as Shaheedi

Gurpurbs, which mark the martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

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**3.5 Ceremonies and customs:**

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Khalsa Sikhs have also supported and helped develop major pilgrimage traditions to sacred sites such as Harmandir Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Patna Sahib, Hazur Nanded Sahib, Hemkund Sahib and others. Sikh pilgrims and Sikhs of other sects customarily consider these as holy and a part of their Tirath. The Hola Mohalla around the festival of Holi, for example, is a ceremonial and customary gathering every year in Anandpur Sahib attracting over 100,000 Sikhs. Major Sikh temples feature a sarovar where some Sikhs take a customary dip. Some take home the sacred water of the tank particularly for sick friends and relatives, believing that the waters of such sacred sites have restorative powers and the ability to purify one's karma. The various Gurus of Sikhism have had different approaches to pilgrimage.

Upon a child's birth, the Guru Granth Sahib is opened at a random point and the child is named using the first letter on the top left-hand corner of the left page. All boys are given the last name Singh, and all girls are given the last name Kaur (this was once a title which was conferred on an individual upon joining the Khalsa).

The Sikh marriage ritual comprises the anand kāraj ceremony. The marriage ceremony is executed in front of the Guru Granth Sahib by a baptized Khalsa, Granthi of the Gurdwara. The tradition of circling the Guru Granth Sahib and Anand Karaj among Khalsa is practised since the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das. Its official recognition and adoption came in the year 1909, during the Singh Sabha Movement.

Upon death, the body of a Sikh is usually cremated. If this is not possible, any respectful means of disposing of the body may be employed. The kīrtan sōhilā and ardās prayers are performed during the funeral ceremony.

**3.6 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Highlight the important festivals of Sikhism:**

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- **Write a detailed note on the first Guru of Sikhism:**

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**3.7 Summary:**

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Thus, based on the above-detailed discussion, now, it can be said that Sikhism was founded in the 15th century AD by Guru Nanak and after that nine more Gurus hold the command of this religion finally, after the death of the last Guru named Guru Gobind Singh, followers started to worship only Guru Granth Sahib. Some important festivals of this great religion are Vaisakhi, Hola Mohalla, Gurupurbs etc.

**3.8 Glossary:**

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- **Sikh:** A person, who follows Sikhism that developed from Hinduism but teaches that there is only one God.

- **Guru Granth Sahib:** The holy scripture of Sikhism which Sikhs regard as the final Guru after 10 human Gurus.

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**3.9 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Discuss the contribution of Sikhism in the glorious past of India
- How Sikhism differs from any other religion of the World?

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**3.10 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://www.twinkl.co.in/homework-help/religion-homework-help/sikhism/sikh-history-who-are-the-10-sikh-gurus>
- [https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialsciences/ppecorino/phil\\_of\\_religion\\_text/chapter\\_2\\_religions/Sikhism.htm#:~:text=Sikhs%2C%20followers%20of%20the%20Sikh,that%20God%20transcends%20religious%20distinctions.](https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/socialsciences/ppecorino/phil_of_religion_text/chapter_2_religions/Sikhism.htm#:~:text=Sikhs%2C%20followers%20of%20the%20Sikh,that%20God%20transcends%20religious%20distinctions.)
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sikhism>
- <https://www.sikhs.org/summary.htm>



**Unit-4**

**Islam & Jainism: Main Teachings and Philosophy**

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**Structure:**

- 4.0 Introduction**
- 4.1 Objectives**
- 4.2 Islam: About and History**
- 4.3 Sects of Islam**
- 4.4 Festivals of Islam**
- 4.5 Jainism: About and History**
- 4.6 Sects of Jainism**
- 4.7 Festivals of Jainism**
- 4.8 Check Your Progress**
- 4.9 Summary**
- 4.10 Glossary**
- 4.11 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 4.12 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**4.0 Introduction:**

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Islam is the second most populous religion in the World. It has 1.9 billion followers and they live in 51 countries of the World with the majority. The primary scriptures of the holy book of this religion are Quran. Muslims believe that Quran which is written in Arabic is unaltered and the final revelation of God. The three most sacred places for the followers of this great religion are Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. It is believed that Islam originated in the early 7th century CE in the Arabian Peninsula in Mecca. The golden period of Islam is considered from the 8th century to the 13th century. Muslims are divided into two broad categories Sunni (85-90%) and Shia (10-15%). Indonesia houses the World's 12% Muslim population and the largest percentage of Muslims live in the Asian continent.

Jainism was emerged in India and considered one of the world's oldest religions. This religion believes in love and humanity. According to the Indian census report, in 2011 India is the home of around 4 million Jains. Jainism had a total of 24 Tirthankars and Rishabhanath was the first Tirthankar and the 24th was Mahavir. Jains follow the ahimsa (non-violence). It is categorized into two parts: Svetambaras and Digambaras.

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**4.1 Objectives:**

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After reading this unit, the learners will be able to:

- Understand the history and culture of Jainism
- Identify the glorious past and present of Islam

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**4.2 Islam: About and History:**

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Islam is a monotheistic faith centred on belief in the one God (Allah). In this regard, it shares some beliefs with Judaism and Christianity by tracing its history back to the patriarch Abraham, and ultimately to the first prophet, Adam. All the prophets preached the same universal message of belief in one God and kindness to humanity. The last in the series of prophets, according to

Muslims, was Muhammad. Muhammad was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia around 570 CE. He worked first as a shepherd and then as a merchant. He was not happy with the people around him because of superstitions and social and economic injustice. The people were worshipping many gods and had forgotten the message of Prophet Abraham to worship one God. Muhammad loved to pray and meditate in the mountains. On one of those occasions, in the year 610 CE, when he was about 40 years old, he received a revelation from God through the angel Jibril (Gabriel). He continued to receive messages from God throughout his life and he began preaching to others what he had learned. His main message is that there was no other God but Allah and that people should lead their lives in a way that was pleasing to Allah.

Islam spread quickly first throughout Arabia and surrounding countries and then throughout the world. There are 1.2 billion Muslims in the world with 7 million in the United States. Only about 18% of Muslims are Arabs and live in the Middle East. The countries with the largest Muslim populations are Indonesia and India. There are two basic groups of Islam: the Sunnis (about 80% of the world's Muslims) and the Shi'ites (about 20% of the world's Muslims). Although they share the same basic beliefs, they disagree on who was the rightful leader of Islam after Muhammad's death. Salient characteristics of Islam are given below:

- Muslims believe that Islam was revealed over 1400 years ago in Mecca, Arabia.
- Followers of Islam are called Muslims.
- Muslims believe that there is only One God.
- The Arabic word for God is Allah.
- According to Muslims, God sent several prophets to mankind to teach them how to live according to His law.
- Jesus, Moses and Abraham are respected as prophets of God.
- They believe that the final Prophet was Muhammad.
- Muslims believe that Islam has always existed, but for practical purposes, date their religion from the time of the migration of Muhammad.

- Muslims base their laws on their holy book the Qur'an, and the Sunnah.
- Muslims believe the Sunnah is the practical example of Prophet Muhammad and that there are five basic Pillars of Islam.
- These pillars are the declaration of faith, praying five times a day, giving money to charity, fasting and a pilgrimage to Mecca (at least once).

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**4.3 Sects of Islam:**

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Members of the two sects: Sunnis and Shia have co-existed for centuries and share many fundamental beliefs and practices. But they differ in doctrine, ritual, law, theology and religious organisation. Their leaders also often seem to compete. From Lebanon and Syria to Iraq and Pakistan, many recent conflicts have emphasised the sectarian divide, tearing communities apart.

**Who are the Sunnis?**

The great majority of the world's more than 1.5 billion Muslims are Sunnis - estimates suggest the figure is somewhere between 85% and 90%. In the Middle East, Sunnis make up 90% or more of the populations of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Sunnis regard themselves as the orthodox branch of Islam. The name "Sunni" is derived from the phrase "Ahl al-Sunnah", or "People of the Tradition". The tradition in this case refers to practices based on what the Prophet Muhammad said, did, agreed to or condemned.

All Muslims are guided by the Sunnah, but Sunnis stress its primacy. Shia is also guided by the wisdom of Muhammad's descendants through his son-in-law and cousin, Ali.

Sunni life is guided by four schools of legal thought, each of which strives to develop practical applications of the Sunnah.

**Who are the Shia?**

Shia constitute about 10% of all Muslims, and globally their population is estimated at between 154 and 200 million. Shia Muslims are in the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Azerbaijan and, according to some estimates, Yemen. There

are also large Shia communities in Afghanistan, India, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

In early Islamic history, the Shia were a movement - literally "Shiat Ali" or the "Party of Ali". They claimed that Ali was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad as the leader (imam) of the Muslim community following his death in 632.

Ali was assassinated in 661 after a five-year caliphate that was marred by civil war. His sons, Hassan and Hussein, were denied what they thought was their legitimate right of accession to the caliphate.

Hassan is believed to have been poisoned in 680 by Muawiyah, the first caliph of the Sunni Umayyad dynasty, while Hussein was killed on the battlefield by the Umayyads in 681. These events gave rise to the Shia concept of martyrdom and the rituals of grieving.

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#### **4.4 Festivals of Islam:**

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The important festivals celebrated by Muslims are given below:

- **Ramadan / Eid-ul-Fitr:**

Ramadan is the Islamic month of fasting, during which Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and having sex during daylight hours. Ramadan is intended to teach Muslims about patience, spirituality, humility and submissiveness to God. Muslims fast as a tribute to God and offer more prayer than usual. Compared to the solar calendar, the dates of Ramadan vary, moving backwards by about eleven days each year depending on the moon. Thus, fascinatingly, a person will have fasted every day of the Gregorian calendar year for 34 years. Muslims believe Ramadan to be an auspicious month as it is believed to be the month in which the first verses of the Quran were revealed to the Islamic prophet, Muhammad. During the Ramadan month, the evenings are filled with feasting and festivities. The roads in Muslim localities get lined with vendors of eatables of all kinds and the feasting continues late into the night with entire families coming out to partake in the festivities.

Eid marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. "Eid" means "festivity" while Fitr means "breaking the fast". Eid celebrates the conclusion of the 29 or 30 days of dawn-to-sunset fasting during the entire month of Ramadan. On Eid, Muslims wish each other Eid Mubarak, wear their best clothes and perfumes, eat some sweet food, and then rush off to offer prayers.

- **Muharram:**

Muharram is a month-long mourning on the death anniversary of Imam Hussain, the son of Ali and grandson of the prophet of Islam. He died fighting at Karbala against Yazid, the son of the usurper Moavia to the khalifas of Islam. The first ten days are observed as days of lamentation by the Muslims in general and the Shias in particular. Tazia processions are observed. The festival of Muharram was observed throughout the period up to Mughal rule.

- **Id-i Milad:**

Idi-Miland, or the feast of the prophets, the nativity is celebrated on the 11th of Rabi-ul-Awwal with great solemnity. On this occasion, special lectures were arranged in which the chief incidents of the Prophet's life were narrated.

Quran was recited amongst the large gatherings. While the recitation of the Quran was going on rose water was profusely sprinkled and sweets and halwa were distributed among the people. It is said that Shah lahan observed this festival with great solemnity and took a seat on the carpet after leaving his throne.

He also distributed charity liberally. It is recorded that on one occasion Shah Jahan gave twelve thousand rupees as charity.

- **Id-ul-Zuha:**

Id-ul-Zuha or Bakr-Id was celebrated on the 10th day of Zu-i-Hijja. On this occasion, people sacrificed a quadruped such as a goat, sheep or even cow as a commemoration of the ram which "redeemed Islam when his father Abraham was ready to make him a sacrifice". This festival was celebrated in the pre-

Mughal period too, but under the Mughals, it began to be observed with great pomp and show.

The emperors took a keen interest in the celebration of this festival. There are instances on record when the emperors themselves went to the Idgah and sacrificed quadrupeds. Jahangir is recorded to have sacrificed three goats with his own hands at this festival. The well-to-do people arranged the ceremony at their homes and offered Fatiha in the name of their deceased relatives.

- **Shab-i-Barat:**

The festival of Shab-i-Barat is celebrated on the 14th of Shabban. It is believed that on this day the Prophet ascended to heaven. It is a common belief that on this night, the lives and fortunes of mortals for the coming year are registered in heaven.

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#### **4.5 Jainism: About and History:**

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Jainism is an ancient religion from India that teaches the way to liberation and bliss is to live lives of harmlessness and renunciation. The essence of Jainism is a concern for the welfare of every being in the universe and for the health of the universe itself. Jains believe that animals and plants, as well as human beings, contain living souls. Each of these souls is considered of equal value and should be treated with respect and compassion. Jains are strict vegetarians and live in a way that minimises their use of the world's resources. Jains believe in reincarnation and seek to attain ultimate liberation - which means escaping the continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth so that the immortal soul lives forever in a state of bliss. Liberation is achieved by eliminating all karma from the soul. Jainism is a religion of self-help. There are no gods or spiritual beings that will help human beings. The three guiding principles of Jainism, the 'three jewels', are right belief, right knowledge and right conduct. The supreme principle of Jain living is non-violence (ahimsa). This is one of the 5 mahavratas (the 5 great vows). The other mahavratas are non-attachment to possessions, not lying, not stealing, and sexual restraint (with celibacy as the ideal).

Mahavira is regarded as the man who gave Jainism its present-day form. The texts containing the teachings of Mahavira are called the Agamas. Jains are divided into two major sects; the Digambara (meaning "sky-clad") sect and the Svetambara (meaning "white-clad") sect. Jainism has no priests. Its professional religious people are monks and nuns, who lead strict and ascetic lives. Most Jains live in India, and according to the 2001 Census of India, there are around 4.2 million living there. However, the Oxford Handbook of Global Religions, published in 2006, suggests that census figures may provide lower than the true number of followers as many Jains identify themselves as Hindu. The Handbook also states that there are around 25,000 Jains in Britain.

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**4.6 Sects of Jainism:**

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Jains are divided into two major sects; the Digambara (meaning sky-clad) sect and the Svetambara (meaning white-clad) sect. Each of these sects is also divided into subgroups. Both agree on the fundamental Jain principles and the five vows in Jainism. However, both have different views when it comes to scriptures, liberation, dress, the birth of Mahavira etc.

**Difference between Svetambara and Digambara:****(1) Liberation of Women:**

This is one of the main differences between Svetambara and Digambara. Digambara believes that women cannot achieve nirvana or liberation directly. They first have to be reborn as a man for this. They give two reasons for this:

- Digambara monks are completely naked. This is not possible for women as they have to possess clothes. It is impractical for women in this society to live naked. Due to this, they cannot lead the life of a true monk and hence cannot achieve liberation.
- Digambaras also believe that women are inherently *himsic*. It is due to the belief that menstrual blood kills micro-organisms living in the female body. Though there is no scientific evidence and this view is not found in modern Jain thinking.



**Svetambara**, on the other hand, has a different opinion. According to them, women are equally capable of achieving liberation as a man. They believe in Sabastra Mukti.

They believe that anybody can achieve salvation, be it a householder or a monk.

**(2) Dress:**

**Digambara** believes that to achieve nirvana or liberation, one must renounce everything including clothes. Therefore Digambara monks are completely naked.

**Svetambara**, on the contrary, believes that the practice of nudity is not essential to attain liberation. Therefore they wear white clothes. However, nuns in both sects wear white clothes.

**(3) Possessions**

**Digambara** monks are not allowed to have any kind of possessions. They believe that it is necessary to renounce everything to lead the life of a true monk.

However, they usually carry three things with them:

Picchi and Kamandalu

- **Picchi** - a broom made up of fallen feathers of a peacock. They use this broom to remove small insects without harming them.
- **Kamandalu** - oblong water pot used for carrying pure and sterilized drinking water.
- **Shastra** - scriptures.

**Svetambara** monks are allowed to possess 14 specified things, which include:

- White clothes
- **Rajoharaṇa** - broom made up of soft white wool attached to a wooden handle.  
Rajoharaṇa- Using this they remove small insects from their path without harming them.
- Begging bowl
- Books etc.

**(4) Birth of Mahavira:**

**Svetambara** Jains believe that Mahavira's embryo was first formed in a Brahmin lady, Devanand. But the change of embryo happens because of God Indra's army commander, Hari-Naigamesin (also known as Kartikeya) on the 83rd day after conception.

The embryo is transferred to a Kshatriya lady, Trisala, who is the wife of King Siddhartha.

**Digambara** Jains do not accept this story.

Also, **Svetambara** Jains believe that Mahavira's mother has 14 auspicious dreams before his birth. However, **Digambara** Jains believe that she has 16 dreams instead of 14.

**(5) The marriage of Mahavira:**

**Svetambaras** believe that before renouncing the worldly life, Mahavira is married to princess Yasoda. Also, he has a daughter named Priyadarsana (also known as Anojja) through her.

**Digambaras** do not believe in this. According to them, Mahavira's parents wanted him to marry Yasoda, but he refused this proposal.

Thus, they believe that Mahavira is Bal Brahmachari i.e. he never married and remain celibate during his lifetime.

**(6) Idols:**

**Svetambara** idols of Tirthankars are decorated with jewels, wearing loincloth with prominent staring eyes. However, **Digambara** idols are naked, undecorated with downcast eyes.

**(7) Scriptures:**

In Jainism, the discourse delivered by Tirthankaras is known as Śhrut Jnāna. It comprises of 11 Angas and 14 Purvas.

**Digambara** holds the opinion that the original texts of Jainism were lost ago.

**Svetambara** believes that they have the original Jain scriptures. However, they also accept that their collection is also incomplete.

Tattvartha Sutra is probably the most authoritative text in Jainism, accepted by both Svetambara and Digambara.

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**4.7 Festivals of Jainism:**

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Jain festivals are celebrated either to recall the life events of the Tirthankaras or for the purification of the soul. Following is a list of important Jain festivals.

**Paryushana:**

This is a festival of repentance and forgiveness. Jains perform different levels of fasting and many religious activities. This festival is celebrated every year in the Hindu month of Shravan and Bhadra. In the international calendar, this festival falls in the month of August or September.

**Mahavir Jayanti:**

This festival marks the birth of Lord Mahavir. According to the Jain calendar, Lord Mahavir was born on the thirteenth day of Chaitra month (March or April).

**Diwali:**

The rest of India celebrates Diwali as a day when Lord Rama returned home from exile. According to Jainism, on this day, the eighteen kings of North Indian territories, who were also the followers of Mahavira, lighted lamps to symbolize Lord Mahavir's knowledge. This festival comes during the month of October or November.

**Maun Agiyara:**

During this festival, people observe complete silence. Communicating in gestures is also not allowed. People also do fasting and meditation. This festival falls on the 11th day of Maghshar month of the Jain calendar, usually the month of October or November.

**Varshi Tapa:**

On this day, the first Jain Tirthankara Rishabha completed austerity after fasting continuously for 13 months and 13 days. People who perform Varshi Tapa,

complete the fasting by taking sugarcane juice. Some people also offer community lunches to celebrate the completion of Varshi Tapa.

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**4.8 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss the principles of Jainism:**

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- **Write an essay on the history of Islam:**

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**4.9 Summary:**

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Islam is the second most popular religion in the world. The majority of its followers live in the Asian continent. Muslims believe in Allah who is the supreme power. Quran is Allah who is the supreme power. Quran is the holiest book of Muslims. After Mohammed's death, Muslims were divided into two sects known as Shia and Sunni. Jainism is one of the oldest religions in the World. Followers of Jainism believe in love brotherhood and non-violence. Jains are divided into two major sects: Svetambara and Digambar. Some important rituals and festivals are Mahavir Jayanti, Gyana Panchami, Pausa Dashmi, Varshi Tapa etc.

**4.10 Glossary:**

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- **Ahimsa (Non-Violence):** The belief in non-violence.
- **Quran:** The most sacred book of Islam

**4.11 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Describe the important festivals of Jainism
- Explain the important festivals of Islam

**4.12 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- [https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/ataglance/glance.shtml#:~:text=Jainism%20is%20an%20ancient%20religion,lives%20of%20harmlessnes%20and%20renunciation.&text=The%20three%20guiding%20principles%20of,is%20non%20violence%20\(ahimsa\).](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/ataglance/glance.shtml#:~:text=Jainism%20is%20an%20ancient%20religion,lives%20of%20harmlessnes%20and%20renunciation.&text=The%20three%20guiding%20principles%20of,is%20non%20violence%20(ahimsa).)
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**Unit-5**

**Hinduism: Char Dham Yatra, Char Dham Yatra of  
Uttarakhand, 12 Jyotirlingas, Kumbh Mela**

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**Structure:**

**5.0 Introduction**

**5.1 Objectives**

**5.2 Char Dham Yatra of India**

**5.3 Char Dham Yatra of Uttarakhand**

**5.4 Twelve Jyotirlingas**

**5.5 Kumbh Mela**

**5.6 Check Your Progress**

**5.7 Summary**

**5.8 Glossary**

**5.9 Self-Assessment Questions**

**5.10 References and Suggested Readings**

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**5.0 Introduction:**

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Hinduism is the world's oldest religion, according to many academicians and researchers, with roots and customs dating back more than 4,000 years. Today, with about 900 million followers, Hinduism is the third-largest religion behind Christianity and Islam. Roughly 95 percent of the world's Hindus live in India. Because the religion has no specific founder, it's difficult to trace its origins and history. Hinduism is unique in that it's not a single religion but a compilation of many traditions and philosophies.

In Hindu religion and spirituality, the pilgrimage has great significance. Members of the faith participate in the following types of pilgrimage. The pilgrimage to each sacred site has its religious significance.

Holy Places: Tirumala, Himalayan Chota Char Dham - Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri. Varanasi/Kashi, Prayagraj, Haridwar-Rishikesh, Mathura-Vrindavan, Somnath, and Dwarka. Here important religious tourist attractions related to the Hindu religion will be discussed.

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**5.1 Objectives:**

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After reading the present unit, the learners will understand:

- The important religious tourist attractions of Hinduism.
- The features of the Hindu religion

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**5.2 Char Dham Yatra of India:**

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The Char Dham ("four abodes") is a set of four pilgrimage sites in India. Hindus believe that visiting these sites helps achieve moksha (salvation). It includes **Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri and Rameswaram**. It is believed by Hindus that every Hindu should visit the char dhams during one's lifetime. The Char Dham as defined by **Adi Shankaracharya** consists of four Hindu pilgrimage sites. Another small circuit in Uttarakhand of four pilgrimage sites-Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath is referred to as Chota Char Dham.

The four Shankaracharya Peeth (Seats) at the Chaar Dham school of Hinduism, created at least four Hindu monastic institutions. He organised the Hindu practitioners under four Maṭhas (Sanskrit: मठ) (institutions/monasteries), with the headquarters at Dvārakā in the West, Jagannatha Puri in the East, Sringeri Sharada Peetham in the South and Badrikashrama in the North.

**Four Pilgrimage Destinations of Char Dham:**

In the Puranas Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Shiva) are referred to as eternal friends. It is said wherever Lord Vishnu resides, Lord Shiva resides nearby. The Chaar Dhams follow this rule. So Kedarnath is considered as the pair of Badrinath, Rama Setu is considered the pair of Rameswaram and Somnath is considered as the pair of Dwaraka. However, according to some traditions, the Char Dham are Badrinath, Rangnath-Swami, Dwarka and Jagannath-Puri, all of which are Vaishnava sites, and their associated places are Kedarnath, Rameswaram, Somnath and Lingaraja Temple, Bhubaneswar (or maybe Gupteshwar) respectively.

The Char Dham Highway project is still under completion and is proposed to get functional by the end of 2018, but currently, many service providers offer a Char Dham Yatra by helicopter for the ease of pilgrim.

**1. Puri:**

Puri located in the east, is located in the state of Odisha, India. Puri is one of the oldest cities in the eastern part of the country. It is situated on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. The main deity is Shri Krishna, celebrated as Lord Jagannatha. It is the only shrine in India, where the goddess, Subhadra, sister of Lord Krishna is worshipped along with her brothers, Lord Jagannatha and Lord Balabhadra. The main temple here is about 1000 years old and constructed by Raja Choda Ganga Deva and Raja Tritiya Ananga Bhima Deva. Puri is the site of the Govardhana Matha, one of the four cardinal institutions or Mathas converted by Adi Shankaracharya. Pandit Nilakantha Das suggested that Jagannath was a deity of Jain origin because of the appending of Nath to many Jain Tirthankars. Jagannath meant the 'World personified' in the Jain context and



was derived from Jinanath. Evidence of the Jain terminology such as Kaivalya, which means moksha or salvation, is found in the Jagannath tradition. Similarly, the twenty-two steps leading to the temple called the Baisi Pahacha, have been proposed as symbolic reverence for the first 22 of the 24 Tirthankaras of Jainism.

According to Annirudh Das, the original Jagannath deity was influenced by Jainism and is none other than the Jina of Kalinga taken to Magadha by Mahapadma Nanda. The theory of Jain origins is supported by the Jain Hathigumpha inscription. It mentions the worship of a relic memorial in Khandagiri-Udayagiri, on Kumara hill. This location is stated to be the same as the Jagannath temple site. However, states Starza, a Jain text mentions the Jagannath shrine was restored by Jains, but the authenticity and date of this text are unclear. This is the plume for Oriya people to celebrate a special day in this Dham which is known as Ratha Yatra ("Chariot Festival").

## **2. Rameswaram:**

Rameswaram located in the South is in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is situated in the Gulf of Mannar at the very tip of the Indian peninsula. According to legends, this is the place where Lord Ram along with his brother Laxman and devotee Hanuman built a bridge (Rama Setu) to reach Sri Lanka to rescue his wife Sita who had been abducted earlier by Ravan, the ruler of Sri Lanka. The Ramanatha Swamy Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva occupies a major area of Rameswaram. The temple is believed to have been consecrated by Shri Rama Chandra. Rameswaram is significant for the Hindus as a pilgrimage to Benaras is incomplete without a pilgrimage to Rameswaram. The presiding deity here is in the form of a Linga with the name Sri Ramanatha Swamy, it also is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.

## **3. Dwarka:**

Dwarka located in the west is in the state of Gujarat, country India. The city derives its name from the word "dvar" meaning door or gate in the Sanskrit language. It is located confluence where the Gomti River merges into the

Arabian Sea. However, this river Gomti is not the same Gomti River which is a tributary of the Ganga River the city lies in the westernmost part of India. The legendary city of Dwaraka was the dwelling place of Lord Krishna. It is generally believed that due to damage and destruction by the sea, Dwaraka had submerged six times and modern-day Dwarka is the 7th such city to be built in the area.

#### **4. Badrinath:**

Badrinath is located in the state of Uttarakhand. It is in the Garhwal hills, on the banks of the Alaknanda River. The town lies between the Nar and Narayana mountain ranges and in the shadow of Nilkantha peak (6,560 m). There are other interesting sightseeing spots like Mana, Vyas Gufa, Maatamoorti, Charanpaduka, Bhimkund and the Mukh of the Saraswati River, within 3 km of Badrinathjee. Joshimath is situated on the slopes above the confluence of the rivers Alaknanda and Dhauliganga. Of the four Maths established by Adi Shankaracharya, Joshimath is the winter seat of Chardham.

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#### **5.3 Char Dham Yatra of Uttarakhand:**

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Char Dham Yatra of Uttarakhand or the Chota Char Dham translated as 'the small four abodes/seats', meaning 'the small circuit of four abodes/seats', is an important Hindu pilgrimage circuit on the gradation Chardham Road Highway and under construction Chota Char Dham Railway in the Indian Himalayas. Located in the Garhwal region of the state of Uttarakhand (formerly the northwestern section of Uttar Pradesh), the circuit consists of four sites – **Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath**. Badrinath is also one of the four destinations (with each destination being in a different corner of the country) of the longer Char Dham from which the Chota Char Dham likely draws its name.

The Annual Char Dham Yatra resumed in May 2014, after remaining suspended since the outbreak of the 2013 Uttarakhand floods. The footfall has now improved due to proactive measures taken by the government of Uttarakhand.

Also, there are chances of roadblocks due to heavy rainfall in late July and August. In May and June, tourists flock in large numbers. So, there is very little time offered for 'Darshan'. So, it is best to take the Char Dham Yatra in mid-May to July and September - October.

The Chota Char Dham included representatives from all three major Hindu sectarian traditions, with two Shakti (goddess) sites, (Yamunotri and Gangotri), one Shaiva site (Kedarnath), and one Vaishnava site (Badrinath).

Accessible until the 1950s only by arduous and lengthy walking trails in a hilly area with heights repeatedly exceeding 4000 meters, the Chota Char Dham was regularly done by wandering ascetics and other religious people, and those who could afford a travelling entourage. While the individual sites and the circuit as a whole were well known to Hindus on the plains below, they were not a particularly visible aspect of yearly religious culture. After the 1962 war between India and China, accessibility to the Chota Char Dham improved, as India undertook massive road building to the border area and other infrastructure investments. As pilgrims were able to travel in minibuses, jeeps and cars to the nearest points of four shrines, the Chota Char Dham circuit was within the reach of people with middle income. Vehicles reach up to Badrinath temple and Gangotri, Yamunotri and Kedarnath are at a distance of 10 to 15 km. Today, the circuit receives lakhs of visitors in an average pilgrimage season, which lasts from approximately April 15 until Diwali (sometime in November). The season is heaviest in the two months before the monsoon, which normally comes in late July. After the rains begin, travel to the sites becomes extremely dangerous. Even before the rains begin, safety is a major concern, as extensive road building and heavy traffic have critically destabilized the rocks, making fatal landslides and bus/jeep accidents a regular occurrence. Mortality rates for a season often surpass 200. Some pilgrims also visit the sites after the rains end and before the sites become impassable due to snow. Although temperatures at the shrines in the early winter months of October and November are inhospitable, it is said that the mountain scenery surrounding the sites is most

vivid after the rains have had a chance to moisten the dust of the plains below. The Chota Char Dham has washed away in the recent 2013 Himalayan flash floods. One of the worst flash floods happened in June 2013 and it heavily devastated many parts of the Chota Char Dham, particularly the town of Kedarnath was almost destroyed and with only the Kedarnathji Temple and a few buildings around remaining intact, albeit partially submerged by rocks and slurry. Chota Char Dham Railway project's 321 km long construction, costing INR43,292 crore (US\$6.6 billion), commenced with Final Location Survey (FSL) by the government of India in May 2017.

**Four Pilgrimage Destinations of Chota Char Dhama are mentioned below:**

Access to the pilgrimage is either from Haridwar, Rishikesh or from Dehradun.

The tradition is to visit the sites in the following order:

1. **Yamunotri**, the source of the Yamuna River and the head of the goddess Yamuna.
2. **Gangotri**, the source of the Ganges (River Ganga) and head of the goddess Ganga.
3. **Kedarnath**, where a form of the Hindu god Shiva is venerated as one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.
4. **Badrinath** is the seat of the Hindu god Vishnu in his aspect of Badrinarayan.

**1. Badrinath:**

Sandwiched between the Nar and Narayan mountain ranges, Badrinath in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand is one of the most sought-after pilgrim centres in the Indian subcontinent. Badrinath is beautifully set in the backdrop of the colossal Neelkanth mountain peak and never fails to make the visitor spellbound with its unparalleled gorgeousness. The term Badrinath is a derivative of Badri, which means the place where berries grow abundantly. A place, which holds so many myths and legends, Badrinath acquires predominance in the travel itinerary of a pilgrim. The popular belief is that Badarinath was the domain of Lord Shiva, and Lord Vishnu managed to unseat Shiva from here to Kedarnath. Another belief is that when Ganga made her

descend to earth she split up into twelve streams and one among the channels, Alakananda fell on Kedarnath which gives Badrinath its majestic look. It is not just recreational activities, shrines and pilgrimage that Badrinath offers. It proffers the awesome beauty of the snow-clad mountain peaks and the surging landscapes of the Garhwal region.

**Badrinath Temple:**

Badrinath is the most sacred Dham of India. It is located at an elevation of 3,133mts above sea level in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand state. This Dham was established by **Adi Shankaracharya** in the 9th century. The deity of Badrinath temple is Lord Vishnu. The temple is situated on the right bank of the holy Alaknanda River.

**2. Kedarnath:**

Kedarnath is an ancient and magnificent temple located in the Rudra Himalaya range, is over a thousand years old, built of massive stone slabs over a large rectangular platform. Ascending through the large grey steps leading to the holy sanctums we find inscriptions in Pali on the steps. The present temple was built by Adi Shankaracharya. The inner walls of the temple sanctum are adorned with figures of various deities and scenes from mythology. According to legends, the Pandavas sought the blessings of lord Shiva to atone for their sin after the battle of Mahabharata. Lord Shiva eluded them repeatedly and while fleeing took refuge at Kedarnath in the form of a bull. On being followed, he dived into the ground leaving behind his hump on the surface. Outside the temple door, a large statue of the Nandi Bull stands as a guard. It is at this time, that the doors of the temple are thrown open to pilgrims, who flock from all parts of India, for a holy pilgrimage.

Kedarnath is amongst the holiest pilgrimages for the devout Hindu. It is set amidst the stunning mountains cape of the Garhwal Himalayas at the head of the Mandakini River. Kedar is another name for lord Shiva, the protector and the destroyer. The shrine of Kedarnath is very scenically placed and is surrounded by lofty, snow-covered mountains, and during summer grassy

meadows covering the valleys. Immediately behind the temple, is the high Keadardome peak, which can be sighted from great distances. The sight of the temple and the peak with its perpetual snow is simply enthralling.

### **3. Gangotri:**

One of the main religious places among the four Char Dham pilgrimage areas, Gangotri, situated in Uttarkashi, is closely related to Goddess Ganga, the river that we know as the Ganges. The history of Gangotri dates back centuries when Goddess Ganga transformed herself into a river to dissolve the sins of King Bhagirath's forefathers, following his penance. Gangotri is a popular pilgrim place in India, which stands at an altitude of 3042m and emits a highly pious aura. Religious rituals are in full swing in the Gangotri temple with the Arti ceremony performed by the pujaris of the Semwal family.

The river Ganga originates from the Gangotri glacier and is known as Bhagirathi. The name Ganga picks up later on after the river passes Devaprayag and merges into the river Alaknanda.

The striking presence of the snow-clad mountains in the vicinity and the pure crystal clear water of the Ganges flowing around add to the sanctity of the place. Vegan food dominates the culture and is available in the local food joints or dhabas. Non-vegetarian food and alcoholic drinks are a strict no-no.

### **Gangotri Temple:**

Gangotri temple is the highest temple of Goddess Ganga and one of the four dhams of Uttarakhand state. Gangotri is situated at an altitude of 3,048mts above sea level. Gangotri offers scenic splendours of rugged terrains, the gushing water of the Bhagirathi River and snow-clad peaks. The place holds great importance amongst Hindus. Gangotri remains open from May and gets closed on the day of the Diwali festival.

### **4. Yamunotri:**

Situated amidst the Garhwal Himalayas, Yamunotri in the state of Uttarakhand is naturally bestowed with abundant beauty and charm. At a hovering altitude of 3293 meters, Yamunotri lies adjacent to the Indo-Chinese border and is

encircled by lofty peaks on all sides. One of the holiest centres in the Hindu pantheon, this sacred abode of the Asti muni boast of so many unparalleled vistas of nature.

Highly revered as the origin of the majestic River Yamuna, Yamunotri is famed for its glaciers, and thermal springs that makes it one of the most important stopovers in the schedule of a Hindu pilgrim. According to Hindu tradition, Yamuna is the sister of Yama, the god of death and a holy dip in this river secures a painless death to the devotee.

An exhilarating location in the footsteps of the Garhwal mountain ranges, Yamunotri proffers picturesque surroundings with awesome shrubs, lush meadows and gushing cascades. A legendary place, which demands lots of courage and stamina to reach, Yamunotri would be a perfect place for those who love escapades. The trek to Yamunotri is magnificent, subjugated by mind-stilling views of craggy peaks and intense forests.

From the snow-clad summits to the turquoise lakes, Yamunotri has unbelievably romantic allures in store for those who are young at heart. Its imposing walking trails beside the gushing streams present some spectacular moments that one could never forget.

#### **Yamunotri Temple:**

Yamunotri is one of the Char Dham and it is also the first place to visit in the Char Dham Circuit. Thousands of devotees visit the sacred shrine of Yamunotri temple every month from May to October. Yamunotri Temple was constructed by Maharaja Pratap Shah of Tehri Garhwal. The temple opens on the auspicious day of Akshay Tritiya and closes on the second day after the Diwali festival. The temple holds immense importance amongst the Hindus. Yamunotri is the source of the Yamuna River which is one of the major rivers of India.

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#### **5.4 Twelve Jyotirlingas:**

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Shiva is one of India's most worshipped deities and has many temples dedicated to him. Most prominent among these temples are the 12 Jyotirlingas

of Shiva which are considered to be the most auspicious pilgrim destinations for Shiva devotees.

According to an old religious text called the Shiva Mahapuran, there was once an argument between Vishnu and Brahma with each claiming to be the supreme power. To put them to the test, Shiva pierced the three worlds into an enormous pillar of light called the jyotirlinga. He asked Vishnu and Brahma to reach the extreme of the pillar saying whoever finds it first will be victorious.

Brahma rocketed in an upward direction while Vishnu went downward chasing the pillar which they did not know was infinite. Brahma returned claiming that he had found the end while Vishnu honestly accepted defeat. Enraged by Brahma's lies, Shiva appeared as a second Jyotirlingas and cursed Brahma that he would have no place in any of the religious ceremonies while Vishnu will be worshipped for eternity.

The twelve Jyotirlingas are believed to be the temples where Shiva appeared as a form of light. They symbolize the utmost reality and the supreme power and infinity of Shiva.

Here is the list of the 12 jyotirlingas of Shiva with their locations in India:

**1. Somnath Jyotirlinga in Saurashtra, Gujarat:**

One of the most famous of the twelve jyotirlingas, Somnath temple in Gujarat is a major pilgrim site that has been renovated quite a few times. The biggest reason behind its popularity is that it is located near a Triveni Sangam which means a confluence of three rivers – Hiran, Kapila and Saraswati in this case.

**2. Mallikarjun jyotirlinga in Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh:**

Located in the religious temple town of Srisailam, the Mallikarjunaswamy temple is a popular Shiva temple in south India owing to the jyotirlinga here. The Mahashivratri celebrations in Mallikarjunswamy are renowned all across India and are worth witnessing.

**3. Mahakaleshwar jyotirlinga in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh:**

Ujjain is extremely popular as one of the venues of the Kumbh Mela, and Mahakaleshwar temple is its biggest tourist attraction on account of the



jyotirlinga placed here. Situated by the Rudra Sagar Lake, the temple is visited by a huge number of devotees daily.

**4. Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga in Shivrpur, Madhya Pradesh:**

And then there is the Omkaram Amaleshwar jyotirlinga on the holy island of Omkareshwar on the banks of the river Narmada. The swayambhu or self-manifested linga here draws in crowds of devotees all year round.

**5. Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga in Parali, Maharashtra:**

Also known as Baba Dham and Baidyanath Dham, the Vaidyanath jyotirlinga is argued to be in Parli while some say the location of this jyotirlinga is in Deogarh in Jharkhand or Baijnath in Himachal Pradesh. It is believed that this land was a funeral place in the past and therefore the abode of tantric like Bhairava who worshipped Shiva.

**6. Nageswar Jyotirlinga in Gujarat:**

Believed to be the oldest shrine of its kind, the Nageshvar jyotirlinga is said to be in Durkavana meaning a forest that finds mention in old texts. According to a legend, Darukavana was a city inhabited by sea snakes and demons ruled by the old demon Daruka. The demon disappeared after Shiva appeared here and resided in the form of a Jyotirlinga.

**7. Kedareswar jyotirlinga in Kedarnath, Uttarakhand:**

One of the four major pilgrim centres forming the char dham pilgrimage for Hindus, Kedarnath is located high up in the mountains of Uttarakhand and is visited by a huge number of devotees every year.

**8. Tryambakeswar jyotirlinga in Nasik, Maharashtra:**

Located close to another pilgrim centre Shirdi, Trimbakeshwar or Tryambakeshwar is a famous religious destination for Hindus in India. It is located in the town of Trimbak and is popular for being home to one of the twelve jyotirlingas.

**9. Rameswar jyotirlinga in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu:**

Perhaps one of the most popular temples in India is the Rameswaram temple known for its brilliant architecture and the jyotirlinga, of course. It is visited by thousands of devotees daily and holds a significant place for Hindus.

**10. Bhimashankar jyotirlinga in Dakini, Maharashtra:**

Another one of the jyotirlingas in the state of Maharashtra, Bhimashankar is an extremely popular destination near the city of Pune. The place gets its name from an evil Asura named Bhima who lived here ages ago and was reduced to ash by Shiva after a war. On the request of other Gods, Shiva manifested himself at this place in the form of the Bhimashankar jyotirlinga.

**11. Visweswar Jyotirlinga in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh:**

Varanasi is one of the holiest places to visit in India and the Kashi Vishwanath temple is its biggest attraction thanks to the Visweswar jyotirlinga here. The grand aartis held here during major festivals, especially Mahashivratri, are an experience you cannot afford to miss.

**12. Ghrishneswar Jyotirlinga in Devagiri, Maharashtra:**

Located in a small village called Verul near Devagiri and Aurangabad in Maharashtra, Grishneshwar or Grushneshwar finds mention in the ancient Shiva Purana as one of the Jyotirlingas.

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**5.5 Kumbh Mela:**

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Kumbh Mela, in Hinduism, is a religious pilgrimage that is celebrated four times over the course of 12 years. The geographical location of Kumbh Mela spans over four locations in India and the Mela site keeps rotating between one of the four pilgrimages on four sacred rivers as listed below:

Haridwar on the Ganges in Uttarakhand, Ujjain on the Shipra in Madhya Pradesh, Nashik on the Godavari in Maharashtra, Prayagraj at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati in Uttar Pradesh

Each site's celebration is based on a distinct set of astrological positions of the Sun, the Moon, and Jupiter. The celebrations occur at the exact moment when

these positions are fully occupied, as it is considered to be the holiest time in Hinduism. The Kumbh Mela is an event that intrinsically encapsulates the science of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritualistic traditions, and socio-cultural customs and practices, making it extremely rich in knowledge.

Pilgrims to the Kumbh Mela come from all sections of the religion ranging from Sadhus (saints) and Naga Sadhus who practice 'sadhana' and keenly follow a strict path of spiritual discipline, to Hermits who leave their seclusion and come to visit the civilization-only during the Kumbh Mela, to seekers of spirituality, and common people practising Hinduism.

During the Kumbh Mela, several ceremonies take place; the traditional procession of Akharas called 'Peshwai' on elephant backs, horses and chariots, the shining swords and rituals of Naga Sadhus during 'Shahi Snaan', and many other cultural activities that attract millions of pilgrims to attend the Kumbh Mela.

### **History of Kumbh Mela:**

Kumbh Mela is made up of two words Kumbh and Mela. The name Kumbh is derived from the immortal pot of nectar which the Devtas and the demons fought over as described in ancient Vedic scriptures known as the Puranas. Mela, as we all are familiar with, is a Sanskrit word meaning 'gathering' or 'to meet'. The history of Kumbh Mela is related to the days when the Devtas and the Demons conjointly produced nectar of immortality as depicted by the legends. The Devtas and the demons agreed to complete the task together and decided to share the nectar of immortality in half. The Devtas and the demons then assembled on the shore of the milk ocean that lies in the celestial region of the cosmos. The churning of the milk ocean produced a deadly poison which Lord Shiva drank without being affected. After crossing through many hurdles years later, Dhanwantari appeared with the nectar of immortality in her hands. The Devtas forcibly ceased the pot with its safety entrusted to the four Gods - Brahaspati, Surya, Shani, and Chandra. Thereafter, the demons chased the Devtas for many days. During this time the drops of Kumbh dropped at 4 places

Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik. These four places are since then believed to have acquired mystical powers. The fight for the Kumbh i.e. the sacred pitcher between the Gods and demons continued for 12 divine days, which is considered to be as long as 12 years for humans. That is why the Kumbh Mela is celebrated once in 12 years and gatherings took place in the above-mentioned sacred places or holy sites. It is said that during this period the rivers turned into Amrit and so, several pilgrims from across the world visit the Kumbh Mela to bathe in the essence of purity and immortality.

**Salient Features of Kumbh Mela:**

- Kumbh Mela is the largest religious gathering in the world which is also known as the "World's largest congregation of religious pilgrims".
- The first written evidence of the Kumbh Mela is mentioned in Bhagvat Purana. Another written evidence of Kumbh Mela is mentioned in the works of Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang (or Xuanzang) who visited India in 629-645 AD, during the reign of Harshavardhana. Also, the Samudra Manthan is mentioned in the Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Mahabharata and Ramayana.
- Amongst the four cities Prayagraj, Nashik, Haridwar and Ujjain, the Kumbh Mela held in Prayagraj is the oldest of all.
- Other activities also took place at the Kumbh Mela with bathing are Pravachan, Kirtan and Maha Prasad.
- No doubt, Kumbh Mela is a major temporary source of earning that gives many people employment.
- In Kumbh Mela, the first bath is led by the Saints which is known as Shahi Snan of Kumbh and it starts at 3 AM. After the royal bath of the Saint common people gets permission to take a bath in the holy river.
- According to Hindu Mythology, it is believed that those who take a dip in the holy water of Ganga are eternally blessed. Not only this, but it also washes the sin and moves them towards the path of salvation.

- The four places or sites of Kumbh Mela are because of the Amrit or an immortal drink that was dropped by Vishnu at these four places.
- The world's largest gathering Kumbh Mela has been included in UNESCO's representative list 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'.
- Kumbh Mela takes place on the dates when the nectar is said to have fallen in the holy river. Every year, the dates are calculated according to the combination of Jupiter, the Sun and the Moon's zodiac positions.
- Kumbh means 'nectar'. Kumbh Mela's story dates back to the time when gods resided on the earth. They had been weakened by the curse of sage Durvasa and the demons were causing mayhem on the earth.

**Types of Kumbh Melas:**

- **Maha Kumbh Mela:** It is held only in Prayagraj. It comes every 144 years or after the 12 Purna (Complete) Kumbh Mela.
- **Purna Kumbh Mela:** It comes every 12 years. Mainly held at 4 Kumbh Mela Places in India i.e. Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain. It rotates every 12 years at these 4 places.
- **Ardh Kumbh Mela:** It means Half Kumbh Mela which is held every 6 years in India only at two places i.e. Haridwar and Prayagraj.
- **Kumbh Mela:** Held at four different places and is organised by the state governments. Millions of people participate with spiritual enthusiasm.
- **Magh Kumbh Mela:** It is also known as Mini Kumbh Mela which is held annually and only at Prayagraj. It is organised in the month of Magh according to the Hindu calendar.

The venue for Kumbh Mela is decided according to the position of the Sun, Moon and Jupiter hold in that period in different zodiac signs.

Since then, Kumbh Mela is celebrated with all the ritual beliefs and people from different aspects gather to celebrate the eve.

**Four Sites of Kumbh Mela:**

Details of Four sites of Kumbh Mela are listed below:

**1. Prayagraj:**

The Prayag Kumbh Mela is a Hindu festival mela held at Prayag Triveni Sangam – the meeting points of three rivers: the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Sarasvati – in Allahabad (officially known as Prayagraj), India. The festival is marked by a ritual dip in the waters, but it is also a celebration of community commerce with numerous fairs, education, religious discourses by saints, mass feedings of monks or the poor, and entertainment spectacle.

The full Kumbh mela is held every 12 years, while an Ardh (half) mela is held after about 6 years at the same site. The 2013 Kumbh Mela was the largest religious gathering in the world with almost 120 million visitors. An Ardh Kumbh Mela was held in early 2019. The next full Kumbh Mela is scheduled for 2025. The exact date is based on the Hindu lunisolar calendar and is determined by the entry of planet Jupiter in Taurus zodiac while the sun and the moon are in Capricorn.

The Mela is one of the four fairs traditionally recognized as Kumbh Melas. An annual fair, known as Magh Mela, has been held at Prayag Triveni Sangam since ancient times (at least early centuries CE). The site, its sacredness, bathing pilgrimage and the annual festival are mentioned in the ancient Puranas and the epic Mahabharata. The festival is also mentioned in later-era texts such as those by Muslim historians of the Mughal Empire. However, these sources do not use the phrase "Kumbh Mela" for the bathing festival at Prayag (renamed Allahabad during the Mughal era). The earliest mention of a Kumbh Mela at Allahabad occurs only after the mid-19th century in colonial-era documents. The Prayagwals (local Brahmins of Prayag) are believed to have adopted the Kumbha and the 12-year cycle of the historic Haridwar Kumbh Mela for their annual Magh Mela around this time. Since then, every 12 years, the Magh Mela turns into a Kumbh Mela, and six years after a Kumbh Mela, it is an Ardh Kumbh ("Half Kumbh") Mela.

The Kumbh Mela at Allahabad is held in the month of Magh when Jupiter is in Aries, Sun and Moon are in Capricorn, or Jupiter is in Taurus, and Sun is in

Capricorn. However, at times this astrological combination (Kumbh Yoga) does not coincide with the month of Magh. In such a case, the mela is still held in Magh. For example, the 1989 Kumbh Mela should have begun in mid-March according to astrological calculations; however, it started in January.

There have been multiple incidences of Hindu astrologers disagreeing over the exact condition that ushers in a mela. As a result, fairs claimed to be Kumbh Melas have been at the same place in successive years. For example, 1941 and 1942 in Allahabad; and again, 1965 and 1966 in Allahabad.

## **2. Haridwar:**

Haridwar is one of the four sites of Kumbh Mela, the others being Prayag (Allahabad), Trimbak (Nashik) and Ujjain. Although there are several references to riverside bathing festivals in ancient Indian literature, the exact age of the Kumbh Mela is uncertain.

The fair at Haridwar appears to be the original Kumbh Mela since it is held according to the astrological sign Kumbha (Aquarius), and because there are several references to a 12-year cycle for it. The Haridwar Kumbh Mela dates at least from the early 1600s. The earliest extant texts that use the name "Kumbha Mela" are Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh (1695) and Chahar Gulshan (1789). Both these texts use the term "Kumbh Mela" to describe only Haridwar's fair, although they mention similar fairs at Allahabad (the annual Magh Mela) and Nashik (the Simhastha). The Kumbh Melas at the other three places seem to be an adaptation of Haridwar's Kumbh Mela to the pre-existing local festivals.

The Muslim conqueror Timur invaded Haridwar in 1398 and massacred several pilgrims, possibly at a Kumbh Mela.

The Kumbh Mela at Haridwar is a mela held every 12 years in Haridwar, India. The exact date is determined according to Hindu astrology: the Mela is held when Jupiter is in Aquarius and the sun enters Aries. An Ardh Kumbh ("Half Kumbh") Mela is held six years after a Kumbh Mela. The Kumbh Mela Officer for 2021 is Deepak Rawat (IAS).

The event possesses deep religious significance to Hindus as well as other spiritual seekers. Historically, it was an important commercial event and was attended by merchants from as far as Arabia.

The last Haridwar Kumbh Mela took place in 2010; the next one is scheduled for 2021, while an Ardh Kumbh Mela took place in 2016.

### **3. Nashik:**

Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha is a Hindu religious mela held every 12 years in the Nashik district of Maharashtra, India. The name of the festival is also transliterated as Sinhastha or Singhastha. It is one of the four fairs traditionally recognized as Kumbha Melas, and is also known as Nashik-Trimbak Kumbha Mela or Nashik Kumbha Mela.

The fair involves ritual bathing on the banks of the Godavari river, at the Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple (in Trimbak) and the Ram Kund in Nashik. Until 1789, the fair was held only at Trimbak, but after a clash between Vaishnavites and Saivites, the Maratha Peshwa segregated the Vaishnavites to Nashik city.

### **4. Ujjain:**

Ujjain Simhastha is a Hindu religious mela held every 12 years in the Ujjain city of Madhya Pradesh, India. The name is also transliterated as Sinhastha or Singhastha. In Hindi, the fair is also called Simhasth or Sinhasth (due to schwa deletion). The name derives from the fact that it is held when Jupiter is in Leo (Simha in Hindu astrology).

It is one of the four fairs traditionally recognized as Kumbha Melas, and is also known as Ujjain Kumbh Mela. According to Hindu mythology, Vishnu dropped drops of amrita (the drink of immortality) at four places, while transporting it in a kumbha (pot). These four places, including Ujjain, are identified as the present-day sites of the Kumbh Mela. "Kumbh" in its literal English translation means "Pot", which emerged from "Samudra Manthan" (Churning of the Ocean) between Gods and Demons. The term 'Mela' signifies fair.



The Simhastha at Ujjain is an adaptation of the Nashik-Trimbak Simhastha fair to a local festival of uncertain origin. In its current form, it began in the 18th century when the Maratha ruler Ranoji Shinde invited ascetics from Nashik to Ujjain's local festival. Both Ujjain and Nashik fairs adopted the Kumbha myth from the Haridwar Kumbh Mela. The Simhastha at Ujjayini pays special reverence to the temple of Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, which is the abode of Lord Shiva's Swayambhu lingam. A river-side festival, it is celebrated on the banks of the Shipra River. The fair attracts millions of pilgrims

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**5.6 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss the important Hindu religious tourist attractions of India:**

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- **Highlight the salient features of the 12 Jyotirlingas of India.**

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**5.7 Summary**

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Hinduism is the world's oldest religion. It is the third largest religion in the world after Christianity and Islam. The exact date of origin of Hinduism is unknown but it is believed that it originated around 4000 years back. About 900

million people around the world believe in Hinduism. It is believed that 95% of them live in India. Being the oldest religion in the world and having 900 million followers, the followers of this great religion have built thousands of temples around India. Pilgrims visit these places to please their God and Goddesses. Some important pilgrim places are the twelve Jyotirlinga, Char Dham Yatra, Kumbha fair sites etc.

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**5.8 Glossary:**

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- **Pilgrimage:** A long journey of a pilgrim to worship God or Goddesses.
- **Pilgrim:** A follower of a religion who covers a long distance to see and worship a religious site.
- **Devote:** Here, devote means the follower of a particular religion.

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**5.9 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Why Kumbh Mela is celebrated in four different places in India?
- Discuss in detail your favourite Hindu religious tourist attraction.
- Write a detailed note on the Char Dham Yatra of Uttarakhand.

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**5.10 References and Suggested Readings:**

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**Unit-6**

**Buddhism: Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Vaishali & Kushinagar**

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**Structure:**

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**6.0 Introduction:**

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The quaint town of Bodh Gaya, in Bihar, echoes with a tranquil ambience, underlined by intense devotion. Dotted with temples and monasteries, this 2,500-year-old birthplace of Buddhism invites travellers from all across the world to soak in its spiritual vibes, retrace the footsteps of Lord Buddha and understand his philosophies at the place where he attained nirvana (enlightenment). The city ebbs and flows with devotees throughout the year, yet it remains suspended in time, as monks in saffron and maroon robes walk around the monuments and temples, their chants and prayers enveloping the surroundings in a cocoon of peace. Even the air of this small town seems to be permeated with peace and serenity, synonymous with Buddhism. Prince Siddhartha, who later became Lord Buddha, is said to have found a quiet retreat under the most hallowed spot here, the Bo or Bodhi tree, where he meditated till the attainment of enlightenment. There are many legends associated with this historic event and it is said that as young Siddhartha settled down to meditate, a young cow herder named Sujata noticed him and moved by his gaunt appearance, brought him a bowl of kheer (sweet rice pudding).

Not only did the meal give him strength but it is said to have inspired his thoughts on following the Middle Path. The ancient city of Bodhgaya holds a special significance in Hinduism; Gaya is mentioned in great epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It is also said to be the place where Lord Rama, with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, came to offer pind dan (an offering to ancestors during Hindu funeral rites) for their father Dashratha.

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**6.1 Objectives:**

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The following are the important objectives of the present unit:

- To know the salient features of Buddhism
- To understand the main teachings of Buddhism
- To know the important Buddhist tourist attractions of Buddhism.

**6.2 Buddhism:**

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Buddhism is a faith that was founded by Siddhartha Gautama (“the Buddha”) more than 2,500 years ago in India. With about 470 million followers, scholars consider Buddhism one of the major world religions. Its practice has historically been most prominent in East and Southeast Asia, but its influence is growing in the West. Many Buddhist ideas and philosophies overlap with those of other faiths.

**Buddhism Beliefs****Some key beliefs of Buddhism are:**

- Followers of Buddhism don’t acknowledge a supreme god or deity. They instead focus on achieving enlightenment – a state of inner peace and wisdom. When followers reach this spiritual echelon, they’re said to have experienced nirvana.
- The religion’s founder, Buddha, is considered an extraordinary man, but not a god. The word Buddha means “enlightened.”
- The path to enlightenment is attained by utilizing morality, meditation and wisdom. Buddhists often meditate because they believe it helps awaken truth.
- There are many philosophies and interpretations within Buddhism, making it a tolerant and evolving religion.
- Some scholars don’t recognize Buddhism as an organized religion, but rather, as a “way of life” or a “spiritual tradition.”
- Buddhism encourages its people to avoid self-indulgence but also self-denial.
- Buddha’s most important teachings, known as The Four Noble Truths, are essential to understanding religion.
- Buddhists embrace the concepts of karma (the law of cause and effect) and reincarnation (the continuous cycle of rebirth).
- Followers of Buddhism can worship in temples or their own homes.
- Buddhist monks, or bhikkhus, follow a strict code of conduct, which includes celibacy.

- There is no single Buddhist symbol, but several images have evolved that represent Buddhist beliefs, including the lotus flower, the eight-spoked dharma wheel, the Bodhi tree and the swastika (an ancient symbol whose name means "well-being" or "good fortune" in Sanskrit).

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**6.3 Tourist Attractions of Bodhgaya:**

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- **Mahabodhi Temple Complex:**

The Mahabodhi Temple Complex, Bodh Gaya lies 115 km south of the state capital of Bihar, Patna and 16 km from the district headquarters at Gaya, in Eastern India. It is one of the four holy sites related to the life of the Lord Buddha, and particularly to the attainment of Enlightenment. The property encompasses the greatest remains of the 5th-6th century A.D. in the Indian sub-continent belonging to this period of antiquity. The property has a total area of 4.8600 ha.

The Mahabodhi Temple Complex is the first temple built by Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century B.C., and the present temple dates from the 5th–6th centuries. It is one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely in brick, still standing, from the late Gupta period and it is considered to have had a significant influence in the development of brick architecture over the centuries.

The present Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya comprises the 50 m high grand Temple, the Vajrasana, the sacred Bodhi Tree and other six sacred sites of Buddha's enlightenment, surrounded by numerous ancient Votive stupas, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular boundaries. A seventh sacred place, the Lotus Pond, is located outside the enclosure to the south. Both the temple area and the Lotus Pond are surrounded by circulating passages at two or three levels and the area of the ensemble is 5 m below the level of the surrounding land.

It is also a unique property of archaeological significance in respect of the events associated with the time Lord Buddha spent there, as well as documenting the evolving worship, particularly since the 3rd century, when Emperor Asoka



built the first temple, the balustrades and the memorial column and the subsequent evolution of the ancient city with the building of sanctuaries and monasteries by foreign kings over the centuries.

The Main Temple wall has an average height of 11 m and it is built in the classical style of Indian temple architecture. It has entrances from the east and the north and has a low basement with mouldings decorated with honeysuckle and geese design. Above this is a series of niches containing images of the Buddha. Further above there are mouldings and chaitya niches, and then the curvilinear shikhara or tower of the temple surmounted by amalaka and kalasha (architectural features in the tradition of Indian temples). At the four corners of the parapet of the temple are four statues of the Buddha in small shrine chambers. A small tower is built above each of these shrines. The temple faces east and consists of a small forecourt in the east with niches on either side containing statues of the Buddha. A doorway leads into a small hall, beyond which lies the sanctum, which contains a gilded statue of the seated Buddha (over 5ft high) holding earth as witness to his achieved Enlightenment. Above the sanctum is the main hall with a shrine containing a statue of Buddha, where senior monks gather to meditate.

From the east, a flight of steps leads down through a long central path to the main temple and the surrounding area. Along this path, there are significant places associated with events that immediately followed the Buddha's enlightenment, together with votive stupas and shrines.

- **Bodhi Tree:**

The Bodhi Tree or Bodhi Fig Tree was a large and ancient sacred fig tree (*Ficus religiosa*, also called the Bo Tree, located in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India, under which Siddhartha Gautama, the spiritual teacher who became known as the Buddha, is said to have attained enlightenment or Bodhi circa 500 BCE. In religious iconography, the Bodhi Tree is recognizable by its heart-shaped leaves, which are usually prominently displayed.

The proper term "Bodhi Tree" is also applied to existing sacred fig (*Ficus religiosa*) trees, also known as bodhi trees. The foremost example of an existing tree is the Mahabodhi Tree growing at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya, which is often cited as a direct descendant of the original tree. This tree, planted around 250 BCE, is a frequent destination for pilgrims, being the most important of the four main Buddhist pilgrimage sites.

Other holy bodhi trees which have great significance in the history of Buddhism are the Anandabodhi Tree at Jetavana in Sravasti in North India and the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Both are also believed to have been propagated from the original Bodhi Tree.

- **The Great Buddha Statue:**

The Great Buddha Statue also known as 80 feet statue is in Bodhgaya. The unveiling and consecration of the Great Buddha Statue took place on 18 November 1989. The consecration ceremony was attended by the XIVth Dalai Lama, who blessed the 25-meter statue, the first great Buddha ever built in the history of India. The Statue is now a symbol of the holy place Bodhgaya, next to Mahabodhi Temple which is a World Heritage site and enjoys constant visits of pilgrims from all over the world. Among local people, it is nicknamed "the 80-foot (25-meter) Buddha Statue."

Under the slogan "Spread Buddha's rays to the Whole World," Daijokyo spent seven years on the construction of the Great Buddha Statue, mobilizing 120,000 masons in total.

- **Vajrasana:**

The red sandstone slab between the Bodhi tree and the Mahabodhi Temple is said to have been erected by emperor Ashoka to mark the exact position where Lord Buddha sat. It is traditionally called Buddha's vajrasana (meaning diamond throne or thunder seat). It is said Lord Buddha sat here in meditation gazing eastwards. One of the most famous of Ashoka's many pillars (on which he had engraved his edicts and his understanding of religious doctrine), it stands at the southeast corner of the temple. Vajrasana has been mentioned in

the work of many scholars like Ashvaghosa, who in his Buddhacharita reveals that this seat is the “navel of the earth”; Fa-Hien mentions that all the past Buddhas attained enlightenment here and the future Buddhas too will attain enlightenment at this spot.

- **Archaeological Society of India Museum:**

Archaeological Society of India Museum houses an excellent collection of various Buddhist and Hindu relics, mostly related to the Pala period (8th to 12th centuries). Established in 1956, the museum has two galleries and an open courtyard, along with two verandahs that boast various antiques. One can find exhibits of bronze statues, terracotta items, images of Lord Buddha and stone sculptures, along with pillars, railings, panels, rods, plaques etc. It is located inside the Mahabodhi Temple complex. The second gallery of the museum houses an idol of the varaha avatar of Lord Vishnu and visitors can also learn about the dasavatara (10-avatar) incarnation of the deity. While it is quite difficult to encapsulate the vast history of Bodh Gaya and the richness of Buddhist culture, this museum is an attempt to make research and understanding easier.

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#### **6.4 Tourist Attractions of Sarnath:**

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Sarnath (along with Bodhgaya and Kushinagar in India, and Lumbini in Nepal) is one of the four most important Buddhist pilgrimage destinations in the world. It has special significance because it's the place where the Buddha gave his first sermon. However, you don't have to be Buddhist to enjoy visiting it. Sarnath also makes a peaceful and refreshing side trip from Varanasi. Many people are surprised to discover Sarnath has Jain and Hindu connections too. Find out what you need to know to visit in this guide.

##### **History:**

A long time ago, around the 5th century B.C., a young prince named Siddhartha Gautama was born in Lumbini. He led a very sheltered and lavish life. However, just before he turned 30, he ventured out into the countryside where

he encountered illness and death. This prompted him to give everything up and go in search of liberation from suffering.

Eventually, he realized that liberation comes from disciplining the mind. He then sat down to meditate under a sacred fig tree and resolved not to get up until he became enlightened. It happened, profoundly, one full moon night. The tree (which came to be known as the Bodhi tree in reflection of his awakening) was located at the site of the magnificent Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya.

The Buddha didn't start preaching at Bodhgaya though. There were five people he wanted to teach first. He'd previously practised physical discipline with them, as a means to liberation. They'd left him in disgust after he decided it wasn't the right path to liberation. The Buddha heard that they were dwelling in a deer park at Sarnath, so he headed there. They were so impressed with his newfound wisdom and Four Noble Truths that they became his first disciples. Buddhism flourished in Sarnath due to its proximity to Varanasi. However, most of the structures were built by Mauryan Emperor Ashoka a couple of centuries after the religion was established. Guilt over his brutal invasion of Kalinga (present-day Odisha on India's east coast) caused him to convert to Buddhism and the practice of nonviolence, and he enthusiastically went about constructing stupas and pillars across India to promote the religion.

The most celebrated pillar is the one at Sarnath. The national emblem of India, featuring four lions and a dharma chakra (wheel that represents the Buddhist teachings), is derived from it. The chakra also appears on the Indian flag.

Subsequent rulers added to the stupas and monasteries that Ashoka built at Sarnath. During the reign of the Gupta dynasty in the 4th century A.D., Sarnath was an active centre of art and Buddhist sculpture. By the 7th century, Sarnath had become a major centre for the study of Buddhism and thousands of monks were living in monasteries there.

Unfortunately, Turkish Muslim invaders arrived in the 12th century and destroyed much of Sarnath, along with many other Buddhist sites in North India. Most of what remained of the Dharmarajika Stupa, made by Ashoka, was

further demolished in the late 18th century by Jagat Singh (Dewan of Raja Chet Singh of Banaras) and used as building materials. However, this rediscovery of Sarnath prompted British archaeologists to excavate the site in the 19th and 20th centuries.

**Buddhist Tourist Attractions of Sarnath:****Dhamek Stupa:**

Dhamek Stupa is the most noticeable structure in Sarnath, near Varanasi. It is one of the most prominent Buddhist structures in India. The Dhamek Stupa was built in 500 CE to replace an earlier structure commissioned by the great Mauryan king Ashoka in 249 BCE.

The Dhamek Stupa represents the deer park (Rishipattana). This park is said to be of great importance as Buddha gave his first sermon here after attaining enlightenment, to his disciples that revealed his “Eightfold Path”.

The Stupa is 28 meters in diameter at the base and 43.6 meters in height, built partly of stone and partly of brick. The stone facing the lower part is adorned with delicate floral carvings of Gupta origin.

The stupa was enlarged on six occasions but the upper part is still unfinished. The wall is covered with exquisitely carved figures of humans and birds, as well as inscriptions in the Brahmi script.

**Dharmrajika Stupa:**

Close to Dhamekh Stupa, another treasure of Sarnath is situated named, Dharmarajika Stupa. It was constructed by King Ashoka and was further destroyed in 1794 by Jagat Singh (to use the bricks for another construction purpose) during which, a box with bones was found. It is believed that this box contains the relics of Lord Buddha. At Indian Museum Kolkata, one can find this box, where it has been kept safely. It is considered that the bones were disposed-off in Ganga by Jagat Singh.

**Chaukhandi Stupa:**

This Stupa is situated about 13 KM from Varanasi. While building the Stupa, the bricks used in it were like Octagonal Tower (during Gupta Period in the 4th

– 6th Century). Later on, little modification was made by Mughal Emperor Akbar in the year 1588 to memorize the shelter of Humayun at Sarnath.

When Lord Buddha visited Sarnath for the first time, he met his first 5 disciples at Chaukhandi Stupa. It is believed that he visited Sarnath post-528 BCE after getting enlightenment at Bodh Gaya to meet his disciples Mahanama, Koudanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa and Asvajita. He met them and shared the knowledge which he had got from enlightenment.

**Ashoka Pillar:**

The initial height of the Ashoka pillar was 55 feet. At present, it's only 7 feet 9 inches. The upper extremity of the Pillar is in the Sarnath Museum, which is also the national symbol of India. Ashoka ordered in the first article of the pillar that if the Monks (Male/Female) will try to break the union or condemn the Sangh, they will be removed from the Sangh by making them wear white clothes. The second article is of the Kushan period and the third article is of Gupt Kaal, in which the teachers of the committees' branch are mentioned.

**Buddha Statue:**

80-feet-tall statue of Lord Buddha in India is situated at Sarnath Thai temple near Varanasi. 815 stones were used in building this statue. It took around 14 years to complete the construction of this statue.

**Archaeological Museum:**

To place and preserve the historical and antique things, a famous Archaeological Museum has been constructed at Sarnath. The museum consists of various objects of Buddhist art, images of Hindu Gods and other ancient things. The museum consists of five Galleries and two Varandahs.

**Mulagandhakuti Vihar Buddhist Temple**

This temple was built in 1931 by Sri Lankan Mahabodhi Society at Sarnath. It is said that this is the place where Lord Buddha spent his first rainy season. On the wall of the temple, beautiful frescoes are incorporated which depict the life of Lord Buddha.

**Deer Park:**

Sarnath word is derived from Sarangnath or the Deer God. Deer Park (in Sarnath) is the place where Lord Buddha has given his first sermon. As per Huiyen Tsang, the famous Chinese Monk, the development of Deer Park was done by Jataka King, Benaras. The park was constructed mainly for deer so that they can roam here free. The park also consists of an array of bird life. One can spend some leisure time apart from hectic life as the atmosphere here is very soothing and relaxing.

**Kushinagar:**

Kushinagar or Kushinara is a town in the Kushinagar district of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is an important Buddhist pilgrimage site, where Buddhists believe Gautama Buddha attained Parinirvana after his death. It is an international Buddhist pilgrimage centre. Kushinagar is one of the four major places in the Buddhist circuit where Buddha is said to have lived. The other sites are Lumbini, Sarnath and Bodhgaya. It was a celebrated centre of the Malla kingdom of ancient India. The followers of Buddhism, especially from Asian countries, wish to visit this place at least once in their lifetime.

**Parinirvana Stupa:**

The Parinirvana Temple with the Parinirvana Stupa, Kushinagar

The reclining Nirvana statue of the Buddha is inside the Parinirvana Stupa. The statue is 6.10 metres long and is made of monolith red sandstone. It represents the "Dying Buddha" reclining on his right side with his face towards the west. It is placed on a large brick pedestal with stone posts at the corners.

**Nirvana Chaitya (Main Stupa):**

Nirvana Chaitya is located just behind the Main Parinirvana Temple. It was excavated by Carlleyle in the year 1876. During excavations, a copper plate was found, which contained the text of the "Nidana-Sutra" which concluded the statement that the plate had been deposited in the Nirvana-Chaitya by one Haribala, who also installed the great Nirvana Statue of Buddha in the temple front.

**Ramabhar Stupa:**

Ramabhar Stupa, also called a Mukutbandhan-Chaitya, is the cremation place of Buddha. This site is 1.5 km east of the main Nirvana Temple on the Kushinagar-Deoria road.

**Matha Kuar Shrine:**

A colossal statue of Lord Buddha is installed, which is carved out of one block which represents Buddha seated under the "Bodhi Tree" in a pose known as "Bhumi Sparsh Mudra" (Earth-touching attitude). The inscription at the base of the statue is datable to the 10th or 11th century A.D.

**Other major places:**

Indo-Japan-Sri Lanka Temple: Indo-Japan-Sri Lanka temple is a marvel of Buddhist architectural grandeur of modern times.

**Wat Thai Temple:**

It is a huge complex built in a typical Thai-Buddhist architectural fashion.

**Ruins and brick structures:**

These are located around the main Nirvana Temple and Main Stupa. These are the remains of various monasteries of different sizes constructed from time to time in the ancient period.

Several museums, meditation parks and several other temples based on the architecture of various eastern countries.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh has proposed the Kushinagar-Sarnath Buddha Expressway to connect Buddhist pilgrimage towns. The expressway will be around 200 km long and will reduce the distance from both towns from Seven hours to one and half hours.

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**6.5 Tourist Attractions of Vaishali:**

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**Vaishali:**

Vaishali finds its origin way back in history from the Mahabharata period. It is the place where democracy found its origin around 600 BC. Numerous references to Vaishali are found in texts about both Jainism and Buddhism,



which have preserved much information on Vaishali and the other Maha Janapadas. Based on the information found in these texts, Vaishali was established as a republic by the 6th century BC, before the birth of Gautama Buddha in 563, making it the world's first republic. Being the birthplace of the last Jain "Thirthankara" Lord Mahavir gives Vaishali a very special place in history. The founder of Buddhism, Gautam Buddha delivered his last sermon and announced his Parinirvana (attainment of enlightenment) on this holy soil. It is also renowned as the land of Ambapali (Amrapali), the great Indian courtesan. It is held that the district derives its name from King Vishal. However, history records that around the time Patliputra was the centre of political, cultural and economic activities in the Gangetic plains, Vaishali came into existence as the centre of the Ganga, it was the seat of the Republic of Vajji. Vaishali is credited with being the World's First Republic to have a duly elected assembly of representatives and efficient administration. The district gained the status of an independent district on 12-10-1972, before which it was a part of the old Muzaffarpur district. Hajipur, the district headquarters of Vaishali was so named after a King of Bengal named Haji Ilyas Shah (1345 to 1358 A.D) who founded it. He built a fort in Hajipur, with a mosque inside it called Jami Masjid, a building measuring 84.5 ft (25.8 m) long and 33.5 ft (10.2 m) broad, which was called Ukkacala in ancient times.

**Ashoka Pillar:** Mauryan Emperor Ashoka (250 BC), built the Ashoka Pillar at Kolhua. Ashoka Pillar is 18.3 m high and is made of a highly polished single piece of red sandstone capped by a bell-shaped capital. Atop the Ashoka Pillar, a life-size figure of a lion is placed. Adjacent to the Ashoka Pillar is a small tank called Ramkund.

**Buddha Stupa-I:** Buddha Stupa-I is the place where one-eighth of the sacred ashes of the Lord Buddha had been enshrined in a stone casket. Presently, the exterior of this stupa is in a dilapidated condition and has a plain surface.

**Budha Stupa-II:** Buddha Stupa-II is located close to the Stupa - 1. Excavation of the site in 1958 led to the discovery of another casket of Lord Buddha's ashes.

**Bawan Pokhar Temple:** Bowan Pokhar Temple is an old temple built in the Pala period. Situated on the northern bank of Bawan Pokhar the temple enshrines the beautiful images of several Hindu gods.

**Abhishek Pushkarn:** Abhishek Pushkarn or Coronation tank contains water that was believed to be sacred in the old days. Close to Abhishek Pushkarn, the Lichchavi Stupa was located. Abhishek Pushkarn is also the site where the stone casket of the sacred ashes of Lord Buddha was enshrined.

**Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World Peace Pagoda):** Built by Buddha Vihar society, the Shanti Stupa lies on the south bank of the coronation tank.

**Kundalpur:** Just 4 km away from Vaishali, Kundalpur is considered the birthplace of Lord Mahavira. It is said that Lord Mahavir, the Jain Tirthankar was born here about 2,550 years ago. Lord Mahavira is said to have spent the first 22 years of his life at Kundalpur.

**Raja Vishal Ka Garh:** Raja Vishal Ka Garh is said to be the ancient parliament house. There is a huge mound with a circumference of about one kilometre and the walls are nearly 2 metres high with 43 mts wide moat around them. It is said that more than seven thousand representatives of the federal assembly gathered at this place to legislate and discuss the day-to-day problems.

**Vaishali Museum:** A place of tourist interest, Vaishali Museum houses some of the archaeological remains discovered here.

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### **6.6 Tourist Attractions of Kushinagar:**

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Kushinagar and Kasia Bazar is a town and a historical place located in the northeastern marginal area of Uttar Pradesh. The name “Kasia Bazar” has been changed to Kushinagar and after that “Kasia Bazar” has officially become a municipality with the name “Kushinagar”. This is a Buddhist pilgrimage where Gautam Buddha had Mahaparinirvana. Kushinagar is located on National Highway 28, about 50 km east of Gorakhpur. There are many beautiful Buddhist temples here. For this reason, it is also an international tourist destination where Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world come for

excursions. After the Kushinagar town and eastwards, Bihar state starts about 20 km.

There are also Buddha Postgraduate Colleges, Buddha Intermediate College and many small schools. The area around Kushinagar is mainly agricultural. Bhojpuri is a popular spoken language. Here are the main crops wheat, paddy, sugarcane etc.

On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, there is a month's fair in Kushinagar. Although this shrine is related to Mahatma Buddha, the surrounding area is Hindu dominated. In this fair, the people around the place participate with complete reverence and perform puja and worship in various temples. Nobody is sure that Buddha is their 'God'.

Kushinagar district belongs to the Gorakhpur division. This area was formerly known as Kushinara where Buddha's Mahaparinirvana took place. The administrative division of Kushinagar district is in Padrauna. The area is 2,873.5 square kilometres (1,109.5 square miles), then the population is 3,560,830 (2011). The literacy rate is 67.66 percent and the sex ratio is 955. This is a Lok Sabha constituency, then seven Assembly constituencies - Fazilnagar, Khida, Ramkola, Hata, Kasia, Padrauna, and Tamakhi Raj. There are 6 tehsils in the district - Padrauna, Kushinagar, Hatta, Tamkihiraj, Khida, Kaptanganj and 14 blocks are - Padrauna, Bishanpura, Kushinagar, Hata, Motichak, Saverhi, Nebula, Narangia, Khida, Dudhi, Fazil Nagar, Sukrauli, Kaptanganj, Ramkola and Tamkhuiraj The number of villages in the district is 1447.

Important Tourist attractions of Kushinagar are listed below:

- **Mahanirvana Stupa:**

Excavations under the supervision of A.C.L. Carlleyle in 1876-77 yielded the remains of the main Mahanirvana Stupa and the statue of the reclining Buddha. The main stupa as well as the shrine in front are built on a single platform which measures 2.74m in height. The statue of the reclining Buddha recovered from this site measures 6.1m in length. It is a monolithic sculpture carved out of a single block of sandstone. The image of the reclining Buddha is found resting

on his right side with his face towards the west probably indicating the sunset of his life. The right hand is placed under his head possibly as a cushion. The image is mounted on a pedestal with three human figures embedded on the western side of the pedestal. An inscription recovered from the site ascribes the statue as a religious gift from Haribala. The image of the reclining Buddha is enshrined in the Mahanirvana Temple. The main stupa that stands next to the Mahanirvana Temple was also excavated by Carlleyle in 1876 CE. Further excavations in 1910 revealed copper coins of Jai Gupta and a copper vessel with a copper plate. There was another vessel containing the silver coins of Kumar Gupta. The main stupa is raised on a circular base and crowned with a dome on the top. The stupa measures 19.81m in height. The temple and the stupa assumed their present form in 1956 during the 2500th anniversary of Buddha Jayanti.

- **Matha Kunwar:**

Prominent among the archaeological finds is the statue of Buddha consecrated at the Matha Kunwar Shrine. This magnificent statue measures 3.05m in height dating back to the 10th-11th century CE. It is carved out of a single blue stone from the Gaya region depicting Buddha under the Bodhi Tree in the Bhoomi Sparsha Mudra. The existing shrine was constructed in 1927 CE to protect the image of Buddha. It is surrounded by ruins of monasteries, stupas and other Buddhist structures.

- **Sri Lanka Buddhist Temple:**

This temple is a joint venture between the AIK World Buddhist Culture Association Japan and the Sri Lanka Buddhist Centre. A flight of stairs leads to the main shrine made up of a domed brick structure on the first floor. The shrine contains an image of Buddha surrounded by ritualistic objects. Several frames of ink paintings adorn the wall at the back of the image.

- **Chinese Buddhist Temple:**

Linh-Son Vietnam Chinese Buddhist Temple is located further north of the Burmese Temple. The main shrine is a two-storied building built in Chinese

style complete with images of dragons and laughing Buddha. The Chinese temple complex also features replicas of shrines at the four important Buddhist pilgrimage sites: Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar. In addition to these, there is a replica of a Buddhist temple in Vietnam. This temple also has lotus ponds.

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**6.7 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Highlight the important pillars created by emperor Ashoka the Great.**

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- **Discuss the important Historical monuments associated with Buddhism.**

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**6.8 Summary:**

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Thus based on the above-detailed study now it is clear that Buddhism is a great religion founded by Siddhartha Gautam, who later became Gautam Buddha. He left everything after seeing the misery and suffering of people. After some years Ashoka the Great, who won Kalinga after a great war where thousands of innocent people died, got attracted towards Buddhism and adopted

Buddhism. Later, to promote Buddhism, he constructed thousands of pillars and stupas around the world.

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**6.9 Glossary:**

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- **Buddhist:** One who follows the teachings of Buddhism
- **Buddhism:** It is a religion, which follows the lessons of Buddha
- **Bhikkhu:** A Buddhist monk who has left his family and friends and now follows the teachings of Buddhism.

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**6.10 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Write a detailed note on the Buddhist tourist attractions of India which are also a part of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- Throw a light on the history of Buddhism.

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**6.11 References and Suggested Readings:**

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**Unit -7**

**Islam & Christianity: Ajmer Sharif, Haji Ali Dargah  
(Mumbai), Hazratbal Shrine (Srinagar), Goa**

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**Structure:**

**7.0 Introduction**

**7.1 Objectives**

**7.2 Islam**

**7.3 Ajme Sharif, Ajmer**

**7.4 Haji Ali Dargah, Mumbai**

**7.5 Hazratbal Shrine, Srinagar**

**7.6 Christianity**

**7.7 Important Churches of Goa**

**7.8 Check Your Progress**

**7.9 Summary**

**7.10 Glossary**

**7.11 Self-Assessment Questions**

**7.12 References and Suggested Readings**



**7.0 Introduction:**

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Islam is the second-largest religion in the world. It is spread in more than 52 countries of the world. In India, Islam is the second-largest religion. Its followers are scattered around the country. During the times of the Mughals to present its followers constructed thousands of religious places. Every year not only Muslims but Hindus too travel to the pilgrimage place of Islam. Some important religious places Muslims are Ajmer Sharif, Haji Ali Dargah, Haratbal Shrine etc. Christianity is the largest religion in the world. It has emerged after the death of Jesus in the first century CE. It is spread across all continents of the World with about 2.282 billion followers. In India, about 27.8 million Christians live who live in every state and union territory of the country. Religious attractions of Christianity are the churches and most of them are situated in Goa. Here in the present unit learners will understand the popular churches located in Goa.

**7.1 Objectives:**

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The following are the major objectives of the present unit:

- To highlight the salient features of different religious attractions of Islam and Christianity.
- To know the contribution of the religious attractions of Islam and Christianity in the tourism industry of India.

**7.2 Islam:**

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Islam is the second largest religion in the world after Christianity, with about 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide. Although its roots go back further, scholars typically date the creation of Islam to the 7th century, making it the youngest of the major world religions. Islam started in Mecca, in modern-day Saudi Arabia, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad's life. Today, the faith is spreading rapidly throughout the world.

**Some facts:**

- The word “Islam” means “submission to the will of God.”
- Followers of Islam are called Muslims.
- Muslims are monotheistic and worship one, all-knowing God, who in Arabic is known as Allah.
- Followers of Islam aim to live a life of complete submission to Allah. They believe that nothing can happen without Allah’s permission, but humans have free will.
- Islam teaches that Allah’s word was revealed to the prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel.
- Muslims believe several prophets were sent to teach Allah’s law. They respect some of the same prophets as Jews and Christians, including Abraham, Moses, Noah and Jesus. Muslims contend that Muhammad was the final prophet.
- Mosques are places where Muslims worship.
- Some important Islamic holy places include the Kaaba shrine in Mecca, the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, and the Prophet Muhammad’s mosque in Medina.
- The Quran (or Koran) is the major holy text of Islam. The Hadith is another important book. Muslims also revere some material found in the Judeo-Christian Bible.
- Followers worship Allah by praying and reciting the Quran. They believe there will be a Day of Judgment and life after death.
- A central idea in Islam is “jihad,” which means “struggle.” While the term has been used negatively in mainstream culture, Muslims believe it refers to internal and external efforts to defend their faith. Although rare, this can include military jihad if a “just war” is needed.

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**7.3 Ajmer Sharif, Ajmer:**

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Ajmer is a bustling city, located 130 km southwest of Jaipur and just 14 km from the pilgrimage town of Pushkar. The city of Ajmer gets its name from “Ajay Meru”, which can be roughly translated as “invincible hill”. Home to several

tourist places, Ajmer can be a perfect representation of the diversity of Indian culture and ethics, and displays a perfect blend of religion, community, culture, etc., coexisting and flourishing in harmony.

Ajmer remains a popular tourist attraction, in addition to being a pilgrimage centre for both Hindus and Muslims. The final resting place of the Sufi Saint, Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Chisti, is visited by Muslims from all over the world; in fact, the Dargah is revered equally by both Hindus and Muslims. The city is surrounded by the expansive lake of Ana Sagar and the rugged hills of Aravalli. Although Ajmer Sharif Dargah, the shrine of Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti, remains the most famous tourist place to visit in Ajmer, the city is also significantly known for the Jain religion and is home to an amazing golden Jain Temple. Ajmer is also a well-known learning centre. The Mayo College was one of India's first schools that acted as the stepping stone for the British style of education and is now one of the popular places to visit in Ajmer.

**History of Ajmer:**

The city was founded by Raja Ajaypal Chauhan in the 7th century AD and the city remained the epicentre of the Chauhan Dynasty till the 12th century AD. The Chauhan dynasty was responsible for the construction of the first hill fort of India, Taragarh, another must-visit place in Ajmer. After the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan by Mohammed Ghori, Ajmer becomes home to several dynasties. The Mughal Sultans particularly liked Ajmer due to the presence of the holy Ajmer Sharif Dargah, the most popular tourist place in the city. Ajmer has a rich history and played host to the first meeting between the Mughal King Jahangir and the Ambassador of the Court of King James 1 of England, Sir Thomas Roe in 1616. The city was officially handed over to the British a few centuries later, making Ajmer the only region in Rajputana to be directly controlled by the British East India Company.

**• Ajmer Sharif Dargah:**

It is believed that a person who prays with a pure heart at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah gets all his or her wishes fulfilled. Ajmer Sharif is a Sufi shrine and one

of the most visited places in Ajmer. The pious Persian Sufi saint, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti who is well-known for his secular preaching is enshrined here. Many Muslims believe that Moinuddin Chisti was Muhammad's direct descendant and it was at his request (Muhammad came to his dream) he went to India. He reached Ajmer in 1192 via Lahore and stayed there till his death in 1236 AD.

His shrine was built by Mughal Emperor Humayun, and to enter the dargah, you need to go through a series of massive doors made from silver with beautiful carvings. As you reach the courtyard, you would come across the tomb of Moinuddin Chishti, carved out of marble. It has gold plating on the top and is guarded by a railing made from silver and a marble screen.

There are several mosques inside the Dargah complex, built by Akbar and Shah Jahan, who made it a point to visit Ajmer at least once a year.

The place is an architectural marvel and perfect for connecting to your spiritual self. You do not have to be religious to visit this place. The peacefulness and serenity of this place is something that you would not get anywhere else.

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#### **7.4 Haji Ali Dargah, Mumbai:**

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The Haji Ali Dargah is a historical landmark in Mumbai and is also one of the most prestigious Islamic symbols situated in South Mumbai. The Haji Ali was built by a wealthy Muslim merchant who became a saint named Haji Ali Shah Bukhari. He renounced all worldly pleasures before embarking on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Haji Ali Dargah was built in his honour in 1431 AD. The whitewashed structure is situated in an area of 4,500 meters and is flanked by crisp, marble pillars that are still marveled at today. This 400-year-old structure that stands in Mumbai today has degenerated and corroded in many places and the structural upgradation of this marvellous structure began in 2008. People from all over the world visit the Haji Ali Dargah irrespective of caste, religion and creed. The Haji Ali Dargah is a popular pilgrimage site today and most tourists visit the tomb of Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari to seek his blessings for

wealth, health, marriage etc. On special occasions such as the death anniversary of the saint or Eid-ul-Fir, special events or programs are organized at the Haji Ali Dargah in Mumbai.

**Architecture:**

The Haji Ali Dargah is made of 'Makrana' marble, the same whitewashed marble that Emperor Shah Jahan used to build the Taj Mahal. The Haji Ali Dargah houses two important monuments-tomb of Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari and a mosque. The architecture of this monument reflects the styles and patterns of Mughal and Indo-Islamic architecture. The Haji Ali Dargah occupies 4,500 sq. meters of space and is 85 feet tall. A marble courtyard with the central shrine and the main mosque brocaded with a red and green sheet are the first structures you see while entering the Dargah complex. Artistic marble pillars, mirror work with kaleidoscopic patterns and minarets sentinel at the shrine in the centre, making the monument a grand sight for all. The Haji Ali Dargah is a 400-year-old structure and is corroding in various places. With permission from the Central Government, the Dargah Trust is now trying to source the Makrana marble to rebuild the structure in various places.

**History:**

The Haji Ali Dargah was built by a wealthy merchant known as Haji Ali Shah Bukhari who decided to renounce all worldly possessions and turned into a saint just before going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The mosque (Masjid) inside the complex and the Dargah were built in 1431 AD. It is believed that on the way to Mecca, Haji Ali perished and the casket that carried his body floated back to the 'Dargah' on its own. However, another legend states that Haji Ali drowned at the point where the Dargah now stands today. Since then, the monument has been a custodian of the shores of Mumbai.

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**7.5 Hazratbal Shrine, Srinagar:**

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Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar is a famous mosque that holds high reverence amongst Muslims. According to local beliefs, it houses Moi-e-Muqqadas – the

sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad's beard. Also known by different names like Assar-e-Sharief, Dargah Sharif and Madinat-us-Sani, this mosque is the epitome of the love and devotion of Muslims for the Prophet. The construction of this shrine started in 1968, under the supervision of Muslim Auqaf Trust's Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The construction of this white marble edifice with a domed structure was completed in the year 1979.

The mosque has a deep-rooted history that dates back to the 17th century. The place where the mosque stands today was originally the site of the Ishrat Mahal and a garden, which were built in 1623 by Shah Jahan's subedar Sadiq Khan. Upon his arrival in 1634, Shah Jahan ordered the conversion of the palace into a place for offering prayers. When Moi-e-Muqqadas arrived in Kashmir in 1699, it was kept in the Naqashbad Sahib for some time, before becoming a part of the Hazratbal. Although this shrine is frequented by locals on Fridays for mass prayers, it experiences an influx of visitors on special occasions, when holy relics are displayed.

**History:**

The mosque contains strands of Muhammad's hair, often referred to as "the relic of Hazratbal shrine" or simply, "the relic". The relic was first brought to Kashmir by Syed Abdullah, a purported descendant of Muhammad who left Medina and settled in Bijapur, near Hyderabad in 1635.

When Syed Abdullah died, his son Syed Hamid inherited the relic. Following the Mughal conquest of the region, Syed Hamid was stripped of his family estates. Finding himself unable to care for the relic, he sold it to a wealthy Kashmiri businessman Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai.

However, when the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb came to know of what had transpired, he had the relic seized and sent to the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer and had Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai imprisoned in Delhi for possessing the relic. Later, realizing his mistake, Aurangzeb decided to restore the relic to Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai and allow him to take it to Kashmir. However, Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai had already died in imprisonment. In

1700, the relic finally reached Kashmir, along with the body of Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai. There, Inayat Begum, daughter of Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai, became a custodian of the relic and established the shrine. Since then, her male descendants have been caretakers of the relic.

Dr Manzoor Banday, Head Cleric of Hazratbal Shrine displays the holy relic on the occasion of Eid e Milad un Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad.

Her male descendants belong to what is known as the Banday family. Currently (as of 2019), 3 main members care for the holy relic: Dr Manzoor Ahmad Banday, Ishaq Banday and Mohiuddin Banday. The Holy Relic is displayed for public viewing only on special occasions like the birthday of Prophet Muhammad and his 4 main companions, Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique, Hazrat Umar ibn Khattab, Hazrat Usman ibn Affan and Hazrat Ali.

The caretakers of the shrine are known as Nishandehs. The eldest male heirs of the previous Nishandeh continue the legacy of displaying the relic when the current Nishandeh passes away.

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### **7.6 Christianity:**

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Christianity is major religion stemming from the life, teachings, and death of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ, or the Anointed One of God) in the 1st century CE. It has become the largest of the world's religions and, geographically, the most widely diffused of all faiths. It has a constituency of more than two billion believers. Its largest groups are the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the Protestant churches. The Oriental Orthodox churches constitute one of the oldest branches of the tradition but had been out of contact with Western Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy from the middle of the 5th century until the late 20th century because of a dispute over Christology (the doctrine of Jesus Christ's nature and significance). Significant movements within the broader Christian world and sometimes transcending denominational boundaries are Pentecostalism, Charismatic Christianity, Evangelicalism, and fundamentalism. In addition, there are numerous

independent churches throughout the world. See also Anglicanism; Baptist; Calvinism; Congregationalism; Evangelical church; Lutheranism; Oriental Orthodoxy; Presbyterian; Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

This article first considers the nature and development of the Christian religion, its ideas, and its institutions. This is followed by an examination of several intellectual manifestations of Christianity. Finally, the position of Christianity in the world, the relations among its divisions and denominations, its missionary outreach to other peoples, and its relations with other world religions are discussed. For supporting material on various topics, see Angel and Demon; Bible; biblical literature; canon law; Creed; Christology; Doctrine and Dogma; ecumenism; eschatology; exegesis; faith; grace; Heaven; hell; heresy; Jesus Christ; liturgical movement; millennialism; miracle; monasticism; monotheism; New Testament; Old Testament; original sin; papacy; prayer; priesthood; purgatory; sacrament; salvation; schism; scripture; theism; theology; and worship.

**The Church and its History:****The Essence and Identity of Christianity:**

At its most basic, Christianity is the faith tradition that focuses on the figure of Jesus Christ. In this context, faith refers both to the believers' act of trust and to the content of their faith. As a tradition, Christianity is more than a system of religious belief. It also has generated a culture, a set of ideas and ways of life, practices, and artefacts that have been handed down from generation to generation since Jesus first became the object of faith. Christianity is thus both a living tradition of faith and the culture that the faith leaves behind. The agent of Christianity is the church, the community of people who make up the body of believers.

To say that Christianity "focuses" on Jesus Christ is to say that somehow it brings together its beliefs and practices and other traditions about a historical figure. Few Christians, however, would be content to keep this reference merely historical. Although their faith tradition is historical—i.e., they believe that



transactions with the divine do not occur in the realm of timeless ideas but among ordinary humans through the ages—the vast majority of Christians focus their faith in Jesus Christ as someone who is also a present reality. They may include many other references in their tradition and thus may speak of “God” and “human nature” or of the “church” and the “world,” but they would not be called Christian if they did not bring their attention first and last to Jesus Christ.

While there is something simple about this focus on Jesus as the central figure, there is also something very complicated. That complexity is revealed by the thousands of separate churches, sects, and denominations that make up the modern Christian tradition. To project these separate bodies against the background of their development in the nations of the world is to suggest the bewildering variety. To picture people expressing their adherence to that tradition in their prayer life and church-building, in their quiet worship or their strenuous efforts to change the world, is to suggest even more of the variety.

Given such complexity, it is natural that throughout Christian history both those in the tradition and those surrounding it have made attempts at simplification. Two ways to do this have been to concentrate on the “essence” of the faith, and thus on the ideas that are integral to it, or to be concerned with the “identity” of the tradition, and thus on the boundaries of its historical experience.

Modern scholars have located the focus of this faith tradition in the context of monotheistic religions. Christianity addresses the historical figure of Jesus Christ against the background of, and while seeking to remain faithful to, the experience of one God. It has consistently rejected polytheism and atheism.

A second element of the faith tradition of Christianity, with rare exceptions, is a plan of salvation or redemption. That is to say, the believers in the church picture themselves as in a plight from which they need rescue. For whatever reason, they have been distanced from God and need to be saved. Christianity is based on a particular experience or scheme directed to the act of saving — that

is, of bringing or “buying back,” which is part of what redemption means, these creatures of God to their source in God. The agent of that redemption is Jesus Christ.

It is possible that through the centuries the vast majority of believers have not used the term essence to describe the central focus of their faith. The term is itself of Greek origin and thus represents only one part of the tradition, one element in the terms that have gone into making up Christianity. Essence refers to those qualities that give something its identity and are at the centre of what makes that thing different from everything else. To Greek philosophers, it meant something intrinsic to and inherent in a thing or category of things, which gave it its character and thus separated it from everything of a different character. Thus, Jesus Christ belongs to the essential character of Christianity and gives it a unique identity.

If most people are not concerned with defining the essence of Christianity, in practice they must come to terms with what the word essence implies. Whether they are engaged in being saved or redeemed on the one hand or thinking and speaking about that redemption, its agent, and its meaning on the other, they are concentrating on the essence of their experience. Those who have concentrated from within the faith tradition have also helped to give it its identity. It is not possible to speak of the essence of a historical tradition without referring to how its ideal qualities have been discussed through the ages. Yet one can take up the separate subjects of essence and identity in sequence, being always aware of how they interrelate.

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### **7.7 Important Churches of Goa:**

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Some important beaches of Goa are listed below:

#### **Churches in Goa (List):**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Name of Church</b>
<b>1.</b>	Basilica of Bom Jesus
<b>2.</b>	Saint Catherine’s Chapel
<b>3.</b>	Church of Our Lady of the Rosary
<b>4.</b>	Church of Saint Cajetan

5.	Alex Church
6.	Three Kings Chapel
7.	Clara's Church
8.	Diogo Church
9.	Church of the Cross of Miracles
10.	Elizabeth Church
11.	Sé Catedral de Santa Catarina
12.	Church of St. Francis of Assisi
13.	Church of Saint Augustine
14.	Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception
15.	Mae De Deus Church
16.	Nossa Senhora de Penha de Franca
17.	Andrew's Church
18.	Santa Cruz Church
19.	Chapel of St. Sebastian, Goa
20.	Church of St. Anne

**1. Basilica of Bom Jesus, Goa:**

Many experts consider the Basilica of Bom Jesus, a 400-year-old church dedicated to Infant Jesus, a masterpiece of Baroque expression. This UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Old Goa remains one of the most visited landmarks in the state. The courtyard and marble floors of the church host many treasures, such as emblems, statues, intricate carvings and woodwork, and a collection of paintings, including the artwork of Dom Martin, a celebrated surrealist artist from Goa. The mummified body of Saint Francis Xavier is the key attraction of the church. The grand altar, a Golden Rose Plant gifted by Pope Pius XII, and the grotto in the church compound are the other highlights here.

- **Year of Establishment:** 1594
- **Location:** Old Goa Road, Goa
- **Timings:** Monday to Saturday – 9:00 am to 6:30 pm
- **Sunday** – 10:30 am to 6:30 pm

**2. Sé Catedral de Santa Catarina, Goa:**

Another one of the famed UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Goa, Sé Catedral de Santa Catarina is quite distinct because of the missing tower on the right. The history of the church dates back to the turbulent age of early Portuguese

occupation. A blend of Tuscan and Corinthian designs can be seen in this edifice that boasts of the Portuguese-Manueline architectural style. A major highlight here is the giant bell called the Golden Bell, which is touted to be the largest in the region. The large and richly ornamented altar, which is dedicated to Catherine of Alexandria and the spacious interiors add a splendid allure to this half-a-millennium-old structure.

- **Year of Establishment:** 1619
- **Location:** Old Goa, Goa
- **Timings:** 7:00 am to 6:30 pm

### **3. Saint Catherine's Chapel, Goa:**

A lot of the old churches in Goa have been built in the Baroque style. One of the smaller, yet enthralling examples is the Saint Catherine's Chapel which stands out because of its history. It was built in the 16th century to commemorate the Portuguese triumph over the ruler Adil Shah. Opposite this brown and white stone chapel, you can still see remnants of the old pre-colonial fort ramparts. The church, which is dedicated to Saint Catherine, is regarded as one of the oldest Christian structures in the entire continent. The design highlights of the church are its windows, twin towers, and the altar.

- **Year of Establishment:** 1510
- **Location:** Old Goa, Goa
- **Timings:** 6:00 am to 6:00 pm

### **4. Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Goa:**

Right next to Saint Catherine Chapel, you will find the well-known Church of St. Francis of Assisi built by the Portuguese. The church is more than 350 years old and while here, you can marvel at the spectacular frescoes and statues of Our Lady of Miracles, St. Francis of Assisi, and the crucified Christ inside the building. Other key features of the church include its three-tier façade with octagonal towers and rich carvings and paintings on the altar. The convent near the church houses a museum established by the Archeological Survey of India

and the main exhibits here include Hindu temple sculptures, paintings, and other artefacts.

- **Year of Establishment:** 1661
- **Location:** Old Goa
- **Timings:**
  - Church** – 7:30 am to 6:30 pm
  - Museum** – 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and 3:00 pm to 6:30 pm

#### **5. Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, Goa:**

With its three-floor façade, chapels, and richly decorated altars, the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary remains one of the glorious landmarks in Goa. It was among the many churches established by Afonso de Albuquerque, one of the most prominent Dukes of Goa. The church, which is more than 475 years old, is located on a bluff from where you can see the Mandovi River and surrounding landmarks. Many architecture enthusiasts visit this place specifically for the Manueline and Gothic details and the sedate reredos compared to the more opulent ones you would find in other Goa churches.

**Year of Establishment:** 1544

**Location:** Old Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am to 5:30 pm

#### **6. Church of Saint Augustine, Goa:**

There is a mystical aura that permeates the ruins at the Church of Saint Augustine complex, which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Churches and Convents in Goa. Established over 400 years ago by Augustinian friars, the church was abandoned in the 19th century. Today, only one of its four towers remains. There used to be an old bell here, but it was moved to the Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception once the edifice started dilapidating. In the 1980s, a thrilling excavation project was conducted here by archaeologists from Georgia and the Soviet Union to retrieve the relics of a Georgian queen named Ketevan the Martyr. The church complex has also been featured in Bollywood movies like Gumnaam and Singham.

**Year of Establishment:** 1602

**Location:** Old Goa

**Timings:** 6:30 am to 12:45 pm and 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm

**7. Church of Saint Cajetan, Goa:**

Another World Heritage landmark, the Church of Saint Cajetan overlooks the Mandovi, one of Goa's major rivers. The edifice, which is believed to have been built by three Italian priests, traces its history to the seventeenth century. The beautiful main dome with Latin inscriptions and the sculptures on the façade are just some of the many noticeable elements. Apart from the main altar, there are six smaller altars complete with huge columns and pilasters. The church, which is also called the Church of Divine Providence, is designed after the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome and features the Corinthian architectural style. You can also see paintings, sculptures, and wooden statues of saints inside this shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Divine Providence. The Church of Saint Cajetan, no doubt, deserves a place in your list of places to visit in Goa in one day.

**Year of Establishment:** 1661

**Location:** Old Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 4:00 am to 7:00 pm

**8. Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, Goa:**

Situated in the state capital Panaji, the hilltop Church of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception offers visitors splendid views of the surrounding areas. The architectural style of this 16th-century church is Baroque, a popular choice of the times. The church houses an old bell that is the second largest in the state (yes, the same bell that was brought from the Church of Saint Augustine, if you remember). The belfry on top of the grand façade in white is one of the most striking features in the exteriors while the interiors, though not as ornate as other churches in Goa, blend many vibrant colours. This beautiful white structure with zigzagging steps certainly counts among the top places to visit in North Goa.

**Year of Establishment:** 1609

**Location:** Panaji, Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and 03:30 pm to 07:30 pm

**9. Alex Church, Goa:**

If you need a breather from the partying hordes of Calangute, you don't need to go too far. St. Alex Church has been a landmark here for about three centuries and apart from the towers and white finish, it is known for its blend of Indian and Portuguese building styles. Behind the main altar, you can marvel at the gilded reredos on the back wall. The interiors of the St. Alex Church feature a heavily ornate style known as Rococo or Late Baroque. Do not leave this out if you want to explore the best churches in North Goa.

**Year of Establishment:** 1741

**Location:** Calangute, Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am and 8:30 pm

**10. Mae De Deus Church, Goa:**

The neo-Gothic spires of the Mae De Deus Church will captivate you from a distance along with its pristine white walls that stand out of the verdant, lush surroundings of the Goan countryside. The statue and cross in front of the church, the buttresses of the building, and the spikes that adorn the entire length of the walls are some of the key highlights here. You can also see a gold-painted wooden statue of Mary at the side altar while the carved and gilded ornamentation of the interiors adds to the allure of the structure. No wonder, the church counts among the top places to visit in Goa.

**Year of Establishment:** 1873

**Location:** Saligao, Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

**11. Three Kings Chapel, Goa:**

A quaint landmark with an interesting tale in its heart, the Three Kings Chapel is considered one of Goa's most haunted places. Apart from the ghostly tales, however, the Three Kings Chapel is a wonderful place to visit because of its location on the summit of a hillock. Tucked away in the small village of Cansaulim, it traces its origins back to the late 16th century and counts among

the best churches in South Goa. Enjoy nice views of the fields and villages that dot the surrounding areas and don't forget to click some Instagram-worthy pictures.

Speaking of tales from the crypt, do you fancy taking a chilling trip through the spooky places in the region? Read our blog on the most haunted places in Goa that will leave you shaking to the bones.

**Year of Establishment:** 1599

**Location:** Cansaulim, Goa

**Timings:** 6:00 am to 5:00 pm

### **12. Nossa Senhora de Penha de Franca, Goa:**

Nossa Senhora de Penha de Franca is a beautiful 17th-century structure located in the northern part of Panaji. The church owes its name to Saint Nossa Senhora, a Spanish saint who is believed to have protected sailors voyaging to India. The structure showcases certain common design elements found in the region, like the white façade and walls, stained glass windows, and tiled roofing. The striking background of lush vegetation and its proximity to the confluence of two rivers makes it a delightful place to photograph and explore, especially in the golden hours. The interiors of the church have certain highlights such as high ceilings and the paintings on the reredos.

**Year of Establishment:** 1626

**Location:** Bardez, Goa

**Timings:** 8:00 am to 11:00 pm

### **13. Clara's Church, Goa:**

Those who seek the image of an idyllic Goa, one that has been lost in the tide of modern recreation, will enjoy a trip to St. Clara's Church. Set in a serene location, the mighty church looms over fields and groves of tropical trees. Built-in the 18th century, it is one of the most enduring landmarks of Goa and has been destroyed and rebuilt a few times over. Visit to soak in the tenacity and hospitality of the local culture.

**Year of Establishment:** 1768

**Location:** Assonora, Goa



**Timings:** 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

**14. Andrew's Church, Goa:**

One of the largest churches in Goa, the St. Andrew's Church attracts many pilgrims and fervent history aficionados from all over the country and beyond. Founded by the Jesuits over four centuries ago, the church is dedicated to Saint Andrew who is the patron saint of fishermen. The white façade is dotted with fine woodwork and stained glass windows and the simply laid altar-reredos is another highlight of the church.

**Year of Establishment:** 1570

**Location:** Vasco Da Gama, Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

**15. Diogo Church, Goa:**

A multilevel white façade welcomes you to St. Diogo Church, which is located in a fairly popular location in Goa. The main altar of the church is dedicated to the patron saint St. Diogo and the church is believed to be more than 400 years old. Five more ornate altars adorn the different sections of the interiors and the arched entry doors are another distinct feature of the church. Locally called the Guirim church, the place traces its history back to the early 17th century and was remodelled several times over the past four centuries.

**Year of Establishment:** 1604

**Location:** Guirim, Goa

**Timings:** 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

**16. Santa Cruz Church, Goa:**

Santa Cruz church, also known as the Holy Cross Church, is another must-visit landmark in Goa. Its Neo-Roman splendour will captivate any lover of architecture. The white colour of the exterior walls and façade, inspired by the Se Cathedral, provides a striking sight even from a long distance. Built at the recommendation of the king of Portugal, this magnificent structure boasts a history of over 450 years. The church celebrates its feast at the beginning of May and it involves many festivities and rituals.

**Year of Establishment:** 1547

**Location:** Santa Cruz, Goa

**Timings:** 6:00 am to 6:00 pm

### **17. Church of the Cross of Miracles, Goa:**

In India, travellers will come across many religious landmarks that may be dedicated to one particular religion but are revered equally by all. The Church of the Cross of Miracles is one such place located on the outskirts of Old Goa. The church has been associated with supernatural apparitions (of a crucified human being!) experienced by many since the 17th century and many come here to pray for their wishes to come true. The Church of the Cross of Miracles boasts a scenic location on the Boa Vista hill and you can spot Se Cathedral and St. Augustine's tower from this hilltop.

**Year of Establishment:** 1619

**Location:** Bainguinim, Old Goa

**Timings:** NA

### **18. Chapel of St. Sebastian, Goa:**

The 200-year-old chapel of St. Sebastian is a compact structure which is most famous for its elegant crucifix. In this crucifix, the sculpture of Jesus Christ has open eyes, adding a startling effect on the viewer compared to more gentle representations. If you visit the church in November, you can enjoy a street fair that marks the Feast of Our Lady of Livrament.

**Year of Establishment:** 1818

**Location:** Panaji, Goa

**Timings:** 9:30 am to 1:00 pm and 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm

### **19. Elizabeth Church, Goa:**

One of the most unique churches in North Goa, the St. Elizabeth Church features the Mannerist style of architecture complete with Rococo features. The edifice has a pleasant rural setting, surrounded by paddy fields. Inside the church compound, you will come across statues of the patron saint (Saint Elizabeth of Portugal) along with smaller sculptures of St. Luis Gonzaga, St. Anne, Mother Mary and other important personalities of Christianity. Though the construction of the original structure dates back to over 400 centuries, the

church has been reconstructed and remodelled several times in the subsequent centuries into what we see today.

**Year of Establishment:** 1618

**Location:** Ucassaim

**Timings:** 6:00 am to 7:00 pm

#### **20. Church of St. Anne, Goa:**

Located close to the Siridao River, the Church of St. Anne offers nice views and it also features many interesting architectural features. You can marvel at the high ceiling and tall façade of this 17th-century Indian Baroque structure. It is believed that certain dimensions of the church follow Indian building principles and the finely decorated altar is one of the main highlights. The church has a rustic charm about it. Signs of ageing can be seen manifested in certain sections, adding more character to this very resilient landmark.

**Year of Establishment:** 1695

**Location:** Talaulim, Goa

**Timings:** 6:30 am to 6:00 pm

Don't think this is a complete list of churches in Goa. There are many more shrines in the region, each with a unique place in the long and rich colonial history of Goa. Remember, a lot of these churches do not have strict timings and the mass timings also vary. Whether you are looking to explore the architectural splendour of these churches or attend the mass, it is recommended that you check the timings before heading out. So, are you all set to take a spiritual trail through the Party Capital of India?

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#### **7.8 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss in detail the important religious tourist attractions of Islam religion.**

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- **Highlight the important churches located in Goa.**

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**7.9 Summary:**

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So based on the above-detailed study, now it is clear that Islam and Christianity are the two most popular and sacred religions in the World. In India, Islam (14.23%) is in second and Christianity (2.30%) is in third place. Ajmer Sharif Dargah is located in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan and every day, it receives around 20,000 pilgrims from Islam and other religions of India. Haji Ali is situated in the Southern part of India, it was built by Muslim merchant Haji Ali Shah Bukhari in 1431. Hazratbal shrine located in Srinagar is another pilgrim destination for Muslims. Its construction was started in 1968 and completed in the year 1979. Christianity has the highest number of followers globally, and it was started in the first century CE. Goa has the most number of churches in India. The majority of these churches are part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list since 1986. These churches were built by Portuguese rulers of Goa between the 16th century to 18th centuries. Therefore, the visitors who reach Goa to see its beautiful sea beaches also cover the churches of Goa.

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**7.10 Glossary:**

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- **Church:**

A building where Christians assemble to worship their God.

- **Sacred:**

According to Cambridge Dictionary, Sacred is considered to be holy and deserving of respect, especially because of a connection with a God.

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**7.11 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Explain your favourite religious attractions of Islam religion.
- Write a detailed note on any two Churches of Goa.

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**7.12 References and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/islam>
- <https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/rajasthan/ajmer-sharif-dargah.html>
- <https://www.mumbai.org.uk/haji-ali-shrine.html>

**Unit-8**

**Jainism & Sikhism: Mount Abu, Palitana, Amritsar,  
Hemkund Sahib (Chamoli), Patna Sahib**

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**Structure:**

**8.0 Introduction**

**8.1 Objectives**

**8.2 Jainism: Meaning, Features & History**

**8.3 Tourist Attractions of Jainism: Mount Abu & Palitana**

**8.4 Sikhism: Meaning, Features & History**

**8.5 Tourist Attractions of Sikhism: Golden Temple, Hemkund Sahib & Patna Sahib**

**8.6 Check Your Progress**

**8.7 Summary**

**8.8 Glossary**

**8.9 Self-Assessment Questions**

**8.10 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**8.0 Introduction:**

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India is the second most populous country in the World. India is not only rich in its population but also has about 10 religions and its followers. Sikhism is the fourth and Jainism is the sixth-largest religion in India. Both religions' followers have constructed so many workshop places where not only devotees of these two great religions gather but others also visit with similar faith and devotion. The majority of the Jain population lives in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Here, we will discuss some great pilgrimage places associated with these two great religions of the world. These great religious attractions are Golden Temple, Hemkund Sahib, Dilwara, Jain Temple and Palitana.

**8.1 Objectives:**

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After reading the present unit, the learners will be able to:

- Understand the features and important tourist attractions of Jainism
- Know the key religious attractions of Sikhism

**8.2 Jainism: Meaning, Features & History:**

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**Jainism Beliefs:**

The distinguishing features of Jain philosophy are its belief in the independent existence of soul and matter; the denial of a creative and omnipotent God, combined with a belief in an eternal universe; and a strong emphasis on non-violence, morality, and ethics. The word Jain derives from the Sanskrit word jina, meaning conqueror and the ultimate aim of Jain life is to achieve liberation of the soul.

The predominance of karma is one of the key features of Jainism. Karma is the sum of a person's actions in this and previous lives that determine his or her fate in future existences. A Sanskrit word, karma means action, word, or deed. Its focus is on the spiritual principle of cause and effect, with individual actions influencing individual effects. Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and future happiness, while bad intent and deeds produce bad karma

and future suffering. Karma is a concept associated with rebirth or the idea that death is the beginning of a new existence. This idea also appears in other Asian religions, including Buddhism.

The motto of Jainism is *Parasparopagraho Jivanam*, meaning “the function of souls is to help one another.” This is associated with the idea of good deeds and is incorporated into the main principles of Jainism: *ahimsa*, non-violence; *anekantavada*, non-absolutism; and *aparigraha*, non-possessiveness or non-attachment. Followers take five main vows that include *ahimsa* and *aparigraha*, as well as *Satya*, not lying; *asteya*, not stealing; and *brahmacharya*, chastity. Jain monks and nuns adhere to these vows absolutely, placing Jainism squarely in the ascetic and self-discipline traditions of *Sramana*.

**Followers:**

The majority of Jains live in India, which counts between 4 and 6 million followers. Some of the largest Jain communities outside India are in the United States, which has more than 79,000 followers; Kenya, which has nearly 69,000 adherents; the United Kingdom, which counts nearly 17,000 followers; and Canada, with approximately 12,000 followers. Other countries with notable Jain populations include Tanzania, Nepal, Uganda, Burma, Malaysia, South Africa, Fiji, Australia, and Japan.

Contemporary Jainism is divided into two major schools, or sects, called *Digambara* and *Svetambara*. The *Svetambara*, meaning “white-clad,” describes its ascetic adherents’ practice of wearing white clothes, while the monks of the “sky-clad” *Digambara* do not wear clothing at all, a practice upon which they disagree.

The most important religious festival of Jainism is *Mahavir Jayanti*, which celebrates the birth of Mahavira—the 24th and last Tirthankara, or teaching god. Other important festivals include *Diwali*, marking the Nirvana, or liberation, of Mahavira’s soul; and the holy event of *Paryushana*, also known as *Das Lakshana*, which is a period of between eight and ten days in August or September of fasting, prayer, and meditation.



**8.3 Tourist Attractions of Jainism: Mount Abu & Palitana**

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**1. Dilwara Jain Temple, Mount Abu:**

Dilwara Jain Temples is one of the finest Jain temples known the world over for its extraordinary architecture and marvellous marble stone carvings, some experts also consider it architecturally superior to the Taj Mahal. It seems a fairly basic temple from the outside but every cloud has a silver lining, the temple interior showcases the extraordinary work of human craftsmanship at its best. These temples were built between the 11th to 13th century AD, The beautiful lush green hills surrounding the temple give a very pleasant feeling. The ornamental details of marble stone carvings are phenomenal and unmatched, the minutely carved ceilings and the pillars are just amazing. All this was done at a time when no transport or roads were available at a height of 1200+ Mtrs in Mount Abu, Huge blocks of marble stones were transported on elephant backs from the Arasoori Hills at Ambaji to this remote hilly region of Mount Abu. Dilwara temple is also a popular Jain pilgrimage attraction.

Dilwara Temple complex consists of five major sections or temples devoted to five Jain trithankaras (saints):

- 1) **Shri Mahaveer Swami Temple** - This temple was constructed in 1582 and is devoted to Lord Mahaveer the 24th Tirthankara of Jain, this temple is relatively small the temple's upper walls have pictures of the porch painted by craftsmen of sirohi in the year 1764.
- 2) **Shri AdiNath Temple or Vimal Vasahi Temple** - This temple is built by Vimal Shah, Minister of Solanika ruler of Gujarat in 1031 A.D., this temple is the oldest of all and dedicated to Shri Adinath Ji - The first jain trithankar, the temple has an open courtyard surrounded by corridors all beautifully decorated with marble carved stones. Cells inside this temple contain tiny images of Jain saints artistically carved on marble stone minutely. The internal dome is aesthetically decorated with designs of flowers and petals, and the huge hall of the temple pillars is decorated with the carving work of female figures playing musical

instruments. The temple also has the "Guda Mandapa" - A simple hall decorated with the images of Shri Adi Nath.

- 3) **Shri Parshavnath Temple or Khartar Vasahi Temple** - This temple was built by Mandika clan between 1458-59 A.D., this temple has the tallest shrine along with four big Mandapa's amongst all Dilwara temples. The carving on the pillars of this temple is yet another example of these Jain temples' architectural superiority.
- 4) **Shri Rishabdaoji Temple or Peethalhar Temple** - This temple is known as Pittalhari/Peethalhar temple because in this temple most of the statues are built using 'Pittal' (Brass Metal). This temple was built by Bhima Shah, a minister from the Gujarat dynasty, like other temples of Dilwara this temple is also having Gudu Mandapa and Navchowki.
- 5) **Shri NemiNathji Temple or Luna Vasahi Temple** - This temple was built in 1230 A.D. by two brothers known as Tejpal and Vastupal, they dedicated this temple to the 22nd saint of Jainism - Shri Nemi Nathji. This temple has one hall named Rag Mandapa which has three hundred and sixty (360) tiny idols of Jain trithankar all minutely crafted on marble proving once again why these Jain marble temples of Dilwara are superior to the Taj Mahal, Among all these white marble idols the idol of Shri Neminath Ji is made up of black marble. The pillars of this temple were built by Maharana Kumbha of Mewar.

The Dilwara Jain Temples are open from 12 P.M. to 5 P.M. for tourists for free and No photography is allowed inside the temple complex

## **2. Palitana:**

The hustling, dusty town of Palitana, 51 km southwest of Bhavnagar, has grown rapidly to serve the pilgrim trade around the Shatrunjaya Hill. The sacred site contains hundreds of shrines that were sanctified when Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of Jainism, gave his first sermon in the temple on the hilltop. Even though the climb to the temples is a rigorous one, it awards a dazzling sight of the intricately carved temples. During the Kartik Purnima festival,

accommodation around town floods with pilgrims and is best booked in advance.

One of Jainism's holiest pilgrimage sites, Shatrunjaya is an incredible hill studded with temples, built over 900 years. It is said that Adinath (also known as Rishabha), the founder of Jainism, meditated beneath the rayan tree at the summit. The temples are grouped into tunks (enclosures), each with a central temple flanked by minor ones. The summit is situated at an elevation (height) of 7,288 feet (2,221 m). Reaching it involves climbing over 3,750 stone steps. To the temples adds to the extraordinary experience. Most days, hundreds of pilgrims make the climb; crowds swell into the thousands around Kartik Purnima, which marks the end of Chaturmas, a four-month period of spiritual retreat and material self-denial that coincides with the monsoon season. White-robed monks walk past you. As you near the top of the hill, the track forks. The main entrance, Ram Pole, is reached by bearing left, though the best views are to the right, where on a clear day you can see the Gulf of Cambay. Inside the Nav Tonk Gate, one path leads left to the shrine of Angar Pir – a Muslim saint who protected the temples from a Mughal attack. To the right, the second tunk you reach is the Chaumukhji Tunk, containing the Chaumukh (Four-Faced Shrine), built in 1618 by a Jain merchant. Images of Adinath, the first Jain tirthankar (believed to have attained enlightenment here), face the four cardinal directions. You can easily spend a couple of hours wandering among the hundreds of temples up here. The biggest and one of the most splendid and important, with a fantastic wealth of detailed carving, is the Adinath Temple, on the highest point on the far (south) side. People who walk down grab a bowl of curd from scores of sellers to restore their energy.

**Brief History:** The Palitana temples on Shatrunjaya Hill were built over a period of 900 years starting from the 11th century. It was Kumarpal Solanki, a great Jain patron, who built the first temples on this site. The temples were destroyed by Turkish Muslims invaders in 1311 AD, when the saint Jinaprabhasuri, who

was then 50 years old, presided over the temples, but later restored to their glory.

**Jain Temples:**

Palitana is the world's only mountain that has more than 900 temples.<sup>[7]</sup> The Palitana temples and the whole mountain are considered the most sacred pilgrimage place (tirtha) by the Jain community and is the world's largest Temple Complex. There are more than 3000 temples located on the Shatrunjaya hills, exquisitely carved in marble. The main temple on top of the hill is dedicated to the first Tirthankara Rishabhanatha (Risahabhadeva). The temples were built by generations of Jains over a period of 900 years, from the 11th century onwards. The temples are managed by the Anandji Kalyanji Trust associated with the Kasturbhai Lalbhai group. From the foot of the hill to the top there are about 3,800 stone steps to facilitate climbing.

The temples are exquisitely carved in marble, with veritable prayers in stone. To an observer, these appear to be ivory miniatures when seen from a distance. Created by master craftsmen, the most important temple is that of the first teerthankara, Shri Adishwar. It has ornate architectural motifs, though in its overall plan, it is simpler than the Choumukh. Other notable temples are those of Kumarpal, Vimalshah and Sampriti Raja. Kumarpal Solanki, a great Jain patron, probably built the earliest temple. The temple has a fabulous collection of jewels, and these can be seen with special permission. The temples date from 11th to the 20th century. From 1865 to 1910 it was ruled by King Dhanpat.

**Belief:**

Every devout Jain aspires to climb to the top of the mountain at least once in his lifetime, because of its sanctity. Not just the temples on the Hill sacred, but as per Jain Scriptures entire Hill is sacred right from top to bottom. The journey is arduous. The walk up the stone stairway hewn into the mountain face takes about an hour and a half. For those unable or unaccustomed to the strain, sling-chairs are available at a bargain. The code for the climbers is stringent, in keeping with the rigours of the Jain faith. Food must neither be eaten nor carried

on the way. The descent must begin before it is evening, for no soul can remain atop the sacred mountain during the night.

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**8.4 Sikhism: Meaning, Features & History:**

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Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak around 500 years ago in a place called the Punjab. This is an area which spans part of India and Pakistan in South Asia today.

**What do Sikhs believe?**

Sikhs believe in one God who guides and protects them. They believe everyone is equal before God. Sikhs believe that your actions are important and you should lead a good life. They believe the way to do this is:

- Keep God in your heart and mind at all times
- Live honestly and work hard
- Treat everyone equally
- Be generous to those less fortunate than you
- Serve others

**Guru Nanak:**

Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikhism. Guru means 'Teacher'. Sikhism is still based on his teachings and those of the nine Sikh Gurus who followed him.

**The Five Ks:**

The Sikh community of men and women is known as the Khalsa which means the 'Community of the Pure'. To become a Sikh and join the Khalsa, people need to follow the Five Ks.

**What is the Sikh holy book?**

The Sikh holy book is called the Guru Granth Sahib. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, said that after him there would be no other living gurus. Instead, Sikhs could look at their holy book for guidance. This is why Sikhs call their holy book a Guru.

The Guru Granth Sahib is a collection of lessons from the ten gurus as well as Sikh, Hindu and Muslim saints. It is written in Punjabi and is greatly respected

by all Sikhs as the living word of God. It is kept on a raised platform under a canopy in the Sikh place of worship. All Sikhs take off their shoes when they are near it.

**Where do Sikhs worship?**

The Sikh place of worship is called a Gurdwara which means 'Gateway to the Guru'. A Gurdwara is any building where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept. Sikhs usually go to the Gurdwara every Sunday. During the services, they listen to teachings based on the Guru Granth Sahib. They also chant and say prayers from the gurus. These are called Keertan.

**The Langar:**

The service ends in a langar (a shared meal). Everyone is welcome to share the meal.

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**8.5 Tourist Attractions of Sikhism: Golden Temple, Hemkund Sahib & Patna Sahib**

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**1. Golden Temple, Amritsar:**

Harmandir Sahib, Harmandir also spelt Harimandir, also called Darbar Sahib (Punjabi: "Sacred Audience") or Golden Temple, the chief gurdwara, or house of worship, of Sikhism and the Sikhs' most important pilgrimage site. It is located in the city of Amritsar, Punjab state, northwestern India.

The first Harmandir Sahib was built in 1604 by Arjan, the fifth Sikh Guru, who symbolically had it placed on a lower level so that even the humblest had to step down to enter it. He also included entrances on all four sides, signifying that it was open to worshippers of all castes and creeds. The foundation stone was laid by Mian Mir, a Muslim divine of Lahore (now in Pakistan). The temple was destroyed several times by Afghan invaders and was finally rebuilt in marble and copper overlaid with gold foil during the reign (1801-39) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The structure thus became known as the Golden Temple.

The Harmandir Sahib is the focus of a complex of buildings that form the heart of Sikhism. The temple itself occupies a small island in the centre of the tank, or

pool called the Amrita Saras ("Pool of Nectar") – the source of the city's name – and is connected to the land on its west side by a marble causeway running across the water of the pool. Situated facing the entrance to the causeway is the Akal Takht, the chief centre of the authority of Sikhism and the headquarters of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Supreme Akali Party), the main political party of the Sikhs in Punjab. On the north side of the tank are the main entrance to the complex and the Teja Singh Samudri Hall (Clock Tower), which houses the main offices of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (Supreme Committee of Temple Management), which oversees the main Sikh gurdwaras. Among several buildings on the east side of the tank are the Assembly Hall and the Guru Ram Das Langur, the latter a large dining hall that serves meals to thousands of pilgrims and other visitors each day.

The Harmandir Sahib itself sustained some minor damage on June 6, 1984, when Indian troops fought their way into the temple complex to dislodge Sikh extremists who had been using it as a fortress and refuge. The Akal Takht, however, was heavily damaged in the attack. Both buildings subsequently were repaired.

## **2. Hemkund Sahib, Chamoli:**

Shri Hemkund Sahib is an important pilgrimage destination for Hindus and Sikhs. Hemkund is the breathtaking Lokpal Lake located at an altitude of 4329 m from the sea level. The picturesque natural settings make this hill region an amazing place for rejuvenating vacations. One can reach this majestic lake through a challenging but interesting and enjoyable trek from Ghangharia.

Sikhs consider this as a scared region with one of the famous Sikh Gurudwara placed in the heart of the region. A Hindu shrine dedicated to the mythological hero Lakshmana is attractive to Hindu Pilgrims. This temple is built on the banks of Hemkund.

Hemkunt Sahib is nestled amidst seven snow-capped peaks and marvellous snowy glaciers. Nature is reflected here with all its mighty appearance in the crystal clear alluring water. Hemkund Lake is fed by the glaciers from majestic

peaks known as Hathi Parvat and Saptrishi Peaks. A small stream known as Himganga originates from this imposing lake.

It is recorded in the holy Granth Sahib that the tenth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Govind Singh meditated on the serene banks of Hemkund in one of his earlier births. Guru Govind Singh is believed to be the Guru who founded all present characteristics of present Sikhism. The Gurudwara of the Sikhs on the banks of Hemkund is located at the place where Guru had meditated. Huge flocks of Sikh pilgrims pay their visit to this Gurudwara every year.

Hemkunt has got mentioned in the Ramayana. It is believed that the younger brother of Lord Rama, Lakshmana regained his health by meditating on the banks of Hemkunt after the severe injuries he received from Meghnath during the Rama-Ravana war. The Lakshmana temple is built at the place where Lakshmana meditated to regain health.

### **3. Patna Sahib, Patna:**

Takht Sri Patna Sahib also known as Harmandir Sahib is a Gurdwara in the neighbourhood of Patna Sahib, India. It was to commemorate the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs on December 1666. It was built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), the first Maharaja of the Sikh Empire, who also built many other Gurdwaras in the Indian subcontinent. The current shrine of Patna Sahib or Takht Sri Harmandirji Sahib was built in the 1950s. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, was born in Patna, Bihar, on 22 December 1666.

He also spent his early years here before moving to Anandpur Sahib. Besides being the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, Patna was also honoured by visits from Guru Nanak Dev Ji as well as Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. Patna Sahib Railway station, a railway station with the same name located nearby, is connected to many metropolitan cities of India by the Howrah-Delhi Main Line.

Patna City is an old area of Patna. Patna City's history belongs to Patliputra. Patna City comes under Patna Sahib (Vidhan Sabha constituency). Bengali Colony, Jhauganj, Lodi Katra, Rambagh, Kali Asthan, Nehru Tola, Marufganj,



Harmandir Gali and Bihar Mills Colony are major areas of Patna City. The main Guru Gobind road connects Patna Sahib Gurudwara and Patna City Chowk. Mangal Talab is a water body located here. Patna City has all sorts of facilities like schools and hospitals for its residents. Other than the Sikh Religious center it has some Hindu Temples and Mosques. It has some Boarding and Lodging facilities around religious centres. Patna Ghat is the Ganga side Ghat flowing in the north of Patna City. Today, Patna City is also a major trading centre.

**History:**

Patna Sahib has a beautiful history to reveal to its devotees. It is the place where Guru Gobind Singh Ji was born in the year 1666. The tenth guru had stayed here for many years before leaving for Anandpur. And as a result, the place is in memory of the home of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Like many other Gurudwaras, it was also constructed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1666. However, the building got demolished owing to a fire in the year 1839. The maharaja ordered the renovation of the shrine; unfortunately, he died before the completion. It is said that the first guru (Guru Nanak) paid a visit to this place en route to the sacred land of Gaya. He was a great philosopher and knew the significance of the Pataliputra, which Hindus failed to remember. The ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur also spent some time here during his trip to Patna.

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**8.6 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Highlight the important pilgrimage attractions of the Jain religion:**

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- **Write an essay on Golden Temple, Amritsar:**

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**8.7 Summary:**

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Thus, now after the detailed discussion of the important pilgrimage places of Jainism and Sikhism, it is clear that all these places are great attractions for devotees. Golden temple is the holiest place for Sikhs and Dilwara Jain Temple is the most sacred place for devotees associated with the Jain religion. Dilwara temple is made with white marble and some experts consider it superior to the Taj Mahal.

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**8.8 Glossary:**

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- **Pilgrimage:** A long journey to a religious place.
- **Devotee:** A person who follows a religion or religious leader.

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**8.9 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Discuss the key features of Hemkund Sahib
- Write an essay on Dilwara Jain Temple

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**8.10 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldcivilization/chapter/Jainism/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zsjpyrd/articles/zkjpkmn>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Harmandir-Sahib>
- <https://uttarakhandtourism.gov.in/activity/shri-hemkund-sahib/>

**Unit-9**

**Pilgrimage Tourism in Uttarakhand**

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**Structure:**

**9.0 Introduction**

**9.1 Objectives**

**9.2 Tourism Industry of Uttarakhand**

**9.3 Char Dham Yatra of Uttarakhand**

**9.4 Panch Kedar**

**9.5 Panch Prayag**

**9.6 Religious Tourist Attractions of Haridwar**

**9.7 Religious Tourist Attractions of Rishikesh**

**9.8 Other Important Religious Tourist Attractions of India**

**9.9 Check Your Progress**

**9.10 Summary**

**9.11 Glossary**

**9.12 Self-Assessment Questions**

**9.13 References and Suggested Readings**

**9.0 Introduction:**

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Uttarakhand is known as the Devbhoomi or the Land of Gods. It is located in the Northern part of India. Most of it is a hilly area. It houses an abundance of natural tourism resources, including hill stations, mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, glaciers, fauna species etc. In human resources, religious attractions are found in significant numbers. This holy land is the home of one Jyotirlinga (Kedarnath), one among the Char Dham destinations, Chota Char Dham destinations and many other attractions. In Uttarakhand peak season for pilgrimage, tourists start from May to November, when it receives lakhs of devotees from all parts of the country. Here, we will discuss the important pilgrimage place of Uttarakhand.

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**9.1 Objectives:**

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Objectives of the present Unit are listed below:

- To know the religious tourist attractions of Uttarakhand.
- To learn the importance of religious tourist attractions of Uttarakhand in the promotion of the tourism industry.

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**9.2 Tourism Industry of Uttarakhand:**

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Devbhoomi Uttarakhand is a state in India one can easily fall in love with. The surreal landscape that comprises the lofty Himalayas, glistening streams, eye-catching meadows, imposing glaciers and surreal lakes, all make Uttarakhand a coveted tourist destination in Indian Himalayas. The state is divided into two regions: Garhwal and Kumaon. Each of these offers plenty of opportunities for tourism, sightseeing, adventure and wildlife. Dotted with sacred Hindu temples and trekking trails, this North Indian state is a travel destination where along with seeking the blessing of the Almighty, one can indulge in adventure and recreational activities.

Uttarakhand, a state in northern India crossed by the Himalayas, is known for its Hindu pilgrimage sites. Rishikesh, a major centre for yoga study, was made

famous by the Beatles' 1968 visit. The city hosts the evening Ganga Aarti, a spiritual gathering on the sacred Ganges River. The state's forested Jim Corbett National Park shelters Bengal tigers and other native wildlife.

Rig Veda, the most ancient of the scriptures says, 'There is no happiness for him who does not travel. The fortune of him who is sitting sits, it rises when he rises, it sleeps when he sleeps, it moves when he moves. Therefore, Wander.

A major portion of human history has been created by travels – treatises and historical accounts are filled with stories of men who travelled to conquer, convert, trade, plunder and most importantly quench their curiosity. Every mountain and ocean stimulated human curiosity to see and know beyond the mundane. This unrelenting beckoning upset their sleep and logic but invigorated their fancies. The obsession for the unknown was an indivisible element of those fancies and humans, as always, have been known to live and die for them.

Now, in the changed circumstances of the 21st century, people still travel mostly when they get tired of routine circumstances or to put it more starkly whenever they find spare time from their demanding and hectic routines. There could be scores of other motives as well. Whatever may the motivation be, it is a truth that every journey does detune and retune one's intimate self. A whole lot ensues between embarking and disembarking. Some strings get tightened and some get loosened.

The **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB)** invites you to take up a journey to the state of Uttarakhand. We can confidently promise a couple of things. All your expectations would be met and the amazingly diverse and beautiful state would open up countless inconceivable dimensions of travel that might never even have occurred to you.

If you were to describe a simple word such as 'beauty' the Uttarakhand experience might leave you stranded for words. Beauty is so inherent to almost all things Uttarakhand stands for – the magnanimous Himalayas, the holiest of the rivers, the spiritual mystery, stunning landscapes, the incessantly colourful

play of nature, enchanting history carved in ancient stones, a mesmerizing floral and faunal plethora and the simplest of the people. Myths, anecdotes and stories are part of every visual that unfolds itself in the eyes of the beholder.

It was thus not a mere coincidence that Charles A. Sherring, the celebrated 19th-century British anthropologist and surveyor noted down in his highly acclaimed work 'Western Tibet and British Borderland' – "In those lovely valleys there is still the romance and poetry of life: each tree has its god, each bush its spirit" – Mr Sherring was describing a fair part of Uttarakhand.

It was also not another coincidence that after his first visit to Uttarakhand Mahatma Gandhi could not restrain himself from alluding to the region as 'the Switzerland of India'.

The age-old Hindu traditions have always accorded the highest esteem to the glory of the colossal and composed heights of the Himalayas which are spontaneously assumed to be the chosen consecrated residences of Gods. A whole lot of the Hindu lore sets out from this 'Land of the Gods'.

Pilgrimages to these heights dating back to more than 1500 years are found recorded in authentic documents and Uttarakhand still attracts millions of devout people who come here with the chaste objective of spiritual emancipation and revelation.

Today, these mountains are no longer restricted to the religious or the spiritual – as a traveller, one can get pleasure from mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking, rock climbing or simply strolling amongst the highest mountainous terrains in the world.

The winter months lay vast and expansive snow carpets as the slopes, turn into playgrounds for adventurous snow-revellers to ski amongst the most beautiful of surroundings. Come spring and the land begins to ooze of nascent life with frozen springs making way for the singsong of unsullied streams, waiting buds coming to full blossom creating an outburst of million hues with as many colourful butterflies and insects joining in the chorus. The spring season of

Uttarakhand would make you comprehend and probably redefine the word, Harmony.

The streams that originate in the deepest hideaways of the glorious Himalayas of Uttarakhand flow on to feed rivers which have nourished a civilization that has been born and brought up in the Indo-Gangetic soil of the country. These rivers are not just water bodies of enormous proportions but are also impressive streams commanding worship and reverence with their source in the holy crevices where gods and goddesses reside. The water from the holiest of all Hindu rivers, the Ganga, is believed to wash away and purge the body, mind and soul of all impurity.

The lush green forests of this region are home to an astounding multiplicity of flora and fauna, some of which fall into the category of endangered species. The wildlife bursts with hundreds and thousands of species, making an exploratory trip to Uttarakhand even more exciting, in the light of the fact that many species are yet to be discovered.

World-renowned mountains and wildlife institutes, national parks and forest reserves in this region pursue scientific research putting in enormous efforts to preserve and protect the land's bounty, encouraging people to participate in this noblest of causes.

A description of the charismatic beauty of Uttarakhand would be incomplete without the mention of the people who inhabit this blessed country – simple, willing to help and hardworking people of the state are as diversified as the elements of nature. Several indigenous tribal groups peacefully co-exist with others, simultaneously keeping their distinct cultures alive. Apart from being a unique tourism destination, Uttarakhand is a goldmine for anthropologists, historians, ornithologists, linguists, geologists you name the discipline and the state has something on offer.

No words can ever be enough to perfectly describe this blessed land. The incredulous variety of experiences – both spiritual and sensory – goes beyond any language or dialect. The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board humbly

invites you to this divinely blissful and fantastic jewel of Mother Nature's treasure chest with a promise that no promise would go unfulfilled.

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**9.3 Char Dham Yatra of Uttarakhand:**

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The Chota Char Dham or Char Dham of Uttarakhand is an important Hindu pilgrimage circuit on the under up gradation Chardham Road Highway and construction Chota Char Dham Railway in the Indian Himalayas. Located in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand (formerly the northwestern section of Uttar Pradesh), the circuit consists of four sites – Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. Badrinath is also one of the four destinations (with each destination being in a different corner of the country) of the longer Char Dham from which the Chota Char Dham likely draws its name.

The Annual Char Dham Yatra resumed in May 2014, after remaining suspended since the outbreak of the 2013 Uttarakhand floods. The footfall has now improved due to proactive measures taken by the government of Uttarakhand.

**1. Yamunotri:**

Yamunotri Temple is situated in the western region of the Garhwal Himalayas at an altitude of 3293 metres. **Maharani Gularia of Jaipur built the temple in the 19th century.** The temple is dedicated to the river Yamuna, which is represented as a silver idol, bedecked with garlands and reconstructed by Maharaja Pratap Shah of Tehri Garhwal.

The Shrine of Yamunotri is at the source of the river Yamuna. Atop is a flank of Bandar Poonch peak (3615 meters). The actual source, a frozen lake of ice and glacier (Champasar Glacier) located on the Kalind Mountain at the height of 4421 m above sea level is about 1 km further up and is not easily accessible. Hence the shrine has been located at the foot of the hill. The Temple of divine mother Yamuna was built by Maharaja Pratap Shah of Tehri Garhwal. The tiny Yamuna has icy cold water and its absolute innocence and infantile purity heighten that deep reverence that Yamunotri has for the devout. According to the legend ancient sage Asit Muni had his hermitage here. The trek to



Yamunotri is truly spectacular, dominated by a panorama of rugged peaks and dense forests.

The deity or Goddess Yamuna is made of black marble. The temple is dedicated to the river Yamuna, which is represented in the form of a silver idol, bedecked with garlands.

Close to the temple are hot water springs gushing out from the mountain cavities. Suryakund is the most important Kund. Near the Suryakund there is a shila called Divya Shila, which is worshipped before puja is offered to the deity. Pilgrims prepare rice and potatoes to offer at the shrine by dipping them in these hot water springs, tied in muslin cloth. Rice so cooked is taken back home as prasadam.

The pujaris and priests who perform in the Yamunotri temple come from the village of Kharsali near Jankichatti.

## **2. Gangotri:**

The Gangotri temple was built by the Gorkha General Amar Singh Thapa, in the 18th century and is situated on the left bank of Bhagirathi River. The temple is nested amidst the beautiful surroundings of deodars and pine trees. It lies close to the holy rock or the Bhagirath Shila where King Bhagirath worshipped Lord Shiva. The Gangotri temple is dedicated to Goddess Ganga.

The Pujaris and Priests who perform in the temple belong to the village of Mukhwa. The water from Gangotri is carried to offer to Lord Shiva. It is believed that this water has nectar in it and will soothe the throat of Shiva who gulps the poison.

## **3. Kedarnath:**

There are more than 200 shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand itself, the most important one is Kedarnath. According to legend, the Pandavas after having won over the Kauravas in the Kurukshetra war, felt guilty of having killed their own Kith and Kin and sought blessings of Lord Shiva for redemption. He eluded them repeatedly and while fleeing took refuge at Kedarnath in the form of a Bafellow.

On being followed, the Lord dived into the ground, leaving his hump on the surface at Kedarnath. The remaining portions of Lord Shiva appeared at four other places and are worshipped there as his manifestations. The arms of the Lord appeared at Tungnath, the face at Rudranath, the belly at Madmaheshwar and his locks (hair) with head at Kalpeshwar. The Kedarnath and the four above-mentioned shrines are treated as Panch Kedar (Panch means Five in Sanskrit).

The Temple at Kedarnath presents an imposing sight, standing in the middle of a wide plateau surrounded by lofty snow-covered peaks. The temple was originally built in the 8th century A.D. by Jagad Guru Adi Shankaracharya and stands adjacent to the site of an even earlier temple built by the Pandavas. The inner walls of the assembly hall are decorated with figures of various deities and scenes from mythology. Outside the temple door, a large statue of the Nandi Bafellow stands as guard.

Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Kedarnath temple has exquisite architecture. Built of extremely large, heavy and evenly cut grey slabs of stones, it evokes wonder as to how these heavy slabs were moved and handled in the earlier centuries. The temple has a Garbha Griha for worship and a Mandap, apt for assemblies of pilgrims and visitors. A conical rock formation inside the temple is worshipped as Lord Shiva in his Sadashiva form.

#### **4. Badrinath:**

The main entrance gate of Badarinath temple is colourful and imposing popularly known as Singhdwar. The temple is approximately 50 feet tall with a small cupola on top, covered with a gold gilt roof. The Badarinath temple is divided into three parts:

- (a) The Garbha Griha or the sanctum sanctorum
- (b) The Darshan Mandap where rituals are conducted and
- (c) The Sabha Mandap where pilgrims assemble.

At the Badarinath Mandir Gate, directly opposite the main Idol of the Lord himself, is the seated idol of Bird Garud, the vehicle/carrier of Lord

Badarinarayan. Garud is seen in a sitting position and praying with his hands folded. The walls and pillars of the mandapa are covered with intricate carvings.

The Garbha Griha portion has its canopy covered with a sheet of gold and houses Lord Badari Narayan, Kuber (God of wealth), Narad rishi, Udhava, Nar and Narayan. The complex has 15 idols. Especially attractive is the one-metre-high image of lord Badarinath, finely sculpted in black stone. According to legend, Shankara discovered a black stone image of Lord Badarinarayan made of Saligram stone in the Alaknanda River. He originally enshrined it in a cave near the Tapt Kund hot springs. In the sixteenth century, the King of Garhwal moved the murti to the present location of the temple. It represents Lord Vishnu seated in a meditative pose called Padmasan.

Darshan Mandap: Lord Badari Narayan is armed with Conch and Chakra in two arms in a lifted posture and two arms rested in Yogic Pose. Badarinarayan is seen under the Badari tree, flanked by Kuber and Garuda, Narad, Narayan and Nar. As you look, standing to the right side of Badarinarayana is Uddhava. To the far right side are Nara and Narayana. Narada Muni is kneeling in front on the right side and is difficult to see. On the left side are Kubera-the god of wealth, and a silver Ganesh. Garuda is kneeling in front, to the left of Badarinarayana.

Sabha Mandap: It is a place in the Temple complex where pilgrims and pilgrims assemble.

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#### **9.4 Panch Kedar:**

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Panch Kedar refers to five Hindu temples or holy places of the Shivaite sect dedicated to the god Shiva. They are located in the Garhwal Himalayan region in Uttarakhand, India. They are the subject of many legends that directly link their creation to Pandavas, the heroes of the Hindu epic Mahabharata.

Panch Kedar has an interesting legend. When the Pandavas went to the Himalayas, Shiv avoided them because they had killed so many people in the

war. To avoid them He ran in the form of a Bull, and Bhim chased him. On being followed, the colossal Bull dived into the ground to resurface at other places. He left his hump at Kedarnath. But when he resurfaced, it seems that he had assumed human form and emerged in different areas in these mountains. His face resurfaced at Rudranath. His Arms resurfaced at Tungnath. His navel emerged at Madha Maheshwar. His hair emerged at Kalpeshwar.

These temples of Panch Kedar have been and are seats of Tapasyas for sages from time immemorial. It is believed that even today the area abounds with siddhas and sadhakThe five temples designated in the strict pecking order to be followed for pilgrimage for worship are the **Kedarnath** at an altitude of 3,583 m (11,755 ft), the **Tungnath** (3,680 m or 12,070 ft), **Rudranath** (2,286 m or 7,500 ft), **Madhyamaheshwar** or **Madmaheshwar** (3,490 m or 11,450 ft) and Kalpeshwar (2,200 m or 7,200 ft). The Kedarnath is the main temple, which is part of four Char Dhams of Uttarakhand Chota Char Dhams (literally 'the small four abodes/seats') or pilgrimage centres of the Garhwal Himalayas; the other three dhams are the Badrinath, Yamunotri and Gangotri. Kedarnath is also one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.

It is said that the Panch Kedar Yatra (pilgrimage) could be directly related to the Gorakhnath Sampradaya (recognized for its pilgrim traditions) of Nepal. As proof, it is stated that the culmination of the pilgrimage was at Pashupatinath temple in Nepal, rightly where Lord Shiva's head is worshipped and not at Kedarnath where the hump is venerated. A further supporting fact mentioned in this regard is that the emblem used in the Kedarnath temple dome is the same as displayed in the Pashupatinath temple dome in Kathmandu.

### **1. Kalpeshwar:**

The hardier tourist may like to trek about 35 km to Kalpeshwar, where the locks (hair) and head, of Lord Shiva are worshipped as JATADHAR.

Located in Urgam Valley at an altitude of 2,134 m. above sea level, the temple is a further 10 km trek from Rudranath to Helong, the motorhead on the

Rishikesh-Badrinath route. The small rock temple of Kalpeshwar is where the Hair appeared. Short of Kalpeshwar is the picturesque valley of Urgam.

It is a favourite location for meditating sages. Legend has it that the sage Arghya had performed austerities here and created the nymph, Urvashi. Rishi Durvasa is also believed to have meditated here under the wish-fulfilling tree, Kalpavriksha. The sage had given Kunti the boon that she could invoke any of the forces of nature and they would appear before her and grant whatever she desired. Known for his quick temper, Rishi Durvasa is often recalled in the context of the incident when, along with several disciples, he visited Kunti's sons, while they were in exile. He indicated that he and his disciples expected food. There was not a grain to cook. Lord Krishna who appeared and miraculously solved the problem answered an anxious Draupadi's prayers.

## **2. Kedarnath:**

Kedarnath, at the head of the Mandakini River, is amongst the holiest pilgrimages for the devout Hindu. The temple believed to be very ancient, has been continually renovated over the centuries. The lingam at Kedarnath, unlike its usual form, is pyramidal and is regarded as one of the 12 Jyotirlingas. Situated at an altitude of 3,581 mts. Kedar is another name of Lord Shiva the protector and the destroyer. Shiva is considered the embodiment of all passions-love, hatred, fear, death and mysticism that are expressed through his various forms.

Situated in the lap of Nar-Narayan Parvat, with the towering Neelkanth peak (6,597 mts.) in the background, Badrinath is one of the most revered Hindu shrines of India. It has been said that "there were many sacred spots of pilgrimage in the heaven, earth and the other world but neither is equal to Badrinath nor shall there be one".

## **3. Madhmaheshwar:**

The stomach of Shiva is believed to have emerged at Madmaheshwar. The temple of Madmaheshwar is located at an altitude of 3,289 m. above sea level, on the slope of a ridge, 25 km northeast of Guptakashi. There is a motorable

road from Guptakashi to Kalimath. The best statue of Har Gauri in India measuring over a metre high is found in the Kali temple. The trek from Kalimath to Madmaheshwar is distinguished by wild unparalleled scenic beauty and engulfed by Chaukhamba, Kedarnath and Neelkanth peaks. Gaundar at the confluence of Madmaheshwar Ganga and Markanga Ganga, is the last settlement before one reaches Madmaheshwar.

Located at the base of Chaukhamba peak at an altitude of 3289 m the classic temple architecture belongs to the North-Indian style. So sanctified is the water here that even a few drops are considered sufficient for ablution. The natural scenery is dramatically wild, with deep gorges & valleys, mountainsides flung upwards towards the skies and the forests where the snow lies thick in winter, only to be replaced by a carpet of greenery in the summer. Kedarnath & Neelkanth peaks are visible from here, the entire ring of mountains associated with the life & times of Shiva. The confluence of Madmaheshwar Ganga just short of the temple, is one of the prettiest spots in the region.

#### **4.Rudranath:**

The face of Lord Shiva is worshipped at Rudranath temple in a natural rock temple as Neelkantha Mahadeva. Lord Shiva is worshipped here as Neelkantha. The temple is situated amid a thick forest at a height of 2286 meters. From Gopeshwar 4 km drivable road is available up to village Sagar from where 20 km. Trek leads to Rudranath and can be approached from Joshimath as well, by trekking about 45 km. The temple provides magnificent views of Hathi Parvat, Nandadevi, NandaGhunti, Trishuli and many others.

There are a number of holy Kunds (Tanks) near Rudranath temple namely Suryakund, Chandrakund, Tarakund etc. The Baitarini, the divine river flows past behind the temple. Anusuya Devi temple is located on the trek to Rudranath involving an additional trek of 3km. This is the only temple in India where the image of Shiva is worshipped as a symbol of his face, a sublime, tender aspect of Shiva, unusual, serene and beautiful indeed to behold.

Devotees come to Rudranath to offer ritual obeisance to their ancestors, for it is here, at Vaitarani river (the water of salvation), that the souls of the dead cross when changing the world.

**5. Tungnath:**

Set on the crest of a hill at an altitude of 3,886 meters, Tungnath is the highest temple in India. Legend has it that the arm of Shiva appeared here. Ravana, of the Ramayana, is said to have performed penance at this temple to propitiate Shiva. The high-altitude temple is a Seat of Swyambhu Linga or the Lord Shiva Incarnate. The temple, one of the Panchakedars or one of the five Shiva temples, is situated in the Chamoli district of the Uttarakhand region. The mythology has it that Lord Shiva was enraged at the act of homicide enacted by the Pandavas by killing their brethren in the grand battle of Mahabharata. Aware of Shiva's annoyance, the Pandavas built the temple to please Lord Shiva and for their salvation. Others claim that Adi Shankaracharya during his historic visit to the region had got it built. They cite the presence of Adi Shankaracharya's image in the garbha-griha or the sanctum of the temple. However, it also houses images of the Pandavas. Besides, the ashtadhatu images of Kaal Bhairava and Veda Vyasa are among the multitude of images there. A dark left-tilting one-foot high linga is the centre of attraction. The locals describe it as an arm of Lord Shiva. The arm of Lord Shiva is also associated with a legend.

Built of stone, this temple is a fine model of ancient architecture. Facing the gate of the temple is Nandi, the Divine Bull and Shiva's vehicle. There are two smaller temples dedicated to Parvati and Vyas in a small courtyard. The temple of Tungnath, at a little over 12, 000 feet, is the highest shrine on the inner Himalayan range. It lies just below the Chandrashila peak. Some way off the main pilgrim routes, it is less frequented than Kedarnath or Badrinath, although it forms a part of the Kedar temple establishment. The priest here is a local man, Brahmin from the village of Maku; the other Kedar temples have South Indian priests, a tradition begun by Sankaracharya, the 8th-century Hindu reformer

and revivalist. Tungnath's lonely eminence gives it a magic of its own. To get there (or beyond it), one passes through some of the most delightful temperate forests in the Garhwal Himalayas. Pilgrim or trekker, or just plain rambler like myself, one comes away really like before mankind began to strip it bare.

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**9.5 Panch Prayag:**

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Panch Prayag means "Five Confluences". It refers to the five confluences which take place at Vishnu Prayag, NandaPrayag, KarnPrayag, Rudraprayag and Devprayag respectively to form the river Ganga. Ganga, the most sacred of Indian rivers, is worshipped as the life-giving goddess, which brings salvation to this land. This great river emerges from the icy glaciers of the Himalayas. Pilgrims bathe in the Ganga on various auspicious days and the water of Ganga is used for purification rituals.

According to the Hindu Mythology when Goddess Ganga started descending to earth, to cherish mankind, Earth was not able to face the force which Ganga had. To temper her force Ganga was split into 12 channels. The siblings again get united into a single stream after Devaprayag. After the confluence of Alaknanda with Bhagirathi at Devprayag, the river is known as Ganga (Ganges). Four other confluences higher up add up to form the five holy confluences or Panch Prayag, which pilgrims visit for worship.

**1. Karnaprayag:**

Karnaprayag is located on the way to Badrinath, on the confluence of two holy rivers Alaknanda and Pindar. It is said that Karna of Mahabharata meditated here for many years to acquire the impregnable shield, which made him a formidable warrior on the battlefield. Swami Vivekananda meditated here for eighteen days with his Guru Bhai, Guru Turianand ji and Akharanand ji. It is the sub-divisional head-quarter of district Chamoli. Roads from here go to Almora, Nainital and Jim Corbet National Park.



**2. Nandaprayag:**

21 km from Karnaprayag, on the main route to Badrinath, where the Alaknanda and Mandakani rivers meet, is a destination which has become a major tourist halting point. Named Nandaprayag, it honours the pious and truthful King Nanda, who had performed a 'Yajna' and gave donations to the Brahmins to win the love and blessings of God. The famous Gopalji temple is also situated here.

One of the Panch Prayag (five confluences) of the Alaknanda River, Devprayag is a pilgrimage town in the Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers merge to form the holy River Ganga at Devprayag. The small town is situated on the route from Rishikesh to Badrinath and is about 71 km from Rishikesh.

Devprayag means the 'holy confluence'. It is an extremely important religious site for Hindus. Ganga, the biggest and holiest river in India, starts its journey to the plains and further towards the Bay of Bengal from

**3. Devprayag:**

Situated at an altitude of over 850 metres, Devprayag is the last Prayag or confluence of the Alaknanda River. Vishnuprayag, Nandaprayag, Karnaprayag and Rudraprayag are the other four confluences of the river. The entire town was destroyed in 1803 by an earthquake. Nonetheless, the heritage structures of Devprayag were restored soon and the ancient charm of the holy town has been retained.

**4. Rudraprayag:**

Named after Lord Shiva (Rudra), Rudraprayag is a small pilgrim town located on the holy confluence of river Alaknanda and Mandakini which is venerated as one of the five sacred confluences or the 'Panch Prayag'. At a distance of about 40 km. from Kalimath. The meeting of the Mandakini and Alaknanda rivers has a unique beauty of its own and it seems as if two sisters were embracing each other. It is believed that to master the mysteries of music, Narad

Muni worshipped Lord Shiva, who appeared in his Rudra Avtaar (incarnation) to bless Narad.

The Shiva and Jagdamba temples are of great religious importance. Till recently, Rudraprayag was a part of the district Chamoli and Tehri. In 1997, the Kedarnath Valley and parts of district Tehri & Pauri were conjoined to form Rudraprayag as a new district. It is the junction for visiting Badrinath and Kedarnath Dham.

There are several temples worth visiting in Rudraprayag one of the most prominent being the Koteswar Mahadev Temple on the shores of the Alaknanda River. Covered with lush foliage, this beautiful cave temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva, who is believed to have stopped and meditated here.

#### **5. Vishnuprayag:**

Formed by the confluence of the impetuous Vishnu Ganga (known after this point, as the Alaknanda) and the Dhauliganga river, Vishnu Prayag, 1372m, has an ancient temple called Vishnu Kund. It is said that the sage Narad worshipped Vishnu at this sanctified spot. Visitors will find the Kagbhusandi Lake bewitching with its emerald green depths giving it a still surface, while on the banks, blossoms evoke the colours of nature in all her glory. The lake can also be approached from Vishnuprayag beside Bhundhar village near Ghangaria.

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#### **9.6 Religious Tourist Attractions of Haridwar:**

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Haridwar also spelt Hardwar, is a city and municipal Corporation in the Haridwar district of Uttarakhand, India. With a population of 228,832 in 2011, it is the second-largest city in the state and the largest in the district.

The city is situated on the right bank of the Ganga River, at the foothills of the Shivalik ranges. Haridwar is regarded as a holy place for Hindus, hosting important religious events and serving as a gateway to several prominent places of worship. The most significant of the events is the Kumbha Mela, which is celebrated every 12 years in Haridwar. During the Haridwar Kumbh Mela,

millions of pilgrims, devotees, and tourists congregate in Haridwar to perform ritualistic bathing on the banks of the river Ganges to wash away their sins to attain Moksha.

According to the Samudra Manthan, Haridwar along with Ujjain, Nashik and Prayagraj (Allahabad) is one of four sites where drops of Amrit, the elixir of immortality, accidentally spilt over from the pitcher while being carried by the celestial bird Garuda. Brahma Kund, the spot where the Amrit fell, is located at Har ki Pauri (literally, "footsteps of the Lord") and is considered to be the most sacred ghat of Haridwar. It is also the primary centre of the Kanwar pilgrimage, in which millions of participants gather sacred water from the Ganga and carry it across hundreds of miles to dispense as offerings in Śiva shrines. Today, the city is developing beyond its religious importance, with the fast-developing industrial estate of the State Industrial Development Corporation of Uttarakhand (SIDCUL), and the close by township of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited as well as its affiliated ancillaries.

Haridwar presents a kaleidoscope of Indian culture and development. In the sacred writings, it has been differently specified as Kapilsthana, Gangadwar, and Mayapuri. It is additionally a passage for the Chota Char Dham (the four principal pilgrim destinations in Uttarakhand viz, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri), subsequently, Shaivaites (adherents of Lord Shiva) and Vaishnavites (devotees of Lord Vishnu) call this place Hardwar and Haridwar individually, relating to Har being Shiv and Hari being Vishnu.

### **1. Har Ki Pauri:**

Har Ki Pauri, famous as Brahm Kund, is considered the most sacred and popular site of Haridwar. It is the place from where the river Ganges enters into the plains after exiting the mountains. Har Ki Pauri was built by Vikramaditya, the famous king, in remembrance of his brother, Brithari, who used to meditate here on the banks of the Ganges River. According to one of the various legends associated with this place, lords Shiva and Vishnu appeared here during the Vedic period. The other legend says that Lord Brahma, also known as the god

of creation, performed a ritual of sacrifice called yagna at this spot. There are footprints on the ghats, which are said to be of Lord Vishnu. It is believed that taking a dip into the water of Har Ki Pauri washes off all the sins of an individual. Devotees in large numbers come to this place to perform rituals, such as mundan (shaving off the head) and upanayana (the initiation ritual), to name a few. In the span of every 12 years, the Kumbh Mela is held at the destination that is witnessed by several thousands of devotees.

### **2. Bharat Mata Mandir:**

Bharat Mata Mandir, popularly known as the Mother India Temple, is a noted religious site in Haridwar. This temple is devoted to Bharat Mata and was constructed by the famous religious guru, Swami Satyamitranand Giri. The late Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, inaugurated this temple in 1983. This eight-storeyed temple is located at a height of 180 ft. Each floor of the shrine is dedicated to different Hindu deities and freedom fighters. The most prominent among all is the idol of Bharat Mata on the first floor. The second floor features the Shoor Mandir, a tribute to the dedicated heroes of India while the third floor's Matru Mandir beautifully honours the great women of India. The fourth floor is dedicated to the great Indian saints and the fifth floor displays the religions, history and beauty of different parts of India. Various forms and incarnations of Goddess Shakti and Lord Vishnu can be seen on the sixth and seventh floor respectively. The eighth floor is a treat for both nature enthusiasts and spiritual souls as it holds a shrine of Lord Shiva from which one can witness an exceptional picturesque view of the Himalayas, Haridwar and Sapta Sarovar.

### **3. Mansa Devi Temple:**

Mansa Devi Temple, a popular religious site, is located at a distance of around 3 km from the city of Haridwar. The temple is dedicated to Mansa Devi, the brainchild of Saint Kashyap, who was a great saint in ancient Vedic times. The deity is the wife of Nag Vasuki, the king of serpents. The temple is perched on the crest of the Bilwa Parvat on the Shivalik Hills and has two idols of the deity.

One of the idols has five arms and three mouths, while the other one features eight arms. One of the 52 Shakti Peethas (the places of worship sanctified to the Hindu goddess Sati or Shakti), this temple is at the peak of the Siddha Peetha Triangle. The triangle is formed by the trio of Maya Devi, Chandi Devi and Mansa Devi temples. While visiting this temple, the devotees tie a thread around the sacred tree, praying to the lord to fulfil their wishes. After the wish is fulfilled, it is necessary to untie the thread from the tree. Tourists can reach the temple by cable car, which is popularly known as Devi Udankhatola.

#### **4. Chandi Devi Temple:**

Chandi Devi Temple, situated on top of the Neel Parvat in Haridwar, is one of the famed religious sites of the country. This temple is one of the 52 Shakti Peethas and was constructed by the erstwhile ruler of Kashmir in 1929. However, it is said that the idol of the deity present in the temple was installed by the great sage, Adi Shankaracharya, in the 8th century. According to folklore, Neel Parvat is the place where Chandika Devi, a Hindu goddess, rested for some time after killing the demon kings, Shumbh and Nishumbha. To reach this temple, travellers can take autos, rickshaws, taxis and tongas from anywhere in Haridwar. They can also reach the place through a trekking route, which is about 3 km from Chandighat. Travelling by cable car is also an interesting option and takes around 25 minutes.

#### **5. Ganga Aarti:**

Ganga Aarti is organized at Har Ki Pauri Ghat. An average of 3000 to 30000 or even more people come to experience evening Ganga Aarti. The crowd will depend on the season (May June is the highest season while July and August are the low seasons) as well as weekend-non-weekend and also the festivals. On Long weekends and all big Indian festivals, more people will join the Ganga Aarti. Har Ki Pauri is the most famous ghat to take a holy dip in the Ganga. Har Ki Pauri is located on the main highway.

From Haridwar Railway Station and bus station, it is 2-3 km far. The nearest airport is Dehradun 35 km. The ghat is religiously very important as according

to the ancient Hindu religious books Lord Vishnu appeared here to bless Bhratuhari. That is why it is known as Har Ki Pauri (which means footprints of god). During every festival day, no moon days, full moon days and weekends you can see more crowds. Every day at least 5000 to 10000 people come here to take a bath. On weekends the number can reach even more. On some of the big festivals such as Baisakhi, Makar Sankranti, somvati Amavasya and Shivratri number of people in one day can easily reach 1,00,000 to 3,00,000 or even more. It is also the same place where the drop of nectar fell during the battle between devas and asuras for nectar. Due to this, it is considered one of the holiest places to take a bath in the holy river Ganga. Where Holy River and holy place comes together it will attract a large number of people. Especially during the Kumbh Mela when the time is also auspicious it attracts millions of people to take a bath in Ganga during the Kumbh festival which comes after every 12 years in Haridwar. There are some other occasions where you can see large gatherings here such as Ardh Kumbh Mela after every 6 years (From Jan to May) and Kanwar Mela (7 days normally come in July and August). Ganga Aarti is done by the pundits (priests) selected by Ganga Sabha. Ganga Sabha is NGO which is managing Ganga Aarti since it is started. Ganga Sabha also manages the ghat along with the help of govt.

**Importance of Ganga Aarti:**

Ganga Aarti means prayer for River Ganga. Prayers are dedicated to gods and goddesses. River Ganga is not just a river in India, It is a Divine Mother. River Ganga gives life in the form of water. The same water also removes sins when you take a dip in its holy water. River Ganga also gives liberation to souls. It's not just a river but the whole culture itself. Historically millions of people are living on the bank of the river Ganga. For agriculture, her water is still precious to India. River Ganga is considered a goddess who was originally living in heaven. Saint Bhagirath made a long meditation to give liberation to his ancestors (reduced to ashes due to the curse of sage Kapil). He was blessed with Ganga by the gods. Lord Shiva held her to reduce her mighty flow. When Ganga

flow on the remaining ancestors of Bhagirath they got Moksha (Liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth). Following the same tradition still Hindu people offer the remaining of their dead relatives (after burning the body) to the river Ganga and expect moksha for them. In the name of the saint Bhagirath River, Ganga is known as Bhagirathi at the source and gets the name Ganga when it is meeting Alaknanda River at Devprayag. For hundreds of years people are considering the river Ganga as the Holy River and it became part of their life when they come to get moksha for their relatives who passed away and to remove their sins. The Ganga Aarti is a kind of thanksgiving to the River Ganga.

#### **6. Kankhal:**

Daksheswar Mahadev or Daksha Mahadev temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, located in the town of Kankhal, about 4 km from Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India. It is named after King Daksha Prajapati, the father of Sati. Daksha is one of the fourteen Prajapatis, creator deities, who preside over procreation and are the protector of life in Hindu mythology.

The present temple was built by Queen Dhankaur in 1810 and rebuilt in 1962. It is a place of pilgrimage for Shaivaite devotees on Maha Shivaratri.

#### **History:**

As mentioned in the Mahabharata and other texts of Hinduism, King Daksha Prajapati, the father of Sati, Shiva's first wife, performed yajna at the place where the temple is situated. Although Sati felt insulted when her father did not invite Shiva to the ritual, she attended the yajna. She found that Shiva was being spurned by her father and she burnt herself in the Yajna Kunda itself. Shiva got angry and sent his Gaṇas, the terrible demi-god Virabhadra and Bhadrakali to the ritual.[3] On the direction of Shiva, Virabhadra appeared with Shiva's ganas during Daksha's assembly like a storm wind and waged a fierce war with the gods and mortals present culminating in the beheading of Daksha, who was later given the head of a goat at the behest of Brahma and other gods. Much of the details of the Ashvamedha Yagna (Horse Sacrifice) of Daksha are found in the Vayu Purana.

**9.7 Religious Tourist Attractions of Rishikesh:**

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Rishikesh, also known as Hrishikesh, is a city governed by Rishikesh Municipal Corporation (since October 2017), and a tehsil in the Dehradun district of the Indian state of Uttarakhand. Located in the foothills of the Himalayas in Northern India, it is also known as the "**Gateway to the Garhwal Himalayas**" and "**Yoga Capital of the World**". It lies approximately 25 km (16 mi) north of the city of Haridwar and 43 km (27 mi) southeast of the state capital Dehradun. According to the 2011 Census report, Rishikesh had a population of 102,138 making it the seventh most populated city in the state of Uttarakhand. It is widely known as the pilgrimage town and regarded as one of the holiest places for Hindu devotees. Hindu sages and saints have visited Rishikesh since ancient times to meditate in search of higher knowledge.

In September 2015, the Union Tourism Minister **Dr Mahesh Sharma** announced that Rishikesh and Haridwar will be the first in India to be given the title of "**Twin National Heritage Cities**". Due to the religious significance of the place, non-vegetarian food and alcohol are strictly prohibited in Rishikesh.

**Religious Tourist Attractions:****1. Ganga Aarti:**

Ganga Aarti is a special ceremony to pay tribute to the holy river Ganges. Every day, it is organized in the morning and evening. In the spiritual city of Rishikesh, this prayer is done at three places named **Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Triveni Ghat and Ramjhula Parking Ghat area**. Parmarth Niketan Aarti which lasts for 45 minutes is followed by the chanting of Mantra (Hanuman Chalisa) sacred fire, essential oil, incense sticks etc. and medicinal herbs for purifying the environment. This Aarti is performed by a group of Brahmin students who are studying in Ashram. Anyone can take part in this ritual by giving a small donation to the Ashram. One has to walk about 1 Km from the Laxman Jhula Parking to reach Ashram or there is a motorboat service to reach Arti place.



**2. Neelkantha Mahadeva Temple:**

The Neelkanth Mahadev Temple is one of the most popular religious sites in Rishikesh. Neelkanth is another name for Lord Shiva and hence, this temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is located at a distance of around 7 kilometres from the renowned Swarg Ashram. The route to the temple is a long three hours walk along a path through a forest. Another alternative to reach the temple is via the popular Lakshman Jhula or you can also hire a cab to take you to the temple. Devotees offer the pious Ganga water to the temple as an offering. This is one of the most popular Lord Shiva Temples in Rishikesh that one must visit. Apart from visiting and exploring the pious temple, you can also explore the other marvels of Mother Nature like beautiful waterfalls and the surrounding dense forests.

**3. Bharat Mandir:**

Bharat Mandir is another addition to the list of temples of Rishikesh. It was founded back in the 12th century by Adiguru Shankaracharya. The temple houses the idol of Lord Vishnu, which is beautifully carved using a single Saligram piece. The temple also features an inner canopy, which in turn features a Shree Yantra. The interiors, as well as the beautiful architecture of the temple, have been recorded in the ancient list of Karkhand. The original temple was destroyed by Tamur and was later rebuilt on the ruins of the same. Archaeological excavations have found at the site various remnants of the past like ancient pots, old statues, as well as ancient coins. This temple is a perfect blend of aesthetical values as well as perfect traditional architecture, which you cannot miss out on while on a trip to Rishikesh.

**4. Kunjapuri Devi Temple:**

The popular temple of Kunjapuri Devi is another religious site to be explored while in the pious city of Rishikesh. It is beautifully nestled on Kunjapuri Hill and is a revered religious spot dedicated to Goddess Parvathi. In the whole of Uttarakhand, this temple of Goddess Parvathi is one of the fifty-two Shaktipeeths. It is quite popular among both locals as well as tourists. It offers

a mesmerizing view of the mighty Shivalik Ranges, the Bandarpunch Peak as well as the Chaukhamba Peak. At this religious spot, you can get to learn much more about the Hindu religion in many details. At the time of Dussehra and Navratri, the temple and its surroundings are well-lit offering a wonderful sight to the visitors and viewers. The grand celebrations of the temple during these festivals are worth witnessing by all.

**5. Tera Manzil Temple or Trimbakeshwar Temple:**

Tera Manzil Temple is one of the most attractive temples of Rishikesh that you can incorporate into your itinerary while visiting the city. It is also popularly known as the Trimbakeshwar Temple. It is a massive temple featuring thirteen stories, which lie on the banks of the pious River Ganga. It is situated exactly opposite the popular Lakshman Jhula. The temple roof houses several deities together for the pilgrims to come and worship. The temple is quite well-known for its outstanding architecture. The topmost floor of the temple offers a mesmerizing view of the beautiful landscape. This temple is said to be around four hundred years old featuring amazing ancient architecture, which you should visit when you come to Rishikesh city.

**6. Raghunath Temple:**

Raghunath Temple is another addition to the list of temples in Rishikesh. It is a revered temple of the Hindus that lies close to the Triveni Ghat in the heart of the city. The temple is dedicated to Lord Ram and Mata Sita, his wife. This shrine of Uttarakhand is of much importance and significance to the Hindus. There is also a small-sized kund or pond featured in the temple, which is popular by the name of Rishi Kund. Rishi Kund is considered one of the most sacred water bodies in Rishikesh. It is a natural hot water spring. It is believed that the Kund was filled with holy water only after River Yamuna had blessed a sage. The residents also believe that Lord Ram had taken a bath in this kund while he was in his exile. It is also said that at this point both River Ganga and River Yamuna meet. The serene vibe of the kund is surely not to be missed while on your tour. You can also enjoy taking a stroll around the local market close to

the temple, which features various crafted ornaments, several holistic statues, and many more attractions.

#### **7. Virbhadra Temple:**

The beautiful and pious Virbhadra Temple is another addition to the list of temples to be visited in Rishikesh. This one is a thirteen-year-old temple and is dedicated to the fierce avatar of Lord Shiva. This fierce avatar of Lord Shiva was taken when his wife Devi Sati had given up her life by jumping into a burning yagya kund. Every year the temple celebrates the popular festival of Mahashivratri with much enthusiasm. There is a fair put up around the temple during this festival where one can enjoy it to the core with family and friends. During the festival of Mahashivratri, the temple is overcrowded with devotees from both nearby and distant places. Anyone who is in the city during this time surely visits the temple on the occasion.

#### **8. Shatrughna Temple:**

The Shatrughna Temple is one of those temples of Rishikesh where you would sense utmost calmness and peace. It happens to be one of the most visited religious sites in the city. You can worship at the temple and also enjoy a yoga session within the premises of the temple. This temple is dedicated to Lord Lakshmana, the younger brother of Lord Rama. The temple is situated at merely a distance of four kilometres from the railway station of Rishikesh. It was constructed by Adi Shankaracharya while on his visit to the city. It is situated quite close to Ram Jhula. This temple is quite rare as the country does not feature many temples dedicated to Lord Lakshmana.

#### **9. Bhootnath Temple:**

The Bhootnath Temple is another pious temple dedicated to Lord Shiva that can be explored while in Rishikesh. It is said that this was the place where Lord Shiva took a rest while on his way to marry his wife Mata Sati. The place is a peaceful one surrounded by lush green vegetation. It is a secluded temple that is yet to be completely discovered by tourists and hence, is less crowded.

The city of Rishikesh is a perfect one to explore if you wish to spend time in a religious, peaceful, and holy ambience. With several temples, ashrams, and holy Ghats the place counts to be one of the topmost religious places in the country. The city can be visited with family, friends and even solo. The place is further beautified by the presence of the River Ganga, which also makes the ambience calm, cool, and peaceful. All in all, the city of Rishikesh is an ideal destination for anyone who desires to head out on a religious trip in India, which is also one that helps to unwind.

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**9.8 Other Important Religious Tourist Attractions of Uttarakhand:**

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**1. Jageshwar Dham Temples, Almora:**

One of the finest examples of architecture in Uttarakhand, Jageshwar Dham is a group of temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. 124 big and small temples look simply beautiful with a gorgeous backdrop of rolling green mountains and a gurgling Jata Ganga stream. As per ASI (Archaeology Survey of India), the temple dates back to post Gupta and pre-medieval era and is said to be 2500 years old. Stone lingams, stone sculptures and carving on altars are the highlight of the temple. The temple's location is ideal for meditation as well.

**2. Madhyamaheshwar Temple:**

A pretty location at the foothills of lovely peaks, Madhyamaheshwar in the Garhwal region of the great Himalayas has an appealing elegance and pictorial surroundings. Blessed with unblemished and numinous surroundings, this diminutive locality is famed as the most scenic spot among the Panch Kedars. Like all other pilgrim sites, Madhyamaheshwar also has a fabulous but interesting legend of its own. It says that after the Mahabharat war, the Pandavas decided to pay reverence to lord Shiva to absolve them from the sin of gotra hatya. Seeing the Pandavas, the Lord concealed himself as a bull and tried to pitch himself underneath but Bhima stopped the lord from doing so as a result of the struggle different parts of Lord Shiva's body appeared at various

places and it is believed that the middle portion had fetched here at Madhyamaheshwar

It takes a tedious trek of 24 kilometres to be at the sanctified premises of Maheswar, but it is worthy and pays high dividends in the form of picturesque surroundings. The unwinding paths through the lush meadows and woody forests proffer the possibilities of a nice stride, the warmth of which is memorable forever.

A black stone structure with nice carvings, set in the background of majestic peaks, Madhyamaheshwar temple imparts a peculiar feeling to all those who gather there. Madhyamaheshwar temple stands elegantly in the southernmost part of a lovely crinkle, whose Kashni Dhar appears as if it soars into heaven. Though the shrine is not a gigantic structure is an oasis of serenity and devoutness. Tiny ponds that surround the tranquil environs attribute the calmness of the holy premises to a great extent. Madhyamaheshwar is indeed a divine spot that inspires one's soul and mind with its aesthetic appeal.

A remote locale, the Madhyamaheshwar trip would be full of escapades and adventure. A tedious but memorable trek through the mesmerizing ambience would truly be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. As you move on from your base camp at Mansuna, the mystic beauty of the Gharwal range would slowly begin to unveil itself before you. Gushing streams, lustrous meadows and all-around greenery, the unparalleled beauty of the surroundings would be awe-inspiring. These breathtaking vistas, like the majestic peaks and magnificent rivers that you come across on your trip, are only a precursor of what awaits you in Madhyamaheshwar.

### **3. Mukteshwar Dham:**

Hilly topography nestled with fruit orchards and coniferous forest, Mukteshwar, the name derived from Lord Shiva, one who offers Moksha (salvation), is a calm and secluded town and tourist destination in the Nainital District of Uttarakhand, India. The famous Mukteshwar temple with its main deity as Lord Shiva is a famous attraction here. This enchanting city is situated

at a height of about 7500 feet on Kumaon Hill. The city has many tourist attractions apart from Mukteshwar temple in its account, Chauli ka Jali is one of the famous attractions.

The region is famous for the Indian Veterinary Research Institute campus established in 1893. This little beautiful town adorned with cute homes of reddish roofs, ancient style window frames made of wood and picket barriers brings the reminiscences of the British Raj. Agriculture in the area consists chiefly of potato cultivation and fruit orchards on terraces cut into the hillsides. Mukteshwar, affluent in scenic splendour, commands a breathtaking view of the Himalayas with magnificent views and bears the Nanda Devi, India's second-highest peak. There is also a Renewable Park developed by The Energy and Resources Institute, which uses solar electricity for most of its electricity needs. As the case anywhere else in India, recently, the town has experienced some construction activity and townships have begun to mushroom in and around Mukteshwar.

The holiday homes that came up in the scenic city are attractive to those looking for an enchanting retreat from large chaotic cities. Also include Nainital packages when in Mukteshwar.

#### **4. Patal Bhuvaneshwar:**

Patal Bhuvaneshwar is one of the most mysterious and spiritual places in Uttarakhand. This hidden pilgrimage situated at 1350 mts above sea level is mainly dedicated to Lord Shiva. Patal Bhuvaneshwar is a limestone cave situated 13 km from Gangolihat in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand state. The way to the Patal Bhuvaneshwar cave goes through a long and narrow tunnel. Other than Lord Shiva the forms of Sheshnag, Kal Bhairav, Ganesha and several other gods can be seen in Patal Bhuvaneshwar. It is believed that the cave is the abode of 33 crore Gods and Goddesses.

#### **4. Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Uttarkashi:**

Uttarkashi is situated at a distance of 154 kilometres from Rishikesh, on the Rishikesh- Gangotri route. The Viswanath Temple is the most important and

ancient holy shrine in this region. Of the many temples in Uttarkashi, the temple of Lord Vishwanath is unrivalled in importance. Shiva, the presiding deity of this temple, is worshipped all day here. Every evening, visitors are greeted by the sound of bells, and the chanting of mantras by pundits at the puja. Within the courtyard of the Vishwanath temple, and to the front of it, is the Shakti Temple, dedicated to the goddess of strength. The massive brass trident projecting from this temple bears an inscription describing how the Vishwanath Temple was built. According to it, the temple was built by King Ganeshwar, whose son Guh, a great warrior, built the trident. 26 feet high, this trident's base measures 8 feet 9 inches, and its top, is 18' / 2 inches in circumference.

### **5. Guptkashi:**

Guptakashi, Gupta Kashi or Guptkashi is a fairly large town located at an elevation of 1,319 metres in the Kedar-khanda ('khanda' means "sector"), in Garhwal Himalayas of Rudraprayag district in Uttarakhand, India. It is known for its ancient Vishwanath Temple dedicated to the god Shiva, which is similar to the one in Varanasi (Kashi). The other well-known temple here is dedicated to Ardhanareshvara, a half man half woman form of Shiva and Parvati. The name Guptakashi has legendary significance linked to the Pandavas, the heroes of the Hindu epic Mahabharata. Its religious importance is considered next to that of Varanasi, believed to be the most pious of all Hindu pilgrimage sites.

Popularly-narrated legend holds that after the Kurukshetra war of the epic Mahabharata, the Pandavas on the advice of god Krishna and other sages wished to atone for their sins of fratricide and Brāhmanahatya committed by them during the war by seeking pardon from Shiva and also pray for his blessings before attaining salvation. But Shiva was not willing to meet them since he was annoyed with them for the unjust events of the war. He, therefore, avoided meeting them at Kashi and went incognito as the bull Nandi to Guptakashi in Uttarakhand. But Pandavas pursued him to Guptakashi and recognized him in the disguised form of Nandi. When Bhima, the second Pandava brother tried to hold the bull by its tail and hind legs, Nandi vanished

from Guptakashi, into the ground (into a cave for hiding), but reappeared later as Shiva in five different forms namely, hump at Kedarnath, face at Rudranath, arms at Tungnath, navel and stomach at Madhyamaheshwar and the locks at Kalpeshwar. The vanishing act of Shiva gave the name Guptakashi (hidden Kashi) to this place on the bank of the Mandakini River. In the upper reaches of the Bhagirathi River, there is another Kashi, called the Uttarkashi (North Kashi). Mythology also states that Shiva proposed to Parvati at Guptakashi before they got married in the small Triyuginarayan village at the confluence of the Mandakini and Sone-Ganga rivers. However the old route of 14 km from Gauri Kund to Kedarnath via Rambara was completely washed away in the 2013 North India floods, and a new route of 15-16 km was made by the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering. The distance from Guptakashi to Kedarnath remains at 22 kilometres and 729.77 meters, which is most important to the celestial nuptials.

According to Puranic literature, Kashi and Kanchi (Kanchipuram) are considered as two eyes of Shiva. Keeping this connotation in view, six more "Kashi"s have been prescribed to be as sacred and spiritual as the main Kashi - Varanasi. Pilgrims, who cannot undertake the long journey to the main Kashi, can travel to the closest Kashi. The six other "Kashi"s cover all the regions of the country. These are Uttarkashi and Guptakashi in Uttarakhand in Northern Himalayas, Dakshinkashi in Southern India, the Guptakashi in Eastern India at Bhubaneswar, the Kashi at Nashik (also Paithan) in Western India and a Kashi in Mandi in Himachal Pradesh in Western Himalayas. The Puranas state that all the Kashis have the same degree of sanctity and reverence as the main Kashi - Varanasi.

Another legend declares that when the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb demolished the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in 1669, and constructed Gaynvapi Mosque (he had even renamed Varanasi as Mohammadâbâd), the Shiva Linga was shifted to Guptakashi for safekeeping. But the original linga of Kashi Vishwanath is stated to have remained here from the time it was shifted.



**6. Bagnath Temple:**

At the junction of the rivers, Gomti and Saryu stands a large temple with a conical tower. Here is the shrine of Bageswar or Vyagreswar, the “Tiger Lord”, an epithet of Lord Siva. This temple was erected by the Kumaun king, Laxmi Chand, about 1450 A.D., but there is an interesting Sanskrit inscription there of a far earlier date. The temple is flooded with devotees on the annual occasion of Shivratri. This place has a cluster of temples. Prominent among these temples are the Bairav temple, Dattatreya Maharaj, Ganga Mai temple, Hanuman temple, Durga temple, Kalika temple, Thingal Bhirav temple, Panchnam Junakhara and Vaneshwar temple.

**7. Baijnath:**

The temples at Baijnath proper are situated on the left bank of the Gomti. On the way to the main temple, just below the house of the Mahanta, is the temple of Bamani (A corrupt form of Sanskrit Brahmani). Tradition of the place says that it was built by a Brahmin widow and was dedicated by her to God Shiva. Another story states that a Brahmin woman who was kidnapped by a Kshatriya was built. The temple is in favour of Shiva for the expiation of her sins. There is an idol of Shiva inside the temple. It has no inscriptions. The construction of the temple does not differ from that of the Tailihata group, so it may also be said to belong to the same period. The main temple, dedicated to Baijnath or Vaidhyanatha (the name of Shiva), which gives its name to the present village is situated near the Gomti. The temple is approached from the riverside by a flight of steps made of stones constructed by the orders of the Katyuri queen. The place was and is a bathing place for the inhabitants who have now made a Kachha pond near the temple. Baijnath is 19 KMs away from Kausani and 26 km from Bageshwer. One it used to be the capital of the Katyuri dynasty of kings and the place was then called Kartikyapura.

**8. Chandika Temple:**

A beautiful temple dedicated to Goddess Chandika stands at a distance of about half a kilometre from Bageshwar. Every year, the temple bustles with activity as the devout congregate here to offer pujas to the deity during the Navratras.

**9. Sriharu Temple:**

Another important temple, the Sriharu temple, is situated at a distance of about 5 km. from Bageshwer. The devotees believe that prayers for wish fulfilment here never go in vain. Every year, a large fair is organised on the Vijya Dashmi day following the Navratras.

**10. Gauri Udiyar:**

This is situated 8 km from Bageshwer. A large cave, measuring 20 X 95 sq mts is situated here, which houses the idols of Lord Shiva.

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**9.9 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Write a detailed note on the Kumbha Mela site of Haridwar:**

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- **Discuss the different sites of Char Dham of Uttarakhand:**

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**9.10 Summary:**

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Uttarakhand is known as the land of Gods (Devbhoomi) and it deserves it because it is the home of the most sacred places of Hindus. The majority of the pilgrimage places are situated in the Garhwal region of the State. The tourism industry in Uttarakhand is seasonal because of this it receives fewer pilgrims than other states of the country. As Uttarakhand is the home of Chota Char Dham, one Dham of National importance and one Jyotirlinga of India therefore, it receives a good number of tourists. Panch Kedar includes five holy temples of Lord Shiva and Panch Prayag which means five places with the confluence of two rivers. Further, we studied the Haridwar which is known as the Gateway to God, a place where the first Ganga aarti was started and it also hosts the Kumbh fair after every 12 years. Finally, we understood Rishikesh because it is the last place where the holy River Ganga flows on hills.

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**9.11 Glossary:**

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- **Peak Season:** When tourist inflow at a particular tourist destination is very high.
- **Devbhoomi:** A land area where Gods and Goddesses live.

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**9.12 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Highlight the only Jyotirlinga of Uttarakhand
- Explain the key features of religious tourism in Uttarakhand
- How religious tourism in Uttarakhand differs from other states of India?

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**9.13 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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**Unit-10**

**Pilgrimage Tourism in Uttar Pradesh**

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**Structure:**

**10.0 Introduction**

**10.1 Objectives**

**10.2 Tourism Industry in Uttar Pradesh**

**10.3 Hindu Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations of Uttar Pradesh**

**10.4 Buddhism Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations of Uttar Pradesh**

**10.5 Check Your Progress**

**10.6 Summary**

**10.7 Glossary**

**10.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

**10.9 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**10.0 Introduction:**

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Uttar Pradesh is situated in the northern part of India. Its capital is Lucknow and neighbouring states and countries are Uttarakhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Nepal. It has 75 districts and the total population is about 22 crores. Almost followers of every religion live in Uttar Pradesh, therefore they have also created their God or Goddess worship places. As the majority of the population of Uttar Pradesh is Hindu so many cities are popular as pilgrimage destinations and attract thousands of pilgrims each year. Some pilgrimage destinations for Hindus are Mathura, Vrindavan, Ayodhya, Prayagraj and Varanasi. As founder of Buddhism delivered his first sermon at Sarnath and spent many years in different parts of the state therefore sites containing relics of Buddhism are also available here. Pilgrimage sites of Islam are also available here because invaders attacked many cities and created their places of worship.

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**10.1 Objectives:**

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The following are the major objectives of the present unit:

- To know the important pilgrimage destinations situated in Uttar Pradesh
- To understand the salient features of religious tourist attractions in Uttar Pradesh.

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**10.2 Tourism Industry in Uttar Pradesh:**

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Situated in the northern part of India, bordering with the capital of India New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh is one of the most popular and an established tourist destination for both Indians and non-Indians alike in India. The most populous state of India, Uttar Pradesh contains many historical monuments and places of religious significance. Geographically, Uttar Pradesh is very diverse, with Himalayan foothills in the extreme north and the Gangetic Plain in the centre. It is also home to India's most visited sites, the Taj Mahal, and Hinduism's holiest city, Varanasi. Kumbh City, Allahabad. Kathak, one of the eight forms

of Indian classical dances, originated from Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh is at the heart of India, hence it is also known as The Heartland of India. The cuisine of Uttar Pradesh like Awadhi cuisine, Mughlai cuisine, and Kumauni cuisine is very famous not only in India but also in many places abroad.

Uttar Pradesh is known for its rich culture and tradition. It is home to Ayodhya and Mathura birthplace of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna and Bhagwan Parshuram respectively. Uttar Pradesh attracts many national and international tourists. Taj Mahal, one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in Agra is also located in Uttar Pradesh.

There are different places one can visit in Uttar Pradesh. Agra, Jhansi, Lucknow and Meerut are historical cities famous for their monuments. Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, Varanasi, Ayodhya, Gorakhpur and Allahabad are holy cities for Hindus and Kushinagar and Sarnath are important Buddhist places among the main four pilgrimage sites related to the life of Gautama Buddha. Noida is the most developed urban city in Uttar Pradesh.

To boost tourism in the state from within the country and other parts of the world, the Government of Uttar Pradesh established an 'Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc' covering the cities of Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi.

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### **10.3 Hindu Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations:**

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#### **1. Varanasi:**

Varanasi is also acknowledged as Benares, Banaras or Kashi and is situated on the banks of the River Ganges in the North Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, India. It is situated about 320 kilometres (200 mi) southeast of the state capital, Lucknow, and 121 kilometres (75 mi) east of Allahabad. A major religious hub in India, it is the holiest of the seven sacred cities (Sapta Puri) in Hinduism and Jainism and played an important role in the development of Buddhism and Ravidassia. This sacred city lies along with NH 2 and is served by four different railway stations named Varanasi Junction Railway Station, Banaras Railway

Station, Kashi Railway Station and City Railway Station and Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport.

It is believed that the Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon to his first five disciples around 528 BCE. The city's religious importance continued to grow in the 8th century when Adi Shankara established the worship of Shiva as an official sect of Varanasi. During the Muslim rule through the Middle Ages, the city continued as an important centre of Hindu devotion, pilgrimage, mysticism and poetry which further contributed to its reputation as a centre of cultural importance and religious education. Tulsidas wrote his epic poem on Lord Rama's life called Ramcharit Manas in Varanasi. Several other major figures of the Bhakti movement were born in Varanasi including Kabirdas and Ravidas. Guru Nanak visited Varanasi for Maha Shivaratri in 1507, a trip that played a large role in the founding of Sikhism.

Much of what is considered modern Varanasi was built during the 18th century, by the Maratha and Bhumihar Brahmin kings. **The Kingdom of Benares was given official status by the Mughals in 1737** and continued as a dynasty-governed area until Indian independence in 1947. Varanasi has been a cultural centre of northern India for several thousand years and is closely associated with the Ganges. Hindus believe that dying here and getting cremated along the banks of the "holy" Ganges river allows one to break the cycle of rebirth and attain salvation, making it a major centre for pilgrimage. The city is known worldwide for its many 84 pucca ghats, embankments made in steps of stone slabs along the river bank where pilgrims perform ritual ablutions of particular note are the Dashashwamedh Ghat, the Panchganga Ghat, the Manikarnika Ghat, and the Harishchandra Ghat, the last two are cremation Ghats.

It is estimated that about 23,000 temples are situated in Varanasi and some most prestigious temples are Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Sankat Mochan, Tulsi Manas Temple, Bharat Mata Temple, New Kashi Vishwanath Temple and Durga Temple. The Kashi Naresh (Maharaja of Kashi) is the chief cultural patron of Varanasi and an essential part of all religious celebrations.



**• Kashi Vishwanath Temple:**

Kashi Vishwanath Temple is one of the most famous Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is located in Vishwanath Gali near Dashashwamedh Ghat in the sacred city of Varanasi. The Temple stands on the western banks of the holy river Ganga and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas of India. The main deity is known by the name Shri Vishwanath and Vishweshwara means Lord of the Universe. The Temple has been referred to in Hindu scriptures for a very long time as a central part of worship in the Shaiva Philosophy. It has been demolished and reconstructed many times in history. The last structure was demolished by Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal emperor who constructed the Gyanvapi Mosque on its site. The current structure was built on a nearby site by the Maratha ruler, Ahilya Bai Holkar of Indore in 1780. Great Sikh King Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated 1 ton of Gold for flaming Temple's Dome, therefore, sometimes it is also known as Golden Temple. Since 1983, the temple has been managed by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. During the religious occasion of Shivratri, Kashi Naresh (King of Kashi) is the chief officiating priest.

**• New Kashi Vishwanath Temple or Birla Temple:**

Shri Vishwanath Mandir or New Vishwanath Temple or Birla Temple is one of the most famous Hindu temples and biggest tourist attractions in the holy city of Varanasi. The temple is situated in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and is principally dedicated to the Lord Shiva. Shri Vishwanath Mandir is the second tallest temple tower in the world with the Vimana's height about 253 feet. In the 1930s, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya planned to replicate Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir on the campus of Banaras Hindu University. The Birla family undertook the construction and the foundation was laid in March 1931. The temple was finally completed in 1966. Shri Vishwanath Mandir's construction took thirty-five years to complete (1931-1966). The temple is the second tallest temple in India. The total height of the temple is 77 meters (253 feet). Temple's design was inspired by Shri Kashi Vishwanath Mandir located near Dashashwamedh Ghat and is made mostly of marble. Shri Vishwanath

Mandir, although a Lord Shiva temple, consists of nine temples within one temple and is open to people from all castes, religions and economic backgrounds. The Shiva temple is located on the ground floor and the Lakshmi Narayan and Durga temples are situated on the first floor. Other temples within Shri Vishwanath Mandir are Nataraj, Mata Parvati, Lord Ganesha, Panchmukhi Mahadev, Lord Hanuman, Saraswati and Nandi. The entire text of the Bhagavad Gita and extracts from sacred Hindu scriptures are inscribed with illustrations on the inner marble walls of the temple.

- **Tulsi Manas Temple:**

Tulsi Manas Mandir is one of the most famous temples in the heritage city of Varanasi. This temple has great historical and cultural importance in Hinduism since the ancient Hindu epic Ramcharitmanas was originally written at this place by Hindu poet-saint, reformer and philosopher Goswami Tulsidas in the 16th century (c. 1532–1623). One of the famous Hindu epics, Ramayan was originally written in the Sanskrit language by Sanskrit poet Valmiki between 500 and 100 BC. Being in the Sanskrit language, this epic was not accessible to and understood by the masses. In the 16th century, Goswami Tulsidas wrote the Ramayan in the Awadhi dialect of the Hindi language and the Awadhi version was called Ramcharitmanas (meaning Lake of the deeds of Rama).

In 1964, the Sureka family constructed a temple at the same place where Goswami Tulsidas wrote Ramcharitmanas. Construction finished in 1964 and was funded by the Thakur Das Sureka family of Bandhaghat, Howrah, West Bengal. The temple was constructed in white marble and landscaping all around the temple. Verses and scenes (pictorials) from Ramcharitmanas are engraved on the marble walls all over the temple.

- **Durga Temple:**

The 18th-century Durga temple lies south of the main city, away from the ghats of Varanasi. This gorgeous religious site is located on Sankat Mochan Road in Varanasi, very close to the Durga Kund and Tulsi Manas Mandir. Also, the Sankat Mochan Mandir and Banaras Hindu University are located in proximity

to the Durga Temple. A narrow lane flanked by flower and puja paraphernalia vendors leads up to this ancient temple. Inside, the low-roofed, bright red-walled temple has a small sanctum with a vivid idol of the Devi riding a tiger, armed with a trident, discus, and sword. Navratras are celebrated with great vigour in this temple. When in Varanasi, make sure to pay a visit to this famous Durga Temple.

**History:**

Also known as Durga Kund Mandir, this beautiful shrine holds great religious significance for the Hindus. The temple was constructed by a Bengali Maharani (Bengali Queen), who was an ardent devotee of the goddess. One of the prime features of this temple is the kund or pond built in the premises of the temple, which people say was linked to the Ganga River. As far as the architecture of the temple is concerned, it is constructed in the North Indian Nagara style with red painted walls. The entire thing looks supremely gorgeous. The main icon of Durga, who is also considered the goddess of strength and power, can also be seen in red colour. As you walk inside the temple, you'll notice several beautifully carved stones engraved on the walls.

- **Bharat Mata Temple:**

Built by Babu Shiv Prasad Gupt and inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1936 the Bharat Mata Temple is a model of undivided India. The temple is located in the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth campus in Varanasi and is amongst the most visited tourist destination of Varanasi. The most striking aspect of Bharat Mata Temple is that instead of gods and goddesses, the temple houses a relief map of undivided India, carved out of marble. The temple is a rare instance of something attributed to nationalism and a tribute to everyone who participated in the making of India.

- **Kal Bhairav Temple:**

Kaal Bhairav Mandir is one of the oldest Shiva temples in Varanasi, India. Situated in Bharonath, Vishweshwarganj (Varanasi), this temple has great historical and cultural importance in Hinduism; especially amongst the locals.

The temple is dedicated to Bhairava (Kaal Bhairav), a fierce form of Shiva and wears a garland of skulls and carries a club of peacock feathers. The word "Kaal" means both "death" and "fate". It is believed that even death is afraid of Kaal Bhairav.

Housed in the inner sanctum of the temple is a silver-faced idol of Kal Bhairav who is seated on his vahana (vehicle), a dog and is holding a trident. Only the face of the icon decorated (with garlands) is visible to the visitors through the doorway. The rest of the icon is covered with a piece of cloth. On the rear door of the temple, there is an icon of Kshetrapal Bhairav, another aspect of Bhairava.

**2. Ayodhya:** Ayodhya is a city situated on the banks of the holy river Saryu. In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, It is the headquarter of the Ayodhya District and the Ayodhya Division. It is also known as Saket, an ancient city of India, and is the birthplace of Bhagwan Shri Ram and the setting of the great epic Ramayana. Ayodhya used to be the capital of the ancient Kosala Kingdom. Owing to the belief as to the birthplace of Bhagwan Shri Ram, Ayodhya (Awadh puri) has been regarded as the first one of the seven most important pilgrimage sites (Mokshdayini Sapt Puris) for Hindus. Being the birthplace of Sri Rama and a Historical place of Indian history several religious and historical places are worth visiting in Ayodhya. Some of them are listed below:

- **Ram Ki Paidi:** Ram ki Paidi is a series of ghats on the bank of River Saryu. The riverfront brings forth an outstanding Landscape, especially on floodlit nights. These serve as platforms to devotees who it is said, come to wash away their sins by taking a dip in the river.

- **Birla Temple:**

Shri Ram Janaki Birla Temple is a newly made temple. It is located opposite the Ayodhya Bus stop on the way to Ayodhya-Faizabad. This temple is dedicated to Lord Ram and Devi Sita.

- **Gulab Bari:**

Gulab Bari (literally meaning 'Garden of Roses') the Tomb of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula is in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India. This place has a good collection of

roses of various varieties set by the sides of water fountains. Gulab Bari is the maqbara (Mausoleum) of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula, the third Nawab of Oudh (now Awadh) on the campus. The tomb proper stands in the centre of a Charbagh Garden accompanied by fountains and shallow water channels.

Gulab Bari is not only a spot that needs to be visited; it is a place of worship and various cultural events. The locals treat it as a holy place. It is said that the monument is connected to a boali in Lucknow and used to be a hiding place for the successors of the Nawab Shuja-ud-daula. Bahu Begum ka Maqbara

- **Kanak Bhawan:** Kanak Bhawan is to the northeast of Ram Janam Bhumi, Ramkot, in Ayodhya. Kanak Bhawan is one of the finest and most famous temples in Ayodhya and is a must-visit. It is believed that this Bhawan was gifted to Devi Sita by Kaikei immediately after her marriage to Lord Ram. This is the private palace of Devi Sita and Lord Rama. Vikramaditya got it renovated. Later it was rebuilt/renovated by Vrish Bhanu Kunwari which exists even today. The main idols installed in the garbhgrih (sanctum), are Lord Ram and Devi Sita.
- **Nageshwar Nath Temple:** This temple is at Ram Ki Paidi in Ayodhya. The temple of Nageshwarnath is said to have been established by Kush, the son of Rama. Legend is that Kush lost his armlet while bathing in the Saryu, which was picked up by a Nag-Kanya, who fell in love with him. As she was a devotee of Shiva, Kush erected this temple for her. Even till the times of Vikramaditya, the temple was in good shape. The present temple was built in 1750 by the minister of Safdar Jung, named Naval Rai. The festival of Shivratri is celebrated here in a big way, and the Shiv Barat procession is taken out during these celebrations which is particularly significant. During the festival time of Mahashivratri, the temple receives thousands of devotees.
- 3. **Chitrakoot:** Chitrakoot means the 'Hill of many wonders'. Chitrakoot falls in the northern Vindhya Range of mountains spread over the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Chitrakoot district in Uttar Pradesh was created on 4 September 1998. Chitrakoot Parvat Mala includes Kamad Giri, Hanumaan

Dhara, Janki Kund, Lakshman Pahari, and Devangana famous Religious mountains. Lord Rama spend a major part of his exile here. According to the epic Ramayana, Chitrakoot is the place where Bharat, brother of Lord Rama came to visit him and asked him to return to Ayodhya and rule the kingdom. It is believed that the supreme Gods of Hinduism, (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) took incarnations here. The place is dotted with many temples and several religious sites. At Chitrakoot, everything relates to Lord Rama. One can also explore the amalgamation of culture and history on this land. Chitrakoot is a spiritual retreat, thronged almost throughout the year by travellers, who have a penchant for the unknown and unexplored. Chitrakoot is a perfect blend of divinity, serenity, and natural beauty.

- **Kamad Giri:**

A forested hill of prime religious significance, this is believed to be the original Chitrakoot. The Bharat Milap Temple is located here. Pilgrims perform a ritual circumambulation of the hill to seek blessings

- **Ramghat:**

Stepped edges lead into the river Mandakini and a serene environment is what one will find here. This riverside is known to be the place where Lord Rama, Goddess Sita and Lord Laxman interacted with Saint Goswami Tulsidas. Ram Ghat is a place with much activity and a seething crowd as it is one of the main Ghats of Chitrakoot. One can see the signs of it from early morning onwards. Also adding to the view are the colourful boats lining the steps leading into the river. One should not miss the evening Aarti on the Ram Ghat.

- **Bharatkoop:**

Bharat Koop is a huge well near Bharatpur village, located around 20 KMs west of Chitrakoot. It is believed that Lord Rama's brother Bharat brought water from all the holy places to honour Lord Ram as the King of Ayodhya. Bharat was unsuccessful in persuading Lord Ram to return to his kingdom and take his place as the king. Bharat then, as per the instructions of Maharishi Atri, poured the holy water into this well. It is said that taking a bath from the water

of this well means bathing in all tirths (pilgrimage destination). There is also a temple here dedicated to Lord Rama and his family.

- **Bharatmilap:**

Bharat Milap temple is believed to be the marking the spot where Bharat met Lord Rama during his period of exile to persuade him to return to the throne of Ayodhya. It is said that the meeting of the four brothers was so overwhelming that even the rocks and mountains of Chitrakoot melted. Footprints of Lord Rama and his brothers imprinted on these rocks can still be seen.

- **Ganeshbagh:**

Ganesh Bagh is located on the Karvi – Devangana road. It was built in the 19th century by Vinayak Raj Peshwa. This place consists of a temple which has carvings on its interiors, resembling the art and style of Khajuraho. This place is also known as mini Khajuraho, owing to its architectural similarity with the original Khajuraho.

- **Hanumandhara:**

This Hanuman temple is situated on top of a huge rock. A steep climb of several carved steps leads to the temple. While climbing these steps one can see splendid views of Chitrakoot underneath. All along the way small idols of Lord Hanuman are placed to offer prayers. Legend says that inside this temple Lord Rama stayed with Lord Hanuman after Lord Hanuman set Lanka on fire and returned. Here Lord Rama helped him pacify his anger. Further up from this point are a few more shrines dedicated to Lord Rama, Mother Sita and Laxman.

- **Guptgodavri:**

Gupt Godavari has located 18 Km from Chitrakoot. Legend has it that Lord Rama and Lakshman stayed here for some part of their exile. Gupt Godavari is a two-cave system inside a mountain with knee-high water levels. The bigger cave has two stone-carved thrones believed to be belonging to Rama and Laxman. The outside of these caves is covered with shops for purchasing memorabilia.

- **Satianusuya:**

This ashram is known to be the resting place of the sage Atri. Atri meditated here with his devout wife Anusuya. Legend says that during the exile Lord Rama and Mother Sita visited Sati Anusuya at this ashram. Sati Anusuya used to teach Mother Sita during this time. There is the large statue of Lord Krishna riding a chariot with Arjun sitting behind him which depicts a Mahabharata scene. Inside it are more sculptures with interesting artwork, kept for sacred darshan.

- **Ramdarshan:**

Ram Darshan temple is one unique temple where puja (worship) and offerings are prohibited. This temple helps people enter integral Humanism by imparting them valuable moral lessons. The temple is an amalgamation of cultural and human aspects and leaves a mark on anyone's heart who ever visits this temple. The temple gives an insight into Lord Rama's life and his inter-personal relations. One needs an entry ticket to enter the premises.

- **Sphatikshila:**

The sphatik shila is a small boulder situated on the banks of River Mandakini, upstream from the Rama Ghat. This place is believed to be the spot where Mother Sita did her Shringaar (makeup). Also, legend has it that this is where Jayant, Lord Indra's son, disguised as a crow pecked Sita on her foot. It is said that this boulder still bears the imprint of Rama's feet.

**4. Mathura:** Mathura has an ancient history and is also the homeland and birthplace of Krishna who was born in the Yadu dynasty. According to the Archaeological Survey of India plaque at the Mathura Museum, the city is mentioned in the oldest Indian epic, the Ramayana. In the epic, the Ikshwaku prince Shatrughna slays a demon called Lavanasura and claims the land. Afterwards, the place came to be known as Madhuvan as it was thickly wooded, then Madhupura and later Mathura.



In the 6th century BCE Mathura became the capital of the Surasena Kingdom. The city was later ruled by the Maurya Empire (4th to 2nd centuries BCE). Megasthenes, writing in the early 3rd century BCE, mentions Mathura as a great city under the name Μέθορα (Méthora). It seems it never was under the direct control of the following Shunga dynasty (2nd century BCE) as not a single archaeological remain of a Shunga presence were ever found in Mathura. Mathura may have come under the control, direct or indirect, of the Indo-Greeks sometime between 180 BCE and 100 BCE, and remained so as late as 70 BCE according to the Yavanarajya inscription, which was found in Maghera, a town 17 kilometres (11 mi) from Mathura. The opening of the 3 line text of this inscription in Brahmi script translates as: “In the 116th year of the Yavana kingdom...” or “In the 116th year of Yavana hegemony” (“Yavanarajya”) However, this also corresponds to the presence of the native Mitra dynasty of local rulers in Mathura, in approximately the same time frame (150 BCE – 50 BCE), possibly pointing to a vassalage relationship with the Indo-Greeks.

After a period of local rule, Mathura was conquered by the Indo-Scythians during the 1st century BCE. The Indo-Scythian satraps of Mathura are sometimes called the “Northern Satraps”, as opposed to the “Western Satraps” ruling in Gujarat and Malwa. After Rajuvula, several successors are known to have ruled as vassals to the Kushans, such as the “Great Satrap” Kharapallana and the “Satrap” Vanaspara, who are known from an inscription discovered in Sarnath, and dated to the 3rd year of Kanishka (c. 130 CE), in which they were paying allegiance to the Kushans. Mathuran art and culture reached its zenith under the Kushan dynasty which had Mathura as one of their capitals, the other being Purushapura (modern-day Peshawar, Pakistan).

Faxian mentions the city as a centre of Buddhism about 400 CE while his successor Xuanzang, who visited the city in 634 CE, mentions it as Mot’ulo, recording that it contained twenty Buddhist monasteries and five Brahmanical temples. Later, he went east to Thanesar, Jalandhar in eastern Punjab, before

climbing up to visit predominantly Theravada monasteries in the Kulu valley and turning southward again to Bairat and then Mathura, on the Yamuna river. The city was sacked and many of its temples were destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018 CE and again by Sikandar Lodhi, who ruled the Sultanate of Delhi from 1489 to 1517 CE. Sikander Lodhi earned the epithet of 'Butt Shikan', the 'Destroyer of Hindu deities'. The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb built the Shahi-Eidgah Mosque during his rule, which is adjacent to Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi believed to be over a Hindu temple. Some important tourist attractions of Mathura are listed below:

- **Raman Reti, Gokul:**

Situated in Gokul, a few kilometres away from Mathura is this incredible place called Raman Van or Raman Reti—whose sacred sands (reti) are redolent with the stories of a bygone era when Lord Krishna frequented to engage in divine plays (Raman) with his brother, Balarama and his cowherd friends. This is also the place he chose to meet his love, Radha before embarking on their journey to Vrindavan together. Raman Reti today is a sandy locale sprawled in a spacious compound complete with a deer sanctuary, a couple of beautiful temples and a relaxing area for ascetics, saints and pilgrims alike. Besides paying reverence, spend some time simply ambling around in the complex—try to bask in the pastimes of Lord Krishna treasured in the sands of Raman Reti. Adjacent to Raman Reti is Karshni Ashram, a famous Ashram housing the ancient Raman Bihariji Temple. Dedicated to the 18th century Saint Gyandasji, the temple houses the deity of Lord Krishna in the exact form as was revealed to the saint as a blessing for his strong austerities to please the Lord. A visit to this famed temple must be on your itinerary if you are stepping into this mystical region.

- **Radha Raman Temple:**

Radha Raman Mandir or Sri Radha Raman Temple is an early modern period Hindu temple in Vrindavan, India dedicated to Lord Krishna as Radha Ramana. It was constructed at the request of Gopala Bhatta Goswami at around 1542 AD. This temple is among the 7 temples of Thakur of Vrindavan including Sri

Radhavallabh ji, Shri Govind Dev ji and four others. The temple is exquisitely crafted and one of the most revered temples in Vrindavan, especially by the followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. It houses the original shaligram deity of Krishna alongside Radharani.

- **Shri Dwarkadhish Temple**

Sri Dwarkadheesh Mandir is one of the oldest and largest temples of Mathura city in the States of India of India, of India. This is a major and famous Hindu shrine, and its current structure was built by Seth Gokul Das Parikh, the treasurer of the Gwalior State(Scindia) in 1814.[2] It was built for the famous Hindu deity Dwarkadheesh (meaning the God or king of Dwarka, where Lord Krishna has shifted from Mathura and settled till his life on earth). There the main deity is Lord Dwarkadheesh, a form of Lord Krishna seen in a black Marble idol named Dwarkanath. With him is the White marble idol of his counterpart deity Sri Radharani.

- **Shri Banke Bihari:**

Shri Bankey Bihari Mandir is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Krishna, in the holy city of Vrindavan in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh. It is situated near Shri Radha Vallabh Temple. This temple is among the 7 temples of Thakur of Vrindavan including Shri RadhaVallabh Ji, Shri Govind Dev Ji and four others. Bankey Bihari Ji was originally worshipped at Nidhivana. Bankey means “bent in three places” and Bihari means “supreme enjoyer.” The image of Lord Krishna stands in the Tribhanga posture. Haridas Swami originally worshipped this devotional image under the name of Kunj-Bihari (“Enjoyer of Lakes”).

‘Bānke’ means ‘bent’, and ‘Bihāri’ or ‘Vihāri’ means ‘enjoyer’. This is how Kṛṣṇa, who is bent in three places, got the name “Bānke Bihāri”.

- **Shri Krishna Janambhumi**

The Krishna Janmasthan, at Mathura, is important because this is where Lord Shri Krishna manifested Himself in the prison house of the cruel king Kansa and set free his father Vasudeva and his mother Devaki. His purpose was to

destroy evil, protect the virtuous, and establish righteousness on a firm footing. Adjacent to the entrance of the prison cell, stands the temple where Astabhuja Maa Yogmaya manifested. The divine ambience of the sanctum sanctorum thrills the hearts of the devotees as soon as they enter the auspicious place, and a sense of conviction surges in their minds that this indeed is the place where Lord Krishna manifested Himself. He gave mankind extraordinary and thought-provoking ideas, in the Sacred Scripture, The Bhagavata Gita. The Bhagavad Gita lays the basis of how life should be led in the various walks that govern our life on this earth, as our soul is immortal.

**5. Vrindavan:** The town stands on the original forest of Vrindavana where the Hindu deity Krishna spent his childhood, on the banks of the Yamuna River. Numerous events are said to have occurred here: this is where Krishna did the divine dance with Gopis (Maharaas), spread the message of divine love with his lover Radha, stole the clothes of the bathing cowgirl maidens (gopis), and vanquished various demons. Consequently, it is a major pilgrimage destination for Hindus, and features by some counts as many as 5000 temples.

**Religious attractions of Vrindavan:**

Entry into all temples is free. Details on some important religious attractions are given below:

- **Bihariji:** The best-known temple in Vrindavan, home to a Krishna idol known as Thakur-ji. The idol's eyes are said to be so powerful that it is kept hidden from view behind a curtain, which is opened and closed every few minutes.
- **Mandir Sri Dham Goda Vihar:** There are about 200 idols in the temple. As the prime centre of Hindu Sanatan Culture, the temple is a perfect reflection of devotion and faith. Visiting this divine temple is like exploring the complete Hindu chronology of faith.
- **Govinda Dev Mandir:** Built by Raja Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur in 1590, this squat, bulky temple reportedly had four stories lopped off during Aurangzeb's reign of terror. These days it's just infested by monkeys.

- **Jaigurudeo Temple:** Also named "Naam Yog Sadhna Mandir". It resembles the Tajmahal, built with white marble. It is a unique temple in that you are prohibited from donating if you are a non-vegetarian.
- **Krishna Balaram Mandir:** better known as the **ISKCON Temple**, [10]. A major draw for Hare Krishna (ISKCON) pilgrims to India, and uniquely among Vrindavan's temples well equipped to deal with foreign visitors. Free breakfast and lunch are available. Great restaurant. Comfortable guesthouse on the Temple grounds.
- **Kesi Ghat:** by the Yamuna. According to the legend, this is where Krishna killed the demon Kesi and then bathed to celebrate. Aarti (prayer lamps) are offered to the Yamuna here every evening.
- **Seva Kunj:** Planted with countless tulsi (holy basil) trees, this is the garden where gopis dance for Krishna at night, and where Krishna and his lover Radha spend the night locked in the Moti Mahal.
- **Rangji Mandir:** The single largest temple in Vrindavan, built in 1851 in a South Indian style, complete with an intricate seven-story gopuram (gateway) at the entrance. Inside is a 50-ft high wooden chariot, taken out yearly for festivals, and in the inner courtyard is the 50-ft high gold-plated pillar known as Dhwaja Stambha.
- **Radhavallabh Mandir:** A very well-known ancient temple of Vrindavan, founded by Shri Hith Harivansh Mahaprabhu, Sri Radhavallabh Lal's idol resemble Sri Radha and Sri Krishna to be embodied in it together- "One soul and two bodies".
- **Radharaman:** In Seva Kunj, see the Deity of Radharaman that self-manifested from a Shalagrama Shila (sacred stone).

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#### **10.4 Buddhism Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations of Uttar Pradesh:**

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##### **1. Sarnath:**

Sarnath is a famous place in Varanasi and it is the destination for cultures like Hindu, Buddha and Jain. Sarnath is the place where Gautama Buddha first

taught the Dharma then Buddhist Sangha has originated as well as came into existence because of the enlightenment of Kondanna. It is situated at least 13 Km to the north-east of Varanasi. There is a village 1 km away from the Sarnath known as the Singhpur where Shreyansanath was born. He was known as the eleventh Tirthankara of Jainism. This is why the Sarnath is also an important pilgrimage site for Jainism.

Buddha has mentioned the Isipatana as one of the four places of pilgrimage which is most visited by his devout followers.

**Origin of Sarnath Name:**

Mrigadava was named because of the deer-park in Sarnath. Isipatana was named because holy men have landed here. The devas rose into the air and disappeared, only their sound fell on the ground. It is believed that Pacceka Buddhas spent their seven days in contemplation in the Gandhamādana and took bathed in the Anotatta Lake. After taking a bathe in the lake he came to the habitations of men by air. They came to earth at Isipatana through the air.

The Deer Park in the Sarnath was forest and gifted by the king of Benares for the purpose where deer might wander unmolested. Sarnath originated from Saranganath known as the “Lord of the Deer”. This park still exists there today.

**• History of Gautama Buddha at Isipatana:**

The Gautam Buddha went from Bodhgaya to Sarnath after 5 weeks of his enlightenment. Before attaining his enlightenment, Gautam has given up the Pañcavaggiya monks to his austere penances and friends then he left them and went to the Isipatana.

He enlightened five former companions using his spiritual powers as they were able to understand Dharma quickly. It is believed that he had to cross the Gange through the air because he had no money to pay the ferryman. The Gautam Buddha had given his sermon to five monks known as his first sermon and called the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. He spent his first rainy season at the Mulagandhakuti of Sarnath. The Buddha Sangha or community had grown

from 5 to 60 in number. They were sent by Buddha to all corners of the world to travel alone to teach the Dharma to people.

There are many other suttas preached by the Buddha at Isipatana besides the Dhammacakkappavattana, some of them are:

- ✓ The Anattalakkhana Sutta
- ✓ The Saccavibhanga Sutta
- ✓ The Panca Sutta
- ✓ The Rathakara or Pacetana Sutta
- ✓ The two Pasa Suttas
- ✓ The Samaya Sutta
- ✓ The Katuviya Sutta
- ✓ The Metteyyapanha of the Parayana
- ✓ The Dhammadinna Sutta

It is believed that there is an ancient well at Isipatana which was used by the monks to live at the Buddha's time.

Buddhism is flourishing in Sarnath because kings and other wealthy merchants live in Varanasi. Sarnath had become a great centre of arts by the third century. In the 7th century, it was noted that 30 monasteries and 3000 monks were founded at Sarnath.

Sarnath is famous because it has become a major centre of the earliest Sammatiya school of Buddhism. At Sarnath, the image of Lord Shiva and Brahma was found. A Jain temple is located at Chandrapuri close to the Dhamekh Stupa.

• **Legendary characteristics of Isipatana:**

According to the Legends, it is believed that all the Buddhas of Buddha Sangha had preached their first sermon at the Isipatana. Isipatana is known by different names such as Khema-uyyāna, etc. Many of the ancient buildings were damaged by Turks but still, an impressive Dhamek Stupa of 128 feet in height and 93 feet in diameter is stand at Sarnath. The Chaukhandi Stupa and ruins of

the Mulagandhakuti vihara denote that Buddha met his first disciples and he spent his first rainy season respectively.

The modern Mulagandhakuti Vihara has beautiful wall paintings and cute deer are still to be seen there. The original Ashoka Pillar stands there surmounted by the Lion Capital of Asoka but it was broken during Turk invasions. It has become India's National Emblem and the national symbol of our flag.

Sarnath also known as Isipatana, is one of the four pilgrimage sites where Gautama Buddha has been designated. The other three are Kushinagar, Bodh Gaya, and Lumbini.

Sarnath has become a pilgrimage place in Varanasi for Buddhists from all over the world. In some countries, Buddhism has become the dominant religion. Some of them are Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Tibet, Sri Lanka etc.

- **Tourist Attractions at Sarnath:**

Sarnath is the most historical and Buddhist holy place in Varanasi, popular among tourists for tourism for various religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. It has so peaceful, clean and calm environment which provides lots of mind and body relaxation. It can be felt like a new world of heaven on earth, totally away from the rush, dust and crowd. Sarnath is an amazing place having lots of things to see. Some of them are mentioned below:

- ✓ **Chaukhandi Stupa:**

Chaukhandi Stupa is the place where Lord Buddha met his 5 disciples first in Sarnath. It is considered that he came to Sarnath after getting enlightenment at Bodh Gaya in 528 BCE to meet his disciples Mahanama, Koudanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa and Asvajita to share his real knowledge got during the enlightenment. Chaukhandi Stupa is situated 13 km from Varanasi. It was built as a brick-like octagonal tower during the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century in the Gupta period. It was a little bit restructured by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the year 1588 to memorize in future the shelter of Humayun at Sarnath.

- ✓ **Dhamekh Stupa:**



Dhamekh Stupa is the place where Lord Buddha had given his first conversation of Dharma. It is made up of brick in a solid and cylindrical shape of height 43.6 m and a diameter of 28 m. It was founded by King Ashoka in 249 BCE. It was rebuilt during the 5<sup>th</sup> century when modifications were added. It is also called the Dharma Chakra Stupa. This stupa contains 8 niches having images of Lord Buddha.

✓ **Dharmarajika Stupa:**

Dharmarajika Stupa is a very significant place located near the Dhamekh Stupa. It is considered that this place has the remains of bones of the Lord Buddha. It was built by King Ashoka who was destroyed in 1794 by Jagat Singh (to get bricks for another construction purpose) during which a box with bones was found. The box is still kept safely at the Indian Museum, Kolkata. It is considered as the bones were disposed of in Ganga by Jagat Singh.

✓ **Archaeological Museum:**

There is a famous Archaeological Museum at the Sarnath built for placing and protecting the historical things very safely as an ancient antiques. It is located near the archaeological ruins across the road. It has various ancient objects from the Buddhist arts, images of Hindu Gods, etc. It consists of five galleries and two verandahs. It is strictly prohibited to have photography inside the museum to keep secret historical things. It opens from 10.00 am till 5.00 pm from Saturday to Thursday.

✓ **Ashoka Pillar:**

Ashoka Pillar is the great thing to see at Sarnath, located amidst the ruins. It is structured representing broken stone cylinders. These are considered remnants of the real Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath. Ashoka was a great Mauryan emperor who constructed various pillars after his name all over India. Originally these are having a height of 12.25 m and a diameter of 0.71 m base, 0.56 m top having Lion Capital (four back-to-back lions). Each of the Ashoka Pillars has Ashoka Chakra at the top which was broken by the Turk invasions. Broken Ashoka Pillars and fragments of the Ashoka Chakra were founded in 1904 during

mining and digging at the Sarnath. The Lion Capital is still kept safely for exhibition purpose at the Sarnath Archaeological Museum.

✓ **Mulagandhakuti Vihara Buddhist temple:**

The Mulagandhakuti Vihara Buddhist temple at Sarnath is one of the temples built by the Sri Lankan Mahabodhi Society in 1931. It is the place where Lord Buddha spent his first rainy season. It has religious and significant historical objects from the Buddha time found in Taxila, exhibited annually on the Karthik Purnima celebration. The walls of this temple have beautiful frescoes depicting the life of the Buddha.

✓ **Bodhi Tree:**

It is located near the Mulagandhakuti Vihara Buddhist temple, called the holy Bodhi vriksha. It is the holiest place for the people of the Buddhist religion as Lord Buddha attained his enlightenment here beneath the tree. It is planted at the Sarnath by the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society of India (Sri Devamitta Dhammapala) on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November in 1931 by taking a branch from the real Sri Maha Bodhi tree of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

✓ **Ruins of Mulagandhakuti Vihara:**

It is the place where ruins of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara are found at Sarnath representing various ancient cultures and traditions of Buddhism during 200 BCE. It is believed that during the Gupta period, around 3,000 monks lived in these monasteries located closer to the Dhammeka Stupa.

✓ **Nichigai Suzan Horinji Temple/Japanese temple:**

The Nichigai Suzan Horinji Temple is one of the Japanese temples located at Sarnath. This is a very nice temple of great importance to Buddhism.

✓ **Migadawun Myanmar Temple:**

Migadawon Myanmar Temple is one of the earliest Buddhist Temples located near Deer Park (means Migadava) at Sarnath. It was built in the month of February 1908. In February 2008 it celebrated its Anniversary after completing 100 Years.

✓ **Buddha Statue:**

A big Buddha Statue is located at the Thai Buddha Vihara of height 80 ft. It is considered the tallest standing Buddha statue at Sarnath. It was built originally of stone over 14 years during the Indo-Thai joint effort.

✓ **Sri Digamber Jain Temple:**

Sri Digamber Jain Temple is located near the Dhamekh Stupa. It is the most religious place for the Digambara monasticism, which is a branch of the Jain Dharma.

✓ **Burmese Buddhist Temple:**

The Burmese Buddhist Temple at Sarnath is a holy destination for Buddhism, located on the west side of Deer Park. It was built in 1910 following the ancient Buddhist tradition, of Theravada.

✓ **Deer park:**

Deer Park is a very beautiful Park for the Deer at Sarnath. It has a very clean, calm and peaceful environment to meditate or rest for long hours.

**2. Kushinagar:**

Kushinagar and Kasia Bazar is a town and a historical place located in the northeastern marginal area of Uttar Pradesh. The name “Kasia Bazar” has been changed to Kushinagar and after that “Kasia Bazar” has officially become a municipality with the name “Kushinagar”. This is a Buddhist pilgrimage where Gautam Buddha had Mahaparinirvana. Kushinagar is located on National Highway 28, about 50 km east of Gorakhpur. There are many beautiful Buddhist temples here. For this reason, it is also an international tourist destination where Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world come for excursions. After the Kushinagar town and eastwards, Bihar state starts about 20 km.

There are also Buddha Postgraduate Colleges, Buddha Intermediate College and many small schools. The area around Kushinagar is mainly agricultural. Bhojpuri is a popular spoken language. Here are the main crops of wheat, paddy, sugarcane etc.

On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, there is a month's fair in Kushinagar. Although this shrine is related to Mahatma Buddha, the surrounding area is Hindu dominated. In this fair, the people around the place participate with complete reverence and perform puja and worship in various temples. Nobody is sure that Buddha is their 'God'.

Kushinagar district belongs to the Gorakhpur division. This area was formerly known as Kushinara where Buddha's Mahaparinirvana took place. The administrative division of Kushinagar district is in Padrauna. The area is 2,873.5 square kilometres (1,109.5 square miles), then the population is 3,560,830 (2011). The literacy rate is 67.66 percent and the sex ratio is 955. This is a Lok Sabha constituency, then seven Assembly constituencies – Fazilnagar, Khida, Ramkola, Hata, Kasia, Padrauna, Tamakhi Raj. There are 6 tehsils in the district – Padrauna, Kushinagar, Hatta, Tamkihiraj, Khida, Kaptanganj and 14 blocks are – Padrauna, Bishanpura, Kushinagar, Hata, Motichak, Saverhi, Nebula, Narangia, Khida, Dudhi, Fazil Nagar, Sukrauli, Kaptanganj, Ramkola and Tamkhuiraj The number of villages in the district is 1447.

**Important Tourist Attractions:**

The ancient town of Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh gets its name from Kusha the son of the Legendary God King Ram who founded and ruled the city. The archaeological findings in the town date back to the 3rd century BC and belong to the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka. Kushinagar today is a major pilgrimage centre for the Buddhists in India and also finds mention in the writings of the Chinese traveller and pilgrim Hieun Tsang. It was at Kushinagar that Gautama Buddha attained the Mahaparinirvana. Here's the list of the best places you can visit in Kushinagar

- **Mahaparinirvana Temple:**

It is located in the ruins of various ancient monasteries which were founded during the 5th century AD. The temple is famous for its 6.10 meters long statue of Lord Buddha. According to the inscriptions in the ruins, the remains of Lord Buddha have been deposited here.

- **Kushinagar Museum:**

The site was opened to the public during 1992-93 and features various archaeological excavations that were found in Kushinagar. Kushinagar Museum houses various artefacts like statues, sculptures, seals, coins and banners and a wide variety of different antiquities. The Stucco idol of Lord Buddha built in a striking Gandhara Style is one of the major attractions of the museum.

- **Ramabhar Stupa:**

Ramabhar Stupa marks the place where Lord Buddha received the Mahaparinirvana or the Final Enlightenment. The 15 meters high stupa is one of the major attractions in Kushinagar. The stupa is also the most important pilgrim spot for Buddhists and is situated in a pleasant and lush green vicinity that makes it a must-visit tourist spot.

The ancient city of Kushinagar is the final resting place of Gautama Buddha and thus is considered to be the most important pilgrim spot for Buddhist followers. From Hieun Tsang to Fa Hein, the city has been an important spot for the Buddhist pilgrim since ancient times. The aforementioned places will surely help you experience the significance of this city for the Buddhists in the world.

### **3. Sravasti:**

Sravasti has been identified with the remains at Saheth-Maheth, situated on the banks of the river Rapti. It was the capital of the ancient Kosala kingdom and is sacred to the Buddhists because it is here that Lord Buddha performed the greatest of his miracles to confound the Tirthika heretics. These miracles include Buddha creating multiple images of himself, which has been a favourite theme of Buddhist art. It is well-connected with good roads constructed under Buddhist Circuit. It is located about 15 km from Bahraich lies this sprawling complex of Buddhist stupas and ruins, believed to be founded by the mythological king Sravast, the town played host to Buddha for 27 years and was his annual rainy season retreat. It was the capital of the ancient Koshal Empire and here the Buddha showed his divine prowess to impress upon the

non-believers. The excellently-preserved ruins have a meditative air around them and amid them stands an ancient Bodhi Vriksh (tree). The huge World Peace Bell in Sravasti established with Japanese help, is said to convey the message of humanity through its toll.

- **Kachchi Kuti:**

An interesting sightseeing place in Shravasti for all the history buffs is the Kachchi Kuti. Located in the vicinity of Mahet, Kachchi Kuti is one of the two mounds in the region. It is an excavated sculpture. The name of this popular tourist attraction in Shravasti is kept after a temporary brick temple that was once situated on the top of it and was built by a sadhu. The excavation observed on the site reveals an image of Bodhisattva. On the lower portion of the image, there is an inscription that reveals that Kachchi Kuti traces its history to the Kushana Period. It also reveals that the site has undergone numerous renovations. As per some scholars, Kachchi Kuti is considered to be a Brahmanical temple whereas, others associated it with the stupa of Sudatta.

- **Pakki Kuti:**

Pakki Kuti refers to one of the largest mounds in Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh. Fa-Hien & Hiuen (a famous Chinese traveller), Hiuen Tsang (Chinese Scholar) and Alexander Cunningham (British engineer) identified this renowned tourist attraction in Shravasti as the stupa of Angulimala. Whereas, other scholars believed it to be the ruins of the Hall of Law which was said to have been erected to commemorate Lord Buddha by Prasenjit. The present structure of this must-visit tourist place in Shravasti has witnessed several renovations. It is believed that once the site was a terraced stupa which was built on a rectangular platform. However, the structural remains of Pakki Kuti today represent the construction works of different periods, the earliest of which is the Kushana Period. Pakki Kuti is one of those ideal places of tourist interest in Shravasti where one can spend time gathering some historical knowledge.

- **Vipassana Meditation Centre, Sravasti:**

This meditation centre is situated right on State Highway 26, opposite Buddha Inter College, barely a few minutes walk from the Jetavana Archaeological Park. As Jetavana is the place where the Buddha spent more time than anywhere else (24 rain retreats), this centre is highly recommended for those who wish to learn meditation, as well as experienced meditators.

- **4. Kaushambi:**

Kaushambi is a major pilgrimage centre for the Buddhists. Located in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Kaushambi attracts many devotees throughout the year. It is believed that Buddha had delivered many of his sermons here. Though most of the city is in ruins due to negligence, there are several interesting places such as forts, stupas and many other ancient monuments located along the Yamuna River that are worth a visit. Tourist Places in and around Kaushambi being an important pilgrimage centre for the Buddhists, Kaushambi boasts several landmarks associated with Lord Buddha. Excavations carried out at old Kaushambi have unearthed Ashoka Pillar and the Ghoshit Ram Monastery along with several other monuments. Ghoshit Ram Vihar is believed to be where Buddha had stayed during his sojourn.

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**10.5 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss in detail the tourist attractions of Kushinagar:**

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- **Highlight the important pilgrimage destinations of Hindus:**

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**10.6 Summary:**

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Uttar Pradesh is the state with the largest population in India. It has a variety of pilgrimage destinations that attracts pilgrims from around the country. According to Indian Tourism Statistics (ITS) 2019, Uttar Pradesh received about 23% of tourists, which is the highest among some pilgrimage destinations like Varanasi, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Vrindavan and Mathura which attract a good no. of religious tourists. One Jyotirlinga Kashi Vishwanath temple is situated here. Prayagraj is one of the four Kumbh Mela Sites in India. Chitrakoot is the land where Lord Rama spent the majority of his time during 14 years of exile. Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Rama. Mathura is the birthplace of Lord Krishna and Vrindavan where he spent most of his childhood.

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**10.7 Glossary:**

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- **Jyotirlinga:** Jyotirlingas are the divine places of Lord Shiva.
- **Exile:** Force someone to live outside his country.

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**10.8 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Write a detailed note on important attractions of Vrindavan
- Write a short note on Sarnath

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**10.9 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://kushinagar.nic.in/about-district/>



- <https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/uttarpradesh/kachchi-kuti-shravasti.html>
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**Unit-11**

**Pilgrimage Tourism in Madhya Pradesh**

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**Structure:**

**11.0 Introduction**

**11.1 Objectives**

**11.2 Tourism Industry in Madhya Pradesh**

**11.3 Hindu Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations in Madhya Pradesh**

**11.4 Buddhism Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations in Madhya Pradesh**

**11.5 Other Pilgrimage Destinations of Madhya Pradesh**

**11.6 Check Your Progress**

**11.7 Summary**

**11.8 Glossary**

**11.9 Self-Assessment Questions**

**11.10 References and Suggested Readings**

**11.0 Introduction:**

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Madhya Pradesh is very rich in having a variety of natural and cultural resources. It is also known as the Heart of India. It is well known for its Plateau, Lakes, National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Forest Areas, Historical Monuments, Forts, Palaces etc. It houses two major capital ranges named Satpura Mountain Range and Vindhya Mountain Range. Narmada is the major and holy River of the State. Madhya Pradesh is the home to ten National Parks: Bandhavgarh National Park, Kanha National Park, Satpura National Park, Sanjay National Park, Madhav National Park, Van Vihar National Park, Mandla Plant Fossils National Park, Panna National Park, Pench National Park and Dinosaur National Park. The state also houses so many Wildlife sanctuaries such as Bori Natural Reserve, Ken Gharial Ghatigaon etc. Out of the total 18 Biosphere reserves of India, the state is home to three important Biosphere Reserves of India named as Panchmarhi Biosphere Reserve in Satpura Range, Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve and Panna National Park. Its capital is Bhopal and the largest city is Indore (also known as Mini Mumbai). In terms of area, Madhya Pradesh is the second largest state of India and it stands in fifth place in terms of largest population. It borders with Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Earlier, Madhya Pradesh's capital was Nagpur and it was including parts of northern Maharashtra but in the year 1956 its southern part was removed and merged with present Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh was merged with Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal to form the new present-day Madhya Pradesh State. A "state of the art" Tourist Reception Center (TRC) cum headquarters of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism is easily the most visible symbol of the resurgence in the tourism sector of the state. Buzzing with activity and positive energy, a visitor to this building would appreciate the rapid strides in tourism taken by the state in a very short time frame.

Also, when it comes to exploring the richness and diversity of the state, Madhya Pradesh no doubt emerges out to be one of the best in all aspects.

Popularly known as the “Tiger State of India, the state has three world heritage sites namely Sanchi, Bhimbetka and Khajuraho. In the last few years, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has initiated several measures to position the state as a leading tourism state. While considerable work has been done and the state is now being recognized as one of the leading tourism states of the nation, much more still needs to be done.

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**11.1 Objectives:**

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The following are the main objectives of the present unit:

- To know the religious tourist attractions of Madhya Pradesh
- To identify the salient features of religious tourism in Madhya Pradesh

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**11.2 Tourism Industry in Madhya Pradesh:**

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The splendour of Madhya Pradesh has been drawing tourists for ages and today the state has not only upheld its pristine beauty as it was years ago but has also added many options to explore for a traveller. Its dense forests, good tiger population, ancient architectures and cultural fusion make it a diverse land to discover.

- **Natural Heritage:**

Madhya Pradesh boasts of a rich natural heritage consisting largely of mountain ranges of the Vindhyas and the Satpuras, the hills give rise to the main river system - Narmada and the Tapti. The state has the largest forest cover in India offering a matchless panorama of natural beauty and wildlife. In the National Parks of Kanha, Satpura, Bandhavgarh, Pench and Panna tourists get the opportunity to see the tiger and a wide range of wild creatures amidst natural surroundings.

- **World heritage sites:**

Besides the natural beauty, the state also houses marvellous structures from the ancient and medieval eras. The beautifully carved temples of Khajuraho, the

stunning forts and palaces of Gwalior, the divinely peaceful temples of Ujjain, and the rustic Chhatris of Orchha divulge the ironic heritage of Madhya Pradesh that fascinates tourists from far and wide.

- **Culture:**

Dominated by tribal communities, this state of central India is rich in culture. The amalgamation of the varied tradition of the diverse groups has made the culture of the state vibrant and multi-dimensional. Be it music and dance or art and craft, the state has all.

This state is said to have the highest flavours of culture and tradition. The culture there, mainly, is a harmonious blend of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Muslims and Sikhs along with the varied tribal groups. Influenced by tribal culture, the different socio-cultural activities portray the lifestyle as well as the rich tradition of the place. The varied cultural activities of the state even help in bringing out the actual spirit of the people of Madhya Pradesh.

With a legacy of musicians, Indian classical songs as well as folk songs form a part of the distinctive culture of the state.

The varied forms of art and crafts of Madhya Pradesh even contribute to the rich culture of the state. Apart from adding a unique charm, the handicrafts of this state of central India reflect the painstaking craftsmanship of the place. Chanderi and Maheshwari silk saris are some of the noteworthy crafts of the state. Bastar, Bilaspur, Bhopal, Bundelkhand, Gondwana, Indore, Khajuraho, Malwa, Mandla, Gwalior, Jhabua, Raigarh, Shahdol and Ujjain are some of the prominent centres of the state's art and crafts.

- **Art And Crafts:**

Apart from the lush national parks and splendid monuments, the state located in the heart of India is well known for its culture and tradition, which also reflects in its art and craft. Handicrafts in Madhya Pradesh depict the craftsmanship of talented artisans as well as add magic to the culture of the state. The creative pieces of crafts work include silk sarees, fabrics with block prints, bamboo work, cane work, jute work, woodcraft, iron craft, stone craft,

metal craft, terracotta, zari work, folk paintings, ornaments, dolls and papier mache.

- **Weaving:**

Originating from the town of Chanderi, the popular Chanderi fabric is a hand-woven combination of silk and cotton. The age-old craft of creating handlooms is practised by the master weavers. On the other hand, Maheshwari is another fabric, which is similar to Chanderi. It's believed that the craft was coined from Maheshwar, and weavers were brought from Surat by the Maratha queen Ahilya Bai Holkar to make sarees & turban cloth for the royal household.

- **Other crafts:**

Bagh printing is an elegant and sober hand-block printing art that comes from the Bagh village in the district of Dhar whereas Durries (rugs) in Madhya Pradesh have been created for eras in the Vidisha district. Jhabua dolls, Zari work, Metalcraft and bamboo craft are some of the other art forms from a lot practised in various parts of the state.

- **Wildlife:**

The heartland of India, Madhya Pradesh is endowed with the largest forest cover and a huge variety of wildlife. From deer to gharials to tigers, Madhya Pradesh is a pool of wild creatures. For ardent nature-buffs, there are 9 National Parks, 6 Tiger Reserves and 25 Wildlife Sanctuaries to satisfy the adventure quest. Plan a trip to the jungles of Madhya Pradesh to catch the real spirit of the Indian wilderness.

- ✓ **Tremendous Tiger Reserves:**

Considered the tiger state, Madhya Pradesh unquestionably has the best parks to spot tigers. The very popular Bandhavgarh National Park has the highest density of tigers in India. In all these reserves including Kanha, the Tigers can be seen wandering around freely. Apart from the tigers, tourists can also discover deer, chital and leopards, etc.

**✓ Fabulous Fossil Reserves:**

Madhya Pradesh has everything that a nature enthusiast wants to explore. From national parks to wildlife sanctuaries, from tiger reserves to fossil parks, the heart of Incredible India is blessed with the best! The fossil park in the Mandla district has relics that are 40-150 million years old. Spread over a huge area, the park comprises trunks of ancient trees, rocks, plants, leaves, shells and fruit seed fossils.

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**11.3 Hindu Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations in Madhya Pradesh:**

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Some important Hindu pilgrimage attractions along with their cities are listed below:

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Name of Pilgrim Destination</b>	<b>City</b>
<b>1.</b>	Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga	Ujjain
<b>2.</b>	Saas Bahu Temple	Gwalior
<b>3.</b>	Bada Ganesh Ka Mandir	Ujjain
<b>4.</b>	Kandariya Mahadeo Temple	Khajuraho
<b>5.</b>	Kal Bhairav Mandir	Ujjain
<b>6.</b>	Chintaman Ganesh Temple	Ujjain
<b>7.</b>	Matangeshwar Temple	Khajuraho
<b>8.</b>	Annapurna Temple	Indore
<b>9.</b>	Adinath Temple	Khajuraho
<b>10.</b>	Lakshmana Temple	Khajuraho
<b>11.</b>	Javari Temple	Khajuraho
<b>12.</b>	Chaturbhuji Temple	Orchha
<b>13.</b>	Omkareshwar Temple	Omkareshwar
<b>14.</b>	Harsiddhi Temple	Ujjain
<b>15.</b>	Parsvanth Temple	Khajuraho
<b>16.</b>	Shri Pashupatinath Temple	Mandsaur
<b>17.</b>	Chausath Yogini Temple	Bhedaghat

18.	Lakshmi Narayan Temple	Bhopal
19.	Gauri Somnath Temple	Omkareshwar
20.	Mamleshwar Temple	Omkareshwar
21.	Temples at Bateshwar	Bateshwar
22.	Kalika Mata Mandir	Ratlam
23.	Taxakeshwar Temple	Mandsaur
24.	Kalmadhav	Amarkantak
25.	Bijasan Mata Temple	Salkanpur
26.	Shri Dwarkadhish Gopal Mandir	Ujjain
27.	Mandir Devi Temple	Satna
28.	Bhairav Parvat	Ujjain

Detail on each Hindu Pilgrimage attraction is given below:

**1. Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, Ujjain:**

Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas located in India. Offering an ambience filled with serenity, the temple draws in many pilgrims. Offering an ambience that is serene and quiet, Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, counted among the best temples in Madhya Pradesh is a great respite to get away from all the chaos and mundanity. On the day of Maha Shivratri, a huge fair get organized near the temple every year when the temple remains open all night. It's a beautiful sight to witness.

**2. Saas Bahu Temple, Gwalior:**

Built-in respect of Lord Vishnu who is also known as Sahastrabahu, this temple is located in Gwalior. The temple was built by King Mahipala and its name gradually changed probably due to mispronunciation. Saas Bahu Temple boasts splendid carvings which portray the brilliant artistic skills of the artisans and sculptures of that time. The temple is best known for offering the most enthralling views of the city of Gwalior and a hike from Gwalior Fort to the temple is also a preferred activity if the weather is pleasant.



**3. Bada Ganesh Ka Mandir, Ujjain:**

Dedicated to Lord Ganesha, Bada Ganesh Ka Mandir is a popular religious tourist attraction in Ujjain and is counted among the best temples in Madhya Pradesh. Hundreds of people from different parts of the country throng this temple every year.

The most fascinating aspect of this temple is that apart from the spot, Ganesh Ka Mandir also serves as a place for learning astrology and Sanskrit. This is another reason why it draws in a large number of visitors. Perfect for those who are not just spiritually inclined, but also want to learn the ancient language, Sanskrit and keen to practice astrology.

**4. Kandariya Mahadeo Temple, Khajuraho:**

Also famed as one of the finest temples in the Khajuraho group of temples, Kandariya Mahadeo Temple was built in 1050 BC. Adorned with ornate carvings with over 900 sandstone sculptures, Kandariya Mahadeo Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. With a Shiva Lingam in its garbha griha, Kandariya Mahadeo Temple is a wonderful depiction of medieval architecture that can be appreciated in abundance here. The beautiful temple is east facing and was built by the popular Chandela ruler Raja Dhandadeva.

**5. Kal Bhairav Mandir, Ujjain:**

Dedicated to Kal Bhairav who is also known as the guardian deity of the city of Ujjain, Kal Bhairav Temple is one of the most visited temples in Madhya Pradesh. With liquor as one of the main offerings, the temple houses the idol of Kal Bhairav who is considered to be the chief of Ashta Bhairava. The famous temple is also related to the Tantra cult which was a secret religious sect that flourished on black magic.

**6. Chintaman Ganesh Temple, Ujjain:**

One of the most revered temples of Madhya Pradesh, the Chintaman Ganesh Temple is believed to be constructed during the rule of Paramaras. The temple is dedicated to Lord Ganesha whose image is housed in the 'garbhagriha'. Dating back to the ancient period, Chintaman Ganesh Temple is famous for brilliantly

preserving the age-old charm. One of the popular legends associated with the Chintamani Ganesh Temple is that Lord Ganesh came to earth and created the temple for himself. The ancient shrine draws in several tourists who come here to seek the blessings of Lord Ganesha to be relieved of all worries.

**7. Matangeshwar Temple, Khajuraho:**

One of the only temples of Chandela reign that is still used for worship, Matangeshwara Temple is a famous temple in the Western group of Khajuraho temples. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Matangeshwara Temple boasts one of the largest lingams in North India. Built about 1100 years ago, Matangeshwar Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and serves as one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in Khajuraho. The Shivratri festival is celebrated with a lot of fervour at Matangeshwar Temple and is also the most favoured time to visit here.

**8. Annapurna Temple, Indore:**

With the Goddess of food, Annapurna is the main deity, Annapurna Temple is a famous pilgrimage site in Indore. The temple is decorated with elaborate carvings and boasts some splendid architectural displays. Annapurna Temple also has shrines dedicated to Sivan, Hanuman, and Kalabhairava. The revered shrine draws in several pilgrims every year and is hailed as one of the must-visit tourist destinations in the city of Indore.

**9. Adinath Temple, Khajuraho:**

Considered as one of the most exquisite Jain temples in Madhya Pradesh, Adinath Temple is dedicated to the Tirthankar Adinath who is believed to have founded the religion of Jainism. The temple is known for having mind-blowing carvings of Yakshis on its three bands of sculptures. The 11th-century temple depicts similarities to Khajuraho's Hindu temples and is a must-visit if you are fond of history and culture.

**10. Lakshmana Temple, Khajuraho:**

Boasting impressive architectural beauty, Lakshmana Temple is made in respect of the Hindu God Vishnu. It was built by the Chandela Kings and is

known to be among the largest temples in the western wing of the Khajuraho complex. The temple catches the fancy of every traveller with its gorgeous exhibit of images of more than 600 gods on the exterior wall.

Lakshmana Temple boasts a fine architectural plan with an entrance porch, a mandapa, antral, maha mandapa and garbha griha. The wonderful temple is also a delightful visit for photography lovers.

#### **11. Javari Temple, Khajuraho:**

Famous for its wonderful architecture, Javari Temple is one of the notable shrines in the Eastern Group of Khajuraho temples. It is a belief that this temple is named after Javari who has owned the land on which the temple is constructed. The beautiful Temple is known for its immaculate design and carvings that reflect the architectural brilliance of a bygone era. With various sculptures adorning its walls, Javari Temple is one of the finest examples of ancient architecture.

#### **12. Chaturbhuj Temple, Orchha:**

Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Chaturbhuj Temple was built by Raja Madhukar during the years 1558 to 1573. The temple is named Chaturbhuj which translates to 'one who has four arms' referring to Lord Rama. The temple boasts ornate decorations with religious symbols on the walls which are wonderful to witness. Denoting striking similarities to the Kushal Mahal in Chanderi, Chaturbhuj Temple is astounding as it doesn't have any erotic carvings for which the Khajuraho temples are known. The temple is also called Jatakari Temple and is known for its intricate architecture.

#### **13. Omkareshwar Temple, Omkareshwar:**

Omkareshwar Temple is the most famous shrine of Madhya Pradesh that is also considered among the 12 Jyotirlingas of India. It is situated on Mandhata Island which lies in the Narmada River and is well-known to be formed in the shape of the Hindu symbol 'Om'. It is the most sacred place for Hindus in Madhya Pradesh. The temple is a must-visit not only if you are spiritually inclined but

also if you want to appreciate the scenic beauty of River Narmada and the island where this temple is located.

**14. Harsiddhi Temple, Ujjain:**

Known to be one of the popular shrines in Ujjain which is a major Shaktipeeth, Harsiddhi Temple was built during the reign of Marathas.

The temple's main deity is Harsiddhi Mata whose idol is painted in dark red colour and stands between the idols of Mahasaraswati and Mahalaxmi.

The temple is famous for the presence of Shree Yantra which is symbolic of the nine forms of Durga and two imposing stambhs that are lit with hundreds of lamps during the festival of Navratri making it an impressive sight to behold.

**15. Parsvanth Temple, Khajuraho:**

Parsvanath Temple is a famous 10th-century Jain temple that is renowned for the artistic brilliance of the Chandela period. It is one of the biggest temples in the Khajuraho complex with the statue of Lord Parsvanath that was installed here in the year 1860. Depicting everyday activities, the carvings on the walls of Parsvanath Temple are considered to be among the finest portrayal of simple events of life in the whole temple complex of Khajuraho.

**16. Shri Pashupatinath Temple, Mandsaur:**

Dedicated to Lord Shiva who is worshipped in the form of Pashupatinath, Shri Pashupatinath Temple is one of the famous temples in Mandsaur. One of the prominent features of the temple is the eight faces of Lord Shiva that are depicted on the Shiva Linga here. The eight faces are symbolic of eight aspects of Shiva in Shaivism theology. The temple is supposed to be built in the 5th or 6th century and has many interesting inscriptions that have helped in ascertaining the dates of many archaeological discoveries in the region.

**17. Chausath Yogini Temple, Bhedaghat:**

Exuding the legacy of ancient dynasties that reigned over Jabalpur, Chausath Yogini Temple is one of the oldest temples. It was built in the 10th century by the rulers of the Kalchuri Dynasty and dedicated to Goddess Durga along with 64 yoginis. Standing through the vagaries of time, Chausath Yogini Temple has

witnessed Mughal invasions when it was damaged partially but is still considered to be an impressive sight to behold for tourists.

**18. Lakshmi Narayan Temple, Bhopal:**

Offering an enthralling sight of the city of Bhopal, Laxmi Narayan Temple is one of the popular Madhya Pradesh temples dedicated to Goddess Laxmi. Encompasses sprawling green lawns, Lakshmi Narayana Temple is known for its beautiful sculptures that date back to the 12th century. Laxmi Narayan Temple has the idols of Goddess Lakshmi, Narayana, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati and enthralls tourists with its architectural splendour.

**19. Gauri Somnath Temple, Omkareshwar:**

Known for its six feet tall Shiva linga, Gauri Somnath Mandir is one of the most visited temples in Madhya Pradesh. There is a popular legend which says that one can see the figure of his next life in the Shiva linga here which is assumed to have predictive qualities. Shaped in the form of a star, the temple also has a statue of Nandi outside the sanctum sanctorum and an idol of Goddess Parvati behind the linga.

**20. Mamleshwar Temple, Omkareshwar:**

Hosting one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, Mamaleshwar Temple in Omkareshwar is believed to be one of the oldest temples in the region. Also known as Amareshwar Temple, the temple is a must-visit if you are visiting Omkareshwar. The temple boasts of many ancient inscriptions which are more than hundreds of years old and a delight for all the tourists who are fond of history.

**21. Temples at Bateshwar, Bateshwar:**

Replete with rich history, Temples at Bateshwar are a group of 200 sandstone Hindu temples that should not be missed among Madhya Pradesh temples. Located along the banks of river Yamuna, temples at Bateshwar were built by King Badan Singh Bhadoriya. The temples are representative of the three major traditions within Hinduism and are dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, and Parvati. The most spectacular time to visit the temple is during the month of October to

November when a grand animal fair is organized attracting tourists from all over the world.

**22. Kalika Mata Mandir, Ratlam:**

Paying respect to Goddess Kalika, this temple is one of the most visited places of spiritual interest in Madhya Pradesh. There is the idol of Kalika Mata that is considered to be the most astounding feature of this temple and one experiences the transformation of energy or 'shakti' into your soul as you stand in front of the idol. Kalika Mata Mandir in Ratlam is a wonderful place to take your loved ones and enjoy the overwhelming spiritual ambience of the place.

**23. Taxakeshwar Temple, Mandsaur:**

Encompassed by the breathtaking natural scenery, Taxakeshwar Temple in Mandsaur is one of the most visited Madhya Pradesh temples. The temple is dedicated to the serpent king Taxakeshwar who is revered as Takhaji by the locals in Mandsaur. Taxakeshwar Temple reflects the architectural elegance of the 12th century and one of the most striking features of the temple is a gorgeous natural water pool that houses a variety of fishes.

**24. Kalmadhav, Amarkantak:**

One of the popular 51 Shakti Peeths, Kalmadhav is known to be more than 6000 years old and believed to be founded by Suryavanshi Samarat. The ancient temple boasts of fine ponds and kunds with the temple built of white rock. Located on the banks of the Shon River, Kalmadhav is believed to be the place where Sati's right hips fell after her self-immolation. The temple attracts the most devotees during the festival of Navratri when one can witness many special rituals performed at the temple.

**25. Bijasan Mata Temple, Salkanpur:**

With goddess Durga as the presiding deity, Bijasan Mata Temple is one of the renowned temples perched atop an 800 ft high hillock. The temple is dedicated to the nine forms of Goddess Durga and is known for the most extravagant Navratri Mela which takes place twice a year. The sacred shrine boasts remarkable architecture and offers some picturesque views from the hill.

**26. Shri Dwarkadhish Gopal Mandir, Ujjain:**

Dedicated to Lord Krishna, Shri Dwarkadhish Gopal Mandir in Ujjain is a wonderful example of Maratha architecture. With two feet tall statue of Lord Krishna dressed in silver, this temple speaks of grandeur blending perfectly the ethnic and modern architecture. The inner sanctum of the temple is adorned by the silver-plated door which was taken away by Mahmud Ghazni but later recovered by Mahadji Scindia. The excellent marble-spined temple offers a great visit if you are interested in history and appreciate architectural creativity.

**27. Maihar Devi Temple, Satna:**

Perched atop Trikoota Hill, Maihar Devi Temple is one of the most beautiful temples after climbing 1063 steps. Attracting flocks of tourists every year, Maihar Devi Temple is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas of Goddess Parvati. It is believed that when Sati was carried down by Lord Shiva, it was her necklace that fell down and thus the name 'Maihar' was derived from the temple which translates to 'necklace of mother'. The temple is best to visit during the festival of Navratri and Durga Puja when the maximum number of devotees visit.

**28. Bhairav Parvat, Ujjain:**

Perched on the top of Bhairav Hills by the banks of River Shipra, Bhairav Parvat is a famous temple in Madhya Pradesh. Also called Gadkalika by the locals, the temple boasts unique architecture with gorgeous stone inscriptions. The Shakti Peeth is believed to be the place where Ma Sati's elbow fell after Lord Shiva cut the burnt corpse by Sudarshan Chakra into 52 pieces. The goddess is revered as Avanti in this temple and is always adorned with red which is considered a sacred colour for married women.

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**11.4 Buddhism Pilgrimage Tourist Destinations in Madhya Pradesh:**

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Several historical Buddhist sites are scattered throughout India, and Madhya Pradesh is certainly not an exception. The monasteries and Gompa of Madhya Pradesh were erected after the life and activities of Gautama Buddha. The significance of the place increased as most of the spots had been visited by

Buddha from Siddhartha to Sakyamuni. These places are all celebrated Buddhist pilgrimage centres around the globe.

Sanchi is a prominent Buddhist site located in Madhya Pradesh, India. Sanchi successfully captures the explorer's attention through the wide display of a large number of Stupas. These again were converted to Buddhist retreats. The Stupa of Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh was the ultimate construction of emperor Ashoka. It is counted as one of those Buddhist sites for which the emperor donated money. The exquisite carvings on the stupas in Sanchi portray a world of total blending of humans and animals living in ideal harmony with each other.

### **1. The Sanchi Stupa:**

The Sanchi Stupa is one of the most ancient and famous Buddhist monuments located at Sanchi town in Raisen District, located about 46 kilometres northeast of Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh.

The Stupa has several chambers, which contain the relics of Buddha. The Sanchi Stupa was constructed in honour of Lord Buddha by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd Century BC. The height of the Stupa is 54 feet. The last addition to the Stupa was done during the rule of the Guptas, before 450 AD. The Stupa at Sanchi is one of the oldest stone structures in India and is crowned by a chhatra, a parasol-like structure, intended to honour and protect the precious relics and is surrounded by four gateways that constitute various sequences from the life of Lord Buddha and Jatakas tales.

The dome of the Stupa is a symbol of the Dharma, the wheel of the Law. Sanchi Stupa is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the National Emblem of India, the Ashoka Chakra was inspired by the Ashoka Pillar of Sanchi.

### **2. Bharhut:**

Bharhut is a village located in Madhya Pradesh, in the district of Satna. Known for its prominent antique from a Buddhist stupa, it is believed to have been founded by the Bhoro people.



Bharhut was excavated by Major General Alexander Cunningham in 1873. The stupa's various chiselled remains are now mainly protected in Kolkata and Allahabad, in the Indian Museum and the Municipal Museum, respectively.

The Bharhut sculptures portray some of the oldest examples of Indian and Buddhist art, later than the art of Ashoka, and somewhat later than the early Sunga reliefs on railings at Sanchi Stupa No.2. Bharhut also has a much more developed iconography compared to Sanchi Stupa No.2.

### **3. Deorkothar (Deur Kothar):**

Deorkothar is a site of archaeological significance in Madhya Pradesh, Central India. It was brought to light in 1982 and is famous for its Buddhist stupas. These stupas are attributed to the Mauryan emperor, Ashoka.

Deorkothar was founded in 1982 by P.K. Mishra and Ajit Singh. It was declared a memorial of national importance in 1988 by the Government of India and is being preserved and conserved by the Archaeological Survey of India, Bhopal. The site has four prominent stupas, out of which only two stupas - No.1 and 2 were excavated. There are surviving traces of 40 stupas, made of either stones or bricks. Near the site, some rocks with old rock paintings and some inscriptions in Brahmi script.

Remnants of terracotta toys, beads, ear studs and coins hint that the site was an active centre of trade.

Interestingly, the ancient tradition of lime technology found in some Harappan and post-Harappan sites besides Kausambi has now been observed at Deorkothar.

### **4. The Stupa No. 2:**

The Stupa No.2 at Sanchi, also called Sanchi II, is one of the earliest surviving Buddhist stupas in India, and closely related to the Buddhist complex of Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh. It is of special importance as it has the oldest known important displays of decorative reliefs in India, probably previous to the reliefs at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya, or the reliefs of Bharhut.

The Stupa exhibits "the oldest extensive stupa decoration in existence" and is observed as the birthplace of Jataka illustrations, well known among them is the relief of the horse-headed ogress thought to be the first known representation of a Jataka (One of Lord Buddha's previous lives)

The Stupa contained a relic box with four small steatite caskets containing human bones. The Brahmi inscription on the relic box implies that it contained "the relics of all teachers, including Kasapagota and Vachi-Suvijayita.

#### **5. Sonari:**

Sonari is the archaeological site of a former monastic complex of Buddhist stupas. The site, stationed on a hill, is located about 10km southwest of Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India. The stupas were dug up around 1850 by Alexander Cunningham, who located two boxes containing relics. One of the reliquaries, which is very elaborately decorated is now on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Excavation of Sonari's Stupa no. 2 revealed three miniature reliquaries, while two of the reliquaries were in soapstone and one was in rock crystal. The main reliquary is shaped to resemble a lotus bud and the upper body is divided into eight rectangular compartments each of which is an elephant, horse, deer or winged lion, patterns typical of the period of the Maurya Empire.

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#### **11.5 Other Pilgrimage Destinations of Madhya Pradesh:**

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##### **Sikh Religion Tourist Attraction:**

##### **Gurudwara in Madhya Pradesh:**

Gurudwara, the shrine of Sikhs, is derived from two words – 'Guru' and 'Dwar' – meaning the gateway to guru. There are many Gurudwara in Madhya Pradesh that has a rich connection with the past. With more than hundreds of Gurudwara established in Madhya Pradesh, these are some of the cleanliest, most organized and calmest places of worship in Madhya Pradesh. Gurudwara of Madhya Pradesh springs back to life during the festive seasons, especially during Lohri, Baisakhi, Gurpurab, etc. The uniqueness of these Gurudwara that

allows it to stand out amongst churches, mosques and temples is that people from every religion can come to worship here. All these Gurudwaras give insight into how Sikhism has been sustained in Madhya Pradesh.

**Famous Gurudwara in Madhya Pradesh:****• Gurudwara Shri Badi Sangat Patshahi Dasvin Sahib in Burhanpur:**

Gurdwara Bari Sangat is about two furlongs northwest of the walled city of Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh. It marks the site where Guru Gobind Singh, travelling to the south with emperor Bahadur Shah, stayed in May-June 1708. Later Hathi Singh, son of Mata Sundari's adopted son Ajit Singh, made his abode here. This Gurdwara has 16 acres of land attached to it.

Guru Granth Sahib is seated on a marble canopied seat in the middle of a spacious high-ceilinged, rectangular hall which has a gallery at mid-height on three sides. Above the hall, over the sanctum, are two floors of square rooms with a domed pavilion on top. An old Bir (hand-written copy) of Guru Granth Sahib is preserved in this Gurdwara. Its pages have beautifully drawn borders in multicolours.

This Gurdwara is much more flourishing and frequented than the other Gurdwara located in Burhanpur along the bank of the Tapi River. Gurdwara Rajghat Sangat Pahili Pathshahi is dedicated to Guru Nanak Dev. It is in a single room looked after by a Nihang who lives in a similar room close by.

**• Gurudwara Shri Data Bandichod Sahib in Gwalior:**

Gurdwara Data Bandi Chorh Sahib, situated in Gwalior, is associated with the imprisonment of Guru Har Gobind Sahib in Gwalior Fort and his celebrated release in which he managed to win the freedom of 52 Rajas (Kings) who had long suffered imprisonment in the Fort. The word "Bandi" means "imprisoned", and "Chhor" means "release". For further reading see Bandi Chhorh Divas. Pilgrims from all over the country visit this Gurdwara to pay homage to Guru Hargobind. During October/November, the worldwide Sikh Sangat (community) celebrates the safe return of the sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind from detention at Gwalior Fort in about October 1619. The day coincides with

the Hindu festival of Diwali, ("the festival of lights"). This concurrence has resulted in a similarity of celebrations amongst Sikhs and Hindus.

**History:**

The most familiar version has Emperor Jahangir being warned by Murtaja Khan, Nawab of Lahore, who noticed that Guru Ji had constructed the Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, 'The Throne of the Almighty', at Amritsar, and was also strengthening his army, he informed the Mughal Emperor Jahangir about this incorrectly, emphasizing that the Sikh Guru was making preparations to take revenge for his father's torture and martyrdom. When Jahangir heard about this he at once sent Wazir Khan and Guncha Beg to Amritsar to arrest Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji. Given the severity of the brutal torture inflicted on Guru Arjan, Jahangir would have had ample reason to believe that the young Guru was coming for his head.

But Wazir Khan, who was an admirer of Guru Hargobind, requested the Guru to accompany them to Delhi telling him that Emperor Jahangir wanted to meet him. Guru Sahib accepted the invitation and soon reached Delhi. However, Guru Hargobind was a man assured of himself who by his mere appearance and evident holiness charmed Jahangir and his wife Noor Jahan (said to be the real power in Jahangir's Darbar.). But the same evil men who had plotted the arrest and torture of Guru Arjan hatched a plot aimed at a similar fate for Guru Hargobind. In this well-told version, Jahangir falls ill, and his astrologer's predictions end with Guru Hargobind seemingly a prisoner in Gwalior Fort whose prayers are the only cure for Jahangir. The Sikhs, after the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan, fear the worst, but the Guru is not worried in the least, even as the same powerful Hindu Courtier Chandu Shah planned his death.

**• Gurudwara Shri Gwarighat Sahib in Jabalpur:**

Gurdwara Sri Gwari Ghat Sahib is located at Gwarighat which is a famous stepped embankment (a ghat) alongside the river Narmada in the city of Jabalpur in the State of Madhya Pradesh. Located almost dead centre in India the Gurdwara is surrounded by a very picturesque setting. Sri Guru Nanak

Sahib Ji, the founder of Sikhi, undertook four journeys, also known as udasis (literally a sombre state of mind, here - travels). For Guru Nanak to spread his message, Guru Ji travelled four times in four different directions from his native Punjab. During Guru Nanak's first udasi (started in 1501 when the Guru was 31 years of age) Guru Nanak travelled to the east and south of India. During his return trip, Guru Nanak and his companion Mardana walked along the northeast side of the River Narmada until they reached Gwarighat near present-day Jabalpur where they crossed the river.

Giani Gyan (also spelt Gian) Singh, the renowned poet has described the crossing of the Narmada River in his 'Panth Parkash'

**Muslim Religion Tourist Attraction:**

- **Moti Masjid, Bhopal:**

Moti Masjid is one of the many mosques located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Even though the mosque is relatively smaller in size as compared to the other exquisite and historical monuments that stand majestically in the 'city of mosques', the Moti Masjid is of equal importance. This famous historic landmark was built by Sikander Jehan Begum of Bhopal, daughter of Qudusiya Begum, in the year 1860. Sikander Begum was an unconventional woman who abolished slavery and set up the trend of progressive women in the entire city. Popularly known as the Pearl Mosque, the mosque is located in the heart of the city and represents the rich history of the Bhopal Begums in India.

The architecture of the Moti Masjid in Bhopal has a striking resemblance to the architecture of the Jama Masjid in Delhi, except for the size. The Moti Masjid features a white marble facade with two small cupolas on the top. The two dark red towers on either side of the primary structure of the mosque are equally beautiful and fascinating.

The easy accessibility of the Moti Masjid through both local and private transport makes this place a popular attraction that tourists love to visit. The mosque is best visited in the early morning hours when there are fewer people here, and one can pray in silence and peace. A typical visit to the Moti Masjid

lasts for about an hour or so, and the excursion can be coupled with a visit to nearby attractions like Shaukat Mahal, Van Vihar National Park, Lower Lake or Birla Museum.

- **Taj-ul-Masjid Bhopal:**

Believed to be one of the largest and most elaborately patterned mosques in India, Taj-ul-Masjid means 'The Crown of Mosques'. With its pink façade and white-domed minarets, it elevates to great heights and stands as a stunning ovation to the rule of Begums in Bhopal. Constructed under the regime of Shah Jehan Begum, the monument however saw completion only after her death.

- **Jama Masjid:**

Built by Qudisiya Begum in 1837, Jama Masjid is a milestone monument of Bhopal. Its towering minarets soar to great heights and are visible from a large distance. Three bulbous cupolas crown the monument and highlight its brilliant architectural exposition. The interior of the mosque, with its marble-sheathed inner sanctum, is a marvellous example of Islamic architecture.

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**11.6 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss in detail the salient features of religious tourist attractions of Madhya Pradesh.**

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- **Discuss the important Buddhist attractions situated in Madhya Pradesh.**

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**11.7 Summary:**

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Madhya Pradesh is located in the central part of India and for this reason, it is also known as the heart of India. Madhya Pradesh is rich in natural and cultural resources. Pilgrimage tourism is also popular in Madhya Pradesh because a lot of religious attractions are available in the state. Two jyotirlingas, one Kumbh mela site and Amarkantak are the prime holy sites of the state. Here we will discuss in detail each place. Buddhist religious sites are also famous in Madhya Pradesh. Some of them are Sanchi Stupa etc.

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**11.8 Glossary:**

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- **Holy Site:** Sacred place of a particular religion.
- **Jyotirlinga:** Holiest temple of Lord Shiva

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**11.9 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Which is your favourite religious tourist attraction in Madhya Pradesh? Give your answer with suitable examples.
- Write a detailed note on the important Jyotirlingas situated in Madhya Pradesh.

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**11.10 References and Suggested Readings:**

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**Unit-12**  
**Pilgrimage Tourism in Bihar**

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**Structure:**

**12.0 Introduction**

**12.1 Objectives**

**12.2 About Bihar**

**12.3 Hindu Pilgrimage Tourist Attractions in Bihar**

**12.4 Buddhist Pilgrimage Tourist Attractions in Bihar**

**12.5 Check Your Progress**

**12.6 Glossary**

**12.7 Summary**

**12.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

**12.9 References and Suggested Readings**



**12.0 Introduction:**

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Bihar is situated in the Eastern part of India. It is the third-largest in terms of population and areawise the twelfth-largest state of India. Its neighbouring states and countries are Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal. River Ganga is the holy River of India that flows through the state. Once Bihar was the centre of power, learning and culture. Siddhartha Gautam got enlightenment under a Bodhi tree at Gaya. Some other holy places of Buddhism Vaishali, Rajgir, Nalanda etc. are also situated here. Gaya is popular among Hindus because they gather here to perform rituals during the Pitra Paksha period. It is believed that Hindu Goddess Sita was born at Sitamarhi in the Mithila region of modern-day Bihar. The state has two World Heritage Sites of India: Mahabodhi Temple Complex and the Archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavihara. According to 2019 Indian Tourism Statistics, about 33 million tourists visited Bihar and out of the 1 million were international visitors.

**12.1 Objectives:**

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The following are the main objectives of the present unit:

- To know the important pilgrimage tourist destinations of Bihar
- To learn the features of pilgrimage tourism products in Bihar

**12.2 About Bihar:**

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Bihar is located in the eastern part of the country. It is an entirely landlocked state, although the outlet to the sea through the port of Kolkata is not too far away. Bihar lies mid-way between the humid West Bengal in the east and the sub-humid Uttar Pradesh in the west which provides it with a transitional position in respect of climate, economy and culture. It is bounded by Nepal in the north and by Jharkhand in the south. The Bihar plain is divided into two unequal halves by the river Ganga which flows through the middle from west to east.

Bihar is a unique state endowed with a rich history. It is the seat of significant mythological events and tales from Ramayana. It is the birthplace of prominent

religions including Buddhism and Jainism. It was Bihar that sprouted the first seed of democracy. It was Bihar where the first true kingdom, Maurya Empire, reigned all over the subcontinent.

Patna, situated on the bank of the river Ganga, is the capital of Bihar and the state's current geographical boundary is shaped after its partition from Bengal and later on after the separation of Jharkhand in 2000.

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**12.3 Hindu Pilgrimage Tourist Attractions in Bihar:**

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Bihar is one of the most sacred places of various religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism & Islam. Many tourists travel to Bihar to visit their pilgrimage. Mahabodhi Temple, a Buddhist shrine and UNESCO World Heritage Site is also situated in Bihar.

**1. Gaya:**

Gaya City is located in south-central Bihar state of northeastern India. The city lies along the **Phalgu River**, a tributary of the Ganges (Ganga) River. It is situated near the junction of the Gangetic Plain and the Chota Nagpur plateau and is notoriously hot in summer. Gaya has major rail, road, and air connections and is a regional hub of commerce. The city is a pilgrimage centre visited by hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims annually. There are 45 sacred places between Patsil Hills (north) and Bodhi Gaya (south), but most are in Gaya itself. The main shrine is a temple dedicated to Vishnu that was built by the Maratha princess Ahalya Bai in 1787. Others are the rocky temple-covered hills of Ramsilla and Brahmajini, the latter identified with the Gayashirsas hill on which the Buddha preached. The town of Bodhi Gaya, 6 miles (10 km) south of Gaya, is famous as the site of the Buddha's enlightenment.

Gaya has several libraries and several colleges affiliated with Magadh University. It constituted a municipality in 1865. In the surrounding region, grains, oilseeds, and sugarcane are grown with the aid of irrigation from the Son, Punpun, Morhar, and Phalgu rivers and the Patna Canal system.

**2. Vishnupad Mandir:**

Vishnupad Temple is one of the ancient and most famous Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The temple is located in Gaya, Bihar, India on the bank of the river Phalgu, marked by a footprint of Lord Vishnu known as Dharmasila, incised into a block of basalt. Atop the structure is a 50-kilo gold flag, donated by a devotee, Gayapal Panda BAL Govind Sen. The Vishnupad temple is the centre for Shraddha rites in Gaya.

The Brahma Kalpit Brahmins, who are also known as Gayawal Brahmins or Gayawal Tirth Purohit or Pandas of Gaya are the traditional priests of the temple from ancient times. Several legendary saints such as Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Chaitanya

Mahaprabhu, Vallabhacharya and Sri Ramakrishna have visited this shrine

**3. Mangala Gowri Temple:**

If you are in the holy city of Gaya, you simply cannot miss one of the most iconic temples in Bihar. Mangala Gauri Temple is one of the 18 Shakti Peethas in India. With mentions in holy books like Padma Purana, Vayu Purana, and Agni Purana, this holy shrine is dedicated to Sati. It is believed that a part of the body of Sati fell here and this place is worshipped in the form of breasts. It is worshipped this small the history of the temple dates back to many sanctuaries. The architecture and grandeur of the temple are something which will surely fascinate you.

**4. Jal Mandir:**

The Jal Mandir or Water Temple is situated in Pawapuri (also known as Apapuri which means a town without sins), in the Indian state of Bihar. It is a major pilgrimage destination for Jains and the temple is dedicated to Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara (religious preacher of Jainism), which marks the place of his cremation. Mahavira attained Nirvana (salvation) in Pawapuri in 527 BC. The temple was originally built by King Nandivardhan, elder brother of Mahavira, within the pond which is filled with red-coloured lotus flowers. It

is one of the five main temples in Pawpuri, where the "Charan Paduka" or foot impression of Mahavira is deified.

#### **5. Mithila Shakti Peeth:**

Situated on the Indo-Nepal border, Mithila Shakti Peeth is one of the most revered temples in Bihar. Mythologies suggest that it is one of the 52 legendary Shakti Peethas as Devi Sati's left shoulder (Vama Skandha) fell here. Hindu devotees come here in large numbers seeking the fulfilment of worldly desires.

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#### **12.4 Buddhist Pilgrimage Tourist Attractions in Bihar:**

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Bihar is known as the centre of power, learning, and culture in India for 1000 years during classical Indian History. Most of the powerful kingdoms of Ancient India rise in the region for example- Magadha Empire (Shishunaga dynasty, Nanda Dynasty, Mauryan dynasty, Shunga dynasty, and Kanva dynasty), Anga (Mahajanpad), Videha (Mithila) Kingdom etc. It is associated with the advent of the earliest myths and legends of Sanatana Dharma, Buddhism and Jainism. The region is intimately linked to the Buddha's life, resulting in a trail of pilgrimages which have come to be known as the Buddhist circuit.

##### **1. Bodhgaya:**

- It is a place where Gautam Buddha obtained enlightenment under the **Peepal tree** which is commonly known as the '**Bodhi Tree**'.
- It is situated by the bank of **river Neranjana** the place was then known as **Uruwel**.
- In 2002, UNESCO declared **Mahabodhi Temple** (Bodh Gaya) a **World Heritage Site**.

##### **2. Pragbodhi:**

- It is the place where Buddha practised asceticism to find the reason for human suffering and the solution to life from pain & suffering before enlightenment.
- The word '**Pragbodhi**' means '**before Enlightenment**' and the place symbolically envisage the same fact.

- It is located on the top of the mountain about three miles to the northeast of Buddhagaya on the bank of the river **Phalgu**.

### **3. Barabar Caves:**

- It is one of the oldest surviving **rock-cut caves** of India which was structured around 322–185 BC.
- It is located on the twin hills of Barabar and Nagarjuni of Makhdumpur Block of Jehanabad district, Bihar which is 24 km away from Gaya.
- Carved in the Mauryan times, the caves have the larger Buddhist Chaitya including stupa emblems, elephant engravings, circular vaulted chambers with rectangular mandapa and a curved architrave.

### **4. Champanagar:**

- It is located in Bhagalpur district and the site is known for the important discourses and sermons from Lord Buddha including Kandaraka Sutta, Sonadanda Sutta, etc.
- Gaggara's Lotus Lake is the centre of attraction not only for Buddhists but also for other tourists because the lake is famous for the beautiful lotus flowers that bloom in it.

### **5. Dona Stupa:**

- There is a folk story behind the site that after Buddha's Parinirvana and cremation, a dispute resultant the division of his mortal ashes among the four Buddha disciples.
  - Stupa is famous for its **holly vessel** which is turned into a grassy mound.
  - A Hindu temple is built over the mound where the **idol of the goddess Tara** is worshipped.

### **6. Ghosrawan:**

- It is situated near the town of Bihar Sharif, Bihar.
- The site is famous for the 10 feet tall shining black stone image of Lord Buddha.

- Tetravan which is only a few kilometres from the site is also a centre of attraction for Buddhist tourists because of the wonderful classification of the statues of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

**7. Gurpa:**

- It is only 40 km away from Bodh Gaya.
- According to the legend that it is the place where **Mahakassapa** (Buddha's successor) waited for **Maitreya**.
- According to Buddhist scriptures envisages that the Maitreya will first visit **Kukkutapadagiri** and raise **Mahakassapa** out of the mountain; get Buddha's robe from him and then begin his journey of dispensation.

**8. Hajipur**

- **Ukkacala** is the ancient name of the modern Hajipur which is located nearby Patna.
- It is one of the important Buddhist sites and is famous for the mortal remains of **Ananda** who was the closest disciple of Lord Buddha.
- This site has immense significance in Buddhism because the Buddha himself delivered discourse i.e. **Cula Goplalaka Sutta** here.

**9. Rajgir:**

- It is an important religious site for Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.
- The literal meaning of the city Rajgir is '**Abode of the kings**'.
- It was the first ancient capital city of the Magadha Kingdom but after coming Udayin capital city was shifted to Patliputra.
- The city is associated with the Haryanka dynasty Kings- Bimbisara and Ajatashatru.
- **Shanti Stupa, Gridhakuta Hill, Ancient Ruins** and **Saptparni Cave** are the centre of attraction not only for Buddhist tourists but also other tourists.
- **First Buddhist Council** was conducted here under the patronage of **Ajatshatru** with monk **Mahakasyapa** in which a decision had taken to preserve the **Buddha's teaching (sutta)** and rules of the Buddhism discipline.

**10. Vaishali:**

- It was the capital city of the Licchavi which was the first example of a republic of the world.
- Republic was part of the Vajjian Confederacy (Vriji) of Mahajanapada around the 6th century BC.
- Ashokan Pillar, Fort Vishal, Museum, and Bawan Pokhar Temple are tourist attraction sites.
- Lord Buddha delivered his last sermons and announced his prospective mahaparinirvan in this city.
- The Second Buddhist Council was held here under the patronage of King Kalasoka which was presided by Sabakami.
- The travelogue accounts of Chinese explorers- Faxian and Xuanzang state about the city which was later used in 1861 by British archaeologists Alexander Cunningham to first identify Vaisali with the present village of Basrah in Vaishali District, Bihar.

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**12.5 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Bihar:**

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- **Highlight the important Buddhist Sites of Bihar:**

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**12.6 Glossary:**

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- **Buddhism:** Buddhism is a religion.
  - **Buddhist:** A person who follows Buddhism is known as a Buddhist.
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**12.7 Summary**

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Most of the people outside Bihar, consider it as the poor state of India but actually, it has a glorious past. Bihar has given great leaders, scholars and researchers in the past but foreign robbers and masstroopers destroyed its many historical monuments later its politicians also have not done any satisfactory work for the state. Now, with some positive efforts of the Government now Bihar is again getting its royal past, infrastructure and a good number of tourists.

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**12.8 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Explain the significance of Gaya for Hindus
  - Write a short note on Buddha's journey in Bihar
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**12.9 References and Suggested Readings:**

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**Unit-13**

**Trends and Patterns of Pilgrimage Tourism in India**

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**Structure:**

**13.0 Introduction**

**13.1 Objectives**

**13.2 Growth of Pilgrimage Tourism in India**

**13.3 Government Initiatives to Promote the Development of Religious Tourism  
in India**

**13.4 Check Your Progress**

**13.5 Summary**

**13.6 Glossary**

**13.7 Self-Assessment Exercise**

**13.8 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**13.0 Introduction:**

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India is blessed with rich and diverse natural, historic, cultural and spiritual resources. Millions of tourists from domestic and international places come to India to experience its spiritual prowess and Indian heritage. India is a land of many religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Sufism has been the centres of pilgrimage for various faiths for ages and these have immensely contributed to the development of Indian heritage values. Religion, spirituality and heritage are common motivations for travel, with major tourist destinations having developed largely as a result of their connections to sacred or historic places, persons and events. The growth of domestic tourism in India largely depends on pilgrimage and heritage tourism and to tap this potential there is a need for integrated development of the selected pilgrimage destinations and integrated development of heritage cities in cooperation with other stakeholders. The integrated development is not only about the development and conservation of a few monuments, but the development of the entire city, its planning, its basic services, quality of life to its communities, its economy and livelihoods, cleanliness, security, reinvigoration of its' soul and the explicit manifestation of its character. However, religious tourism destinations are not like holiday/leisure tourism destinations, which are primarily targeted at the segment inclined to travel and spend. In developing a religious tourism product, it is essential to build community participation at the given location/destination. Further, it is not only important to provide modern amenities at religious sites but also to see how the visitor interacts and seeks new experiences at such places.

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**13.1 Objectives:**

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After reading the present Unit, the learners will understand:

- The growth of pilgrimage tourism in India
- Indian Government's Initiatives in the Promotion of religious tourism

**13.2 Growth of Pilgrimage Tourism in India:**

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Pilgrimage tourism is becoming a major growth area of the Indian travel market with more Indians opting to go on pilgrimage to popular religious cities, such as Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Puri in Odisha, a new report has revealed. According to travel marketplace ixigo, there has been month-on-month, double-digit growth in hotel bookings on its site for several cities with religious connections. These include Puri (60% growth), which is famed for its Jagannatha Temple, Varanasi (48%), Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh (34%) and Shirdi in Maharashtra (19%), Travel Trends Today reported. "Spiritual tourism is on the rise. Cities like Puri and Varanasi not only offer travellers a traditional experience but also enable them to rejuvenate at yoga retreats and Ayurveda spas," said Alope Bajpai, CEO & co-founder of ixigo. "Looking at the spike in hotel bookings via ixigo, it's safe to say that spiritual travel is now being considered as one of the offbeat travel trends in India," he added. "It is fascinating to see that young adults are showing quite a high inclination towards exploring indigenous cultural experiences in our country." The ixigo study also looked into outbound train searches to these religious cities and found Lucknow topped the list with about 13% of searches, followed by Mumbai (7%), Hyderabad (6%) and Delhi (5%). According to Bajpai, spiritual tourism is one of the biggest untapped markets for domestic travel: nearly 60% of domestic tourism in India is religion-based. "To support this upcoming trend, the government has allocated special budgets for creating infrastructure around religious places," he added.

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**13.3 Government Initiatives to Promote the Development of Religious Tourism in India:**

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The Government is very much aware of the importance of religious tourism not only as an economic enabler but also as a tool to ensure communal harmony. Some recent notable initiatives are as follows:

- IRCTC has given a much-needed boost to the Buddhist Circuit, providing a holistic product that addresses transport, sightseeing and accommodation requirements. Apart from this, airports have also been made operational in Bodh Gaya, thereby facilitating the direct movement of tourists from South East Asian countries, a major part of the clientele.
- Seven new tourist circuits will be developed across the country to facilitate travel to and stay at religious places. Work has already begun to prepare detailed project reports for Sufi, Buddhist & Jain, Christian, Sikh, Hinduism and Sarva Dharma circuits. The Sufi circuit will include Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Bijapur, Shirdi, Aurangabad, and the Awadh region, besides the dargahs in J&K, Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand. The Christian circuit will have the churches of Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Sarv Dharma Circuit, to promote national integration, will be aligned along Tirupathi-Chennai-Velankanni-Nagoor and Vaishnodevi - Golden Temple-Sacred Heart Church (Delhi)-Nizamuddin. The Ministry of Tourism has already identified 35 destinations for Phase I and will cover another 89 in Phase II. Consultants engaged by the ministry will help identify gaps in infrastructure and amenities, assess investment requirements and possible sources of funds and also evolve business models for investment and operations. The ministry has proposed a required outlay plan of Rs 9,450 crore for the 12th Plan and hopes to draw in private investment close to Rs 28,000 crore for such projects.
- **Prashad Scheme:** There have multiple initiatives have been carried out by various ministries for the development of infrastructure for tourists but still there are persisting challenges which need to be addressed lack of infrastructure on accommodation for budget hotels, roads, last mile connectivity, sewage, hygiene and cleanliness, solid waste management, lack of awareness, developing a code of religious etiquette to be observed by the religious tourists, etc. PRASHAD scheme offers a tremendous opportunity to undertake infrastructure developments at important pilgrimage and heritage destinations/cities in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable manner that

focuses on livelihoods, skills, cleanliness, security, accessibility and service delivery.

**Objectives of Prashad Scheme:**

- Rejuvenation and spiritual augmentation of important national/ global pilgrimage destinations;
- Enhance tourism attractiveness of identified pilgrimage destinations and heritage cities under integrated tourism development of heritage cities in a planned, prioritized and sustainable manner by providing world-class tourism projects in them;
- Position pilgrimage and heritage tourism as a major engine for its direct and multiplier effects of economic growth and employment generation;
- Follow community-based development through the 'Pro-Poor' tourism concept and 'responsible tourism initiatives.
- Assure active involvement of local communities through employment generation
- Creating awareness among the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of an increase in sources of income, improved living standards and overall development of the area.
- Promote heritage in the form of heritage structures especially under integrated tourism development of heritage city, local arts, culture, handicrafts, cuisine, etc., to generate livelihood in the identified places.
- Strengthen the mechanism for bridging the infrastructural gaps at identified pilgrimage destinations and throughout heritage cities as identified under integrated city heritage tourism development within the core tourism footprint;
- Develop a monitoring mechanism for the timely implementation of the projects in collaboration with the States/UTs and other stakeholders;
- Strengthen the measures for the safety and security of pilgrims and tourists and, improve the quality of tourism services
- Enable convergence of state and central government schemes as well as private sector developments for integrated site/destination development

**13.4 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss the Indian Government's initiatives in the promotion of religious tourist sites:**

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- **Highlight some emerging trends in pilgrimage tourism in India:**

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**13.5 Summary:**

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Thus, it is clear that there is a great need to identify core deficiencies, facilitate the provision of products, services and subsequently address the issues that are important for paving the way for the development and promotion of religious tourism in India. Whereas, heritage city tourism would largely attract a different audience. But the issues are not different and the fact is that the heritage areas are neglected, and overcrowded with inadequate basic services and infrastructure, such as water supply, sanitation, roads, etc. Basic amenities like toilets, signage and street lights are missing. Also, there is a need for a more

**13.6 Glossary:**

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- **Prashad Yojna:** Initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to promote infrastructure at the important pilgrimage sites of India.

**13.7 Self-Assessment Exercise:**

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- Write a short note on cities receiving the maximum no. of religious tourists.
- Highlight some more efforts which the Government can do to promote religious tourism in India.

**13.8 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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**Unit-14**

**Strategies to Promote Pilgrimage Tourism in India**

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**Structure:**

**14.0 Introduction**

**14.1 Objectives**

**14.2 Strategies to Promote Pilgrimage Tourism in India**

**14.3 Government Efforts**

**14.4 Check Your Progress**

**14.5 Summary**

**14.6 Glossary**

**14.7 Self-Assessment Questions**

**14.8 Reference and Suggested Readings**



**14.0 Introduction:**

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Pilgrimage tourism is the most popular type of tourism. Every year, millions of pilgrimage tourists travel to the holy places to please their God and Goddesses. In India, we have thousands of temples and other holy sites. Some prominent religious attractions of India are the 12 Jyotirlinga, Char Dham, four Kumbh Mela Sites, Amarnath Yatra, Vaishnodevi, Shirdi Sai Temple, Tirupati Balaji, Mathura, Vrindavan, Ayodhya, Bodhgaya, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Rajgir, Chitrakoot, Amarkantak etc. Based on the above information, it is clear that India has a lot of holy sites which attract tourists from all parts of the country, but more tourists can be attracted by good promotional strategies. Here, we will understand the promotional strategies which central and state Governments follow to increase tourist inflow at the destination.

**14.1 Objectives:**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the different strategies adopted by the Indian Government to promote pilgrimage tourism
- Identify the measures that must be taken to promote pilgrimage tourism

**14.2 Strategies to Promote Pilgrimage Tourism in India:**

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Enhanced emphasis on minimizing the impact on the environment and maintaining the ecological balance

- Developing the integrated infrastructure for Pilgrimage tourism development
- Developing Pilgrimage tourism circuits through the hub and spoke model.
- Providing the tourists with a holistic tourism experience.
- Scrutiny of religious trusts.
- Marketing of Pilgrimage tourism destinations
- Developing an appropriate Institutional Framework to stimulate the
- Growth of Pilgrimage Tourism in India

- Improving connectivity to specific pilgrimage tourism circuits to promote them. eg. Buddhist Circuit.

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### **14.3 Government Efforts:**

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Some initiatives taken by Indian Government are given below:

1. **Prasad Scheme:** Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) launched in 2014-15 by the Union Ministry of Tourism. It aims at the integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in a planned, prioritised and sustainable manner to provide a complete religious tourism experience. The number of sites under PRASAD has now reached 41 in 25 states. It focuses on the development and beautification of the identified pilgrimage destinations.

2. **Swadesh Darshan:**

Swadesh Darshan is a Central Sector Scheme. It was launched in 2014-15 by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India. It is a theme-based tourist circuit in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner. 15 thematic circuits have been identified under the Swadesh Darshan for development. Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance – CFA to State Governments, and Union Territory Administrations for the infrastructure development of circuits. This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc.

#### **Swadesh Darshan Scheme – Objectives**

- To develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and prioritized manner
- Development of identified theme-based circuit in an integrated manner
- To promote employment through the active involvement of local communities.
- Follow community-based development and pro-poor tourism approach.
- Promote the cultural and heritage value of the country

- To enhance the tourist attractiveness sustainably by developing world-class infrastructure in the circuits or destinations
- To aware the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of increased sources of income, improved living standards and overall development of the area.
- To promote local art, handicraft, culture, cuisine, etc. to generate livelihoods in the identified regions
- To harness tourism potential for the direct and multiplier effect on employment generation and development of the economy.
- To leverage the capital and expertise of the public.

### **3. Pilgrimage Special Trains:**

Pilgrimage Special Tour Packages are specially designed for those who seek spiritual peace. The ultimate purpose of the spiritual journey is to experience bliss and to connect with the Supreme Power. India is the birthplace of many religions like Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. However, India's takes on religion is very practical and empirical which is why it is a secular country. Humanity is the main and most common religion practised by every Indian. Religion in a secular country is a matter of personal choice and everyone is free to practice and learn from the teachings of other religions. This knowledge imbibed in the Indian constitution and culture is practised everywhere.

There are Pilgrimage Special Trains which cover all the important religious destinations enabling tourists to worship the deity of their choice. There are various pilgrimage centres across the country like Tirupati Balaji in Andhra Pradesh. Jagannath Puri in Odisha. Shirdi Sai Temple in Maharashtra, Vaishno Devi in Jammu and Kashmir and many more.

Some Religious Tour Packages are Shri Ramayan Yatra which covers destinations like Ayodhya, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi, Allahabad, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Hampi and Rameshwaram. Puri Ganga Sagar Yatra covers destinations like Ganga Sagar, Puri and Varanasi. Shirdi Jyotirlinga Yatra

covers destinations like Ujjain, Dwarika, Somnath, Ahmedabad, Pune, Nasik and Shirdi. Another one is Baidyanath Ganga Sagar Yatra which covers destinations like Baidyanath, Ganga Sagar, Kolkata, Varanasi and Prayag.

Some Pilgrimage Special Train Tours of IRCTC Tourism are Kumbh Special which covers destinations like Allahabad and Varanasi. Bharat Darshan Special Tourist Train covers destinations like Vizag, Tirupati, Kanyakumari, Rameshwaram, Madurai and Puri. Another one is Dwarkadish Jyotirling Yatra which covers destinations like Omkareshwar, Ujjain, Ahmedabad, Dwarka, Nageshwar, and Somnath. Mookambika Special covers destinations like Murudeshwara, Kollur, Mookambika, Sringeri, Horanandu and Dharmasthala. The last one is the Bharat Darshan Special South India tour which covers destinations like Tirupati, Rameshwaram, Kanyakumari, Kochuveli, and Kurnool Town.

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**14.4 Check Your Progress:**

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- **How religious tourism can be promoted in India?**

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- **Discuss the different promotional strategies adopted by the Government to promote religious tourism:**

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**14.5 Summary:**

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Thus, it is clear that we have a lot of potential in terms of pilgrimage tourism resources and our destinations are also receiving a good number of tourists but we can increase tourist movement at the destination by promoting the destination on a different platform.

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**14.6 Glossary**

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- **Pilgrimage Tourism:** Visit a holy place to worship God or Goddesses.
- **Tourism Resource:** Man-made or natural things which attract a tourist to visit a tourist destination

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**14.7 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Discuss the problems and challenges faced by responsible authorities in the promotion of religious tourism in India.
- Discuss the relationship between marketing management and the tourism industry.

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**14.8 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <http://www.mcrhrdi.gov.in/army/week4/syndicate/group4.pdf>

**Unit-15**

**Problems and Prospects of Pilgrimage Tourism in India**

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**Structure:**

**15.0 Introduction**

**15.1 Objectives**

**15.2 Problems and Challenges Faced by Pilgrimage Destinations in India**

**15.3 Prospects of Pilgrimage Tourism in India**

**15.4 Check Your Progress**

**15.5 Summary**

**15.6 Glossary**

**15.7 Self-Assessment Questions**

**15.8 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**15.0 Introduction:**

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Every type of tourism somehow affects a tourist destination. These effects may be positive and negative. Though every tourist destination wishes that tourist inflow increase at the tourist destination because it has more advantages than disadvantages. When a destination is developed as a tourist destination it receives a large no. of tourists, employment opportunities and good infrastructure but at the same time inflation also increases at the destination, and crime incidents are also increased at the destination. Here, in the present unit, the learners will understand the challenges faced by tourist destinations when religious tourism increases. Further, a focus will be also given on future prospectus of this type of tourism.

**15.1 Objectives:**

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After reading the present unit, the learners will be able to:

- Understand the different problems and challenges faced by a destination
- Know the prospects of pilgrim tourism in India

**15.2 Problems and Challenges Faced by Pilgrimage Destinations in India:**

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**Deficiency of proper substructure:** A big challenge in front of the government to fulfil the deficiency of proper substructure. Substructure needs for travel and tourism range from corporeal substructures such as roads, electricity, water supply, telecommunications etc. Because of the poor infrastructure, international tourist hesitates to come. It has been a vital cause why international tourist has been skipping the country. Squander Management – In part a derivative of the problem of carrying capacity, the squander management problem has aggravated as science and technology grew to usher us into the ‘Plastic era’.

**Access and connectivity:** To harness India’s tourism efficacy, various endeavours are being taken for opening new destinations and exploring the alcove section. However basic facilities such as air, road connectivity and

hospitality services at these destinations and the connecting cities are insufficient. This is the utmost obstacle to the development of tourism.

**Monetizing Religion:** In the race for developing as many niches as possible, there is oftentimes the issue of religion being 'monetized', as the host community gets increasingly driven by the 'profit motive.'

**Infringement of Carrying Capacity:** Most of the religious places within the country, major or minor, experience short-term, but intense seasons that modify the dynamic forces and the changing aspects of the region for the rest of the year. The Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand is one such example. It begins from May until November and puts severe pressure on the transport infrastructure of the Garhwal region. When there is the occurrence of monsoons and a lot of road construction is still under progress, then the region also experiences landslides. Hence, environmental issues, such as the occurrence of landslides impose detrimental effects within the course of the development of religious tourism.

**Convenience:** Convenience at various tourist locations and route need to be improved basic convenience such as drinking water, well-maintained and clean waiting rooms and toilets, first aid etc.

**Human Resource:** Availability of skilled manpower is the utmost challenge faced by the travel and tourism industry, to blemish growth in the travel and tourism industry, trained manpower or workforce is required. If manpower increased, the travel and tourism industry will defiantly improve.

**Security and safety:** In India, there is a lack of security and safety. The major reasons are the internal community riots and also the terrorist attacks faced from time to time. The country is highly unsafe for females and there is poor discipline as well as political instability in the country.

**Lack of publicity:** Lack of publicity for good tourist destinations among the travellers and also a lack of good education to the locals on receiving guests and hosting them. Also, lack of publicity on cuisines and cultures



**15.3 Prospects of Pilgrimage Tourism in India:**

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Religious Tourism will promote Indian economic revenue and will pave the path to sustainable economic development. Religious Tourism will improve people's spiritual health because now a day's people are being more materialistic which is leading them towards stress, anxiety, and crime. This sort of tourism will be helpful in this way. Religious Tourism will be a wonderful opportunity for our highly technical gazette-friendly new generation to know about our own culture, traditions, and religion. Religious Tourism will make India a global icon for its rich cultural and religious heritage. Religious Tourism involves a great deal of communication with the individuals, within as well as outside the places of worship. The communication normally takes place with the religious leaders as well as the individuals, who possess strong viewpoints and perspectives regarding faith. There are some religious places within the country, where individuals feel that all their needs and desires would get fulfilled. Hence, for this purpose, they are involved in effective communication with religious leaders and another aspect of communication is the enhancement of knowledge. Religious tourism generates employment opportunities. The development of tourism would act as stimulate in building entrepreneurship, small business enterprises and economic diversity. The individuals, who are interested in working in this area, are provided with the opportunities to develop their capabilities, skills and abilities so that they can important contributions to improving the socio-economic benefits. Numerous religious places in India have been established since ancient times. These religious places have their significance. Hence, what is of utmost significance on the part of the individuals is to ensure that their authenticity and original character are maintained. In most cases, when devotees make entry into a religious place, then there is a security check. They are required to keep their valuables outside and then are permitted to go inside to offer their prayers. It is vital to ensure that their authenticity and original character are maintained. The religious

authorities ensure that proper rules and policies are formulated and individuals follow them appropriately. In India, individuals normally possess the viewpoint that religious tourism would be beneficial to them in the promotion of peace and harmony and the resolution of conflicts and disputes. In every household, among the family members or in their employment, individuals do sometimes get involved in the occurrence of conflicts and disputes. This in most cases is unfavourable and disappointing. Therefore, to promote peace, an agreeable and congenial atmosphere and relationships among individuals, one plan religious tourism. Therefore, it can be stated that promoting peace and harmony is also one of the important characteristics of religious tourism.

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**15.4 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Discuss the problems and challenges faced by religious tourist destinations in India:**

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- **How by promoting religious tourism we can develop a destination?**

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**15.5 Summary:**

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Thus, now it is clear that religious tourism has a very important role in the development of a destination. It provides direct and indirect job opportunities and increases the standard of living of most people but at the same time it also increases the carrying capacity problems, pollutes the destination, increases criminal activities etc. Therefore, responsible authorities should focus on solutions to remove such issues from the destination.

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**15.6 Glossary:**

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- **Carrying Capacity:** It means the maximum number of people who can avail of the basic infrastructural facilities at the destination.
- **Infrastructure:** The basic systems and services that are necessary for a country or an organization, for example, buildings, transport, and water and power supplies

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**15.7 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Highlight the problems faced by religious tourists while visiting a destination.
- Discuss the measures that should be taken by the private sector to remove.

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**15.8 Reference and Suggested Readings:**

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- <https://travel.earth/what-is-religious-tourism-and-what-are-the-challenges-it-is-facing/>

**Unit-16**  
**Impacts of Pilgrimage Tourism**

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**Structure:**

**16.0 Introduction**

**16.1 Objectives**

**16.2 Socio-Cultural Impacts of Religious Tourism**

**16.3 Environmental Impacts of Religious Tourism**

**16.4 Economic Impacts of Religious Tourism**

**16.5 Check Your Progress**

**16.6 Summary**

**16.7 Glossary**

**16.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

**16.9 Reference and Suggested Readings**

**16.0 Introduction:**

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Tourists visit a destination for business or recreational purposes. In recreational or leisure they travel to see the destination's natural or cultural resources. India is popular for its natural attractions which include 105 National Parks, 566 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 18 Biosphere Reserves. Similarly, India is also famous for its cultural resources which include its forts, palaces, fairs & festivals, cuisine etc. The majority of foreigners come to India to see its culture; similarly, domestic tourists also visit different states of India to see and experience the cultural beauty of the different states. As we all know that every nature of tourism affects us positively or negatively a destination. These impacts are economic, socio-cultural or environmental. Religious tourism is one of the important types of reasons tourists travel to India. Religious tourism is also known as mass tourism because millions of tourists travel to religious places. Here, we will discuss different forms of religious tourism impacts on a holy site.

**16.1 Objectives:**

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After reading the present unit, learners will be able to:

- Understand the Socio-Cultural impact of religious tourism
- Identify the Economic and Environmental impacts of pilgrimage tourism

**16.2 Socio-Cultural Impacts of Religious Tourism:**

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An inherent aspect of tourism is the seeking of authenticity, the desire to experience a different cultural setting in its natural environment. Although cultural tourism provides opportunities for understanding and education, there are serious impacts that arise as a result. It is not only the volume of tourism at work but the types of social interactions that occur between tourists and hosts.

**Positive socio-cultural impacts:**

There are several benefits for the host community as a result of tourism. This includes economic benefits such as opportunities for local businesses which allows for increased trade among the increased number of visitors and then

develops a variety of local businesses. In addition, tourism also brings employment opportunities, enhances the economy of the region, and creates revenue for the local government. Tourists also use public services, creating funding for public services, such as health, the police and the fire department, as well as increasing the demand for public transport. Other public facilities, such as parks and benches are also well kept by the community for the tourists, improving the overall aesthetics of the host community. On a more social level, tourism leads to intercultural interaction. Tourists often engage and learn from the locals. Tourism can also increase pride in locals. They want to show off the community that tourists have chosen to visit. The increase in people also leads to the creation of more social venues and experiences where locals and tourists can interact in. Entertainment and recreational facilities will allow for more opportunities to socialise and engage with each other. Tourism can be beneficial for the host community as it provides the financial means and the incentive to preserve cultural histories, local heritage sites, and customs. It stimulates interest in local crafts, traditional activities, songs, dance, and oral histories. It also opens up the community to the broader world, new ideas, new experiences, and new ways of thinking.

**Negative socio-cultural impacts:**

Cultural interactions can have adverse effects. In terms of economic disadvantages, local communities need to be able to fund the tourist demands, which leads to an increase in taxes. The overall price of living increases in tourist destinations in terms of rent and rates, as well as property values going up. This can be problematic for locals looking to buy property or others on a fixed income. In addition, to balance out tourist destinations, the number of locals to tourists must be relatively equal. This can be more problematic for tourists as their access could be denied.

Other negative sociocultural impacts are differences in social and moral values between the local host community and the visiting tourist. Outside of affecting the relationship between tourists and locals, it can also cause friction between

groups of the local population. In addition, it can cause drifts in the dynamics between the old and new generations. Tourism has also correlated to the rise of delinquent behaviours in local host communities. Crime rates have been seen to rise with the increase of tourists. Crimes are typically those of rowdy behaviour, alcohol and illegal drug use, and loud noise.

In addition, gambling and prostitution may increase due to tourists looking for a "good time". Tourism has also caused more disruption in host communities. Crowding of locals and tourists may create a vibrant ambience, but it also causes frustration and leads to the withdrawal of residents in many places. Increased tourists also result in increased traffic which can hinder the daily life of the residents. Culture shock may impact both tourists and their hosts.

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### **16.3 Environmental Impacts of Religious Tourism:**

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Ecotourism, nature tourism, wildlife tourism, and adventure tourism take place in environments such as rain forests, high alpine, wilderness, lakes and rivers, coastlines and marine environments, as well as rural villages and coastline resorts. People's desire for more authentic and challenging experiences results in their destinations becoming more remote, to the few remaining pristine and natural environments left on the planet. The positive impact of this can be an increased awareness of environmental stewardship. The negative impact can be the destruction of the very experience that people are seeking. There are direct and indirect impacts, immediate and long-term impacts, and there are impacts that are both proximal and distal to the tourist destination. These impacts can be separated into three categories: facility impacts, tourist activities, and the transit effect.

#### **Negative Impacts:**

The following are the negative economic impacts of religious tourism:

- **Loss of Agricultural Land:** It decreases agricultural land because hotels, travel agencies, transport companies, restaurants, airports, and railway stations

are being created on the agricultural land which otherwise can be utilized for the production of vegetables and fruits.

- **Pollution at the destination:** When thousands of religious tourists gather at the destination then they pollute the destination. In India bathing in a nearby holy River or pond of a temple is necessary so some tourists throw garbage into the waterbody and a few of them use bathing soaps which results in water pollution.

- **Loss of flora and fauna:** Infrastructure is required for the tourists who visit a religious tourist destination. To create such infrastructure a large no. of forest area is destroyed which also results in the loss of different species of fauna species too.

**Positive Impacts:**

- **Creation of parks and artificial water bodies:** To increase the beauty of religious destination parks and artificial lakes are created which increases the beauty of the destination. All such beautiful parks and water bodies increase the tourist inflow at the destination.

- **Increases awareness about the significance of the Environment:** When tourists travel to the destination then all activities increase the income of the tourist destination so the tourist destination gets aware of the significance of the environment.

**16.4 Economic Impacts of Religious Tourism:**

Global tourism in 2014 contributed 3.3 percent (US\$1.7 trillion) to the world's GDP, with its total contribution rising to almost 10 percent of the world's GDP. The GDP increase comes from the over 1.4 billion international tourists worldwide. Visits and boosts to GDP are expected to continue to rise shortly as falling oil prices contribute to reduced living costs and increased available income for households, as well as reduced costs for air travel.

Tourism can be divided into subcategories into which impacts fall: spending from visitors on tourism experiences like beach holidays and theme parks (domestic and international), spending on leisure items like bicycles, business spending, and capital investment.



The economic contribution of tourism is felt in both direct and indirect ways, where direct economic impacts are created when commodities like the following are sold: accommodation and entertainment, food and beverages services, and retail opportunities. Residents, visitors, businesses, and various levels of government (municipal to federal) all influence direct tourism impacts through their spending in or near a given tourism area. The key component of direct economic impacts of tourism is that they occur within a country's borders and are implemented by "residents and non-residents for business and leisure purposes".

In contrast, indirect economic impacts of tourism can be found in investment spending surrounding tourism offering from private and governmental interests. This investment may not explicitly be related to tourism but it benefits the tourist and local stakeholders all the same. Indirect impacts of tourism are exemplified by the purchase and sale of intermediary items like additional supplies for restaurants during the high tourism season or widened sidewalks in busy downtown centres. Indirect economic impacts (the supply chain, investment, and government collective) accounted for 50.7 percent of the total GDP contribution from travel and tourism in 2014.

Induced spending, the re-circulation of a tourist dollar within a community, is another way that tourism indirectly has an impact on a community. For example, a foreign tourist injects money into the local economy when he spends a dollar on a souvenir made by a local at the tourist destination. That individual goes on to spend that dollar on lunch from a local vendor, and that vendor goes on to spend it locally.

### **Positive and negative economic impacts of tourism**

There are both positive and negative effects on communities related to the economic impacts of tourism. A positive impact can refer to an increase in jobs, a higher quality of life for locals, and an increase in the wealth of an area. Tourism also has the advantage of rebuilding and restoring historic sites and encouraging the revitalization of cultures. A positive impact is to increase or to

make better either for the tourist, the host community and residence and/or the tourist destination. Positive impacts are related more to the materialistic well-being, rather than to the happiness of a host community or tourist.

The tourist destination enjoys positive impacts, if there have been improvements to the natural environment such as protection, national parks, man-made infrastructure, and waste-treatment plants. Tourism provides the economic stimulus to allow for diversification of employment and income potential and develop resources within the community. Improvements in infrastructure and services can benefit both the locals and the tourists. Whereas heritage tourism focuses on local history or historical events that occurred in the area, and tends to promote education. Positive impacts begin when there is an increase in job opportunities for locals as the tourism industry becomes more developed. There is also an increase in average income that spreads throughout the community when tourism is capitalised on. In addition, the local economy is stimulated and diversified, goods are manufactured more locally, and new markets are open for local business owners to expand to. Unfortunately, these benefits are not universal or invulnerable. While more employment may be available, tourism-related jobs are often seasonal and low-paying. Prices are known to fluctuate throughout the year. They rise in the high tourist season to take advantage of more tourist dollars, but have the side effect of pricing goods above the economic reach of residents, effectively starving them out of a place that was once their home.

Negative impacts are the effects that are caused in most cases, at the tourist destination site with detrimental impacts to the social and cultural area, as well as the natural environment. As the population increases so do the impacts, resources become unsustainable and exhausted and the carrying capacity for tourists in a destination site may become depleted. Often, when negative impacts occur, it is too late to impose restrictions and regulations. Tourist destinations seem to discover that many of the negative impacts are found in the development stage of the tourism area life cycle (TALC).

Additionally, the economics of tourism have been shown to push out local tourism business owners in favour of strangers to the region. Foreign ownership creates leakage (revenues leaving the host community for another nation or multinational business) which strips away the opportunity for locals to make meaningful profits. Foreign companies are also known to hire non-resident seasonal workers because they can pay those individuals lower wages, which further contributes to economic leakage. Tourism can raise property values near the tourism area, effectively pushing out locals and encouraging businesses to migrate inwards to encourage and take advantage of more tourist spending.

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**16.5 Check Your Progress:**

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- **Highlight the positive economic impacts of religious tourism:**

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- **Throw a light on the socio-cultural impacts of religious tourism:**

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**16.6 Summary:**

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Religious tourism has multiple types of impacts on the destination. These impacts are positive and negative but positive impacts are more than negative impacts because religious tourism provides employment & earning opportunities, it also increases the standard of living of local people. When a tourist reaches the destination he and the host community both understand each other's culture

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**16.7 Glossary:**

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- **Environment:** The natural world, for example, the land, air and water, in which people, animals and plants live.
  - **Impact:** Positively or negatively affecting something.
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**16.8 Self-Assessment Questions:**

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- Explain the negative environmental impacts of religious tourism
  - Describe the significance of religious tourism on a destination.
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