



## PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN NORTH BIHAR

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### ABSTRACT

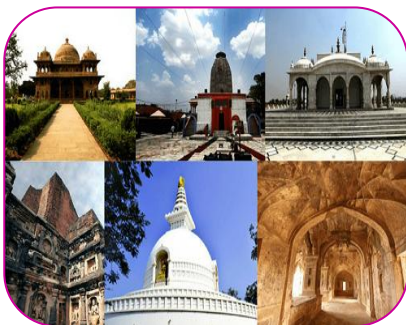
*We can't have a command on the cyclic movement of taste, fashion, likes, dislikes, needs, requirements and soon. This process is, of course, influenced by the law of nature which forces us to welcome a change. If we avoid or delay it, the seeds of dissatisfaction and monotony get a favourable nexus for their germination and proper development. Hence to exercise a control on this speed breaking constraint, we allow a change which influences our decision making behaviour and forces us to welcome a change of place. It matters the little with whatever the motives, we travel, such as entertainment, speeding up of the learning cycles, pleasure or even on the religious and cultural considerations. The whole thing is our movement. Against this background, the travelling was transformed into a business which, of late, has taken the shape of an industry. This process of transformation has crossed different ups and downs right from the very beginning of civilisation and culture when tourism by and large was a matter of pilgrimage. The Roman Empire, no doubt, injected life and strength to travelling and so, credibility for the development of tourism ultimately goes to them. This paper is a modest attempt to study the prospects and challenges of pilgrimage tourism in Bihar.*

**KEYWORDS:** Pilgrimage Tourism, Poor Infrastructure, Social Problems, Technological Developments

### INTRODUCTION

Increasing number of people are visiting different lands specially those places having important historical or cultural associations with the ancient past or those places holding special art festivals, music festivals, theatre and other cultural events of importance. Curiosity has been one of the major reasons for tourism. There has always been curiosity in man about foreign lands, people and places. In the present day world technological developments in the area of mass media have made it possible for people to read, see and hear about different places. The increasing interest shown by many in architecture, art, music, literature, folklore, dance, paintings and sport, of other people's culture or in archaeological and historical remains and monuments is but another aspect of man's curiosity to seek more knowledge. This curiosity has been stimulated by more education. International events like Olympic Games, Asian Games, national celebrations, exhibitions, special festivals, etc. attract thousands or tourists.

Travel for spiritual reasons has been taking place since a long time. Visiting religious places has been one of the earliest motivators of travel. A large number of people have been making pilgrimages to sacred religious places or holy places. This practice is widespread in many parts of the world In the Christian world for instance, a visit to Jerusalem or the Vatican is considered to be very auspicious In the Arab-Moslem world, the pilgrimage to Mecca or some other holy centres is considered to be a great act of faith. In Bihar there are many pilgrimage centres and holy places of all the major religions of the world where every year a large number of pilgrims from all over the world come.



### Prospects of Pilgrimage Tourism in North Bihar

Bihar has immense potential for various tourism activities, first and foremost being religious tourism. The history of Bihar indicates a rich heritage inherited from various dynasties & great personalities.

### Important Pilgrimage Tourism Sites in North Bihar

#### District Begusarai

- i. Birpur: 10 kms from Begusarai Ancient stone images of Lord Vishnu and other deities were discovered in the bed of an old tank in 1959.
- ii. Jaimangalgarh: Ancient images of Barah, Badri Narayan, Shiva and Parwati located in the temple here.
- iii. Baidyanath: Shiva temple is built during the late Pratihad dynasty.
- iv. Ramgarh: Famous Mundeshwari temple, built on a summit of a hill at a height of about 600-ft.
- v. Naulagesh: 14 kms. from Bhagvanpur block. There are a number of mounds here. In the course of excavations some fine sculptural remains in black stone big earthen jars, broken pieces, ancient pots.

#### District Darbhanga

- i. Brahmpur: 8 kms. from Kamtaul. The village is noted for the Gautam Kund and a temple of Gautam Rishi.
- ii. Kusheshwar - Asthan: 22 kms. north-east of Hasanpur Road Railway Station. It is noted for the temple of Lord Shiva. The origin of this temple is traced to the epic period.
- iii. Makranda: 5 kms. south of Manigachhi Railway station. The place is known for its old temple called Banwaristhan.
- iv. Darbhanga: Darbhanga is the seat of the Maha of Darbhanga. The Raj areas is a well developed and beautiful laid-out complex of palaces, temples, offices, parks, gardens and ponds. There are a number of palaces built by successive Maharajas. The Maharaj of Darbhanga has traditionally been very great patrons of art and literature and through their magnificence has always prided encouragement to the scholars of Maithili and Sanskrit.

#### District Katihar

- i. Belwa: 8 kms south of Barsoi. it has remains of ancient buildings and some stone images of Lord Shiva and Goddess Saraswati.
- ii. Baldiabari: 2.5 kms from Manihari. It is noted the site of a battle saught between Nawab Siraj-ud-daula of Murshida and Nawab Shankat Jung, govern of Purnea
- iii. Kursela: Erstwhile seat of Kursela Estate

#### District Madhepura

- i. Chandisthan: 8 kms north of Murligan Railway Station. The place is famous for its temple of Goddess Chandrika.
- ii. Singheshwar 7 kms north of Madhapura. The place is noted for its temple of Lord Singheshwara (Mahad)
- iii. Ramnagar: 16 krns. from Murliganj Railway Station famous for the Temple of Kali.

#### District Madhubani

- i. Andhrathurlu: 19 kms from Jhangharpaur railway station. It has an old temple known as Kamladitya. The temple contains images of Surya, Vishnu, Lakshmiand Astacal Kamal.
- ii. Balirajpur: 25 kms. north-east of Madhubani. Tradition ascribes the fort to King Bali of the epic period.
- iii. Bhavanipur: 5 kms. away from Pandaul Block. The place is noted for its temple of Ugranath and traditional association with famous Maithili poet, Vidyapati.
- iv. Bisfi: 9 kms from Kamtaul Railway Station. Famous for the birthplace of Maithily poet, Vidyapati.

- v. Sourath: Famous for Somnath Mahadev tEmple. It owes its importance to the annual Sabha held by Maithil Brahmins for negotiation marriages.
- vi. Phulhar: 6 kms west of Harlakh block. Famous for Goddess Gina temple. Princess Site used to come here every day to worship the goddess. Lord Rama saw her for the first time at this place.
- vii. Jainagar: It contains the remains of a mud built fort, now in ruins. It is probably one of the several forts, which alauddin Hussain, King of Bengal constructed from Kamrup in Assam to Bettiah in order to resist, the incursions of the hill tribes.
- viii. Vasudevpur 16 kms east of Madhuban. It was an important centre of the old Raj kingdoms of Bhara arid Canciha.
- ix. Uchaitha: Sanskrit renowned poet Kalidas was blessed by Bhawati at this place.

#### District Muzaffarpur

- i. Rajkhand: Famous for Bhairaw Nath temple
- ii. Muzaffarpur Famous for Garibnath temple of Lord Shiva.
- iii. Ambara Chowk: 40 kms from Muzaffarpur. The home of Amrapali, the famous court dancer of Vaishali.
- iv. Katra Garh: 35 kms north-east of Muzuffarpur during the reign of Akbar, Katra Garh was one of the state so the Mughal empire.
- v. Khudi Ram Bose Memorial

#### District West Champaran

- i. Ramnagar: 43 kms. north of Bettiah. Famous for Shiva temple, constructed about 100 years age by the Raja of Ram Nagar.
- ii. Bhikna Thori: lying on the fringe of Valmiki Tiger Reserve forests on the Nepal border is said to be a corruption of its ancient name 'Bhikshu-Thaur' (a resting place for monks)

#### District East Champaran

- i. Someshwar Fort: The fort stands on the summit of the Someshwar hill. The fort is none in ruins.

#### District Purnea

- i. Bhawanipur: 40 kms. south-west of Purnea. Famous for Bhawani Devi Asthan temple, constructed by the Derbhanga Raj in 1928 AD.
- ii. Barasthan: The temple was set up in 1948 after a stone image of Baraha, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, was discovered while ploughing a field.
- iii. Bhawanipur: 8 kms. south-west of Pumea Town. This place is famous for its temple of Goddess Kamakhya.
- iv. Amaur: 40 kms north of Purnea. It is the seat of Amaur Estate established about 150 years ago.
- v. Banaili: it is noted as the seat of former Banaib estate

#### District Saharsa

- i. Dewan Sal Mandir: One Shiv Ling is established in the temple. It is said that the Ling was established by Maharaja Shalivahan sometime in 100 B.C.
- ii. Darhara: Famous for Lord Shiva Temple.
- iii. Nauhatta: The place has a 'Shiva Temple' about 80 feet in height
- iv. Madan Bharati Asthan (Mahishi): The place is situated in village Mahishi. It is said that a religious discourse (Shastrarth) was held between Shankaracharya and the local scholar Mandan Mishra. Barti, wife of Mandan Mishra, who was also a great scholar, was named as judge for the discourse. it is also said that Shankaracharya, after Mishra, was Challenged by Bharti, was outwitted by her and accepted defeat.
- v. Tarn Asthan: 16 kms. west of Sahasa. Famous for an ancient temple of Bhagwati Tara is built

- vi. Ukahi: it contains an ancient image of Goddess Durga, discovered during excavation.
- vii. Mahapura: Saint, Baba Karu Khishav Ashram is situated in this place.

#### District Samastipur

- i. Malinagar: 35 kms. south-west of Lahenasarai famous for Mahadev temple.
- ii. Vidyapatingar: This place is famous for Maithili poet Vidyapati, who breathed his last in search of Lord shiva.

#### District Sheohar

- i. Deokuk: 19 kms. west of Sitamarhi. Famous for Shiva temple at Deokuli (or Dhekuli). Legends have it that Draupadi, the wife of the pandavas was born here.

#### District Sitamarhi

- i. Baghi Math: 7 kms northeast of Sitamarhi. There is a big Hindu monastery, which contains 108 rooms.
- ii. Pupri: Famous Baba Nageshwamath temple is here. It is said that Lord Shiva himself had appeared here as Nageshwar Nath Mahadev.
- iii. Sabhagacchi Asthan: This is sacred place where the Maithil Brahmins gather every year and hold matrimonial negotiation on a large scale, which finally leads to the marriages being performed. This is a symbol of the ancient culture of Mithila. This place is some 20 kms. west of Sitamarhi town.

#### Challenges

North Bihar is endowed with the potential to develop as a major tourist destination of India for domestic & foreign tourists. Being sluggish in terms of development, the State is facing challenges, which directly and indirectly curb the growth of tourism. The existing infrastructure, safety & Security & local awareness are the major hindrance for the development of the tourism in the State.

- **Competition by other developed Tourist Destination of the Country**

Other tourist destinations as Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan etc. are posing stiff competition for Bihar by providing better tourism based infrastructures, developing the resources and by marketing aggressively about themselves as a great tourist destination.

- **Social Problems**

Social problems like causes of insurgency etc. should be curbed or resolved and provisions to give complete security cover for the tourists.

- **Poor infrastructure and basic amenities**

Infrastructures, if not improved, specially roads, solid waste management, power and accommodation, it would create major hindrances in the development of tourism.

- **Lack of Awareness of Tourism Activity**

General public requires be educating and informing about tourism and their supports to its developments.

#### CONCLUSION

Tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in the world. This Sector not only provides more jobs per million rupees of investment than any other sector of the economy, but is also capable of providing employment opportunities for the unskilled and specialized alike even in the farthest parts of the country side. It also has the potential to promote pro-poor growth than many other sectors

because tourism converge a number of activities like transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishment, retail shops, entertainment businesses and other hospitality services provided to individual or group traveling away from their residences for leisure, business and entertainment. Given the importance of Tourism Promotion in the North Bihar context and the need to broad base tourism, it is high time that adequate attention paid to Pilgrimage Tourism. Abundant physical as well as human resources available for tourism promotion in rural India offer enormous core for rural tourism. Creation of awareness among the rural folks and with minimum intervention in terms of imparting basic skills would certainly keep rural tourism on a high pedestal which in turn would reduce the gap between urban and rural India. Balanced regional development which is an avowed national objective can be achieved with minimum investment. Rural tourism thus provides an alternative model for the overall development of rural areas of North Bihar. Gandhiji's dream of 'Gram Swaraj' may be realized for the prosperity of the Nation.

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