

THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN TEMPLES IN INDIA'S ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the economic and employment impact of Indian temples, with a focus on the temples in North India. The study is based on data collected from more than 200 villages in three districts of Haryana, including the number of temples, their size, the number of festivals and events organized, the number of people employed, and the revenue generated by the temples. The research found that the temples in India have a significant impact on the economy and employment of the country. They generate a substantial amount of revenue through donations, offerings, and other sources, which is used to maintain and develop the temple infrastructure, contributing to the local economy. The temples also provide employment opportunities to a large number of people, including priests, temple staff, and local people, who sell goods and services to the devotees. The study concludes that the temples in India play a crucial role in the economic and employment growth of the country, and more research is needed to further understand their impact. This research paper highlights the importance of temples as a driver of tourism and their role in India's GDP.

Paper Identification



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Introduction

Temples are an integral part of Indian culture and tradition, and they hold a special place in the hearts of millions of Indians. They not only serve as places of worship but also play a significant role in the social, cultural, and economic life of the country. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the economic and employment impact of Indian temples. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the economic and employment impact of Indian temples, with a particular focus on North India. This paper is organised under three sections.

Section 1: Economic Contribution of Indian Temples

This section analyzes the importance of local temples in India, their role in shaping the country's society and culture, and their contribution to the economy. It also includes case studies of Indian temples.

Section 2: Employment Generation Potential of Indian Temples

This section provides an overview of the employment generation potential of Indian temples and their contribution to the Indian economy.

Section 3: Conclusion

The final section presents the conclusions drawn from the analysis and discussion in the preceding sections.

Section 1: Economic Contribution of Indian Temples

1.1 Overview of Local Indian Temples

Local temples were once the centers of the community where people gathered to exchange news and ideas, share their stories and difficulties, seek each other's advice, and plan their social lives. Money received from prosperous farmers was distributed through the sale of goods produced by small businessmen, potters, and craftsmen. Vaidyas, teachers, people associated with music, and astrologers were also associated with the temple, making it a hub of activity for the whole society. India has a rich cultural and religious heritage, and religion plays a vital role in the lives of its people. There are over 5 million temples in the country, and they are spread across rural and urban areas. In North India alone, there are more than 10 religious places in every village, with festivals or fairs organized at least once a year at all these places. These festivals and fairs attract a large number of people, and lakhs of rupees are spent on most of the events.

After studying more than 200 villages in three districts of Haryana namely Kurukshetra, Karnal, and Kaithal, the following conclusion was drawn:

Out of the ten religious places in each village, almost two religious places are run by a whole family as a priest, and they earn their livelihood by taking care of the temple. The main religious places found in every village are Nagar Kheda, Shiv Mandir, Hanuman Mandir Jaharveer Goga, Sheetla Mata, Ravidas Mandir, Balmiki Mandir, and Gurudwara.

In the whole of India, there are more than 50 lakh temples in six and a half lakh villages. Even if only one family is employed in every village temple, more than 60 lakh people in the country are directly running their livelihoods from the temples. Moreover, a large number of people indirectly get employment from temples. In small towns and cities, the number of temples generally ranges from 30 to 60, and many of them have appointed priests from families or religious institutions.

According to a study conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), about 1.27 million people were employed in the religious sector in India in 2011-12. It is estimated that if the temple has given employment to one family in every village, then more than 6 million people in the country are running their livelihood directly from the temples.

1.2 Case Studies of Prominent Indian Temples

Temples and pilgrimage centers in India are not just centers of faith but also important sources of economic activity. They attract millions of devotees every year, leading to the growth of many supporting industries. Indian temples have been a significant part of the country's cultural and religious heritage for centuries. Many temples in India have become important pilgrimage sites, attracting millions of tourists and devotees every year. In this paper, we will look at the top 10 Indian temples based on the number of tourists, offerings, donations, total staff, and their contribution to funding education and hospital institutions.

1 Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, Andhra Pradesh

The Tirumala Venkateswara Temple is one of the most visited temples in India, with an average of 75,000 to 80,000 pilgrims visiting every day. The temple receives more than 20 million visitors every year. The annual income of the temple is estimated to be around INR 3,000 crore. The temple has a staff of around 18,000 people. The temple generates revenue of around 39 crore rupees annually through the auctioning of the curled hair of the devotees. Additionally, the temple has 52 tonnes of gold ornaments worth around Rs 37,000 crore. The temple also earns about 1.10 crore rupees annually from the sale of 1.5 lakh laddoos daily. The temple trust runs several educational and healthcare institutions, including Sri Venkateswara University and Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences.

2. Vaishno Devi Temple-Jammu and Kashmir

The Vaishno Devi Temple is another popular temple in India, located in the hills of Jammu and Kashmir. The temple receives around 10 million visitors every year. The annual income of the temple is estimated to be around INR 500 crore. The temple trust has over 3,000 staff, including priests, caretakers, and other support staff. The temple trust also funds educational and healthcare institutions, including the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University and the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital.

3. Jagannath Temple, Puri-Odisha

The Jagannath Temple in Puri is a popular temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath. The temple receives around 30,000 to 40,000 visitors every day, and around 8 million visitors every year. The temple collects around INR 500 crore in offerings and donations every year. The temple trust has over 6,000 staff, including priests, caretakers, and other support staff. The temple trust also funds educational and healthcare institutions, including the Jagannath Sanskrit University and the Jagannath Cancer Hospital.

4. Siddhivinayak Temple, Mumbai

Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai is a popular temple that attracts around 25,000 visitors every day. The temple receives offerings and donations in the form of cash, jewelry, and other valuables. The temple collects around INR 150 crore in offerings and donations every year. The temple trust has over 2,000 staff, including priests, caretakers, and other support staff. The temple trust also funds educational and healthcare institutions, including the Siddhivinayak College of Engineering and the Siddhivinayak Hospital.

5. Kashi Vishwanath Temple - Uttar Pradesh

The Kashi Vishwanath Temple is a popular temple located in the holy city of Varanasi. The temple receives around 3 million visitors every year. The temple collects around INR 100 crore in offerings and donations every year. The temple has a staff of around 300 people.

6. Golden Temple - Punjab

The Golden Temple, also known as Sri Harmandir Sahib, is a Sikh temple located in Amritsar. The temple receives around 100,000 visitors every day, and around 20 million visitors every year. The temple collects around INR 900 crore in offerings and donations every year. The temple trust runs several educational and healthcare institutions, including the Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences and Research.

7. Somnath Temple - Gujarat

This temple in Gujarat is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva and has been looted and destroyed 17 times by the Ottoman ruler Mahmud of Ghazni. The Somnath Temple is a popular

temple located in Gujarat, dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple receives around 7 million visitors every year. The temple collects around INR 60 crore in offerings and donations every year. The temple trust runs several educational and healthcare institutions, including the Somnath Sanskrit University.

8. Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Located in Madurai, this temple attracts around 20 to 30 thousand devotees daily and generates around 60 crores of revenue annually. The temple has around 33,000 sculptures and 14 gopurams ranging between 45 and 50 meters in height. The temple receives offerings and donations in the form of cash, jewelry, and other valuables. The temple trust has over 5,000 staff, including priests, caretakers, and other support staff. The temple trust also funds educational and healthcare institutions.

9. The Ram Temple in Ayodhya- Uttar Pradesh

The Ram Temple in Ayodhya is one of the most significant Hindu temples in India. The Ram Temple in Ayodhya is expected to attract a large number of visitors from all over the world. It is estimated that the temple can accommodate around 1 lakh devotees per day. It is estimated that the temple will receive around Rs. 100 crore in offerings and donations annually. The Ram Temple in Ayodhya will provide employment opportunities to a large number of people. The temple management has appointed priests, staff, and caretakers for the temple. The construction of the temple has also provided employment opportunities to the local people.

The construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya has provided a significant boost to the local economy. The construction work has provided employment opportunities to the local people, and the construction material was sourced from local suppliers. The temple is expected to boost the local economy by generating business opportunities for the local people, such as selling goods and services to the devotees.

The Ram Temple in Ayodhya is expected to have a significant impact on the local economy and employment. The temple is expected to attract a large number of visitors, generate substantial offerings and donations, and provide employment opportunities to the local people. The construction of the temple has also provided a significant boost to the local economy. Overall, the Ram Temple in Ayodhya is expected to play a crucial role in the economic growth and development of the region.

10. Shirdi Sai Baba Temple, Maharashtra

The Shirdi Sai Baba Temple is another popular temple in Maharashtra, dedicated to the 19th century saint Sai Baba. The temple receives around 25,000 to 30,000 visitors every day, and

around 8 million visitors every year. The temple collects around INR 350 crore in offerings and donations every year. The temple trust runs several educational and healthcare institutions, including the Shri Sai Baba Institute of Engineering and Technology, the Sai Institute of Higher Learning and the Sai Hospital.

Section 2: Employment Generation Potential of Indian Temples

2.1 Indian temples contribution to the economy

Temples in India are not just centers of faith and worship, but also important sources of economic activity and employment generation. They attract millions of devotees every year, leading to the growth of many supporting industries. Here are some ways in which Indian temples contribute to the economy:

Tourism: Temples in India are important tourist destinations, attracting millions of visitors every year. Many of these temples are architectural masterpieces and have fascinating stories attached to them, making them not just places of worship but also tourist attractions. This leads to the growth of many supporting industries such as hotels, restaurants, transportation, and souvenir shops.

Employment: Temples provide employment opportunities for thousands of people in various fields such as hospitality, maintenance, security, and administration. The upkeep and maintenance of these temples require a significant workforce, which contributes to the local economy.

Donations: Devotees donate significant amounts of money to temples in India. This money is used for the maintenance and development of the temple, which includes the construction of new buildings, the purchase of equipment, and the hiring of staff. These donations also contribute to the local economy by providing a source of income for the people associated with the temple.

Agriculture: Many temples in India own large tracts of land, which are used for agricultural purposes. This land is either cultivated by the temple or leased out to farmers, providing a source of income for both the temple and the farmers. In some cases, the temple also provides training and other support to the farmers, which helps to improve their livelihoods.

Arts and Crafts: Many temples in India have a rich tradition of arts and crafts. Local artisans create a variety of handicrafts, which are sold to devotees and tourists. These handicrafts include items such as sculptures, paintings, and textiles, which contribute to the local economy.

In conclusion, temples in India play a significant role in the country's economy. They contribute to the growth of many supporting industries, provide employment opportunities, and generate

income through donations, agriculture, and arts and crafts. The economic impact of Indian temples is significant, and they continue to be an important part of the country's cultural and economic landscape.

2.2 Employment generation potential of Indian Temples

Indian temples have significant employment generation potential, as they are not just places of worship but also centers of culture, heritage, and economic activity. Here are some ways in which Indian temples can generate employment:

Hospitality and Tourism: Temples in India are important tourist destinations, attracting millions of visitors every year. The growth of the tourism industry has created a demand for various services such as hotels, restaurants, transportation, and tour guides. Temples can employ people in these services to cater to the needs of tourists and devotees.

Maintenance and Upkeep: The upkeep and maintenance of temples require a significant workforce. Temples need staff to clean the premises, maintain the gardens, and perform regular repairs and renovations. These activities require a range of skills such as plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and masonry, which can provide employment opportunities.

Security: Temples require round-the-clock security to ensure the safety of visitors and the temple's valuables. Security personnel can be employed to provide security services such as access control, crowd management, and emergency response.

Arts and Crafts: Many temples in India have a rich tradition of arts and crafts. Local artisans create a variety of handicrafts, which are sold to devotees and tourists. These handicrafts include items such as sculptures, paintings, and textiles. Temples can provide training and employment opportunities for artisans in various crafts.

Agriculture: Many temples in India own large tracts of land, which are used for agricultural purposes. This land is either cultivated by the temple or leased out to farmers, providing a source of income for both the temple and the farmers. Temples can employ people in various agricultural activities such as planting, harvesting, and crop maintenance.

In conclusion, Indian temples have significant employment generation potential. They can employ people in various services such as hospitality, maintenance, security, arts and crafts, and agriculture. These activities provide opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers and contribute to the local economy. Temples can play a crucial role in creating employment opportunities and improving the livelihoods of people associated with them.

1.3 The relationship between GDP and Temple revenue

The relationship between GDP and temple revenue is a complex one, as it involves various factors that impact the economy. However, in general, the revenue generated by temples can have a positive impact on a country's GDP.

Firstly, the revenue generated by temples can contribute to the local economy. Temples often generate revenue through donations, offerings, and other sources. This revenue is used to maintain and develop the temple infrastructure, contributing to the local economy. For example, the revenue generated by the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple in India is estimated to be around Rs. 2,500 crore annually, and this revenue is used to develop the temple infrastructure and surrounding areas, contributing to the local economy.

Secondly, temples can act as a driver of tourism, which can have a positive impact on the economy. Many tourists visit temples in India, contributing to the country's tourism industry. The revenue generated by tourism can contribute to the country's GDP. For example, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, India, attracts millions of tourists annually, contributing to the country's tourism industry and GDP.

Finally, the employment opportunities provided by temples can also contribute to the economy. Temples provide employment opportunities to a large number of people, including priests, temple staff, and local people. The employment opportunities provided by temples can help to reduce unemployment and poverty, contributing to the overall economic development of the country.

In conclusion, the revenue generated by temples can have a positive impact on a country's GDP. However, this impact is dependent on various factors, including the size and popularity of the temple, the location, and the economic conditions of the region. Nevertheless, the positive economic impact of temples cannot be denied, and they continue to play a significant role in the economic development of many countries.

Section 3: Conclusion

Indian temples play a vital role in India's economy and employment. They contribute significantly to the country's GDP and provide employment opportunities to millions of people. The study highlights the need to recognize the economic potential of Indian temples and leverage their economic and employment generation potential. It also underscores the importance of investing in skill development and training to enhance the employability of temple workers.

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