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MARC Insights

Maha-kumbh 2025: A Dive into Religious Tourism and Its Economic Impact

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Leading brands have doubled their event marketing budgets for Maha Kumbh 2025, resulting in a 300% surge in overall marketing expenditure

Introduction to Maha Kumbh

Maha Kumbh 2025 Witnessed Over 663 Million Pilgrims in 45 Days (January 13 to February 26, 2025) Spanning 12km Along the Sacred Riverbanks of Prayagraj.

What is Maha-Kumbh Mela?

Maha-Kumbh, held **once every 144 years** in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, is the ultimate spiritual gathering for Hindus—marking the completion of 12 cycles of the 12-year Kumbh Mela and offering a once-in-a-lifetime path to spiritual fulfillment.

Why Kumbh Mela is Celebrated?

Kumbh Mela is celebrated to mark the mythological event where drops of Amrit (nectar of immortality) fell at these four places (Prayagraj, Haridwar, Nashik, Ujjain), during a celestial battle between gods and demons.



Types of Kumbh Mela

Types of Kumbh Mela	Maha Kumbh Mela Most rare and spiritually powerful form of the Kumbh Mela.	Purna Kumbh Mela Major event with millions for sacred rituals.	Ardh Kumbh Mela A smaller-scale event between Purna Kumbh Melas.	Kumbh Mela Frequent gathering for spiritual purification.
Frequency	Once every 144 years	Every 12 years	Every 6 years	Every 4 years
Location	• Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh	• Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh) • Haridwar(Uttarakhand) • Nashik (Maharashtra) • Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh)	• Haridwar(Uttarakhand) • Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh)	• Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh) • Haridwar(Uttarakhand) • Nashik (Maharashtra) • Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh)

Sources :- BBC News, India Today, V&R, The Business Rule, Reuters, Organiser, New18,

Maha-kumbh Infrastructure at Prayagraj

The Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj spanned 4,000 hectares at Triveni Sangam, with temporary infrastructure that included hospitals, sanitation, transport, 25 sectors, and 50 ghats to support millions of pilgrims.



The NDRF had introduced **water ambulances** to provide emergency medical assistance on the river.



Floating jetties and changing rooms were installed at seven major ghats, ensuring safe and convenient access to the river for pilgrims.



U.P. Police had deployed **floating police chowkis** equipped with advanced surveillance systems and first aid facilities.



Maha Kumbh Infrastructure

1,60,000

Total number of tents installed

40,000

Police and Security official

15,000

Sanitation Workers

67,000

Street Lights

30

Floating Bridge

25,000

Waste bins

1,50,000

Hygiene facility

99

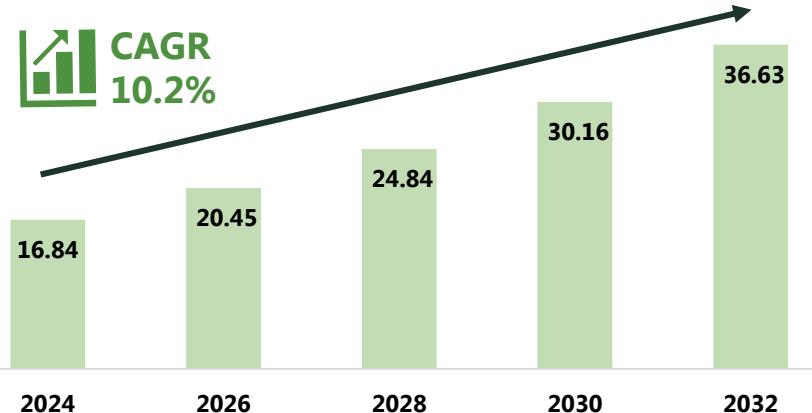
Parking for over half a million vehicles

Sources :- BBC News, India Today, V&R

Religious Tourism of India

Religious tourism drives over 60% of India's domestic travel.

Indian Religious Tourism Market Size In INR Lakh Crore



Search interest for religious sites grew by 97% in 2023 compared to 2022, according to MakeMyTrip.

585%
AYODHYA

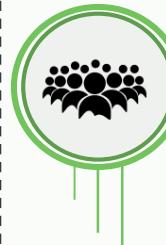
359%
UJJAIN

343%
BADRINATH

Highlights of Religious Tourism in India

Youth Participation:-

Religious travel is no longer just for seniors. **Youth, corporates, and NRIs** are actively participating. Maha-Kumbh saw strong bookings from travelers aged 30–35.



Employment Generation

Religious tourism, valued at INR 16.84 lakh crore, is set to reach INR 36.62 lakh crore by FY2032, creating an estimated **140 million jobs by 2030**.



Infrastructure Improvement

Experts say improved roads, railways, and government schemes have made pilgrimage travel easier, strengthening India's spiritual corridors



Sources :- [Markets and Data](#), [Future market Insights](#), [Skift](#), [Times of India](#), [New18](#), [Make my Trip](#)

Maha-kumbh Elevating India's religious tourism

The Maha Kumbh has contributed approximately 10% to India's spiritual tourism market in FY25.

The Role of Maha Kumbh in Enhancing Religious Tourism in India



Shree Ram Temple Ayodhya

- ❖ In 2024, Ayodhya welcomed a staggering 164 million tourists.
- ❖ During the 45-day Maha Kumbh, more than **12.5 million** devotees visited the Shree Ram Temple.
- ❖ Devotees contributed an estimated **INR 15 lakh daily** in donations at the Ram Mandir.



Religious Tourism in Varanasi

- ❖ In FY 2024, Varanasi welcomed 110 million tourists.
- ❖ Hotel bookings in the city surged by **30%**, driven by the Maha-kumbh 2025.
- ❖ Flight bookings to Varanasi also witnessed a remarkable **127%** increase.

- ❖ According to ixigo, flight and train bookings to Prayagraj and surrounding areas have surged by **2.6 times and Lucknow by 42%** driven by the influx of pilgrims for Maha-kumbh.
- ❖ **Inbound spiritual tourism** in India VISA applications has grown by **21.4%**, fueled by major religious events such as the Maha-kumbh, which alone drew **663 million pilgrims**.
- ❖ **Group travel** for spiritual purposes has increased by **35%**, while enhanced infrastructure around pilgrimage sites has further enriched the visitor experience,
- ❖ Spiritual tourism from the United States and the United Kingdom has increased, with **women comprising 66%** of millennial travelers leading this trend.

Sources :- [News18](#), [Hindustan Times](#), [Money control](#), [Times of India](#), [Times of India](#).

Economic Contributions of Maha-Kumbh

A Tourism Surge with Over 1 Million International Visitors and High-Demand Stays Ranging from INR 1,500 Dorms to INR 1 Lakh Luxury Tents with 44 Super Luxury Tents at Sangam Nivas.

Revenue generated

 **INR 2 Lakh Cr.**

Projected revenue during 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela

 **INR 1.2 Lakh Cr.**

Revenue generated during 2019 Ardh Kumbh Mela.

 **INR 12,000 Cr.**

Revenue generated during the 2013 Kumbh Mela.

Job Opportunities



Over 3 lakh individuals employed across hotels, lodges, and guesthouses.



Approximately 1.5 lakh drivers, conductors, and logistics personnel engaged.



More than 2 lakh vendors offering food, clothing, and religious items.



Nearly 1.5 lakh people involved in sanitation, event coordination, and safety operations

The Economic Impact of Maha Kumbh Mela 2025

 **45 Cr +**
Total Pilgrims Arrival

 **INR 6,400 Cr.**
Budget Allocation

 **INR 2 Lakh Cr. +**
Financial Transaction

 **0.8%**
Transaction % of India's GDP

Sources :- [Awesome India](#), [Organiser](#)

Economic Impact of Maha-Kumbh Across Key Sectors

In 2019, visitors spent an average of INR 300–INR 500 per day. In 2025, this was expected to rise to INR 600–INR 750 per person, providing a further boost to the economy.

Tourism & Hospitality Sector



Hotels & Guesthouses

Over 60,000 accommodations were fully booked, generating around **INR 15,000 crore**.



Tents & Temporary Shelters

More than 1 lakh tents were set up, contributing an estimated **INR 10,000 crore**.



Food & Beverages

Restaurants and street vendors earned **over INR 5,000 crore**.



Tour Operators

Special travel packages has brought in approximately **INR 4,000 crore**.

Transportation Sector



Helicopter rides

offering aerial views at **INR 5,000** per ticket, expected to generate over **INR 157 crore** during the **45-day event**.



Indian Railways

Indian Railway operated over **1,500 special trains**, with projected earnings of **INR 20,000 crore**.



Bus Services

Public and Private bus services has generate over **INR 12,000 crore**. **UPSRTC deployed over 7,000 buses**, including 350 shuttle buses.



Taxis & Ride-Sharing

Taxis and Ride Sharing including services like Ola, Uber, and local operators, earn **over ₹4,000 crore**.

Sources :- [Awesome India, Organiser](#)

Economic Impact of Maha-Kumbh Across Key Sectors

In 2025, hoarding rental rates have increased up to INR 15 lakh per month from INR 6 to INR 9 lakh in 2019, and macro influencers charging INR 10–30 lakh per campaign.

Retail and Consumer goods

- ❖ The surge in visitors boosted demand for essentials, with groceries, dairy, and oils generating **INR 20,000 crore**.
- ❖ Retailers benefited from this high-volume sales opportunity.

Religious and Handicraft Items

- ❖ Religious items and handicrafts generated a revenue of **INR 25,000 crore**, driven by the devotional vibe.
- ❖ Rural artisans gained global exposure, boosting local economies.

Advertising in Maha-Kumbh

- ❖ Leading brands have doubled their event marketing budgets for **Maha Kumbh 2025**, resulting in a **300% surge in overall marketing expenditure**.
- ❖ **2019 Ardh Kumbh** spending was in the range of INR 1,200–1,500 crore, the **estimated spend for Maha-Kumbh for 2025** has increased to **INR 4,500 crore**.

Top Spender



INR 120 Cr.
FMCG Brands
HUL and ITC.



INR 80 to 100 Cr.
Telecom Players
Airtel.



INR 50-70 Cr.
Digital Platforms
Paytm and Flipkart.

Sources :- [Awesome India](#), [Organiser](#), [Moneycontrol](#)



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