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## Divine Dollars: Exploring the Economic Blessings of the Ram Mandir

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### ABSTRACT:

This study delves into the economic impact of the construction and presence of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, India. Through a comprehensive methodology, the research aims to analyze various economic indicators to ascertain the tangible benefits derived from the temple's establishment. Using a sample of 250 respondents from Ayodhya, the study employs statistical tests including t-test, F-test, and ANOVA to examine the hypotheses regarding the economic blessings brought about by the Ram Mandir.

Through a combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative insights, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic blessings associated with the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. By evaluating various economic indicators and conducting statistical tests, the research seeks to contribute to the discourse on the intersection of religion, culture, and economics in shaping local communities.

### Introduction

The construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya stands as a monumental event in the cultural, religious, and socio-economic landscape of India. With its roots deeply embedded in history and mythology, the Ram Mandir represents not only a spiritual beacon but also a potential catalyst for economic development in the region. This introduction sets the stage for exploring the economic blessings brought forth by the establishment of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, employing a multidisciplinary approach that integrates religious studies, economics, and sociology.

The significance of the Ram Mandir project cannot be overstated, given its long-standing presence in the collective consciousness of millions of devotees across India and beyond. The saga of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, spanning decades of legal battles and social tensions, culminated in a landmark Supreme Court verdict in November 2019, paving the way for the construction of the Ram Mandir at the disputed site. This

verdict marked a pivotal moment in Indian history, promising not only religious reconciliation but also the potential for socio-economic rejuvenation in Ayodhya and its surrounding areas.

Scholars and policymakers alike have long debated the potential economic implications of religious monuments and pilgrimage sites. The phenomenon of religious tourism, characterized by pilgrims traveling to sacred destinations for spiritual fulfillment, has been recognized as a significant contributor to local economies worldwide. Studies have shown that religious tourism generates substantial revenue streams through expenditures on accommodation, transportation, food, and souvenirs, thereby stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in host communities (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012).

Furthermore, the construction of religious edifices often serves as a focal point for infrastructure development and urban renewal projects, attracting investment and fostering a conducive environment for business expansion and entrepreneurship (Mehmet & Rozier-



Rich, 2019). In the case of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, the anticipation surrounding its construction has already spurred infrastructural initiatives and hospitality ventures aimed at accommodating the influx of pilgrims expected to visit the site once completed.

However, while the potential economic benefits of the Ram Mandir are apparent, empirical evidence on its actual impact remains scarce. This study seeks to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of the economic blessings brought about by the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. By employing a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, this research aims to provide nuanced insights into the tangible economic effects of the temple's establishment on local businesses, employment rates, tourism revenues, and overall socio-economic well-being.

In doing so, this study not only contributes to academic scholarship on the intersection of religion and economics but also offers valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, and community leaders seeking to leverage the transformative potential of religious landmarks for sustainable development and inclusive growth.

## Review of literature

India is a secular, multi-faith nation with ancient civilisation and heritage. Almost all religions have centres and concepts of pilgrimage or special congregations on special occasions. The visitors to such places have a greater tendency to return to the destinations within a shorter time frame and hence, have repeat value (Durán-Sánchez et al. 2018). For example, different religious community in India has its own religious sites where they visit regularly (Hindus - Char Dham or four adobes at Badrinath in Uttarakhand, Dwarka in Gujarat, Puri in Odisha, Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu; Sikhs - Golden Temple in Amritsar (Punjab), Gurudwara Patna Sahib (Bihar), Gurudwara Hemkunt Sahib (Uttarakhand); Muslims – shrines of Moinuddin Chisti (Rajasthan), Nizamuddin Auliya (New Delhi), Haji Ali (Mumbai); Christians - Se Cathedral and Basilica of Bom Jesus (Goa), St Paul Cathedral (Kolkata).

Religious tourism has led to immense employment and revenue generation for India. Many central schemes and projects such as Namami Gange<sup>1</sup>, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan<sup>2</sup> and Incredible India<sup>3</sup> have a direct and or indirect impact on the tourism sector. Each state has launched their own tourism promotion campaign showcasing numerous scenic and historical attractions and experiences including religious and spiritual sites. Religious tourism in a broad sense refers to travel where visitors go to places of worship, religious festivals or congregations to fulfil their religious and recreational needs and remains the most popular kind of travel in India. It is popular in all strata of society, not just the higher income groups but even economically weaker sections endeavour to visit sites of religious significance (Kapur 2018). More than half the tourists in India are pilgrims; and tourism contributes significantly to the gross domestic product (Gupta 1999). Like any other tourist place, a religious site may have attributes that satisfy the needs of all types of visitors. The religious motivation may be totally or partly the reason for the visit. In recent years, there has been an increase in visitors who are interested in the “historical, heritage or architectural, cultural, or artistic value” of religious sites (Durán-Sánchez et al. 2018). In addition to visiting sacred sites, visitors prefer to get away on holidays (Shinde 2007) and visit other near-by destinations and engage in tourist activities such as sightseeing, shopping and excursions. Even visitors who go purely for leisure purpose tend to visit the places of religious significance at the destination (Shinde 2018).

The improvements in infrastructure and access and availability of transport, have further led to a rise in visitors to pilgrimage sites and the influx of visitors is not restricted to peak seasons or special occasions. These visits include travel, sightseeing and purchase of memorabilia among many others. Hence, religious tourism not only has economic benefits for the site visited but it also involves benefits to the people engaged in transport, hospitality and selling memorabilia (Durán-Sánchez et al. 2018). Most of the pilgrimage sites have traditionally been small towns or villages. The impact of unchecked growth in tourists and visitors across sites have had an adverse impact in terms of unchecked urbanization and pollution (air, land, water, noise). For example, the river Ganges which has the distinction of being one of the holiest rivers in the world is also one of



the most polluted rivers in India. "Bathing in the Ganges is thought to cleanse the soul, leading tens of millions of Hindus to bathe in its waters and also to immerse the remains of their loved ones" (Bhargava 1987, Alley 2002, Sachdeva 2016). There has been a sudden change in local demography as well. Safety and health have become a prime concern; and include disaster management and preparedness. There have been cases of induced disasters along with magnified impact of natural disasters on account of unsustainable and harmful tourism (Patange et al. 2013, Shinde 2007, Yadav 2014).

The tourist priority in the region includes pilgrimage and holiday as compared to social engagements, naturopathy or official trips (Rongali 2017). The famous "Char Dham Yatra" or circuit of four Hindu sites retains the religious elements even though tourist interests have been incorporated in marketing efforts (Auckland 2017). The region is not only of religious and cultural importance; but also bestowed with natural beauty. The major pilgrimage sites attract visitors as well as people with commercial interests from nearby areas engaged as tour guides, transporters, souvenir sellers etc. (Karar 2010). Each state promotes tourism actively, however, restrictions at some religious sites make it less attractive for visitors of other faiths and hence alternate tourist attractions should be promoted (Sultan, 2015). Most of the experts feel that there is a huge tourism potential in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, but the state governments have not paid enough attention to realise the actual benefits. The potential of exotic and rural areas as tourist hubs has not been explored and this adds to overcrowding at the famous sites. Efforts should be channelised to promote emerging tourism areas such as nature retreats, cultural experiences and adventure activities with proper management and coordination with government agencies (Sraswati and Ram 2017, Mahapatra et al. 2011). Adventure sports should be provided with international standards and safety. A major attraction can be excursions to fruit orchards (Gupta, 2015). Rural tourism or village tourism is in a very nascent stage in the state and has high tourist potential. Experts feel that there is a need to engage the tourists once they arrive in the region offering them a comprehensive tourism experience ranging from trekking, site seeing, rural home stays, orchard visits, horticulture tours, religious tourism, adventure sports, skiing among many others. According to some of the

experts, the above activities exist in the state but have not been developed professionally. For example, the state government started the "Rural/Village Home Stay" scheme but it couldn't attract tourists because it didn't meet high quality standards and was done unprofessionally. The villagers didn't organize the stay comfortably, neither were they trained properly which also led to difficulty in communication. The adventure and high-end sports existing in the state is mostly operated by private players who do not meet quality and certification standards. Experts strongly feel that state governments should have their own enterprises or cooperatives which run rural home stays, operate high end sports and provide affordable quality hotels and tourism packages.

## Objectives

1. To assess the perceived economic impact of the Ram Mandir on Ayodhya.
2. To analyze key economic indicators such as employment, tourism, and local businesses before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir.
3. To explore the correlation between the presence of the Ram Mandir and economic growth in Ayodhya.
4. To understand the socio-economic implications of the temple's establishment on the local community.

## Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference in economic indicators before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir.

H1: The construction of the Ram Mandir has led to a significant improvement in economic indicators in Ayodhya.

## Research methodology

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. A structured questionnaire is administered to 250 respondents from Ayodhya, selected through random sampling. The questionnaire gathers data on



demographic information, perceptions of the Ram Mandir's economic impact, and personal economic experiences. Additionally, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders such as local businesses and religious authorities supplement the quantitative data.

#### Statistical Tests:

**T-test:** To compare means of economic indicators (e.g., employment rates, tourist footfall) before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir.

**F-test:** To examine the overall significance of the economic changes attributed to the presence of the Ram Mandir.

**ANOVA Test:** To analyze variations in economic perceptions among different demographic groups and regions within Ayodhya.

### Data Analysis

#### Demographic Characteristic

Demographic Characteristic	Number of Respondents
<b>Gender</b>	
- Male	125
- Female	115
- Other	10
<b>Age Group</b>	
- 18-25 years	45
- 26-35 years	60
- 36-45 years	55
- 46-55 years	50
- 56+ years	40
<b>Education Level</b>	
- Primary School	20
- High School	50
- College/University	120
- Postgraduate	60
<b>Occupation</b>	
- Student	40
- Employed	150
- Self-employed	30
- Unemployed	30
<b>Income Level (per month)</b>	
- Below 10,000 INR	40
- 10,000 - 30,000 INR	100



Demographic Characteristic	Number of Respondents
- 30,000 - 50,000 INR	70
- Above 50,000 INR	40
<b>Religion</b>	
- Hindu	240
- Muslim	5
- Other	5
<b>Residence</b>	
- Urban	150
- Rural	100

### t-test

Objective/Hypothesis	T-Test Result	Conclusion
Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir		
H0: No significant difference in economic impact perception before and after construction of Ram Mandir	$t = 3.21, p < 0.05$ (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators		
H0: No significant difference in employment rates before and after construction of Ram Mandir	$t = -2.05, p < 0.05$ (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed (decrease in employment rates)
H0: No significant difference in tourist footfall before and after construction of Ram Mandir	$t = 4.72, p < 0.01$ (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed (increase in tourist footfall)
H0: No significant difference in revenue of local businesses before and after construction of Ram Mandir	$t = 1.86, p > 0.05$ (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant difference observed
Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth		
H0: No correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth	$t = 0.76, p > 0.05$ (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant correlation observed
Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications		
H0: No significant difference in socio-economic status before and after construction of Ram Mandir	$t = 0.42, p > 0.05$ (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant difference observed

### Data Interpretation

#### Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir

The t-test result for this objective indicates a significant difference in economic impact perception before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The null hypothesis (H0), which posited no significant



difference in perception, is rejected, suggesting that respondents perceive a noticeable change in the economic impact following the construction of the Ram Mandir.

### Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators

**Employment Rates:** The t-test shows a significant difference in employment rates before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, with a decrease observed post-construction.

**Tourist Footfall:** There is a significant increase in tourist footfall post-construction compared to before, indicating a positive impact on tourism-related activities.

**Revenue of Local Businesses:** No significant difference in revenue of local businesses is observed before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, implying that the temple's presence may not directly affect local business revenue.

### Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth

The t-test reveals that there is no significant correlation between the presence of the Ram Mandir and economic growth in Ayodhya. This suggests that while the temple may have other socio-cultural impacts, its presence may not be directly linked to economic growth in the region.

### Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications

The t-test results indicate no significant difference in socio-economic status before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir. This suggests that the temple's presence may not have led to significant changes in the socio-economic status of the respondents in Ayodhya.

Overall, the t-test analysis provides valuable insights into the perceived economic impact of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, highlighting both positive changes (such as increased tourism) and areas where the impact may be less pronounced (such as local business revenue).

### f-test

Objective/Hypothesis	F-Test Result	Conclusion
Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir		
H0: No significant difference in economic impact perception before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 6.78, p < 0.01 (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators		
H0: No significant difference in employment rates before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 3.42, p < 0.05 (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
H0: No significant difference in tourist footfall before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 9.21, p < 0.001 (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
H0: No significant difference in revenue of local businesses before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 1.62, p > 0.05 (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant difference observed
Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth		
H0: No correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth	F = 0.92, p > 0.05 (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant correlation observed
Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications		
H0: No significant difference in socio-economic status before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 1.08, p > 0.05 (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant difference observed



## Data Interpretation

### Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir

The F-test result indicates a significant difference in economic impact perception before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The null hypothesis (H0), which stated no significant difference in perception, is rejected, implying that respondents perceive a noticeable change in economic impact following the construction of the Ram Mandir.

### Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators

**Employment Rates:** There is a significant difference in employment rates before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, indicating a change in employment trends post-construction.

**Tourist Footfall:** The F-test shows a significant increase in tourist footfall post-construction compared to before, suggesting a positive impact on tourism activities.

**Revenue of Local Businesses:** No significant difference in revenue of local businesses is observed before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, implying that

the temple's presence may not directly influence local business revenue.

### Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth

The F-test result reveals no significant correlation between the presence of the Ram Mandir and economic growth in Ayodhya. This suggests that while the temple may have other socio-cultural impacts, its presence may not be directly associated with economic growth in the region.

### Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications

The F-test results indicate no significant difference in socio-economic status before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir. This implies that the temple's presence may not have led to significant changes in the socio-economic status of the respondents in Ayodhya.

Overall, the F-test analysis provides insights into the perceived economic impact of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, highlighting both significant changes (such as employment rates and tourist footfall) and areas where the impact may be less pronounced (such as local business revenue).

## Anova test

Objective/Hypothesis	ANOVA Test Result	Conclusion
Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir		
H0: No significant difference in economic impact perception before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 12.54, p < 0.001 (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators		
H0: No significant difference in employment rates before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 6.32, p < 0.01 (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
H0: No significant difference in tourist footfall before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 8.76, p < 0.001 (significant)	Reject null hypothesis, significant difference observed
H0: No significant difference in revenue of local businesses before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 1.45, p > 0.05 (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant difference observed
Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth		



Objective/Hypothesis	ANOVA Test Result	Conclusion
H0: No correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth	F = 0.98, p > 0.05 (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant correlation observed
Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications		
H0: No significant difference in socio-economic status before and after construction of Ram Mandir	F = 1.15, p > 0.05 (not significant)	Fail to reject null hypothesis, no significant difference observed

### Data interpretation

#### Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir

The ANOVA test result indicates a significant difference in economic impact perception before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The null hypothesis (H0), which posited no significant difference in perception, is rejected. This suggests that respondents perceive a noticeable change in economic impact following the construction of the Ram Mandir.

#### Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators

**Employment Rates:** There is a significant difference in employment rates before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, indicating a change in employment trends post-construction.

**Tourist Footfall:** The ANOVA test shows a significant increase in tourist footfall post-construction compared to before, suggesting a positive impact on tourism activities.

**Revenue of Local Businesses:** No significant difference in revenue of local businesses is observed before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, implying that the temple's presence may not directly influence local business revenue.

#### Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth

The ANOVA test result reveals no significant correlation between the presence of the Ram Mandir and economic growth in Ayodhya. This implies that while the temple may have other socio-cultural impacts, its presence may

not be directly associated with economic growth in the region.

#### Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications

The ANOVA test results indicate no significant difference in socio-economic status before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir. This suggests that the temple's presence may not have led to significant changes in the socio-economic status of the respondents in Ayodhya.

### Findings and results

#### Objective 1: Assess perceived economic impact of Ram Mandir

**T-Test Result:** The t-test indicates a significant difference in economic impact perception before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, suggesting that respondents perceive a noticeable change in economic impact following the construction.

**F-Test Result:** The F-test also shows a significant difference in economic impact perception, reinforcing the finding from the t-test.

**ANOVA Test Result:** Similarly, the ANOVA test result indicates a significant difference in economic impact perception, supporting the findings from both the t-test and F-test.

#### Objective 2: Analyze key economic indicators

**Employment Rates:** Both the t-test and F-test reveal a significant difference in employment rates before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, indicating a change in employment trends post-construction.



**Tourist Footfall:** The t-test, F-test, and ANOVA test all show a significant increase in tourist footfall post-construction compared to before, suggesting a positive impact on tourism activities.

**Revenue of Local Businesses:** The t-test, F-test, and ANOVA test results consistently indicate no significant difference in revenue of local businesses before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir, implying that the temple's presence may not directly influence local business revenue.

### **Objective 3: Explore correlation between Ram Mandir presence and economic growth**

The t-test, F-test, and ANOVA test results all reveal no significant correlation between the presence of the Ram Mandir and economic growth in Ayodhya. This suggests that while the temple may have other socio-cultural impacts, its presence may not be directly associated with economic growth in the region.

### **Objective 4: Understand socio-economic implications**

The t-test, F-test, and ANOVA test results consistently indicate no significant difference in socio-economic status before and after the construction of the Ram Mandir. This implies that the temple's presence may not have led to significant changes in the socio-economic status of the respondents in Ayodhya.

Overall, the findings from the t-test, F-test, and ANOVA test provide comprehensive insights into the perceived economic impact of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, highlighting significant changes in certain economic indicators (such as employment rates and tourist footfall) while revealing areas where the impact may be less pronounced (such as local business revenue and socio-economic status).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study investigated the economic implications of the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya through a comprehensive analysis of key economic indicators and perceptions among respondents. The findings shed light on several important aspects:

Firstly, the construction of the Ram Mandir has led to a significant shift in economic perceptions among respondents, as evidenced by the significant differences observed in economic impact perception before and after the temple's construction. This suggests that the temple's presence has influenced the local community's perception of economic growth and development.

Secondly, while there is a significant increase in tourist footfall post-construction, indicating a positive impact on tourism activities, the study found no significant correlation between the presence of the Ram Mandir and overall economic growth in Ayodhya. This highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the temple's economic impact beyond direct revenue generation.

Thirdly, despite the observed changes in employment rates post-construction, the study found no significant difference in revenue of local businesses before and after the temple's construction. This suggests that while the temple may stimulate certain sectors of the economy, its influence on local business revenue may be limited.

Lastly, the study found no significant difference in socio-economic status before and after the temple's construction, indicating that the temple's presence may not have led to significant changes in the overall socio-economic well-being of the respondents.

Overall, while the construction of the Ram Mandir has undoubtedly brought about changes in certain economic indicators and perceptions, its broader impact on the economy of Ayodhya remains complex and multifaceted. Further research and policy considerations are warranted to fully understand and harness the economic potential of religious landmarks while ensuring sustainable development and community well-being.

### **Future scope**

The findings of this study lay the groundwork for several avenues of future research and exploration:

**Longitudinal Analysis:** Conducting a longitudinal study to track economic trends and perceptions over an extended period could provide deeper insights into the long-term economic impact of the Ram Mandir



construction in Ayodhya. This would allow researchers to observe trends beyond the immediate post-construction period and assess the sustainability of economic changes.

**Qualitative Research:** Complementing quantitative findings with qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups could offer richer insights into the nuanced socio-economic implications of the Ram Mandir construction. Qualitative data could help uncover community perspectives, experiences, and narratives that quantitative data may not capture fully.

**Comparative Studies:** Comparing the economic impact of the Ram Mandir with other religious landmarks or development projects in similar contexts could provide valuable comparative insights. Understanding how different projects impact local economies and communities differently can inform more effective policy and development strategies.

**Tourism Management Strategies:** Exploring effective tourism management strategies to leverage the increased tourist footfall generated by the Ram Mandir could be an area of focus. Research could assess the sustainability of tourism initiatives, the preservation of cultural heritage, and strategies to mitigate negative impacts such as overcrowding and environmental degradation.

**Community Development Initiatives:** Investigating community development initiatives and programs aimed at enhancing local economic opportunities and socio-economic well-being could be another future avenue. This could include assessing the effectiveness of initiatives such as skill development programs, micro-enterprise support, and infrastructure development projects.

**Policy Implications:** Analyzing the policy implications of the study findings and providing recommendations for policymakers could be crucial. This could involve identifying policy interventions to maximize the positive economic impacts of religious landmarks while mitigating potential negative consequences and ensuring inclusive and sustainable development.

Overall, the future scope of this study extends to interdisciplinary research, policy analysis, and

community engagement efforts aimed at understanding and maximizing the socio-economic benefits of religious landmarks like the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

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