



## Beyond Nawabs-Proposed Tourism Potentials of Emerging Lucknow for Policy Makers

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### ABSTRACT

*City of Nawabs, Golden City of the East, Shiraz-i-Hind and Constantinople of India, Lucknow has been known with these names. A CII-KPMG report says that tourist visits in the northern states of India witnessed a growth rate of 10.2 % during 2008-2012 compared to the national average growth rate of 16.3 % during the same period. While multiple tourism circuits based on diverse themes exist across northern states, low level of stay durations by both domestic and international tourists indicates the need for more entertainment and leisure activities. Advantage of demographic dividend and willingness of Indians to spend on tourism can be tapped by destinations only if they re-invent themselves. Lucknow as a destination needs to move beyond above introductions and policy makers should focus on complimentary product offerings of Dalit Tourism, Mango Tourism, and River Tourism as explored by the research paper.*

**KEYWORDS :** *Dalit Tourism, Mango Tourism, River Tourism*

### Introduction

Lucknow is often described as the following, City of Nawabs, the Golden City of the East, Shiraz-i-Hind and the Constantinople of India. A traveller to Lucknow today is still fascinated by the timeless elegance of this city which even today, as malls and multiplexes sear its skyline, struggles to keep its tryst with destiny with its lofty Imam-baras (Islamic halls of prayer) and remnants of palaces that speak volume of its glorious history. The modernization and population pressure, in the era of globalization, upon the cities are changing their façade. Rather than a monotonous history, passing through the alleys of Hindu principedom and Muslim rule; it encompasses much more. No other city has experienced the Hindu rule, the Muslim rule, a passing Mughal touch, feudal lord's regime and colonial rule so closely. The exception lies not only in the variety, but also in the manner, in which all the colours of these periods have been amalgamated, absorbed and exhibited, explicitly visible even in the present times. The turn of the century was a watershed year on Lucknow's development calendar. This was the time when the city's old master plan, drafted in 1992, was losing its relevance. In the new master plan that came out in 2005, the area beyond Gomtinagar stretching between Faizabad Road and Kanpur Road was tuned in as new hub of development. Tradition and modernity are viewed as a continuum (Shills 2006) and the co-existence of two can be seen very uniquely in the present city of Lucknow. Modernity has created ample which can be a tourism offering.

Tourist visits in the northern states of India witnessed a growth rate of 10.2 % during 2008-2012 compared to the national average growth rate of 16.3 % during the same period. U.S.A. and U.K. accounted for the maximum number of foreign tourist visits in the northern states of India in 2012. While tourists visit states of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi for commercial and business related purposes, states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Punjab are preferred as leisure destinations. For religious tourism, they prefer states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. While multiple tourism circuits based on diverse themes exist across northern states, low level of stay durations by both domestic and international tourists indicates the need for more entertainment and leisure activities. (CII-KPMG 2013)

### Methodology and Objective

Present study follows the positivistic approach. It is descriptive in form, empirical in nature with quantitative approach providing support. Present study has used primary, secondary and tertiary resources. It is based upon basal information, physical surveys and consultation of journals, magazines, CD, books, district gazetteer, travelogues; both on cultural change management and tourism, world over and in Lucknow. The facts were checked with living human memory. Observation methods were employed.

India's demographic dividend of a younger population compared to developed countries is leading to greater expenditure on leisure services. The findings of the CII-KPMG Survey prompted the writer to formulate a research paper, targeting new potentials, with an objective to chalk out tourism resources (delimiting specifically to three areas

mentioned below) of Lucknow which can be transformed into products thereby making Lucknow a destination that moves beyond the *Nawabian* milieu. The ultimate aim is to increase the duration of stay by offering the tourist a vibrant and holistic itinerary thereby creating a positive cascading impact on the tourism potential of the destination as a whole.

### Proposed Prominent Potential Tourism Resources of Emerging Lucknow

**1. Dalit Tourism-** The state of Uttar Pradesh has just had brush with a very Lutyens like chief minister Ms. Mayawati. Her long cherished dream was to make a mark in the architectural re-construction of Lucknow (the capital of Uttar Pradesh and an erstwhile capital of Oudh) and Noida (Part NCR-National Capital Region). She is known for erecting dozens of giant statues in Lucknow of *dalit* (down-trodden castes) icons like B.R. Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram and herself (this of course has had comparisons to Saddam Hussian, who was fond of making his own statues while alive). Yet history may eventually remember her not just as a *dalit* politician but also as the Lutyens of Lucknow. When the British Raj shifted its capital to Delhi, Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens and other British architects were summoned to India to build New Delhi, a great new city outside the old walled city of Delhi. They created wide avenues and giant edifices of red sandstone. Enormous public spaces were created between Lutyens' two most famous creations, India Gate and Rashtrapati Bhavan (President's House). Her scale was though not quite as ambitious. Yet her giant parks in Lucknow must rank among the greatest new public spaces created in any Indian city since Independence. She has used creamy sandstone which is different in colour from Lutyens' red, but her style is startlingly similar. It is no coincidence that her Lucknow resembles Lutyens' Delhi. She has drawn on ancient Buddhist architecture no less than Lutyens. Ms. Mayawati's Lucknow symbolises the rise of *dalits*, mixing this with memories of the ancient glory of Buddhist India. These monuments are a product in themselves. It is important to add that a consistency in the political will, rather foresight is needed to utilize this potential of Lucknow. This seems difficult in a state that is used to regional political tussle based heavily on caste lines.

**2. Mango Tourism-** A destination has to move beyond products and create experiences in order to stay competitive in the market. This creates distinctiveness in the global market. A Mango variety produced in the Malihabad region of Lucknow known as Malihabadi Dussehari was granted Geographical Indication registration in 2009. It now sits on the same exalted pedestal as Darjeeling Tea and Coorg Orange (Karnataka). A majority of the local residents of Malihabad are Islam's followers. Their lineage is traced to Bani-e-Israel, a tribe of the Jews. This lineage has been proven in many research papers. Kerala has started 'Spice Route tourism' on lines of Silk Route tourism of China which is expected to start from Muziris port in Kerala up to Venice in Italy passing through 31 countries. They innovated their existing basket of tourism offering by capitalizing on a facet of history for which their region has been known from time immemorial. Precisely we need a story along which a product has to be designed; Lucknow's Malihabad area has got an equally astonishing history. Programs like "An Evening with Dussehari Aam" in the rural settings of the village

accompanied with mango tasting sessions, urdu poetry narration by poets of Lucknow and a workshop or an interaction with Padmashri Haji Kaleemullah Khan ,country's best known expert on mangoes(resident of Malihabad) can prove to be a great cocktail of Mango-Rural-Ethnic-Special Interest Tourism. Sporadic efforts have been made to achieve the aforesaid but couldn't succeed in the absence of consistent political will having a foresight to rejuvenate the tourism of the region.

**3. River Tourism-** The stretch of the Gomti River flows right through the middle of the city. A beautified river front can lend a grace to Lucknow, making it a scenic journey for both tourists and residents. A river running through it, not many cities in the world are as blessed as Lucknow. The Gomti could well have been Seine or Thames of the city. But it's nowhere even near that. From a lifeline, it has been reduced to a narrow stream at most of the places, thanks to a general callousness and negligence, both from successive governments and citizens of Lucknow. With a 22 kilometre of river front in the middle of the city, Gomti has the potential to become a great tourist attraction. But all efforts in this direction have either been symbolic or ill planned and lacked foresightedness. The flow of the river dictated the site of the architectural extravaganza like the Asfi Imambara, Sheesh Mahal, Dilkusha Palace and La Martiniere. The researcher has chalked out a detailed road map for River Tourism which might include the following, usage of water steamers for ferrying passengers to heritage points, developing safe evacuation route along riversides to avoid any natural emergency through water machines especially designed for Gomti which can navigate in shallow water, this would be the first step towards Disaster Management in Lucknow. A hot air balloon on the bank which could go upto 200 meters to show the river and the city. 'Heritage cruise' for tourists and local visitors on especially designed water –steamers, reclaiming land on

the left bank for developing commercial as well as residential units. Contamination, a serious issue, needs to be addressed before the Launch of the project .Water sports activities and also rowing competition course based on international standards. Removal of all the slum and washer man areas from the embankment and at the same time making sure that there proper rehabilitation in terms of allocation of space for their work which fetches them bread and butter. It can be done on the lines of Wajid-Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Lucknow who organised festivals on the banks of the Gomti. The Chhat-tar Manzil (planned to be converted into a Live Museum) can be lit up and dancing and music on board can be included. The aforesaid product can serve as a combination of River-Heritage-Cruise-Adventure Tourism product.

### Conclusion

Co-existence of traditional and modern aspects can be seen very clearly in the city of Lucknow, which can be offered as a unique tourism product, however serious efforts should be made to preserve the traditional, yet, develop the modern form. It is to be emphasized that despite a slight conflict in cultures of Old and Emerging Lucknow regarding their acceptance, destinations should keep re-inventing themselves by way of new product/experience offerings to the tourists as part of rejuvenating exercise. With approximately 60 % of India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) coming from the services sector of which tourism is an integral part, no state of India can afford to ignore tourism. It has to be reiterated that consistency in the administrative machinery deployed in the tourism department of the state of Uttar Pradesh, foresight of the political class and an effort to move beyond the myopic vision of caste based formations/affiliations to garner votes in the elections and any how come in the power seem to be the greatest hurdles to achieve the aforesaid.

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