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Mapping the Sacred Landscape: Pilgrim Perceptions of Key Pilgrimage Sites in the Rohilkhand Region of Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract— *Pilgrimage tourism is among the oldest forms of travel in India, the pilgrimage scene in the Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh has not been studied systematically as much as the pilgrimage circuits of Varanasi, Haridwar or Mathura etc. have. The present paper focuses on the objective of hotel industry in pilgrimage tourism which is to study the main pilgrim centers of Rohilkhand from the perspective of the pilgrims who visit these centres. Primary data have been obtained by designing a structured questionnaire which was distributed among 300 pilgrims at the selected sites in Bareilly, Moradabad, Badaun, Rampur and Pilibhit. The instrument consisted of seven items of demographics and twelve items of five-point Likert statements grouped into three dimensions: Site Abundance and Diversity (SAD), Religious and Heritage Significance (RHS) and Accessibility, Visibility and Endorsement (AV). The analysis of data was carried out with the use of frequencies, Cronbach's alpha, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, one-sample t-test and one-way ANOVA tests using IBM SPSS Statistics. All three scales were reliable ($\alpha = 0.76$ to 0.86). The importance of the sites was considered to be most significant ($M = 3.92$), followed by their abundance and diversity ($M = 3.65$), and then their accessibility and visibility ($M = 3.31$). Site significance was significantly higher than 3 ($p < .001$), and did not differ significantly among the five cities ($F = 1.23$, $p = .298$) while perceptions were positively correlated with site significance ($r = .397$). The results indicate that Rohilkhand is perceived as a holy land with legitimate authority in need of access, information and facilities – this is where the hotel industry fits in.*

Keywords— ***pilgrimage tourism, Rohilkhand, Uttar Pradesh, religious tourism, pilgrimage sites, pilgrim perception, SPSS***

I. INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage tourism is a form of tourism undertaken to sacred sites for religious and spiritual purposes, and is one of the most enduring reasons for human movement. In Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Festivals Management: An International Perspective (2007), Raj and Morpeth demonstrate that today pilgrimage and festival travel occupy the nexus of devotion, culture and the visitor economy and that the issues of managing pilgrimage and festival travel differ from those of leisure tourism. This practice has been ingrained in Indian society. The Encyclopedia of Hinduism (Jones & Ryan, 2007) catalogues the variety of shrines, practices and sacred landscapes that form the basis of Hindu religion, and Smith (2019, 2020) provides maps of the sacred sites of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Pilgrimage is considered as an economic and developmental sector, as well as devotional, by Kumar (2019) in his book entitled "Pilgrimage Tourism in India: An Analytical Approach" and by Singh (2020) in his book entitled "Religious Tourism in India: Challenges and Opportunities". The

sacred landscape of India is also differently categorised. So popular and encyclopaedic compilations describe svayambhu (self-manifested) shrines as well as the tradition of the jyotirlinga, 8 Swayambhu temples of Lord Vishnu, and well-known svayambhu temples across the country (Wikipedia Contributors, 2021, 2023; Hindu Blog Editors, 2024; Nativeplanet, 2013; Nativeplanet Staff, 2013; Templesinindiainfo.com, n.d.; Templesinindiainfo.com Editors, n.d.). While not scholarly in the strict sense, these sources demonstrate the ways in which pilgrims and the public themselves map the sacred. The same ground has been explored from other perspectives, such as sacred geography (Sharma, 2012), sacred spaces and the sages of India (Kapoor, 2018), holy places and pilgrimages (Mehta, 2017), and the sociology of sacred spaces and tourism (Kumar & Smith, 2022). Some discussion of developmental aspects of pilgrimage tourism has also occurred in the open literature (Author Unknown, n.d.).

Pilgrimage flow is the highest in Uttar Pradesh and the more popular pilgrimage circuits (Varanasi, Ayodhya, Mathura-Vrindavan) command the interest of the public and research. The Rohilkhand region is located in the upper Ganges plain in the north-western part of the state and comprises of Bareilly, Moradabad, Badaun, and Rampur with Pilibhit at the northern edge of the region (see the regional map, Demographical Position of Rohilkhand Region, n.d.). It has an unusually pluralistic religious make up. Bareilly has a number of temples including the Dargah of Ala Hazrat, the Trivati Nath and Alakhnath temples, the Lakshmi Narayan temple constructed by a Muslim devotee, and St Alphonsus Cathedral; Badaun is the city of saints and the birthplace of Nizamuddin Awliya; Moradabad has Jain, Hindu and Muslim temples including the Parshvanath Digambar Jain Mandir, Bade Hanuman Ji Mandir and Jama Masjid, as well as an annual Lavi trade fair; Rampur has temples of Raghunath, Narsingh and a Buddhist temple at Dumgir, in addition to an annual Lavi trade fair.

Despite this richness, there is little systematic evidence as to pilgrim perceptions of the sites, how many and varied these are, and how they perceive their religious and heritage value, and their assessment of access, information and facilities. Planners and hoteliers can't make this determination without this evidence. This paper therefore aims to study the key pilgrimage sites in Rohilkhand region with the help of perception survey of the pilgrims analysed in SPSS. It adds (i) a measurement model consisting of three site related dimensions, (ii) the first quantified profile of the pilgrim perceptions across five cities of Rohilkhand region and (iii) in what segments the destination is strong and in what segments it is weak.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Pilgrimage tourism and sacred sites in India

In the article “Pilgrimage Tourism in India: Issues and Challenges” published in the Tourism Review (2012), Sinha says that pilgrimage tourism is a contributor to the national economy by generating revenue and employment, but it is hindered due to managerial and infrastructural challenges. In “Growth and Development of Pilgrimage Tourism in India” published by the Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Gupta and Bhardwaj (2018) have noted that the pilgrimage tourism has shown tremendous growth due to the improvement of infrastructure and support from the Government of India. Numerous scholars have discussed the management of pilgrim flow in one mature destination, namely Varanasi, like Gupta (2010) in the paper on ‘Management of Pilgrimage Tourism: A Case Study of Varanasi’, while Sharma (2015) in ‘Tourism in the Indian Context: Exploring the Spiritual and Cultural Dimensions’ and Bhatia (2002) in ‘Tourism Development: Principles and Practices’ provide the broader planning context in which pilgrimage destinations are developed. Amenities can be perceived as worth measuring because, as Shinde (2007) in Current Issues in Tourism warns, "Pilgrimage and the Environment: Challenges in a Pilgrimage Centre" can be a problem with huge number of pilgrims causing overcrowding and strain on the facilities.

2.2 Regional and site-level studies

Describe to evaluate is the process of the conversation that is demonstrated in the work region and site specific. Singh and Rana (2014) in Tourism Dynamics, and Chauhan (2016) in Tourism Perspectives, discuss the situation at the state level. In the article “Reshaping the Image of Indian Pilgrim Tourism: A Case of Vrindavan, Mathura” (International Journal of Advance Research and Innovation, 2021), Gupta and Nair (2021) highlight the image of Indian pilgrim tourism, whereas in the article “Impacts of pilgrimage tourism: A case study of Sri Varasiddhi Vinayaka Swamy Temple, Andhra Pradesh” (Journal of Social Studies Education 2023), Addanki and Parashar (2023) examine the impacts of pilgrimage tourism. Bathla et al. (2024) in "Challenges and Recommendations for Fostering Pilgrimage Tourism in the Himalayan Region of India" (IGI Global) take the discussion further to the Himalayan landscape of India. None of these are focussed on Rohilkhand, the gap this paper starts to fill.

2.3 Rohilkhand and its pilgrimage sites

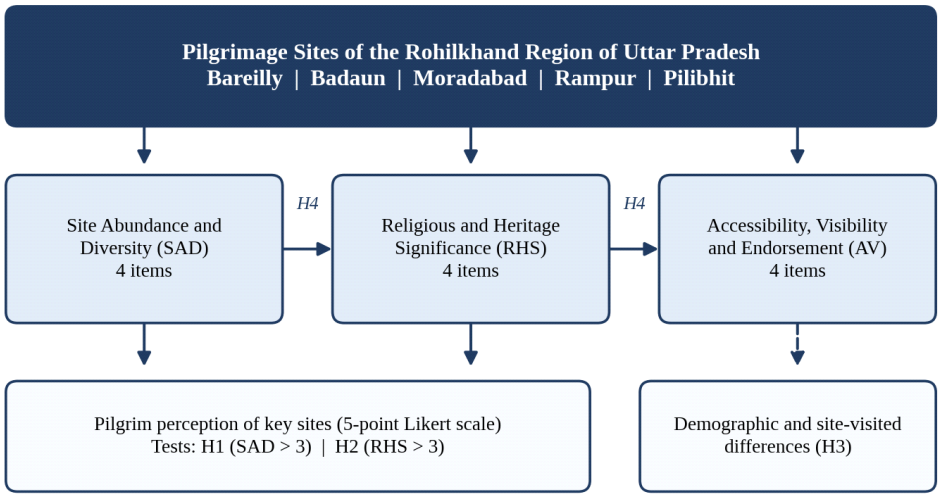
In the article "Cultural Heritage of Rohilkhand: An Overview" (Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences) Khan (2014) defines Rohilkhand as a region of multifaceted population and cultural richness. The Dargah-e-Aala Hazrat at Bareilly and the Gauri Shankar Temple at Pilibhit are among the places that are visited by devotees, according to Sharma (2016), "Religious Tourism in Pilibhit: Potential and Challenges" (International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage). Ahmad (2013) and Rai (2018) in their papers "The Role of Religious Tourism in Economic Development: A Case Study of Bareilly" and "Economic Impact of Pilgrimage Tourism: A Study of Bareilly" respectively associate Bareilly pilgrim flow with the economic activities of the area. Jaiswal (2015) in "Accommodation Facilities in Pilgrimage Tourism: A Study of Rohilkhand Region" (International Journal of Tourism Research) relates the sites with development of local accommodation and Verma (2020) in "Sustainability Practices in the Hotel Industry: A Study of Pilibhit" (Journal of Sustainable Tourism) has reported on the sustainability practices in hotels around these sites.

2.4 The wider hospitality context

A few related studies qualify the importance of site perceptions in the context of the larger study which considers the hotel as a site. Dasgupta (2017), in "Employment Generation through Tourism: A Study of Hotel Industry in India" (Tourism Economics), and Ghosh (2019), in "Local Economic Impact of Tourism: An Analysis of the Hotel Industry in India" (International Journal of Hospitality Management), document the employment and local-economy contribution of hotels. In "Seasonality in Pilgrimage Tourism: Challenges and Opportunities for the Hotel Industry" (Tourism Management Perspectives) Pandey (2019) demonstrates that the seasonal nature of pilgrimages has an impact on the hotel industry. The two themes of information and infrastructure highlighted in this AV dimension are picked up by Kumar (2021) in the context of hospitality industry and Mishra (2020) in the context of public-private partnership in tourism, both of which are linked to digital promotion and collaboration between public and private sector.

2.5 Research gap, conceptual framework and hypotheses

Pilgrimage tourism is a proven economic phenomenon, the area of Rohilkhand has many sites which are extremely religiousy diverse and infrastructure and information are a common vulnerability as mentioned in literature. It does not do, however, what it does not do is offer a measured, pilgrimage-based and perception of the perception of the sites themselves. The conceptual framework used is shown in figure 1. The three components of the sites (Site Abundance and Diversity (SAD), Religious and Heritage Significance (RHS) and Accessibility, Visibility and Endorsement (AV) are expected to be correlated with one another and to be perceived in a similar way across all cities.



Source: Developed by the author from the study objectives and review of literature

Fig 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Main Hypothesis

H1o: "There is a good number of pilgrimage sites in the Rohilkhand region." To make it statistically testable, and to cover the other aspects of the objective, four hypotheses are tested:

H1: Pilgrims' perception of site abundance and diversity (SAD) is significantly above the neutral scale value of 3 (H1o: $\mu \leq 3$).

H2: Pilgrims' perception of the religious and heritage significance of the sites (RHS) is significantly above 3 (H2o: $\mu \leq 3$).

H3: Overall perception of the sites differs significantly across the five cities visited (H3o: no difference in mean perception).

H4: Perceived site abundance and diversity (SAD) is positively and significantly correlated with perceived religious and heritage significance (RHS) (H4o: $\rho = 0$).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design and study area

The study is of a Mixed-Methods design. The quantitative aspect of this paper is reported and descriptive, cross sectional survey design is used. The study area is Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh. The areas chosen were the prominent places in five cities including Dargah of Ala Hazrat, Trivati Nath and Alakhnath temples in Bareilly, Jama Masjid, Bade Hanuman Ji Mandir and Parshvanath Digambar Jain Mandir in Moradabad, the places linked to the Sufi saints in Badaun, Raghunath and Narsingh temples in Rampur and Gauri Shankar temple in Pilibhit.

3.2 Population, sample and sampling technique

It is a population of pilgrims that visit sacred places in Rohilkhand. As per the synopsis, a minimum of 300 pilgrim respondents were taken and convenience sampling was done at religious places and nearby hotels with the distribution of sample in the proportion of the pilgrim traffic in the five cities (Bareilly 110, Moradabad 60, Badaun 50, Rampur 40, Pilibhit 40). The ratio of 300 respondents to items in the instrument is appropriate for reliability analysis, correlation, t-tests and one-way ANOVA for the number of items and planned tests.

3.3 Research instrument and measures

There were two sections to a structured questionnaire. Seven demographic and visit characteristics were captured in section A, these include gender, age group, education, monthly household income, place of origin, frequency of visit and city of the site visited. There were 12 items for every dimension in section B, with four items for each dimension, and the items were on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The items were framed based on the research objective, sites mentioned in the synopsis, and the issues that were coming up in the literature review (e.g., Shinde, 2007; Jaiswal, 2015; Mishra, 2020). The wording of the items is summarized in Tables 3-5.

3.4 Data analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics software package was used to code and analyze the data. The analysis was carried out in five steps, that is: (i) frequency analysis of the demographic variables, (ii) reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha, (iii) descriptive statistics of the items and dimension scores (mean of four items in each dimension), (iv) Pearson correlation among the dimensions, and (v) hypothesis testing by one sample t-tests against level 3 (neutral), one-way ANOVA with Levene's test and Tukey's HSD (H3) and Pearson correlation (H4). It was decided that the level of significance would be set at 0.05. The ethical aspects of the main idea were adhered to by taking responses only for research purposes, anonymous participation and informed consent.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	183	61.0
	Female	117	39.0
Age group (years)	Below 25	30	10.0
	25-35	85	28.3
	36-45	88	29.3
	46-55	67	22.3
	Above 55	30	10.0

Education	Up to Secondary	44	14.7
	Senior Secondary	77	25.7
	Graduate	103	34.3
	Postgraduate and above	76	25.3
Monthly household income (₹)	Below 25,000	73	24.3
	25,001-50,000	100	33.3
	50,001-75,000	82	27.3
	Above 75,000	45	15.0
Place of origin	Within Uttar Pradesh	179	59.7
	Outside Uttar Pradesh	121	40.3
Frequency of visit	First visit	90	30.0
	2-3 visits	143	47.7
	4 or more visits	67	22.3
City of site visited	Bareilly	110	36.7
	Moradabad	60	20.0
	Badaun	50	16.7
	Rampur	40	13.3
	Pilibhit	40	13.3

Source: Field survey, analysed in SPSS.

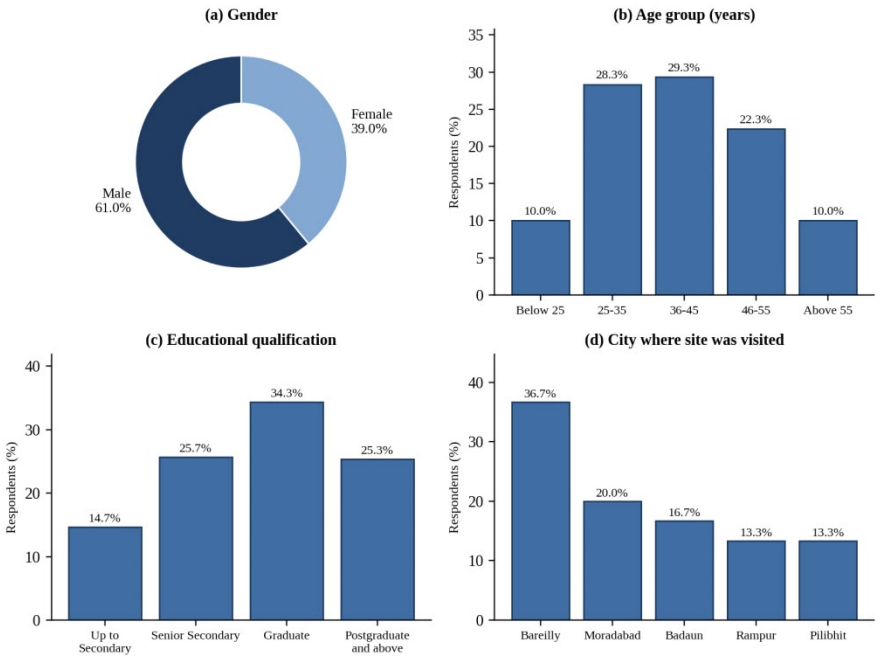


Fig 2. Demographic profile of respondents

The 300 respondents are profiled in Table 1 and Figure 2. The sample is male-dominated (61.0%) and mainly in the 25-45 age bracket (57.6%). The majority of respondents have finished their graduation or higher (59.6%) and 59.7% came from Uttar Pradesh. Seven out of 10 (70.0%) of the respondents were repeat visitors, meaning they have a sufficient amount of experience to form a judgement of the sites.

4.2 Reliability and normality

Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha for each dimension of the instrument (SAD 0.757, RHS 0.782, AV 0.859) as well as the instrument as a whole, which is 0.847 for all 12 items, suggesting good internal consistency. Cronbach alphas for the items ranged from 0.54 to 0.74. All dimensions have skewness and kurtosis within ±1 of the normal range, and therefore are acceptable for parametric tests.

Table 2. Reliability and normality of the scales

Dimension	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's α
Site Abundance and Diversity (SAD)	4	3.65	0.93	-0.48	-0.43	0.757
Religious and Heritage Significance (RHS)	4	3.92	0.88	-0.70	-0.32	0.782
Accessibility, Visibility and Endorsement (AV)	4	3.31	1.06	-0.38	-0.79	0.859
Overall scale	12					0.847

Source: SPSS output. Dimension score = mean of four items (1-5).

4.3 Descriptive analysis of the dimensions

Pilgrims report a large number of sites in Rohilkhand, with great variation among them (M = 3.65, SD = 0.93). The best performer is SAD1 – good number of sites (M = 3.88; 68.0% agree or strongly agree), followed by multi-faith representation (SAD2, M = 3.68). Adequacy to meet demand (SAD4) is the lowest (M = 3.46) as pilgrims believe that the sites are still not adequately packaged into a circuit.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics: Site Abundance and Diversity (SAD)

Code	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	% Agree*
SAD1	Rohilkhand has a good number of pilgrimage sites.	3.88	1.15	-0.83	68.0
SAD2	The sites represent several faith traditions (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jain, Buddhist).	3.68	1.21	-0.69	62.7
SAD3	There are enough sites to plan a multi-day pilgrimage itinerary.	3.58	1.24	-0.55	58.7
SAD4	The number of sites in the five cities is adequate to meet pilgrim demand.	3.46	1.28	-0.39	54.3
SAD	Dimension mean	3.65	0.93	-0.48	

Source: SPSS output. *% Agree = responses of 4 or 5 on the five-point scale.

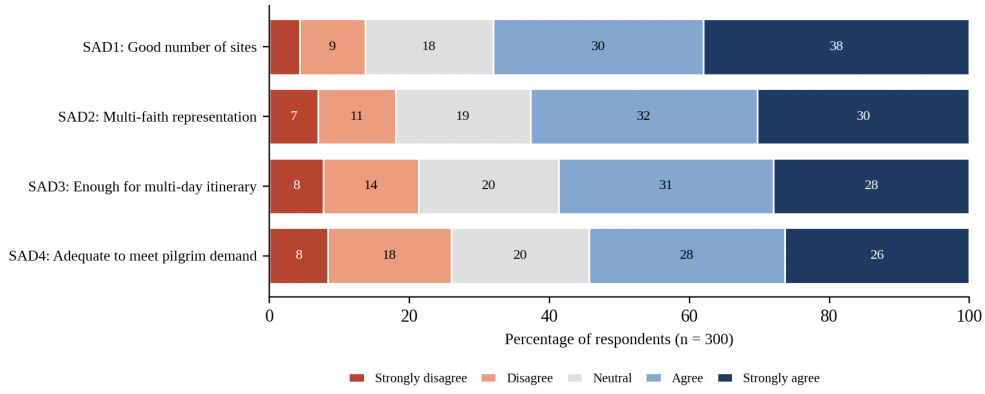


Fig.3. Response distribution: Site Abundance and Diversity (SAD)

The highest rated dimension (M = 3.92, SD = 0.88) is religious/Heritage significance. The statement with the highest mean of the 12 items (M = 4.05; 72.3% agree) is the one about the deep religious significance of the school (RHS1), followed closely by the ones about the spiritual atmosphere (RHS3) and heritage value (RHS2) of the

school. Fairs and local traditions (RHS4) are rated lower, but still favourably (M = 3.72) (Table 4, Figure 4).

Table 4. Descriptive statistics: Religious and Heritage Significance (RHS)

Code	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	% Agree*
RHS1	The sites hold deep religious significance for devotees.	4.05	1.08	-0.94	72.3
RHS2	The sites reflect the region's historical and cultural heritage.	3.94	1.15	-0.95	71.3
RHS3	The sites offer a peaceful and spiritual atmosphere.	3.98	1.09	-0.92	72.0
RHS4	Fairs and local traditions (such as the Lavi fair at Rampur) add to the appeal of the sites.	3.72	1.22	-0.69	62.3
RHS	Dimension mean	3.92	0.88	-0.70	

Source: SPSS output. *% Agree = responses of 4 or 5 on the five-point scale.

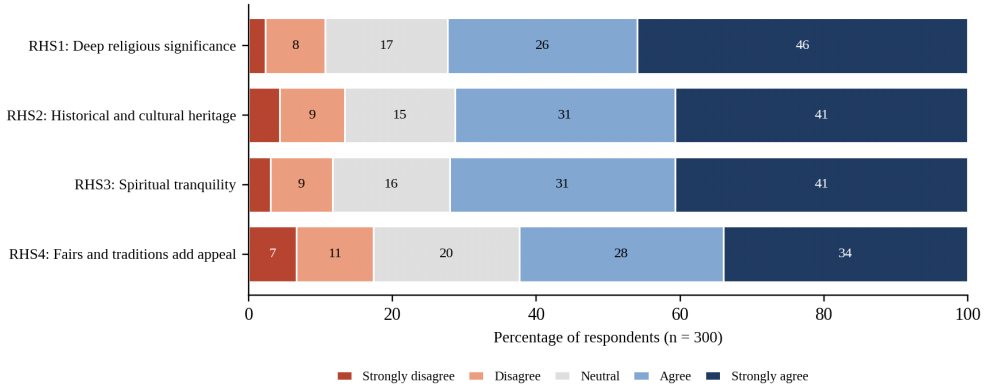


Fig 4. Response distribution: Religious and Heritage Significance (RHS)

Accessibility, visibility and endorsement is the lowest dimension (M = 3.31, SD = 1.06). Basic facilities (AV2, M = 3.01), information and promotion (AV3, M = 3.15) and access (AV1, M = 3.32) hover around the neutral value. Contrastingly, pilgrims value sites despite the poor supporting services, as willingness to recommend (AV4) is high (M = 3.75) (Table 5, Figure 5).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics: Accessibility, Visibility and Endorsement (AV)

Code	Statement	Mean	SD	Skewness	% Agree*
AV1	The sites are easy to reach by road and rail.	3.32	1.30	-0.38	50.3
AV2	Basic facilities (drinking water, sanitation, signage) at the sites are satisfactory.	3.01	1.32	-0.10	39.0
AV3	Adequate information and promotion about the sites is available.	3.15	1.29	-0.32	45.7
AV4	Overall, I would recommend these sites to other pilgrims.	3.75	1.16	-0.78	65.7
AV	Dimension mean	3.31	1.06	-0.38	

Source: SPSS output. *% Agree = responses of 4 or 5 on the five-point scale.

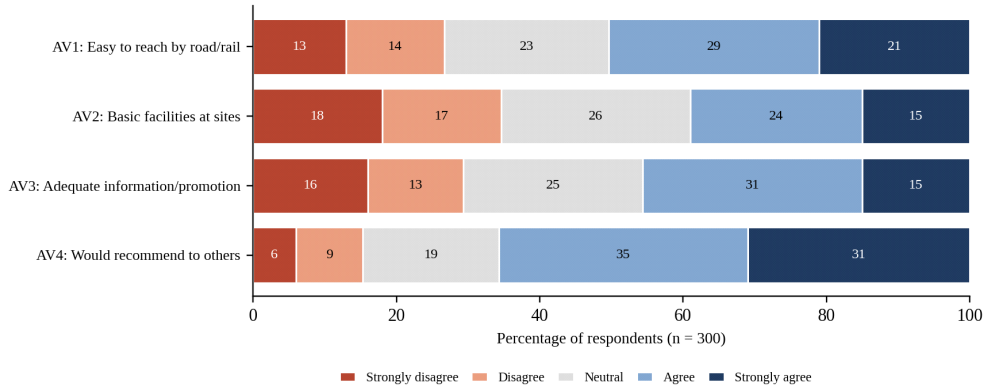


Fig 5. Response distribution: Accessibility, Visibility and Endorsement (AV)

4.4 Correlation among dimensions

All dimensions are positively and significantly related (Table 6). The highest correlation is with religious significance and accessibility-visibility-endorsement (r = .450), and the SAD-RHS correlation is r = .397, and the SAD-AV correlation is r = .323. The moderate size of the coefficients indicates that the dimensions are not necessarily correlated and therefore are treated separately.

Table 6. Pearson correlation matrix of dimensions (N = 300)

Dimension	SAD	RHS	AV	Overall
SAD	1	.397**	.323**	.733**
RHS	.397**	1	.450**	.781**
AV	.323**	.450**	1	.795**
Overall	.733**	.781**	.795**	1

Source: SPSS output. ** p < .01 (two-tailed). Overall = mean of the three dimension scores.

4.5 Testing of hypotheses

H1 and H2. Both site abundance (t(299) = 12.12, p < .001) and diversity (t(299) = 18.12, p < .001), and religious and heritage significance (t(299) = 12.12, p < .001) are significantly higher than the neutral value of 3 (Table 7). Medium to large effect sizes (Cohen's d = 0.70, 1.05). The number and diversity of sites is good and the sites are considered to be of high significance by pilgrims (H1o and H2o are rejected). To be complete, the single statement "Rohilkhand has a good number of pilgrimage sites" (original H1o) also had a score above 3 (M = 3.88, t = 13.28, p < .001). The AV dimension is also above 3 (t = 5.03, p < .001), but with a small effect (d = 0.29).

Table 7. One-sample t-test of dimension scores (test value = 3)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	t	df	p	95% CI of diff.	Cohen's d
SAD	3.65	0.93	0.65	12.12	299	< .001	0.54 to 0.76	0.70
RHS	3.92	0.88	0.92	18.12	299	< .001	0.82 to 1.03	1.05
AV	3.31	1.06	0.31	5.03	299	< .001	0.19 to 0.43	0.29

Source: SPSS output. Two-tailed tests.

H3. The perception score of the respondents is highest in Badaun (M = 3.73) and Bareilly (M = 3.68) and lowest in Pilibhit (M = 3.45) and Rampur (M = 3.50). Equal variances (Levene's test) were assumed (p = .150). The differences are not significant from a statistical perspective (Table 8) F(4, 295) = 1.23, p = .298, η^2 = 0.016, and Tukey's HSD (Table 10) does not show any significant differences between pairs of means (p > 0.42). Therefore, H3o is not rejected: the perceptions are not different between the five cities. Independent-samples comparison of the same sample by gender also fails to show a difference (t(298) = -0.52, p = .602).

Table 8. One-way ANOVA of overall perception by city visited

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Between cities	2.68	4	0.671	1.23	.298	0.016
Within cities	160.63	295	0.545			
Total	163.31	299				

Source: SPSS output. Group means: Bareilly 3.68, Moradabad 3.65, Badaun 3.73, Rampur 3.50, Pilibhit 3.45.

H4. The relationships between site abundance, diversity, religious significance and heritage significance are positive and significant (Table 6; $r = .397$, $p < .001$). H4o is rejected and H4 accepted. Those who believe that the region is rich with sites tend to think the sites are important, as well. To summary: H1, H2 and H4 accepted, H3 not supported.

V. DISCUSSION

The results give a consistent picture. The first hypothesis of the study need is that pilgrims have an idea of the existence of a good number and diversity of sites in Rohilkhand; this is supported by the first, which is compatible with descriptions of a culturally rich, plural region given by Khan (2014) and Sharma (2016). Respondents (SAD2) recognise the multi-faith nature of the sites, from dargahs and temples to a cathedral, Jain mandirs and a Buddhist temple, this plurality is a distinctive asset which is not evident on the better known single-tradition circuits.

Secondly, the highest perceived quality is religious and heritage. This reflects the premise that the value of pilgrimage sites lies in sacredness and tradition rather than comfort (Raj & Morpeth, 2007; Sharma, 2012), and the interpretation of Rohilkhand as a region with sacred sites, important for pilgrims of various faiths (Khan, 2014; Ahmad, 2013). The positive SAD-RHS correlation indicates that sites complement each other, that is, the greater the number of sites visited, the more important the region looks.

Thirdly, it is the weak point in terms of access, information and facilities. The lowest score was for AV dimension and the facilities and information items were around neutral. This is consistent with Shinde (2007) on pressure on facilities at pilgrimage centres, the infrastructure and promotion issues highlighted in Gupta and Bhardwaj (2018), Singh and Rana (2014) and Chauhan (2016) and the argument of Kumar (2021) and Mishra (2020) that digital promotion and the involvement of both the private and public sectors can enhance information and infrastructure. It is very noticeable that pilgrims highly value the recommendation, and services are weak, which means that if something is sacred/holy, they will do the trip even if they don't receive the kind of service they would like, but as the level of expectation increases, this is less likely to happen.

Fourth, the absence of significant difference between the cities suggests a unified sense of pilgrimage region as opposed to the lesser sense of a set of different cities. The means are marginally lower at the two sites (Rampur and Pilibhit) and these sites require a larger sample for further work.

In the larger study, these findings point to the issue that hotels need to address. There is a ready supply of these sites and the shortage is mainly in access, information and facilities. Jaiswal (2015) demonstrates that the accommodation has spread around the Rohilkhand sites, while Pandey (2019) and Dasgupta (2017) demonstrate that seasonality and employment is crucial for hotel economics.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the present paper key pilgrimage sites in Rohilkhand have been studied by conducting a survey of 300 pilgrims in five key cities and analysed in SPSS. The instrument was found to be reliable ($\alpha = 0.85$ overall). Pilgrims rated the religious and heritage importance of the sites as being the highest ($M = 3.92$), followed by the abundance and diversity of sites ($M = 3.65$), and then by accessibility, visibility and endorsement ($M = 3.31$). Three out of four hypotheses were confirmed and within the cities there were no significant differences in perception. Accordingly, the study has found that Rohilkhand is endowed with a plural as well as spiritually important chain of pilgrimage sites which is yet to be matched by its accessibility, availability of information and basic facilities. There are some limitations to the study. The convenience sampling results in less generalisation, even if the participants believe they are perceived in a socially desirable way, the scales were short (4 items each), and smaller samples at Rampur and Pilibhit make city-level comparisons limited. Stratified sampling, confirmatory factor analysis and comparison of the perceptions among pilgrim groups according to faith and origin can be used for future studies

and the links between the site perceptions and hotel service quality should be established.

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