Sustainable Management and Development of Religious Tourism in Ramayana Circuit of Uttar Pradesh

Satyendr Kumar Chaudhari [1*], Anshima Srivastava [2]

[1*]Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, India

Email: bu.gsatyendra@bujhansi.ac.in   ORCID: 0009-0008-3005-097X

[2]Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, India

Email: anshimasrivastava1@gmail.com ORCID: 0009-0005-1329-1198

Abstract

Over the last decade, India has witnessed substantial growth in religious tourism, largely propelled by state-sponsored initiatives, including the creation of thematic tourism circuits. Among these, the Ramayana Circuit, developed under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, holds a distinctive position because of its profound civilizational, spiritual, and cultural importance within Hindu belief systems. Despite rising tourist arrivals, the circuit's long-term sustainability is constrained by fragmented governance, inadequate accommodation, and erosion of authentic spiritual ambiance. Drawing on servicecape theory, destination governance literature, and sustainability discourse, this study proposes and empirically validates an integrated framework, FITSL-Gov (Familiarity, Interaction and Ambience, Tourism Infrastructure, Service and Sustainability, Loyalty, and Governance). Using a mixed-methods design, quantitative data were collected from 600 pilgrims across five key nodes of the Ramayana Circuit (Ayodhya, Nandigram, Shringverpur, Prayagraj, and Chitrakoot, complemented by qualitative insights from 42 stakeholder interviews. The structural equation modeling results indicate that spiritual ambiance is the strongest mediator between accommodation quality, governance effectiveness, and tourist satisfaction and loyalty, which is consistent with previous pilgrimage studies. The findings further reveal a governance paradox, in which individual initiatives receive high ratings but fail to convert into holistic destination satisfaction due to coordination gaps. This study contributes to the literature by encompassing the servicecape and destination loyalty models in religious tourism contexts and offering actionable policy recommendations for ambiance-centric planning, tiered accommodation development, and cohesive governance reforms. This study provides a data-driven roadmap for positioning the Ramayana Circuit as a globally competitive, spiritually authentic, and sustainably managed religious tourism destination.

Keywords: Religious Tourism, Ramayana Circuit, Spiritual Ambience, Accommodation, Heritage, Culture

Introduction

In modern economies, tourism increasingly functions as a significant catalyst for socio-economic advancement, cultural preservation, and regional cohesion. In India, tourism contributes significantly to employment generation, infrastructure development, and promoting cultural heritage. Within this broader tourism ecosystem, religious tourism occupies a particularly prominent position, given the country's civilizational depth, spiritual diversity, and dense, sacred geographical network. Pilgrimage destinations such as Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Chitrakoot, Mathura, and Vrindavan attract millions of visitors annually, cutting across regional, linguistic, and socioeconomic boundaries. In recent years, the Government of India has increasingly promoted religious tourism through the development of thematic circuits under flagship schemes such as Swadesh Darshan and Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD). These initiatives aim to improve destination infrastructure, enhance visitor experiences, and position India as the epicenter of spiritual and cultural tourism. Deeply rooted in the epic Ramayana, the Ramayana Circuit carries immense symbolic and emotional weight, charting the revered life journey of Lord Rama. It encompasses key pilgrimage sites, including Ayodhya, Shringverpur, Nandigram, Prayagraj, and Chitrakoot, which are deeply embedded in the Hindu religious consciousness.

The Ramayana Circuit has witnessed exponential growth in tourist inflows, particularly after major infrastructure investments and increased national and international visibility. However, its rapid growth has exposed several structural

and experiential challenges in the field. Pilgrims frequently report dissatisfaction with inadequate accommodation, overcrowding during peak seasons, inconsistent service quality, poor destination management, and the loss of authentic spiritual ambience. The marketing concept of 'atmosphere,' initially proposed by Kotler (1973) as a strategic tool, evolved into Bitner's (1992) 'servicescape' framework. Within tourism, ambience is understood to encompass sensory cues, design elements, rituals, and symbolic meanings (Slåtten et al., 2009). Religious tourism enhances the spiritual dimension, and ambience becomes sacred magnetism (Eade & Sallnow, 1991). Chaudhari & Kabia (2023) found that ambience is directly linked to pilgrims' emotions and loyalty in the Ramayana Circuit. The ambience is not merely aesthetic but experiential. Pilgrims expect sacred soundscapes (e.g., bhajans and temple bells), visual cues (e.g., architecture and sculptures), and ritual availability (e.g., puja thalis and Ramcharitmanas in hotel rooms). These elements create emotional resonance, which translates to customer satisfaction and loyalty. While physical infrastructure has improved at select nodes, the experiential and governance dimensions of religious tourism development are still fragmented. Existing policy discourse has largely emphasized infrastructure creation and promotional activities, often prioritizing the supremacy of spiritual ambience. This intangible yet powerful experiential core distinguishes religious tourism from other forms of leisure.

Moreover, accommodation development has not kept pace with the rising demand, resulting in affordability issues, quality compromises, and an uneven spatial distribution of lodging facilities. Governance mechanisms involving numerous stakeholders and agencies further complicate implementation, leading to coordination gaps and suboptimal results. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to address a critical research and policy gap by integrating three interconnected dimensions of religious tourism development - spiritual ambience, accommodation sector performance, and governance effectiveness within a single framework. Building on servicecape theory, destination loyalty models, and sustainable tourism literature, this study proposes the FITSL-Gov framework, aligning spiritual ambience as a mediating construct linking governance and accommodation quality to tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

(i)   To examine the role of spiritual ambience in shaping pilgrim satisfaction and destination loyalty in the Ramayana Circuit.

(ii)   To assess accommodation sector challenges in the context of rapidly rising tourist inflows.

(iii)   To evaluate the effectiveness of government initiatives and governance mechanisms.

(iv)   To empirically test an integrated framework for sustaining a religious tourism destination.

By adopting a mixed-methods approach, this study offers both theoretical advancement and policy-relevant insights for sustainable religious tourism development in India.

Literature Review

Driven by faith-based motivations, ritual practices, and profound emotional intensity, religious tourism stands apart from other forms of travel (Eade & Sallnow, 1991; Trono, 2021). In contrast to leisure tourists, pilgrims are driven by spiritual commitments, belief systems, and the pursuit of transcendental experiences. The literature suggests that religious tourism offers profoundly subjective experiences, primarily molded by symbolic meanings, sacred narratives, and active ritual engagement, transcending mere functional aspects of travel (Yao & Zhang, 2020). Consequently, traditional tourism satisfaction models require contextual adaptation when applied to religious destinations such as Ayodhya. Destination experience in religious tourism extends beyond tangible services to include emotional fulfillment, spiritual peace, and perceived sacredness (Kim & Brown, 2012). Studies have emphasized that pilgrims often tolerate physical discomforts such as crowding or lack of basic amenities, provided the spiritual atmosphere remains integral. However, persistent neglect of experiential quality can wear down destination image and long-term loyalty, even among faith-driven visitors (Oliver 1993). The concept of ambience originates from environmental psychology and the marketing literature.

The notion of atmosphere as a strategic influence on consumer behavior, initially explored by Kotler, was later broadened by Bitner into the servicescape framework, which considers physical environments, sensory inputs, and social dynamics. In tourism contexts, ambience includes visual aesthetics, soundscapes, spatial layouts, and symbolic

depictions. In religious tourism, the ambience acquires a sacred dimension. Sacred architecture, ritual sounds (i.e., temple bells, chants, and bhajans), religious iconography, iconology, and the conduct of service staff collectively contribute to a sense of spiritual authenticity. Intellectuals have highlighted that the spiritual atmosphere serves as an emotional and symbolic link between pilgrims and sacred sites, thereby reinforcing faith, satisfaction, and the intention to revisit. Empirical studies in pilgrimage contexts have demonstrated that ambience significantly influences emotional responses, perceived value, and loyalty. However, most studies treat ambience as an isolated experiential variable without systematically integrating it with accommodation quality and governance mechanisms. As a fundamental part of tourism infrastructure, accommodation significantly influences visitor satisfaction, a factor particularly salient in religious contexts. In religious tourism destinations, accommodation requirements differ substantially from those in leisure tourism. Pilgrims prioritize affordability, cleanliness, proximity to sacred sites, availability of vegetarian food, prayer spaces, and culturally sensitive service. The accommodation landscape in Indian pilgrimage destinations typically includes dharmshalas, budget hotels, guest houses, homestays, and a limited number of mid-scale or luxury hotels. Accommodation quality is essential for tourist satisfaction (Chen et al., 2011). Religious tourism requires specific features such as worship spaces, vegetarian meals, proximity to temples, and affordability (Aulet & Duda, 2020). Chaudhari & Kabia (2023) identified infrastructural gaps, affordability issues, and cultural loss in the Ramayana Circuit. Budget accommodations often lack hygiene, sanitation, and basic amenities, while luxury hotels are infrequent and expensive. Homestays and dharmshalas are overcrowded during festivals, and eco-friendly lodges and boutique heritage hotels have been proposed as sustainable alternatives, aligning with global trends in religious tourism (Trono, 2021). Rapid increases in pilgrim inflow often strain existing capacity, leading to overcrowding, price surges, and quality deterioration during peak seasons. Several studies have identified accommodation shortages as a major constraint on sustaining pilgrimage tourism growth. Recent literature support for diversified accommodation strategies, including community-led homestays, heritage hotels, and eco-lodges, to balance affordability, capacity expansion, and sustainability. However, empirical assessments linking accommodation quality to spiritual experiences and loyalty in religious tourism contexts remain limited.

The effective coordination among public, private, and community stakeholders in tourism planning and management is termed destination governance. This coordination becomes especially vital in religious tourism, given the complex interplay of diverse stakeholder networks, sacred institutions, and delicate sociocultural considerations. While government initiatives like Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD aim to enhance infrastructure and promote tourism circuits, studies by Chaudhari & Kabia (2025) reveal a paradox: high-scoring initiatives like social media campaigns often fail to translate into overall stakeholder satisfaction due to bureaucratic delays and coordination issues. This aligns with broader literature emphasizing the need for public-private partnerships, community involvement, and streamlined governance to overcome such fragmentation (Hall, 1994; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Without effective coordination, initiatives remain fragmented, leading to underutilized funds and poor implementation of programs. Government initiatives, such as Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD, aim to address infrastructural gaps, improve destination aesthetics, and promote integrated circuit-based tourism. While these schemes have resulted in visible improvements, scholars have reported mixed outcomes due to bureaucratic delays, inter-agency coordination issues, and limited stakeholder participation. Public-private partnerships, community engagement, and decentralized governance models are increasingly recognized as essential components of sustainable destination management.

However, empirical evidence on how effective governance translates into improved pilgrim experience and loyalty remains fragmented. Tourist satisfaction is broadly observed as a precursor to destination loyalty, manifested through revisiting intentions and positive word-of-mouth. In religious tourism, loyalty is reinforced by belief systems, emotional attachment, and perceived spiritual fulfillment. Sustainability practices such as environmental management, waste control, community benefits, and cultural preservation further enhance destination credibility and long-term appeal. Tourist satisfaction is a function of ambience, service quality, and destination image (Kim & Brown, 2012; Oliver, 1993). Loyalty is established as intentions to revisit and promote. Religious tourism adds belief-driven motivation (Yao & Zhang, 2020). Despite the growing attention to sustainability in tourism research, integrated models capturing the interplay between ambience, infrastructure, governance, and sustainability in religious tourism contexts are infrequent. This study addresses this gap by proposing and empirically testing the FITSL-Gov framework.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

The FITSL-Gov framework conceptualizes sustainable religious tourism as a multidimensional system integrating experiential, infrastructural, behavioral, and managerial components. The framework comprises six interrelated constructs.
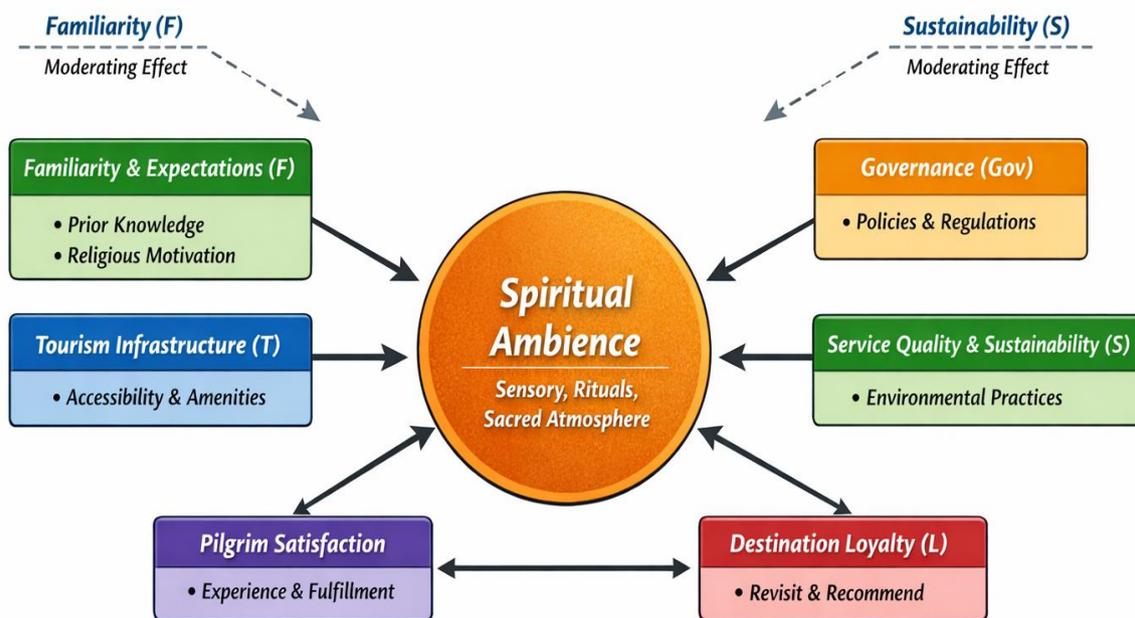

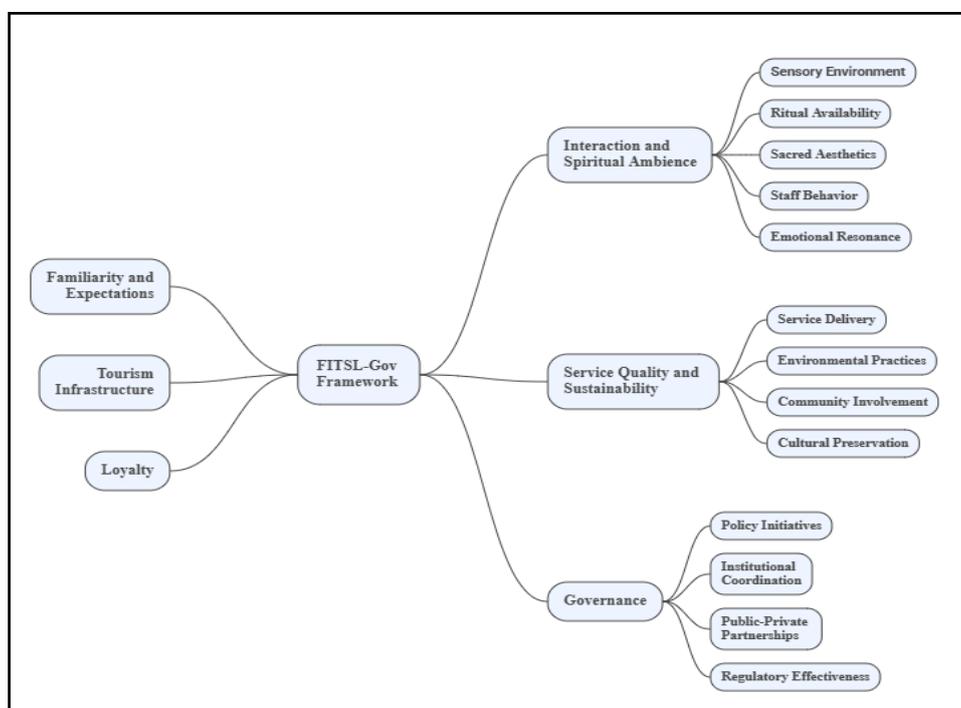*Figure 01. Conceptual Model of the FITSL-Gov Framework*

The figure illustrates the spiritual ambience as a central facilitating construct linking tourism infrastructure and governance with pilgrim satisfaction and destination loyalty, while sustainability and familiarity act as moderating variables.

- **Familiarity and Expectations (F):** This dimension encompasses pilgrims' prior knowledge of the pilgrimage, their inherent religious motivations, cultural context, and the expectations they hold regarding the destination. It reflects how prior exposure to religious teachings, cultural norms, and information about the site shapes their mindset and readiness. Such familiarity influences their engagement level, satisfaction, and overall pilgrimage experience by aligning expectations with actual chance meeting.

- **Interaction and Spiritual Ambience (I):** This factor refers to the quality of sensory and emotional experiences pilgrims experience during their visit. It includes the availability and authenticity of rituals, the occurrence of sacred aesthetics such as architecture and iconography, the manner and conduct of staff or facilitators, and the overall emotional resonance evoked by the environment. Together, these elements foster a spiritual atmosphere that enhances pilgrims' connection to the sacred and expands their religious experience.

- **Tourism Infrastructure (T):** This element addresses the physical and logistical framework supporting pilgrimage activities. It comprises the accessibility of the site, including transportation networks, the capacity and quality of accommodations, availability of basic amenities such as sanitation and food services, and auxiliary support services. Robust infrastructure ensures pilgrims' comfort, safety, and convenience, facilitating a seamless pilgrimage journey and reducing potential barriers to participation.

- **Service Quality and Sustainability (S):** This dimension evaluates the effectiveness and ethical grounding of service delivery at the pilgrimage site. It incorporates the professionalism and responsiveness of service providers, observance to environmental sustainability practices, active involvement of the local community, and efforts to preserve

cultural heritage. High service quality combined with sustainable management practices ensures the long-term viability of the pilgrimage site while honoring its cultural and ecological integrity.

- **Loyalty (L):** Loyalty refers to pilgrims' behavioral intentions and emotional bonds toward the pilgrimage destination. It includes their willingness to revisit the site, recommend it to others, and maintain an ongoing attachment that rise above the immediate visit. This construct reflects the cumulative impact of the pilgrimage experience on pilgrims' commitment, which can drive sustained engagement and contribute to the destination's reputation and growth.

- **Governance (Gov):** Governance encompasses the policy frameworks, institutional coordination, and regulatory mechanisms guiding pilgrimage site management. It involves the roles of public authorities, private sector partnerships, and community stakeholders in implementing policies, ensuring compliance, and fostering collaborative efforts. Effective governance promotes organized development, balances diverse interests, and enhances the overall quality and sustainability of the pilgrimage experience.

The framework positions spiritual ambience as a central facilitating variable linking infrastructure and governance inputs to satisfaction and loyalty.

Figure 02. Conceptual Process of the FITSL-Gov Framework

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Spiritual ambience mediates the relationship between accommodation quality and pilgrim satisfaction.

H2: Governance effectiveness moderates the relationship between tourism infrastructure and spiritual ambience.

H3: Sustainability practices strengthen the relationship between spiritual ambience and destination loyalty.

H4: Pilgrim familiarity and expectations moderate the relationship between spiritual ambience and pilgrimage satisfaction.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods design that integrates quantitative survey data with qualitative stakeholder insights. This approach enabled the triangulation of findings and strengthened the robustness of the empirical conclusions. A total

of 600 pilgrims and 42 stakeholders were graphed across Ayodhya, Shringverpur, Prayagraj, and Chitrakoot. Respondents rated ambience, accommodation, infrastructure, governance perception, sustainability practices, satisfaction, and loyalty on Likert scale. This dataset provides insights into governance initiatives and stakeholder satisfaction. Reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted, all of which exceeded the recommended thresholds. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed hypotheses and examine the mediating and moderating effects. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed to contextualize the quantitative findings.

Results and Interpretation

- **Demographic Profile:** The sample comprised 56.7% male and 43.3% female respondents, with domestic pilgrims accounting for 98.8% of the total sample. As well, 42 stakeholders of the tourism industry, like 40.5% temple, 45.2% hotels and travel agencies, 9.5% government authorities, and 4.8% of data are collected from other sources. The demographic distribution reflects the Ramayana Circuit's largely domestic orientation.

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	340	56.7
	Female	260	43.3
	Total	*600*	*100*
Origin	Domestic	593	98.8
	Foreign	07	1.2
	Total	*600*	*100*
Stakeholders	Temples	17	40.5
	Hotels & Travel Agencies	19	45.2
	Government Authorities	04	9.5
	Others	02	4.8
	Total	*42*	*100*

Table 01: Demographic Profile of Pilgrims (n = 600) & Stakeholders (n = 42)

- **Reliability and Validity Assessment:** All constructs demonstrated satisfactory reliability and convergent validity, confirming the robustness of the measurement model used.

Construct	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR
Ambience	0.87	0.61	0.84
Accommodation	0.82	0.58	0.81
Infrastructure	0.85	0.63	0.86
Governance	0.80	0.55	0.79
Sustainability	0.83	0.59	0.82
Satisfaction	0.88	0.65	0.87
Loyalty	0.86	0.62	0.85

Table 02: Construct Reliability and Validity Statistics

The reliability and validity analyses confirmed the robustness of the measurement model employed in this study. All constructs, Ambience, Accommodation, Infrastructure, Governance, Sustainability, Satisfaction, and Loyalty, revealed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.80 to 0.88, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. The composite reliability (CR) values were similarly high, ranging from 0.79 to 0.87, indicating that the latent constructs were measured with precision and consistency. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct surpassed the 0.50 benchmark, affirming adequate convergent validity. These results validate the structural integrity of the FITSL-Gov framework and support the SEM analysis. Notably, the high reliability scores for ambience ($\alpha = 0.87$) and satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.88$) reinforce their central role in predicting tourist loyalty within the religious tourism context.

- **Tourist Inflows and Accommodation Pressure:** Secondary data indicate exponential growth in tourist inflow, particularly in Ayodhya and Chitrakoot, between 2021 and 2023. This surge has intensified accommodation shortages and service quality. The data explain the exponential growth in pilgrim inflows to Ayodhya and Chitrakoot, highlighting accommodation capacity constraints.

Year	Ayodhya		Chitrakoot	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
2021	15,460,182	883	2,218,572	67
2022	23,909,014	1,465	3,719,223	98
2023	57,570,896	8,468	10,829,438	131
Total	96,940,092	10,816	16,767,233	296

Table 03: Tourist Inflows and Accommodation Pressure in the Ramayana Circuit

- **Structural Equation Modeling Results:** SEM results established the FITSL-Gov framework. Spiritual ambience emerged as the strongest predictor of satisfaction, significantly mediating the effects of accommodation quality and infrastructure on satisfaction. Governance effectiveness significantly moderated the infrastructure-ambience relationship; however, sustainability practices enhanced the ambience-loyalty pathway.
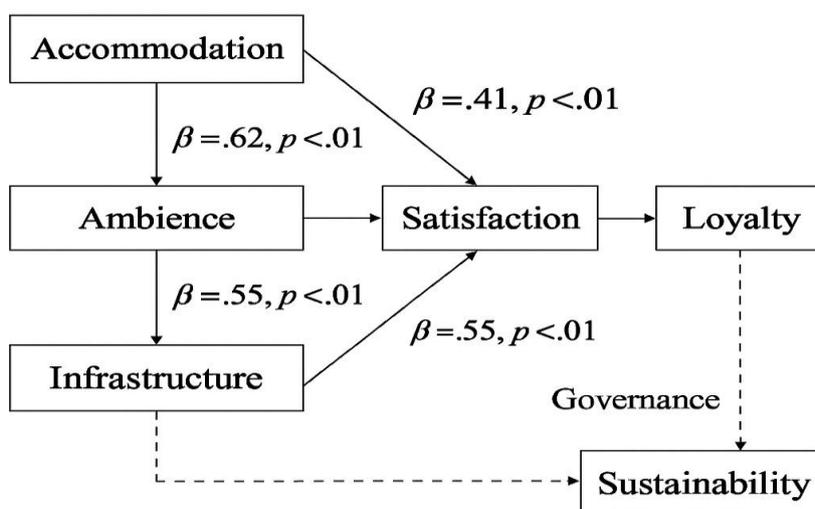

Figure 03: SEM Path Analysis Diagram of FITSL-Gov Model

The SEM path diagram visually depicts the structural relationships among key constructs that influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty in the Ramayana Circuit. The model established both direct and moderated pathways, thereby validating the FITSL-Gov framework.

Accommodation → Ambience → Satisfaction → Loyalty This sequence illustrates a full mediation effect, where the quality of accommodation indirectly influences tourist loyalty through ambience and satisfaction.

o The path from Accommodation to Ambience ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .05$) suggests that spiritually resonant lodging, such as temple-proximate hotels, dharmshalas, and heritage homestays, enhances the perceived ambience.

o Ambience to Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < .01$) was the strongest path, confirming that sacred atmosphere, rituals, and sensory signs are central to pilgrim satisfaction.

o Satisfaction to Loyalty ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < .01$) shows that satisfied pilgrims are more likely to revisit and recommend the destination to others.

Governance moderates Infrastructure → Ambience: Governance initiatives (e.g., signage, accessibility upgrades, temple restoration) enhance the impact of infrastructure on ambience. The moderation effect ($p < .05$) implies that infrastructure alone is insufficient; its spiritual framing through governance determines ambience quality.

Sustainability moderates the ambience-loyalty link: Sustainability practices (e.g., waste management, eco-lodging, community engagement) strengthen the link between ambience and loyalty ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < .05$). This suggests that pilgrims value not only spiritual experience but also ethical and environmental stewardship.

Discussion

The findings emphasize the significance of spiritual ambience in maintaining religious tourism destinations, supporting the theories of servicecape and environmental psychology (Bitner, 1992; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Although infrastructure and accommodation are essential, they are inadequate without experiential authenticity, specifically in faith-based destinations. The governance paradox identified in this study is consistent with previous research on destination governance, which highlights coordination failures despite strong policy intentions (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009; Hall, 2019). The incorporation of sustainability practices not only improves environmental outcomes but also enhances perceived spiritual authenticity and loyalty, emphasizing the necessity for inclusive and community-centered development models (Trono, 2021). The findings highlight the significance of spiritual ambience in sustaining religious tourism. While infrastructure and accommodation are necessary, they are insufficient without experiential authenticity and the governance inconsistency recognized in this study reflects a disconnect between initiative-level success and holistic destination satisfaction. The integration of sustainability practices enhances not only environmental outcomes but also perceived spiritual authenticity and loyalty, reinforcing the need for inclusive and community-centered development models in the tourism sector. First, destination planning must prioritize ambience-centric design by incorporating sacred aesthetics, ritual facilitation, and culturally sensitive service training. Second, tiered accommodation strategies, including dharmshalas, homestays, heritage hotels, and eco-lodges, are essential to address capacity and affordability challenges. Third, governance reforms should emphasize inter-agency coordination, stakeholder participation, and outcome-based monitoring. Finally, sustainability practices must be institutionalized through regulatory frameworks and community engagement strategies.

Conclusion

The research focuses on religious tourism in the Ramayana Circuit in Uttar Pradesh, India, and introduces the FITSL-Gov model to explain the impact of spiritual atmosphere, accommodation quality, and governance on tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Key points include the rapid growth of religious tourism in the Ramayana Circuit, which faces challenges such as inadequate accommodation, weak management, and a diminished spiritual atmosphere. Spiritual ambience, categorized by the sacred atmosphere created through rituals, sounds, and the environment, is essential for pilgrims' satisfaction and their loyalty to revisit. Quality accommodation near temples, such as dharmshalas and heritage hotels, enhances this spiritual ambience. Governance, defined as the effectiveness of collaboration among various agencies and

stakeholders, impacts how infrastructure supports the spiritual experience. Sustainable practices, including waste management and community involvement, increase the perceived value of the destination and enhance loyalty.

The study employed surveys and interviews with pilgrims and stakeholders at key locations within the circuit. Results demonstrate that spiritual ambience fully mediates the relationship between accommodation and infrastructure quality, satisfaction, and loyalty. Improved coordination in governance is necessary to prevent fragmented efforts. The study recommends focusing on ambience in planning, enhancing accommodation options, reforming governance for better coordination, and adopting sustainability practices to preserve the circuit's spiritual and tourism value. This model can be applied to other pilgrimage destinations to guide sustainable and meaningful religious tourism development.

References

1. Aulet, S., & Duda, J. (2020). Religious tourism and pilgrimage: Motivations, experiences and management challenges. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 33*, 100607. https://doi.org/10. 1016/j.tmp.2019.100607

2. Bitner, M. J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing, 56*(2), 57–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600205

3. Chaudhari, S. K. (2025). Assessment of government measures for promotion of tourism in the Ramayana Circuit of Uttar Pradesh. *Journal of the Oriental Institute, 74*(2), 211–229. https://www.journaloi.com

4. Chaudhari, S. K., & Kabia, S. K. (2023). The inevitability of spiritual ambience to sustain religious tourism in the Ramayana Circuit of Uttar Pradesh. In P. Singh & R. Borlikar (Eds.), *Shree Ram Van Gaman Path and tourism development* (pp. 88–98). Ansh Book International.

5. Chaudhari, S. K., & Kabia, S. K. (2023). Issues, challenges, and opportunities in the accommodation sector to promote religious tourism in Ramayana Circuit of Uttar Pradesh. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 29*(4), 3773–3779. https://doi.org/10 .53555/kuey.v29i4.8433

6. Chen, C. M., Lee, H. T., Chen, S. H., & Huang, T. H. (2011). Tourist behavioural intentions in relation to service quality and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 13*(5), 416–432. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.821

7. Eade, J., & Sallnow, M. (1991). *Contesting the sacred: The anthropology of Christian pilgrimage*. Routledge.

8. Goeldner, C. R., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2009). *Tourism: Principles, practices, philosophies* (11th ed.). Wiley.

9. Hall, C. M. (2019). Constructing sustainable tourism development: The 2030 agenda. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 27*(7), 1044–1060. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1560456

10. Kim, A. K., & Brown, G. (2012). Understanding relationships between perceived travel experiences and destination loyalty. *Anatolia, 23*(3), 328–347. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 13032917.2012.696272

11. Kotler, P. (1973). Atmospherics as a marketing tool. *Journal of Retailing, 49*(4), 48–64.

12. Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. MIT Press.

13. Oliver, R. L. (1993). Cognitive, affective, and attribute bases of satisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Research, 20*(3), 418–430. https://doi.org/10.1086/209358

14. Slåtten, T., Mehmetoglu, M., Svensson, G., & Sværi, S. (2009). Atmospheric experiences that emotionally touch customers. *Managing Service Quality, 19*(6), 721–746. https://doi.org/10 .1108 /09604520911005020

15. Trono, A. (2021). Religious and spiritual tourism: Sustainable development perspectives. In A. Trono (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of religious and spiritual tourism* (pp. 439–457). Routledge.

16. UNWTO. (2022). *Tourism and sustainable development goals*. World Tourism Organization.

17. Yao, Y., & Zhang, H. (2020). Religious tourism experience and destination loyalty. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 15*, 100409. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm. 2019.100409