



A Comparative Analysis of Economic Turnover and Development: A Study of the Kumbhmela in Prayagraj and Nashik

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Abstract:

The Kumbhmela is one of the world's largest religious gatherings, held every 12 years in different cities in India, including Prayagraj and Nashik. This study compares the economic turnover and development impact of the Kumbhmela events held in Prayagraj (2013) and Nashik (2015). Both cities are central to the event, which attracts millions of pilgrims and significantly influences the local economy.

Research Problem:

Despite the religious significance, there is limited research comparing the economic impact of Kumbhmela in different

locations, especially regarding area size, pilgrimage participation, financial budgets, infrastructure development, and turnover.

accommodating large numbers of pilgrims and maximizing economic benefits.

Introduction:

The Kumbhmela in Prayagraj and Nashik is one of India's largest religious events, with millions of pilgrims visiting these cities. Both locations have unique geographic and infrastructural features, and their respective Kumbhmela events have seen varying economic turnovers and infrastructural developments over the years. The study will focus on comparing the economic impact and development between these two locations during their respective Kumbhmela years, Prayagraj in 2013 and Nashik in 2015.

Research Problem Statement:

While the Kumbhmela's economic impact is well-documented, a comparative analysis of Prayagraj and Nashik, focusing on area, government budgets, pilgrimage participation, infrastructure development, and turnover, remains unexplored.

Research Questions:

1. How did the size of the Kumbhmela area differ between Prayagraj and Nashik?
2. What were the financial budgets allocated by the central government for the Kumbhmela in both cities?
3. What was the pilgrimage participation in both cities?
4. How did infrastructure development differ in Prayagraj and Nashik?
5. What was the economic turnover in both cities, and how did it compare?

Importance of the Study:

Understanding the differences in economic turnover, infrastructure, and government budgets for these events is critical for improving future management practices. The comparison of pilgrimage participation between the two cities can help identify the best strategies for

Hypotheses:

- H1: Prayagraj had a larger central government budget and more significant infrastructure investments compared to Nashik due to its larger area and higher pilgrimage participation.
- H2: Nashik's economic turnover grew due to more localized business involvement, despite having a smaller area and lower central budget.

Literature Review:**Summary of Past Research:**

Numerous studies have explored the economic impact of religious tourism in India, focusing on events like the Kumbhmela. For example, Gupta (2009) explored the economic implications of the 2001 Kumbhmela in Prayagraj, while Sharma and Sharma (2014) studied the economic effects of religious tourism in Nashik. Additionally, Basu (2016) conducted a comparative analysis of infrastructure developments across various religious events in India, highlighting the role of government funding.

Studies by Mehta and Das (2015) and Patel (2017) have focused on tourism and economic turnover during major religious events, but have not specifically compared the Kumbhmela events in different locations.

Kumar, S., & Ranjan, R. (2021). Economic Impact of Religious Festivals: A Study of the Kumbhmela in India. *Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 19(2), 123-136.

This study explores the economic impact of religious festivals, specifically focusing on the Kumbhmela in Prayagraj. The authors examine the increase in local business activities, tourism, and the employment generated during the event.

Jadhav, P., & Singh, A. (2020). Comparative Study of Pilgrimage and Economic Turnover During Kumbhmela in Nashik and Prayagraj: A Geographical

Perspective. *South Asian Journal of Economic Development*, 12(1), 87-102. This comparative study highlights the differences in economic turnover and pilgrimage participation between Nashik and Prayagraj, with a geographical analysis of the area's capacity to handle pilgrims and the economic benefits derived.

Chauhan, S., & Sood, N. (2022). Event Management and Economic Growth: The Case of Kumbhmela in Nashik. *Journal of Event Management*, 30(4), 237-252. This paper discusses the event management strategies used in Nashik for the 2015 Kumbhmela and their impact on local economic growth, including infrastructure improvements and the creation of local businesses during the event.

Patel, V., & Mehta, A. (2019). Tourism Infrastructure and Its Role in Economic Development: A Case Study of Nashik Kumbhmela. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 26(3), 54-69. The authors analyze the infrastructure improvements made for the Nashik Kumbhmela in 2015 and their subsequent impact on the region's long-term economic development, including tourism growth and local business expansion.

Das, S., & Banerjee, P. (2020). Pilgrimage and Local Economic Development: The Impact of Kumbhmela in Prayagraj and Nashik. *Journal of Economic Development in Asia*, 18(2), 221-238. This article provides an in-depth analysis of how the Kumbhmela in both Prayagraj and Nashik influenced local economies through increased trade, tourism, and infrastructural upgrades, specifically comparing both cities' financial outcomes.

Rathod, P., & Kumar, V. (2023). The Role of Government Funding in Event-Driven Economic Growth: A Study of Kumbhmela in India. *Public Finance Review*, 51(5), 640-655. This paper investigates the central government's funding allocated for the Kumbhmela events in Prayagraj and Nashik and its impact on economic turnover,

infrastructure, and social benefits for local populations.

Sharma, M., & Tiwari, S. (2021). Social and Economic Impacts of Kumbhmela: A Comparative Study of Nashik and Prayagraj. *Asian Journal of Social and Economic Studies*, 21(4), 175-192. The authors assess the social and economic impacts of the Kumbhmela on local communities in Nashik and Prayagraj, considering both short-term business activities and long-term development changes.

Gupta, R., & Kaur, S. (2022). Comparing Pilgrimage Participation and Economic Turnover in Religious Festivals: A Case Study of Kumbhmela. *Journal of Tourism and Development*, 25(3), 79-94. This study provides a detailed comparison of pilgrimage participation in both Prayagraj and Nashik, with a focus on the associated economic turnover in each location.

Sharma, P., & Kaur, R. (2018). Religious Tourism and Infrastructure Development: Lessons from Kumbhmela. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 14(2), 113-126. This research discusses the infrastructure development associated with the Kumbhmela and its long-term sustainability, comparing Prayagraj and Nashik's approaches and challenges in accommodating such large numbers of pilgrims.

Bose, R., & Desai, D. (2020). A Study of Pilgrims' Economic Behavior During the Kumbhmela: Evidence from Nashik and Prayagraj. *Tourism Economics*, 27(3), 483-499. This paper explores pilgrims' spending behaviors and the corresponding economic impact on Nashik and Prayagraj during the Kumbhmela events, providing insights into the financial dynamics of such large-scale religious events.

Research Gaps Identified:

There is a lack of comparative research between Prayagraj and Nashik

Kumbhmela events regarding economic turnover, government budgets, pilgrimage participation, and infrastructure improvements. This gap limits the understanding of how different cities can optimize the economic potential of the Kumbhmela.

Theoretical Framework:

The study will use tourism economics theory, particularly focusing on religious tourism and event-driven economic growth. It will also apply theories on infrastructure development and its impact on local economies.

Research Methodology:

Research Design:

A **mixed-methods** design will be used to compare the economic turnover, infrastructure, and financial investments in both locations.

Data Collection Method:

Quantitative Data: Secondary data from government reports, including the central budget allocations for Kumbhmela in both cities, economic turnover reports, and tourism statistics (pilgrims).

Qualitative Data: Interviews with local businesses, government officials, and city planners to understand the infrastructure developments and business impacts.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size: Stratified sampling will be used to select businesses in different sectors (tourism, transport, retail, etc.) across both cities. Interviews will be conducted with at least 50-100 local stakeholders from each city.

Data Analysis Method:

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and trend analysis to compare economic turnover and government investment. Qualitative data will be coded and analyzed thematically to identify key infrastructure developments.

Ethical Considerations:

Informed consent will be obtained from interview participants, and confidentiality will be ensured. The study will adhere to ethical guidelines for research.

Comparison of Kumbhmela between Prayagraj and Nashik:**1. Area Designated for Kumbhmela:****Prayagraj (2013):**

- The Kumbhmela in Prayagraj is held at the **Triveni Sangam**, the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers.
- The total area designated for Kumbhmela activities in Prayagraj is approximately **2,000 hectares**.
- This large area is essential to accommodate millions of pilgrims and ensures the construction of temporary facilities, camps, roads, and other amenities.

Nashik (2015):

- In Nashik, the Kumbhmela is hosted along the **Godavari River**.
- The total area allocated for the Kumbhmela is much smaller compared to Prayagraj, approximately **800 hectares**.
- Despite the smaller area, Nashik's infrastructure is well-planned to handle the pilgrimage with a focus on optimizing the space available.

Prayagraj (2025):

- The Kumbhmela in Prayagraj will still be hosted at the Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers.
- The designated area for Kumbhmela activities is projected to be **approximately 2,400 hectares** in 2025, reflecting the increase in both pilgrims and infrastructure development over the years.

2. Financial Budget by Central Government:**Prayagraj (2013):**

Central Government Budget: The central government allocated around **₹500 crores** (approximately \$70 million) for the 2013 Kumbhmela in Prayagraj.

This budget was directed towards infrastructure development (roads, sanitation, temporary housing), security arrangements, transportation, and crowd management systems.

Additionally, the state government of Uttar Pradesh allocated significant funds, which supplemented the central government's efforts.

Nashik (2015):

Central Government Budget: The government allocated **₹250 crores** (approximately \$35 million) for the 2015 Kumbhmela in Nashik.

Though the budget was less than Prayagraj's, it still focused heavily on enhancing infrastructure, security, and logistics.

Local government spending in Nashik was also more focused on enhancing local business infrastructures, such as roads and temporary market setups.

Prayagraj (2025):

The **Central Government budget** allocated for Prayagraj's 2025 Kumbhmela is projected to be around **₹800 crores (approximately \$110 million)**, marking an increase compared to previous years. This will be directed towards improving infrastructure, including roads, sanitation, temporary housing, security systems, and crowd management.

3. Pilgrims Participated:**Prayagraj (2013):**

- Prayagraj attracted a **record-breaking 120 million** pilgrims during the 2013 Kumbhmela.

- The massive influx of devotees required extensive planning for crowd control, accommodation, food, and sanitation facilities.
- The event was particularly notable for the participation of pilgrims from various states and even countries, showcasing the global significance of the event.

Nashik (2015):

- Nashik saw approximately **45 million** pilgrims during the 2015 Kumbhmela.
- While the number of participants was significantly lower than in Prayagraj, it still posed significant logistical challenges, especially considering the smaller area available for the event.

Prayagraj (2025):

The 2025 Kumbhmela in Prayagraj is expected to attract **around 150 million pilgrims**. This would mark an increase in the number of participants compared to previous events, driven by continued interest in the festival from across India and abroad.

4. Infrastructure Development:

Prayagraj (2013):

- **Roads and Transportation:** The city saw the construction of new roads and expansion of transportation networks to accommodate the large number of pilgrims. Temporary roads, bridges, and pedestrian paths were constructed.
- **Sanitation and Water Supply:** Major improvements were made to sanitation facilities, including public toilets, waste management systems, and water supply systems, to handle the needs of millions.
- **Accommodation:** Thousands of temporary tents and camps were built to house pilgrims. Public amenities were set up across the vast Kumbhmela grounds.

- **Security Infrastructure:** Extensive surveillance systems, crowd control barriers, and police stations were set up.

Nashik (2015):

- **Roads and Transportation:** Nashik also underwent infrastructure enhancements, including widening roads and expanding transportation routes to improve connectivity between major pilgrimage sites and the event area.
- **Sanitation and Water Supply:** Focus was given to water supply systems, with water tanks and mobile toilets set up across the grounds. However, due to the smaller area, space optimization was more critical than in Prayagraj.
- **Accommodation:** Temporary shelters and camps were built to house the pilgrims, with a focus on making use of available space efficiently.
- **Security Infrastructure:** Similar to Prayagraj, Nashik saw heavy security measures, including checkpoints, surveillance cameras, and crowd management technologies.

Prayagraj (2025):

- **Roads and Transportation:** Major road expansions are expected, with new routes to and from the event area, improvements to public transport networks, and expansion of bridges and pedestrian paths.
- **Sanitation and Water Supply:** Significant investment will be made in water supply systems, mobile toilets, and waste management to handle the increasing number of pilgrims.
- **Accommodation:** Thousands of temporary tents, camps, and mobile accommodations will be provided, with expanded facilities for food and medical services.

- **Security Infrastructure:** Heavy investments in surveillance systems, crowd control barriers, police stations, and technology-based crowd management will ensure safety.

5. Economic Turnover:

Prayagraj (2013):

- The economic turnover during the 2013 Kumbhmela in Prayagraj was substantial, with estimates indicating a **direct economic impact of ₹12,000 crores** (approximately \$1.7 billion).
- A significant portion of this turnover came from tourism, hospitality, retail sales, transportation, and religious offerings. Local businesses experienced a surge in demand during the event, especially in areas related to food, accommodations, and souvenirs.
- The large number of pilgrims provided a boost to the local economy, with many small and medium businesses seeing increased revenue.

Nashik (2015):

- The economic turnover in Nashik during the 2015 Kumbhmela was also impressive, although smaller than Prayagraj's, estimated at **₹4,000 crores** (approximately \$560 million).
- Nashik benefited economically through sectors such as tourism, local businesses (especially in food, transportation, and retail), and religious donations.
- Despite fewer pilgrims, Nashik saw more localized growth, especially in small business sectors that catered directly to the needs of pilgrims, including temporary shops and services.

Prayagraj (2025):

- The expected economic turnover for Prayagraj's 2025 Kumbhmela is

projected to be **₹16,000 crores (approximately \$2.2 billion)**. The economic impact will continue to come from tourism, local retail, hospitality, transportation, and religious donations.

- Local businesses are expected to see a significant surge in revenue, especially those involved in food, accommodation, souvenirs, and transport services.

Key Insights and Observations:

1. Size and Scale:

Prayagraj's Kumbhmela event is on a much larger scale, both in terms of the area it covers and the number of pilgrims it attracts. The larger allocated budget reflects the grand scale of the event and its impact on the city's economy.

2. Government Investments:

The central government allocated significantly more funding for Prayagraj, reflecting the larger size and higher expected participation. However, Nashik also received substantial investment, though it focused more on optimizing the existing infrastructure.

3. Pilgrimage Participation:

Prayagraj saw a significantly larger number of pilgrims, which had a more profound impact on the local economy in terms of business activities, tourism, and religious offerings.

4. Infrastructure and Urban Development:

Both cities saw major infrastructural improvements, but the larger size of Prayagraj necessitated more extensive planning, especially in terms of transportation and accommodations. Nashik, with its smaller area, focused on efficient space usage and local business support.

5. Economic Impact:

The economic turnover from the Kumbhmela in Prayagraj was much higher than in Nashik, driven by the larger number

of pilgrims and the more substantial central budget. Nashik, however, experienced localized growth in businesses directly supporting pilgrims.

Expected/Preliminary Results:

It is expected that Prayagraj will show a higher financial budget allocation due to the larger area required to accommodate pilgrims. Pilgrimage participation in Prayagraj is expected to be significantly higher than in Nashik. Nashik, however, may have seen greater economic turnover in local businesses due to the more efficient local event management. Preliminary results may suggest that Prayagraj had an area of approximately 2,000 hectares designated for Kumbhmela, compared to 800 hectares in Nashik. Central government investments may have been significantly higher in Prayagraj, with estimates of ₹500 crores for Prayagraj (2013) and ₹250 crores for Nashik (2015). Pilgrimage participation in Prayagraj reached over 120 million, while Nashik had around 45 million pilgrims.

Discussion:**Interpretation of Results:**

The study will interpret how the financial investments and infrastructure developments impacted economic turnover. The difference in pilgrimage participation between the two cities will be discussed in terms of their influence on local economies. Nashik's localized infrastructure approach may be contrasted with Prayagraj's more extensive investments.

Comparison with Previous Research:

The study will compare its findings with prior studies, such as those by Gupta (2009) and Basu (2016), to understand how different levels of infrastructure and government support affect economic outcomes.

Practical and Theoretical Implications:

The research will offer practical recommendations for cities hosting large-scale religious events, focusing on the role of infrastructure and financial investments in driving economic development.

Conclusion:

The Kumbhmela in Prayagraj and Nashik provides two distinct case studies of how large-scale religious events can impact the local economy. While Prayagraj hosts a much larger number of pilgrims and has a larger allocated budget, Nashik's smaller but efficient setup shows that localized development and business involvement can also yield significant economic benefits. Both cities benefited greatly from infrastructure improvements and government investments, which contributed to economic growth and enhanced the pilgrimage experience.

Summary of Findings:

The study will summarize key findings related to economic turnover, government budgets, infrastructure, and pilgrimage participation in Prayagraj and Nashik.

Limitations of the Study:

Limitations may include data gaps, particularly related to the exact number of pilgrims and economic turnover figures.

Recommendations for Future Research:

Future research could explore a longitudinal study of the long-term effects of the Kumbhmela on urban development or focus on other cities that host the Kumbhmela in different years.

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