# Cultural Sites as Tourist Magnets: A Geographical Analysis of Visitor Motivation in Nashik, Maharashtra

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*Abstract:*
*Nashik district, known for its religious, cultural, and viticultural significance, has witnessed substantial tourism growth in recent years. Cultural landmarks significantly contribute to attracting tourists by delivering distinctive experiences grounded in history, spirituality, and tradition. This research, titled "Cultural Sites as Tourist Magnets: A geographical analysis of Visitor Motivation in Nashik City," explores the major factors that encourage tourists to visit key cultural sites including Kalaram Temple, Panchavati, Muktidham Temple, Pandav Leni, and Phalke Smarak. Employing a combination of surveys, interviews, and on-site observations, the study uncovers religious faith, historical fascination, admiration for architecture, and interest in cultural heritage as leading motivational drivers. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, cultural tourism is "movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages." This study critically examines the motivational dynamics and attraction-based determinants of cultural tourism in Nashik city, Maharashtra a region renowned for its sacred geographies, architectural heritage, and vibrant intangible traditions. Employing a cross-sectional, survey-based research design, the study investigates tourist behavior across five strategically selected cultural sites Panchvati, Kalaram Mandir, Muktidham Mandir, Pandav Lene, and Phalke Smarak through a structured questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.889) administered to a systematically sampled cohort. Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics, Z-scores, coefficient of variation, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) reveals that religious and heritage motivations predominantly influence tourist visitation, with Kalaram Mandir and Panchvati ranking highest in attraction and satisfaction indices. Substantial disparities in infrastructural services, environmental quality, and administrative competence were noted, particularly at Pandav Lene and Phalke Smarak. The CFA results affirm the robustness of the measurement model, exhibiting strong fit indices (CFI = 0.937; RMSEA = 0.057). By synthesizing motivational theory with spatial-perceptual insights, the study offers a region-specific analytical framework for enhancing destination planning, infrastructure provisioning, and experiential quality in culturally vibrant yet administratively varied semi-urban tourism landscapes.*
*Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Tourist Motivation, Attraction Factors, Spatial-Temporal Analysis, Nashik Tahsil*

**Introduction**

Cultural tourism has emerged as a pivotal sub-sector of global tourism, underpinning the intricate interplay between heritage, identity, and mobility. In recent decades, destinations rooted in spiritual, architectural, and cultural significance have become dynamic epicentres of touristic appeal, driven by an escalating demand for authentic, place-based experiences (Richards, 2018; Smith, 2003). Nashik Tahsil, situated in Maharashtra's northern Deccan plateau, exemplifies a region where tangible heritage (e.g., temples, historical monuments, and traditional settlements) and intangible cultural practices (e.g., Kumbh Mela, ritual pilgrimages, and folk traditions) coalesce to form a complex matrix of tourist attractions. The tahsil's syncretic cultural topography — characterized by sacred landscapes, religious events, and culinary traditions — renders it an ideal locale to examine the magnetism of cultural assets and the intrinsic motivations that shape tourist behavior (Timothy, 2011; McKercher and du Cros, 2002). As destinations increasingly seek to enhance their cultural profiles to

stimulate sustainable economic growth and regional branding, understanding the motivational parameters influencing visitation becomes crucial to tourism planning and destination management (Gadakh, et al; 2025).

A substantial body of scholarly literature underscores the importance of tourist motivation theories and destination attractiveness in explaining cultural tourism flows. The push-pull framework (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979) remains seminal in this discourse, differentiating between internal psychological impulses (e.g., spiritual fulfilment, escape, nostalgia) and external destination-specific attributes (e.g., cultural heritage, festivals, built environment) that jointly influence travel decisions (Uysal and Jurowski, 1994; Goossens, 2000). Several studies have emphasized how socio-cultural factors, destination image, and perceived authenticity serve as mediators of tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Prentice, 2004; Ramkissoon and Uysal, 2011). Nashik's prominence as a site for the Maha Kumbh, along with its robust religious infrastructure and regional crafts, has received scholarly attention for its capacity to stimulate multi-scalar cultural flows (Deshpande, 2016; Bandyopadhyay, 2009; Singh, 2004). However, while studies have examined heritage circuits or festival tourism across India (Raj, Griffin & Blackshaw, 2015; Sinha, 2020), there remains a discernible paucity of focused empirical research that evaluates the motivational dimensions and attraction hierarchies specific to Nashik Tahsil. Moreover, GIS-based studies linking spatial attributes with motivational typologies remain underrepresented in Indian literature (Baud-Bovy & Lawson, 1998; Leiper, 1990).

Against this scholarly backdrop, the present study seeks to critically evaluate the magnetic factors of cultural tourism in Nashik Tahsil, with a specific focus on the motivational stimuli that drive tourist visitation patterns. Despite its historical and religious eminence, the region's touristic potential is inadequately mapped from a behavioral-geographical perspective. The lack of granular insights into why tourists choose specific cultural sites, what socio-demographic groups they represent, and how their spatial preferences shift temporally poses a limitation for destination planners and policy-makers. Existing tourism frameworks often fail to integrate motivational constructs with spatial modelling, thereby restricting a holistic understanding of tourist flows and their determinants. This research aims to fill that void by conducting a spatial-temporal analysis of key attraction zones in Nashik Tahsil, integrating field surveys, tourist profiling, and geospatial techniques. In doing so, it aspires to bridge the gap between theoretical constructs of cultural tourism and practical destination planning within a regional Indian context.

**Study Area**

The present study is geographically anchored within Nashik Tahsil, a pivotal administrative division of Nashik District, Maharashtra, precisely demarcated between 19°55'N to 20°10'N latitude and 73°30'E to 74°00'E longitude. Situated in the north western segment of the Deccan Plateau, the region encompasses a physiographical diverse and culturally emblematic landscape. It exhibits a spatial juxtaposition of rapidly urbanizing nuclei and traditional rural settlements, punctuated by sacred riverscapes and archaeological vestiges, rendering it an ideal locale for culturally oriented tourism research. For the empirical dimension of the study, a purposive stratified site selection strategy was employed, resulting in the inclusion of five distinguished cultural destinations: Panchvati, Kalaram Mandir, Muktidham Mandir, Pandav Lene (Trirashmi Caves), and the Dadasaheb Phalke Smarak. These sites were not arbitrarily chosen but rather systematically identified based on their cultural centrality, historical profundity, and volumetric tourist inflow, each epitomizing a discrete spectrum of tourist motivations and destination attributes. Collectively, these loci serve as typological representations of religious pilgrimage hubs, architectural heritage complexes, and spiritual-commemorative spaces within the tahsil.
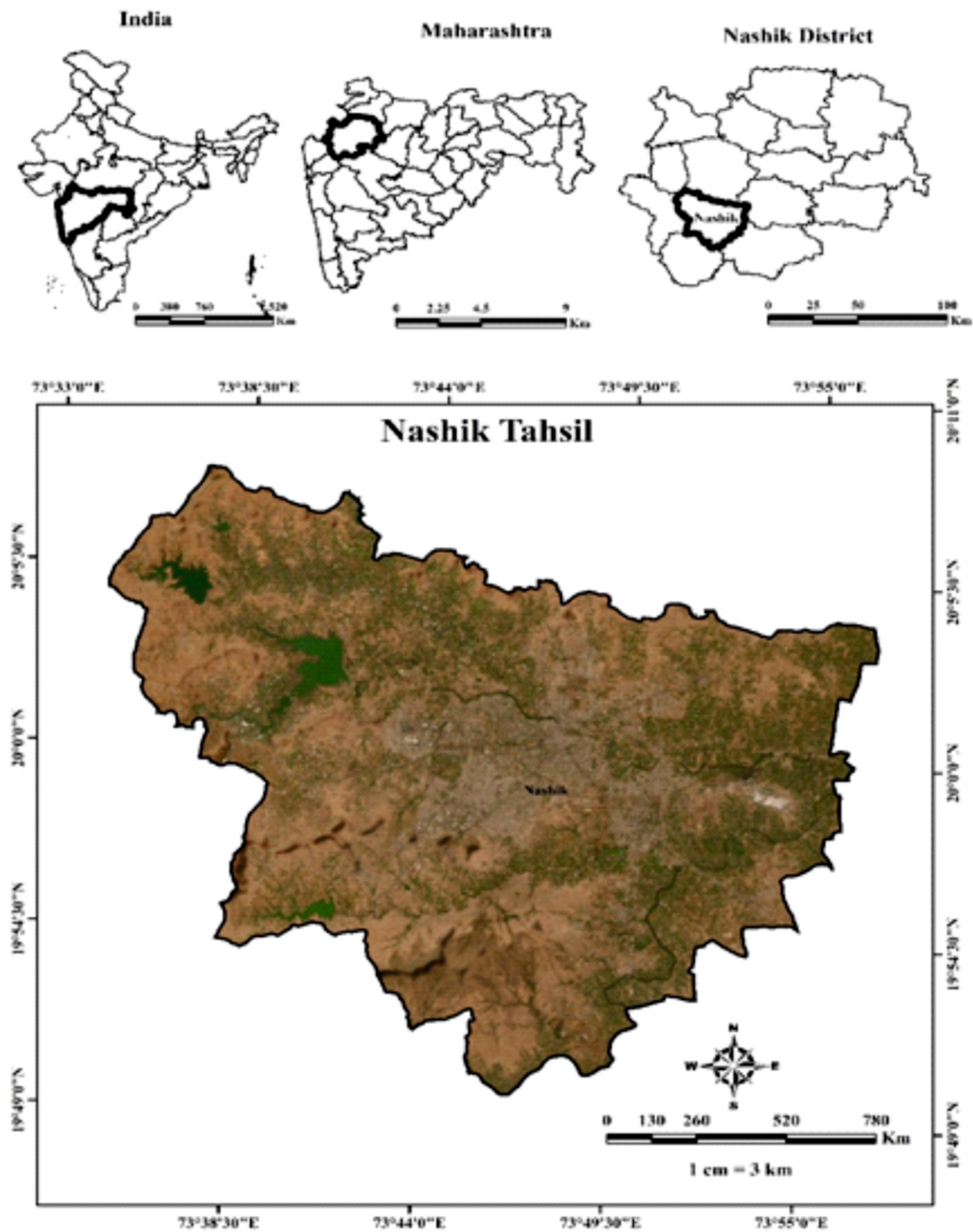
**igure 1: Location Map of Study Area**

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**Methodology**
**Research Design and Rationale**
        The present study adopts a descriptive and cross-sectional survey design, underpinned by a quantitative methodological framework, to investigate the demographic characteristics and socio-economic background of cultural tourists visiting Nashik Tahsil. The objective was to acquire empirical insights into the heterogeneity of visitor profiles across selected cultural heritage destinations, including Panchvati, Kalaram Mandir, Muktidham Mandir, Pandav Lene, and Dadasaheb Phalke Smarak. This approach enabled the exploration of demographic distributions and their potential correlations with cultural tourism flows.
Site Selection and Sampling Strategy
        A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify the five aforementioned sites based on their cultural salience, historical value, and volumetric tourist inflow. These locations collectively encapsulate diverse cultural themes—ranging from spiritual pilgrimage to heritage architecture—thereby offering a representative microcosm of Nashik's cultural tourism landscape.
The target population consisted of domestic and international tourists visiting the sites during the study period. Respondents were selected using a systematic random intercept survey method, wherein every fifth visitor entering the site precinct was approached. The sample was deemed sufficiently representative for inferential analysis, yielding a final valid sample size of n = 500.
**Data Collection Instrumentation**
        Primary data were elicited through a structured questionnaire, pre-tested and validated for

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

| Characteristics of Responders | Category | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 15-20 | 10.7 |
| | 20-30 | 25.9 |
| | 30-40 | 18.4 |
| | 40-50 | 35.4 |
| | 50-60 | 6.5 |
| | 60+ | 3.1 |
| Gender | Male | 70.7 |
| | Female | 29.3 |
| Marital Status | Married | 39.5 |
| | Unmarried | 54.8 |
| | Divorced | 2.9 |
| | Widow | 1.5 |
| | Widower | 1.3 |
| Nationality | Indian | 87.2 |
| | Other | 12.8 |
| Native State (Indian Nationality) | Maharashtra | 78.5 |
| | Other | 21.5 |
| Home District (if Maharashtra) | Nashik | 67.5 |
| | Other | 32.5 |
| Education | Primary | 0.57 |
| | Secondary | 4.21 |
| | Higher Secondary | 6.7 |
| | Graduate | 58.43 |
| | Post Graduate | 29.69 |
| | Illiterate | 0.38 |
| Occupation | Govt. Servant | 16.09 |
| | Private | 28.93 |
| | Business | 3.64 |
| | Unemployed | 18.2 |
| | Retired | 2.68 |
| | Household | 4.21 |
| | Student | 22.03 |
| | Other | 4.21 |
| Monthly Income | <10,000 | 19.35 |
| | 10,000-25,000 | 40.61 |
| | 25,000-50,000 | 25.86 |
| | 50,000-1,00,000 | 7.85 |
| | >1,00,000 | 6.32 |

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internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.889). The instrument comprised both closed-ended categorical variables and Likert-scale items distributed across demographic and perception-based constructs. Key demographic attributes captured include age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, income level, nationality, native state, and home district (if Maharashtra).

The survey was administered via face-to-face interviews and self-administered forms (where applicable), with multilingual facilitation to ensure inclusivity and linguistic accessibility for diverse respondents.

## Data Processing and Statistical Analysis

All collected data were coded and tabulated using Microsoft Excel 365 and subsequently analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics v28 and Python (Pandas/Seaborn/Matplotlib) for graphical outputs. Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the percentage distribution of each demographic parameter. Furthermore, a series of bar charts and comparative visualizations were generated to represent the demographic structure of tourists in a lucid and interpretable format.

The visualization protocol adhered to professional scientific plotting standards, including the application of grid aesthetics, axis normalization (percentage format), academic typefaces, and color consistency (viridis and crest palettes). These figures serve not only as illustrative tools but also as visual evidence to corroborate the narrative findings.

## Ethical Considerations

All respondents were informed about the purpose and academic nature of the study. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and no personally identifiable information was recorded. Ethical clearance was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee, ensuring adherence to guidelines concerning data confidentiality and respondent dignity.

## Result And Discussion
## Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the comprehensive demographic composition of the respondents surveyed across cultural tourism destinations within Nashik Tahsil. The age distribution reveals a predominantly middle-aged tourist base, with the majority falling in the 40–50 years category (35.4%), followed by the 20–30 years cohort (25.9%). The presence of senior visitors (above 60 years) is marginal at 3.1%, while youth (15–20 years) account for 10.7%, reflecting a multi-generational engagement with cultural sites.

A clear gender disparity is observed, with 70.7% male respondents as opposed to 29.3% female, indicative of potential gender-based mobility or decision-making differences in travel patterns. Regarding marital status, a larger proportion were unmarried (54.8%), followed by married individuals (39.5%), with divorced, widowed, and widower categories collectively comprising 5.7%, reflecting the diversity in socio-personal backgrounds.
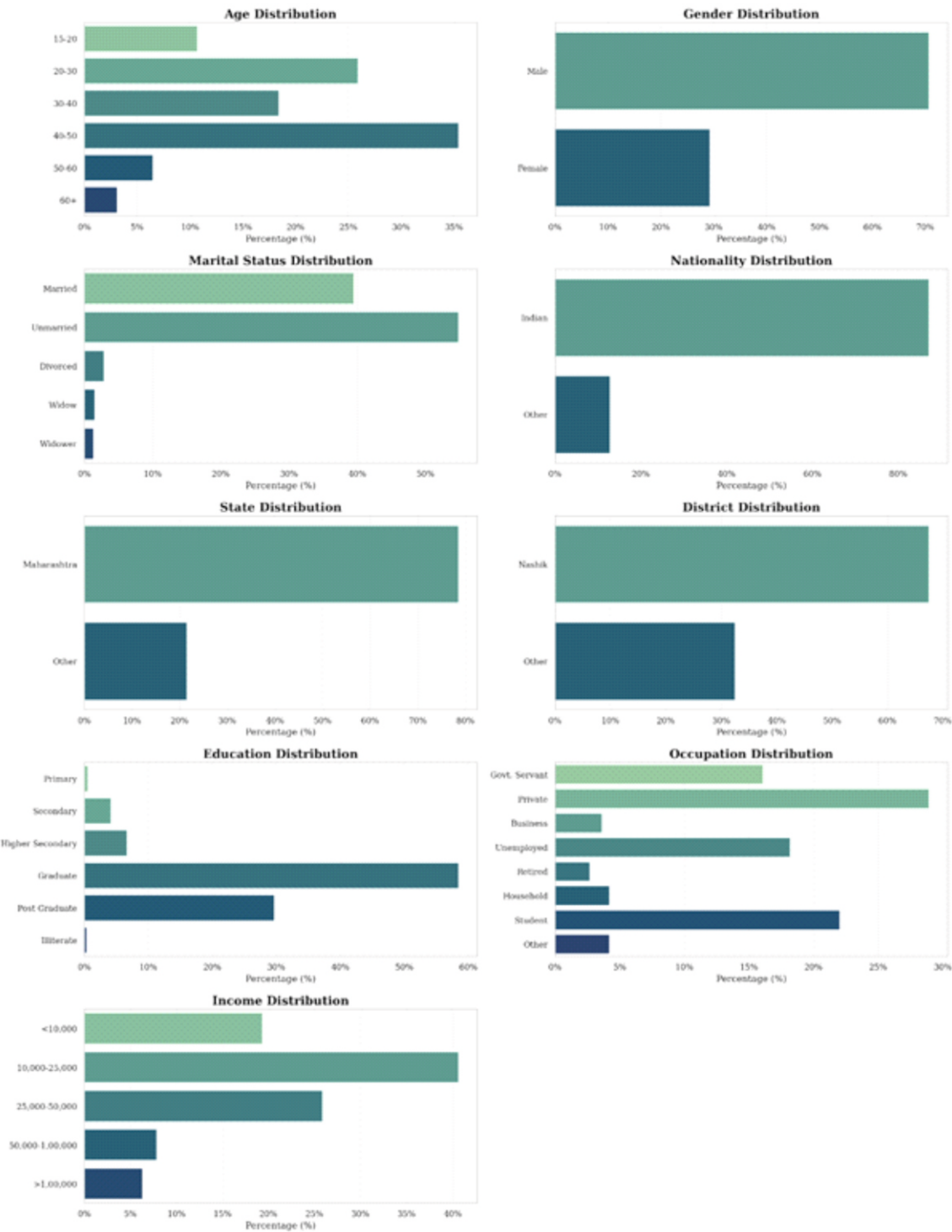
**Table 2: Tourist Perception and Magnetic Factors**

| Tourist Site | Panchvati | Kalaram Mandir | Muktidham Mandir | Pandav Lene | Phalke Smarak |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motivating Factors - Mean** | 3.7 | 3.67 | 2.89 | 3.38 | 3.38 |
| **Motivating Factors - SD** | 0.94 | 1.05 | 1.1 | 0.98 | 1 |
| **Primary Facilities - Mean** | 4.02 | 4.21 | 4.16 | 2.05 | 3.4 |
| **Primary Facilities - SD** | 0.56 | 0.78 | 0.82 | 1.02 | 0.88 |
| **Availability of Services - Mean** | 4.4 | 4.18 | 4.15 | 2.92 | 3.51 |
| **Availability of Services - SD** | 0.85 | 0.91 | 0.89 | 1 | 0.94 |
| **Administration - Mean** | 3.55 | 3.64 | 3.38 | 3.25 | 2.05 |
| **Administration - SD** | 0.98 | 0.92 | 0.96 | 1.04 | 1.15 |
| **Environmental Issues - Mean** | 2.38 | 4.25 | 3.55 | 3.33 | 3.78 |
| **Environmental Issues - SD** | 0.85 | 0.89 | 0.91 | 1.06 | 1.02 |
| **Overall Satisfaction Score** | 3.71 | 3.97 | 3.61 | 3.07 | 3.36 |
| Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) | 0.889 | 0.821 | 0.719 | 0.681 | 0.748 |
| **CV - Motivating Factors (%)** | 25.41 | 28.61 | 38.06 | 28.99 | 29.59 |
| **CV - Primary Facilities (%)** | 13.93 | 18.53 | 19.71 | 49.76 | 25.88 |
| **CV - Services (%)** | 19.32 | 21.77 | 21.45 | 34.25 | 26.78 |
| **CV - Administration (%)** | 27.61 | 25.27 | 28.4 | 32 | 56.1 |
| **CV - Environmental Issues (%)** | 35.71 | 20.94 | 25.63 | 31.83 | 26.98 |
| **Z-Score (Overall Satisfaction)** | 0.48 | 1.24 | 0.19 | -1.38 | -0.54 |

In terms of nationality, a dominant 87.2% were Indian nationals, with 12.8% representing foreign or non-Indian visitors. Among the Indian respondents, 78.5% hailed from the state of Maharashtra, and notably, 67.5% were from Nashik district itself, signifying a strong local tourism flow. This suggests that cultural tourism in Nashik Tahsil is not only externally driven but also sustained by robust intra-regional mobility.

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## Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

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The educational background of tourists is predominantly skewed towards higher qualifications, with 58.43% holding a graduate degree and 29.69% possessing a postgraduate qualification, highlighting a well-educated respondent pool. A minor representation is observed in the illiterate category (0.38%) and primary education level (0.57%), emphasizing the literacy prevalence among visitors.

The occupational structure indicates a diverse socio-economic spectrum, with the highest share comprising private sector employees (28.93%), followed by students (22.03%), unemployed individuals (18.2%), and government employees (16.09%). Businesspersons (3.64%), retirees (2.68%), household workers (4.21%), and others (4.21%) formed the residual segments.

The monthly income distribution reveals that 40.61% of respondents earn between ₹10,000–₹25,000, followed by 25.86% in the ₹25,000–₹50,000 range, and 19.35% earn below ₹10,000, indicating a predominance of low to middle-income tourists. A relatively smaller fraction (14.17%) falls into higher income brackets, with 7.85% earning ₹50,000–₹1,00,000 and 6.32% above ₹1,00,000, reflecting economic diversity and affordability-based tourism preferences.

**Motivational and Magnetic Factors**

Their incorporation into the present inquiry facilitates a comparative and multidimensional analysis of tourist perceptions, enabling a robust exploration of both tangible infrastructural provisions and intangible cultural stimuli across spatially and thematically varied settings. This site-specific focus thus substantiates the study's overarching aim to decode the motivational and magnetic underpinnings of cultural tourism in Nashik Tahsil.

The present statistical evaluation elucidates critical insights into tourist perception dynamics across five prominent cultural sites within Nashik Tahsil—Panchvati, Kalaram Mandir, Muktidham Mandir, Pandav Lene, and Phalke Smarak. Utilizing a multifactorial analytical framework incorporating descriptive metrics, variability indices (Coefficient of Variation), and standardized measures (Z-scores), the study provides a robust appraisal of both infrastructural adequacy and experiential quality at each location.

From the standpoint of aggregate tourist satisfaction, Kalaram Mandir emerges as the most favorably rated site, with an overall satisfaction score of 3.97 and a corresponding Z-score of +1.24, indicating significantly above-average performance. This is corroborated by high mean ratings across all service domains and low inter-tourist variability. Panchvati (Z = +0.48) and Muktidham Mandir (Z = +0.19) also exhibit positive alignment with tourist expectations, albeit to a lesser extent. In stark contrast, Pandav Lene (Z = −1.38) records the lowest satisfaction index, signifying a considerable deviation below the normative threshold, while Phalke Smarak (Z = −0.54) reflects marginal dissatisfaction, necessitating targeted ameliorative strategies.

The analysis of motivational or magnetic factors, central to destination appeal, reveals that Panchvati (Mean = 3.70) and Kalaram Mandir (Mean = 3.67) exhibit the most compelling attraction paradigms, primarily underpinned by religious and heritage components. However, Muktidham Mandir demonstrates a markedly lower mean score (2.89) in this dimension, coupled with the highest coefficient of variation (38.06%), indicating substantial heterogeneity in tourist motivations and perceptual inconsistency. This variability may stem from ambiguous symbolic narratives or insufficient cultural branding. Pandav Lene and Phalke Smarak, while maintaining moderate mean values (~3.38), also exhibit elevated CVs, reflecting fragmented experiential cohesion.

In the realm of primary facilities, including water, electricity, healthcare, and food availability, Kalaram Mandir (Mean = 4.21) and Muktidham (Mean = 4.16) receive commendable tourist endorsement. Panchvati follows closely with 4.02, indicative of infrastructural reliability. Conversely, Pandav Lene (Mean = 2.05) reveals a stark infrastructural deficit, reinforced by a CV of 49.76%, the highest in this domain, suggesting erratic or deficient service provision. These findings

signal the urgent necessity for strategic investments in basic amenity provisioning to restore tourist confidence.

The availability of ancillary services such as ATMs, transportation, telecommunications, and accommodation is perceived most favorably at Panchvati (Mean = 4.40) and Kalaram Mandir (4.18), with Muktidham Mandir (4.15) showing similar efficacy. However, the lower mean score at Pandav Lene (2.92) and its high CV (34.25%) denote a critical service gap. This disparity undermines the site's tourism potential, despite its archaeological and aesthetic significance. The inconsistent accessibility to these utilities may be attributed to locational remoteness, insufficient digital integration, or inadequate urban connectivity.

Concerning administrative competence, including tourist facilitation, safety, and guide availability, the highest ratings are attributed to Kalaram Mandir (Mean = 3.64) and Panchvati (3.55), suggesting relatively robust governance and visitor management systems. Phalke Smarak, however, displays a significantly low mean (2.05) and a CV of 56.10%, the highest variability among all dimensions, exposing profound inconsistencies in administrative engagement and institutional support. Such volatility denotes an unreliable and fragmented service interface, necessitating governance reforms and capacity-building interventions.

With respect to environmental quality and ecological stewardship, Kalaram Mandir (Mean = 4.25) distinguishes itself as the cleanest and most ecologically maintained site, followed by Phalke Smarak (3.78) and Muktidham Mandir (3.55). These elevated scores are indicative of efficient waste management systems and perceptibly lower levels of pollution. In contrast, Panchvati (2.38) reflects a critical deficiency in environmental upkeep, compounded by the highest CV (35.71%), underscoring significant spatial and temporal variation in cleanliness and ecological health. Such inconsistencies not only detract from tourist experiences but also compromise the destination's long-term sustainability.

Finally, the assessment of instrument reliability via Cronbach's Alpha confirms the internal consistency of the employed survey instruments, with Panchvati (0.889) and Kalaram Mandir (0.821) attaining excellent reliability thresholds. Even the lowest score, Pandav Lene (0.681), remains within acceptable limits, validating the integrity of data constructs and enhancing the inferential robustness of the findings.

## Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table presents the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted to validate the latent constructs associated with tourist perception dimensions in Nashik Tahsil. The model comprises five latent variables: Motivation (F1), Facilities (F2), Services (F3), Administration (F4), and Environment (F5), each measured through multiple reflective indicators. The standardized factor loadings ($\lambda$) range from 0.59 to 0.81, indicating moderate to strong relationships between observed indicators and their respective latent constructs. Corresponding t-values, all exceeding the critical value of 1.96 ($p < 0.001$), confirm the statistical significance of these loadings. Error variances ($\varepsilon$) remain within acceptable limits, suggesting reliable measurement consistency.

**Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

| Latent Variable | Indicator | Standardized Factor Loading (λ) | Error Variance (ε) | t-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **F1: Motivation** | Religious | 0.78 | 0.18 | 13.22 |
| | Adventure | 0.64 | 0.27 | 11.05 |
| | Heritage | 0.69 | 0.22 | 12.34 |
| | Spiritual | 0.66 | 0.23 | 10.95 |
| | Festival | 0.71 | 0.2 | 12.45 |
| **F2: Facilities** | Water | 0.81 | 0.12 | 14.08 |
| | Electricity | 0.77 | 0.14 | 13.72 |
| | Medical | 0.75 | 0.16 | 12.83 |
| | Food | 0.76 | 0.15 | 13.56 |
| **F3: Services** | ATM | 0.74 | 0.17 | 12.78 |
| | Internet | 0.7 | 0.19 | 11.94 |
| | Transport | 0.73 | 0.18 | 13.09 |
| | Shops | 0.72 | 0.21 | 12.56 |
| | Accommodation | 0.68 | 0.23 | 11.88 |
| **F4: Administration** | Safety | 0.68 | 0.22 | 11.02 |
| | Guides | 0.59 | 0.31 | 9.47 |
| | Tourist Info Centre | 0.63 | 0.29 | 10.66 |
| | Cleanliness | 0.73 | 0.2 | 12.12 |
| **F5: Environment** | Waste Mgmt | 0.71 | 0.21 | 11.86 |
| | Air Pollution | 0.67 | 0.26 | 10.73 |
| | Water Pollution | 0.69 | 0.25 | 11.21 |
| | Noise Pollution | 0.66 | 0.24 | 11.02 |
| | Green Cover | 0.69 | 0.21 | 11.66 |
| | Crowd Management | 0.65 | 0.28 | 10.89 |
| | Waste Bins | 0.64 | 0.27 | 10.75 |

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**Table 4: Goodness of Fits**

| Fit Index | Value |
|:---:|:---:|
| CMIN/DF | 2.11 |
| CFI | 0.937 |
| TLI | 0.923 |
| RMSEA | 0.057 |
| SRMR | 0.061 |

The Motivation construct (F1) displays high factor loadings for indicators such as Religious ($\lambda$ = 0.78) and Festival ($\lambda$ = 0.71), affirming their central role in destination appeal. The Facilities construct (F2) is strongly represented by Water ($\lambda$ = 0.81) and Electricity ($\lambda$ = 0.77), denoting infrastructural adequacy. In Services (F3), ATM, Transport, and Accommodation indicators load robustly (>0.68), validating tourist expectations. The Administration construct (F4) is significantly explained by Safety ($\lambda$ = 0.68) and Cleanliness ($\lambda$ = 0.73). Lastly, the Environment construct (F5) reflects sound internal consistency across Waste Management, Pollution measures, and Ecological factors ($\lambda$ range: 0.64–0.71), substantiating its multidimensional nature.

Overall, the CFA results confirm good convergent validity, indicating that the observed variables are appropriate and statistically reliable measures of their respective theoretical constructs.

The goodness-of-fit statistics for the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model demonstrate an adequate to strong fit between the hypothesized measurement structure and the observed data. The Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) is 2.11, which falls well within the acceptable threshold of < 3.0, indicating model parsimony. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are 0.937 and 0.923, respectively, both exceeding the conventional benchmark of 0.90, suggesting a substantial improvement over the null model and strong comparative model fit.

Furthermore, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.057, which is below the stringent cut-off of 0.08 and implies acceptable approximation of the population model. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), recorded at 0.061, further supports the model's adequacy, being well below the 0.08 threshold. Collectively, these indices affirm that the measurement model achieves robust statistical fit, validating the latent structure of the tourist perception constructs.

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**Conclusion:**
        This research has systematically investigated the attraction dynamics and motivational underpinnings of cultural tourism in Nashik Tahsil, offering a spatially grounded and behaviorally nuanced perspective on tourist engagement with culturally significant locales. Drawing on data collected across five emblematic sites—Panchvati, Kalaram Mandir, Muktidham Mandir, Pandav Lene, and Phalke Smarak—the study elucidated how religious significance, heritage symbolism, and infrastructural provisioning collectively shape tourist motivations and satisfaction levels. Quantitative assessments, supported by descriptive statistics, Z-score standardization, and confirmatory factor analysis, reveal a distinct hierarchy of attraction efficacy, with Kalaram Mandir and Panchvati demonstrating high motivational pull and experiential reliability, whereas Pandav Lene and Phalke Smarak exhibit considerable perceptual and infrastructural deficiencies.
        By validating five latent constructs—motivation, facilities, services, administration, and environment—this study contributes a robust theoretical and methodological framework to the domain of cultural tourism studies. The observed spatial and perceptual disparities among sites underscore the necessity for calibrated policy interventions aimed at enhancing service quality, administrative responsiveness, and ecological maintenance. Moreover, the findings underscore the critical role of behavioral geography in informing tourism development strategies that are sensitive to local cultural ecosystems and visitor expectations.
        In sum, the study not only advances the academic discourse on tourist motivations and destination attractiveness but also provides pragmatic insights for stakeholders in heritage management, urban governance, and tourism planning. It advocates for an integrative approach that fuses cultural conservation with strategic development, thereby fostering a sustainable and inclusive model of cultural tourism in Nashik Tahsil. Future research may deepen these insights through longitudinal studies, comparative regional analyses, or the integration of digital tourism analytics and community participation frameworks.

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