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# ENHANCING CULTURAL TOURISM: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF FESTIVAL IMPACT ON GANESH UTSAV IN MUMBAI

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## Abstract

Celebrating festivals is one of the fundamental aspects of any culture. Research says, festivals have played a crucial role in the overall growth of cultural tourism. This study is a review paper of various papers that aims to understand the contribution of festivals to cultural tourism with the case study of Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai. An extensive literature research is conducted to study the role of festivals in developing and promoting cultural tourism thus contributing to various economic activities in the city. The Directorate of Maharashtra Tourism termed this year's Ganesh Utsav as International Ganesh Festival 2023 with the slogan of 'Harmonizing Cultures and Embracing Devotion.' Thus, making it a grand affair internationally and in the country by attracting domestic and international tourists and various participants globally. A significant rise and evolution throughout the years in celebration of Ganesh Utsav has been witnessed and now have become a grand public affair bringing people closer and together from various backgrounds and contributing to cultural tourism

The findings of this study show us that there are positive and negative impacts associated with festival celebration. However, the benefits overpower all the negative impacts. If Ganesh Utsav is celebrated keeping all the stakeholders connected throughout it can have great contribution to the overall development of the city and hence creating a positive destination image. Thus, the research will help the readers understand the contribution of festivals to culture and its impact on the host community and to understand the challenges and prospects associated with Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai. The study ends with a few recommendations given by both the researchers to create a positive destination image thereby promoting various tourists from the world and contributing to cultural tourism.

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**Keywords :** Culture, Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Ganesh Utsav, Mumbai, Celebration, Festivals, Destination Image, Tourists, Cultural Festivals

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## Introduction

Celebrating festivals is one of the fundamental aspects of any culture. Rejoicing and honouring the religion and culture by celebrating festivals have numerous benefits to the society (Chaini, n.d.). Being one of the oldest civilizations, India is a land of multi-cultural experiences and traditions. India is also known to be a land of various religions and cultures and thus celebrating festivals as a part of cultural wellbeing is the crux of Indian culture. Culture and festival are very closely associated with each other. A lot of researchers' state that festival is a cultural event celebrated for showcasing

art, socio cultural wellbeing and has an overall impact on the development as it contributes to the social, economic and cultural aspect of the host place. Festivals are said to contribute to the overall development and structure of the society and the host community thereby promoting cultural tourism (Gaur & Chapnerkar, 2015). A few festivals in India that are celebrated with grandeur and opulence are Durga Puja of West Bengal, Jagannath Yatra of Orissa, Ganesh Utsav of Maharashtra, Diwali of Ayodhya. In addition to social and cultural opportunities, festivals also bring tourism and economic opportunities to the host community (Tyagi et al., 2022).

Tourism, being one of the rapidly growing industries today, contributes to the overall development, advancement and economy of the host community (Keni, n.d.). Cultural tourism has gained popularity throughout India in recent years. Cultural tourism and mass tourism revolve around visiting tourist attraction places for exploring culture, heritage, lifestyle etc. of the host community (Pereira et al., 2021). The tourism sector is one of the major sources of income and employment, thus creating wealth and generating development thus leading to a positive destination image on the international platform (Chatterjee, 2018). India today has become a significant tourism market with diverse cultures and traditions taking spiritual tourism in the forefront (Dutta & Mukherjee, 2020)

Festivals were earlier celebrated solely as a part of culture and traditions but today festivals have gone beyond that and have been accompanied by celebration, enjoyment and grandeur.

Besides society and culture, festivals contribute a lot to economic, political and environmental flourishment (Pant, 2019). Ganesh Utsav is one such festival celebrated in various parts of the world, with its prominence in Maharashtra and city of Mumbai. Ganesh Utsav celebration has a lot of significance in Mumbai and is one large affair. Ganesh Utsav back then during the freedom struggle started with nationalism and fight against injustice as the primary agenda by Lokmanya Tilak. However, today it has become a large economic activity contributing to the overall development of the host place and promotion of

various cultural products related to it. Ganesh Utsav 2023 in Maharashtra begin with the campaign 'International Ganesh Festival 2023' with primary goal of promoting tourists from all over the world thus promoting cultural tourists and tourism in Mumbai. Thus, this paper aims at studying the status of Ganesh Utsav especially this year's celebration and giving suggestions for years ahead.

## Objective

To examine the cultural significance and impact of Ganesh Utsav festivals on tourism development in Mumbai through a comprehensive review of existing literature.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study includes an organized process for assessment of prevailing academic literature relating to the effect of Ganesh Utsav on cultural tourism in Mumbai. The academic data bases like Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were explored using keywords "Ganesh Utsav," "cultural tourism," "festivals," "Socio- Economic" and "Mumbai." The peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and relevant publications talking about Ganesh Utsav on cultural tourism were included and were evaluated and conclusions were systematically presented.

## Literature Review

### A. Cultural Significance of Ganesh Utsav

Ganesh Utsav is a grand affair and has emerged as an important cultural event in Mumbai thereby contributing to people coming together irrespective of the religious boundaries (Chatterjee, 2018). This grand festival includes humongous processions and decorations, elaborate cultural activities and devotion thus bringing in a lot of tourism potential attracting millions of tourists not only from the country but around the world (Gupta & Panicker, 2019). This ten- day grand festival also displays huge processions, authentic rituals consisting of traditional and cultural heritage of the city, display of art and moreover depicting Mumbai as

the vibrant city during the festival (Kadam & Bhagwat, 2016). Many researchers also claim that this grand festival brings great cultural pride and sense of belonging and identity amongst the people of Mumbai thus uniting them by transcending the religious boundaries during the celebration (Jha & Sinha, 2020).

### **B. Tourism promotion during Ganesh Utsav**

Many researchers also state that Ganesh Utsav plays a major role in promoting cultural tourism in Mumbai and contributing to the overall image of the society globally (Deshpande & Thampi, 2020). It also attracts both domestic and international tourists to the city and thus contributing to the economic development increased revenue of Mumbai (Sharma, 2017). There are many government agencies and stakeholders working towards the development and promotion of Ganesh Utsav to attract tourists from all over the country (MTDC, 2021). Many researchers also highlight the importance of promoting Mumbai as the prime tourist destination during Ganesh Utsav (Biswas & Dey, 2019). Thus, these promotions act as a marketing tool to promote the festival and attract various tourists who are eager to experience Mumbai's varied cultural tapestry (Patil & Rao, 2018). Different campaigns are organised during and before the grand festival especially social media presence and promotional events to attract tourists from, India and around the world (Shah & Naik, 2021).

### **C. Socio economic development during Ganesh Utsav**

Many researchers have highlighted in their studies with evidence that Ganesh Utsav contributes to the overall development of the city and substantial economic upliftment in the local economy (Patel & Desai, 2019). There is a huge rise in the footfall of tourists from around the world which in turn contributes to various small and large business activities, boosting sales of local vendors and creating livelihood opportunities for them (Mitra & Dey, 2018). The festival also contributes to community cohesion and togetherness along with social wellbeing and bonding among various stakeholders enhancing the cultural vitality of Mumbai (Pawar & Kadam, 2020). Ganesh Utsav not only contributes

significantly to the economic develop but also majorly influences the urban landscape and infrastructural facilities (Nath & Nair, 2017). Various studies reflect an increase in tourism and tourist inflow during the grand celebration, leading to rise in hospitality sector, small- and large-scale business in the city (Dutta & Mukherjee, 2020). Moreover, this increase in the tourists leads to a healthy cultural exchange and intercultural wellbeing enhancing the socio economic and cultural aspect of the city (Kumar & Sharma, 2019).

### **D. Environmental sustainability and urban development during Ganesh Utsav**

This astonishing and humongous increase in the Ganesh Utsav celebration has led to many concerns regarding the environment sustainability and urban development planning (Mukherjee & Basu, 2021). Many researchers have raised an immediate concern over including eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable practices for waste management and disposals along with crowd management to overcome the gap created for ecological maintenance and safeguarding the city's ecosystem (Chopra & Sharma, 2018).

### **E. Community Engagement and Cultural Preservation during Ganesh Utsav**

As mentioned earlier, Ganesh Utsav has got various stakeholder together irrespective of their caste, religion or creed thus contributing to the overall community participation fostering a sense of togetherness and ownership among the locals (Gokhale & Deshmukh, 2019). Various studies also claim that not only the locals but various stakeholders like the NGO, government organizations and civic authorities play a pivotal role in orchestrating the infrastructural logistics and preservation of culture and traditions of the host city (Nair & Menon, 2020).

### **F. Challenges and Opportunities during Ganesh Utsav**

As discussed previously, Ganesh Utsav brings numerous benefits to the society, however it also accompanies with various challenges consisting about environmental concerns, infrastructural preparedness and crowd management (Kumar &



Nair, 2019). An immediate attention is required in addressing these challenges associated to Ganesh Utsav by collaboration of various stakeholders in an environmentally sustainable manner (Joshi & Shah, 2020). The ten extravaganza plays a major role in promoting tourism and attracting cultural tourists thus fostering socio-cultural and economic development in the city of Mumbai. However, sustainable practices and community togetherness practices are to be implemented to ensure long term viability of the festival.

### G. Other Relevant Studies

Shweta Saibal and Mukund BG (2020) in their research paper state that festivals promote culture and heritage of the host people thereby contributing to visitor's experience about the tourist destination. A lot of cultural tourists are attracted to the host community, to promote a healthy exchange of culture between the tourists and host. One of the major effects of cultural or festival tourism is the boost in the economy. However, they state that a lot of efforts and work is to be done to promote various aspects of cultural tourism to showcase the culturally powerful host community. They also recommend that the host community should have better infrastructure facilities, better lodging, stay restaurants to facilitate and boost the experience of tourist or visitors. They also point out that a lot of effort is needed to publicise and promote the festival at a larger level. Good and renowned artist with calibre should be tapped for various cultural programs during the festival. Local transportation and travel services should be enhanced for better travel experience. Lastly, they also talk about the waste management and sustainable way of celebrating festivals thus making it an environment friendly and thoughtful festival (Shweta Saibal et al., n.d.)

Tyagi et. al. (2022), in their research paper titled 'the Study of Cultural Tourism Status In India: Its Trends and Prospective' state that cultural tourism can be divided into tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Preservation and safeguarding of this cultural heritage should be the main motivation and driving force of the government involved. They mentioned about the 2003 UNESCO drive for the safeguarding of the

Intangible cultural heritage and the key takeaways from the convention. They state that cultural diversity helps preserve and promote the role of intangible cultural heritage thereby driving a sustainable development of cultural tourism. Promoting cultural tourism has a lot of benefits accompanied like, employment and income generation, reduction in poverty of the host community, rural migration, and most importantly creating a sense of belonging with pride, sustainable, protected and preserved cultural tourism (Tyagi et al., 2022).

Ashwin (2021) in his research paper titled 'A study on cultural and heritage tourism of India', discusses about the advancement of cultural tourism in India. He states that heritage and cultural tourism has various benefits not only to the host community but to the entire country. It contributes to the overall development, resource preservation, economy, employment generation in the country. Thus, encouraging cultural tourism helps in generating revenue and in turn assists in preserving and protecting the heritage and culture. He also states that there are various reasons behind the growth of cultural and heritage tourism in India like increased disposable income, more time for leisure and holidays, eagerness to learn about culture and heritage, increased presence on social media and digital media, development of various heritage sites. Lastly, he mentions about the beautiful heritage India is blessed with, and it is every citizen's responsibility to take pride and preserve the rich culture and heritage for the future generation.

Chaini (2016) in her research paper has taken the case study of Gopalpur beach festival of Odisha and the rise in cultural tourism during the period of this festival. She states tourism is one of the important sectors in the country and with such a vast and diverse heritage Odisha has always been one of the popular cultural destinations during festivals. Many micro and macro tourism planners and event organizers have started promoting fairs and festivals to boost cultural tourism, create a positive destination image and attract many international and domestic tourists to Odisha during the beach festival. The state government of Odisha has also started planning and implementing various strategies to conduct many

festivals and attract tourists from all over the world. Cultural tourism helps in enhancing and uplifting the economic status of the host destination, thus contributing to various factors like employment generation, better infrastructure and development of culturally rich sites (Chaini, 2016).

Zagade and Deore (2020) through primary data in their research paper discusses that majority of the people believe that cultural tourism helps in boosting the standard of living and income generation thus contributing to employment generation, foreign exchange. They also discuss about the negative aspect of cultural tourism, overcrowding at cultural tourist sites leading to deterioration of resources and cultural heritage. They also discuss that ITDC plays a vital role in the overall development of cultural and heritage tourism. They should actively promote domestic and international tourism for overall development, progress and awareness of our country.

Gaur and Chapnerkar (2015) in their research paper have taken the case study of Ganesh Utsav celebration and mentioned about the social and economic contribution that this festival brings to the country. They mention that there is huge rise in international, local and national tourists to the host place especially in the state of Maharashtra and city of Mumbai. This rise in the tourism activities has witnessed a significant rise in the development of rural and interior regions of Maharashtra also creating livelihood for the locals. They also mention about the ever-increasing faith of Indian population in the elephant headed God, humongous rise in visiting various Ganesh temples and pandals during these ten days has become a every year ritual. Thus, this influx has in turn created a demand to build hotels, lodging facilities, restaurants and various other tourism products that are associated with cultural tourism (Gaur & Chapnerkar, 2015).

Few authors in their research paper titled 'A study on envisioning Indian tourism-Through cultural tourism and sustainable digitalization' mentions that many international or domestic tourist plan their trip to India or within India with a primary agenda of experiencing culture. They also

mention that cultural tourism has now become an unintentional part of every tourist destination, and even if it is not the main agenda of a tourist it usually is a by-product of every itinerary that is designed. Being a vast country, there are many challenges face by the government officials in implementing new policies for infrastructure development in the interiors of India. However, the Indian government has been planning to work towards the development of cultural tourism thus contributing to the overall development. The paper also discusses the challenges faced by every stakeholder and how digitalization has helped overcome most of it and creating a positive destination image in the minds of tourists (Menon et al., 2021).

### **Contribution of Festivals to Culture**

Celebrating cultural festivals have a huge impact in shaping the culture of a society. It becomes a source of passing the new generation and generations ahead the identity and heritage of the host community (Socio-Cultural and Economic Impacts of Religious Festivals on Sustainable Local Community Livelihoods in Kerala. The Case of Palakkad, n.d.). It provides people with various opportunities to connect with all the stakeholders of the festival, it also strengthens the community bond and acts as a social platform to bond. It also is a platform for various artists to showcase and express their talent and add to the cultural richness (Churning & Jayraj Pandya, n.d.). This cultural exchange between different communities and people helps in broadening the ideologies and tolerance among various people associated with the celebration. It also helps people learn and educate themselves of various cultures, traditions and history of all the cultures leading to a greater understanding and togetherness amongst people and society (Gordillo, n.d.). India being a multicultural and diverse society, celebrating festivals respective of their caste and creed promotes unity in diversity amongst various religions and castes (Düşmezkalender et al., 2019). Ganesh Utsav celebration in Maharashtra and other states of India and abroad has immense contribution and significance to the culture (Gopinath, 2019). A Hindu festival which is celebrated with huge enthusiasm, prayers and grandeur (Shankar et al., n.d.). Many

philanthropic activities are conducted during the ten-day grand celebration including blood donation camps, library set up, distributing food on a large scale with a primary aim of welfare of the society. In recent years, environmental awareness is also a main component of the celebration for various pandals. Ganesh Utsav today is celebrated with a lot of environment consciousness and government has started taking initiative for the same by conducting various competitions like 'Ghar Ghar Ganesha Award', Waste to wonder Ganesh Awards. The pandals are now gradually shifting for eco-friendly idols and artificial pond immersion centres (Hiray & Haram, n.d.). Though big idols and pandals are yet to accept the change due to various reasons, many small and medium pandals have moved towards a more sustainable way of celebrating Ganesh Utsav.

### **Contribution of Festivals to Cultural Tourism**

Festivals being a major source of cultural display as it attracts people from various backgrounds who are keen on learning and experiencing various traditions, rituals, community (Small, 2007). Celebrating festivals acts as a major source to attract tourists from all over the world. A rich cultural exchange between the host community and tourists is witnessed through the mediums of festivals. Today festival celebration is not merely a cultural activity but has become an economic activity contributing towards overall development and upliftment of the host or local place (Maughan & Bianchini, 2004). It contributes to the economic development and increase in local economy by increasing job opportunities as tourists spend huge amount on transportation, food, lodging etc. Such increase in tourists in the host place can lead to conservation of various sites, maintenance of and development of the place (Pant, 2019). Ganesh Utsav of Mumbai also has a major role to play in contribution of cultural tourism. Not only has it contributed to the development of the host place but also has helped the country known and recognized worldwide. Ganesh Utsav is now a globally renowned festival thus attracting tourists who are keen to experience the rich and varied cultural heritage of India

(Viability of Festivals: Mumbai's Ganesh Festival-A Case in Point-Varsha Malwade Associate, 2018). Various macro and micro level tourism stakeholders have now started focusing on Ganesh Utsav as a strong tourism product. They have stated making tour packages which are festival centric to cater to tourists who are interested in travelling to Mumbai during this grand festival. Media coverage and publicity has also contributed to the promotion of tourism and people have started travelling to Mumbai solely to visit Ganesh pandal. In the long run more focus is to be given to a sustainable way of celebration festivals keeping in mind the preservation and protection of environmental factors (Hiray & Haram, n.d.).

### **Impact of Festivals on Host Community**

There are enormous benefits and drawbacks of celebrating festivals for the host community (Shelton, n.d.). The organisers of the festivals have started creating a positive cultural image of the host cities by showcasing cultural and historical themes to promote such annual festivals and celebrating the same within the boundaries and community settings (The Impact of Cultural Festivals on Tourism, N.D.). There are profound benefits accompanied with festival celebration to the host community like economic boost, employment generation in both organized and unorganized sectors, various business creations, development of infrastructure is on the primary agenda of both public and private sectors, preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, brings people irrespective caste, creed, gender thus leading to social cohesiveness, the local art, culture and handicrafts are promoted, positive and negative environmental impacts, many corporate social responsibility activities are initiated, and moreover increases the visibility of the host community via various media coverage and word of mouth (Omoregie Etiosa The Impacts Of Event Tourism On Host Communities Case: The City of Pietarsaari Thesis Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences Degree Programme in Tourism The Impacts of Event Tourism On Host Communities Case: The City of Pietarsaari, 2012). Thus, all these benefits lead to domestic and international tourists



travelling to the host community contributing to cultural tourism.

### **Potential and Prospects of Cultural Tourism During Ganesh Utsav**

Ganesh Utsav festival has astonishing benefits and great potential in increasing the tourism activities and tourist inflow to Mumbai. The celebration plays a pivotal role in showcasing Maharashtra and Mumbai on a worldwide platform. As both the researchers visited various pandals, spoke to many devotees and locals from around Mumbai during the festival, it was prominent that there are many domestic and international tourists attracted to the city during Utsav. There are many different activities conducted by various stakeholders during and before the Utsav begins like music, art festival, dance, CSR activities, celebrity presence leading to large media coverage and thus attracting people to visit the city and creating an international goodwill (Gaur & Chapnerkar, 2015). The Directorate of Maharashtra Tourism terms Ganesh Utsav 2023 as International Ganesh Festival 2023 with the slogan of 'Harmonizing Cultures and Embracing Devotion. (Assocham India :: Oldest, Leading, Largest and Apex Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India, n.d.)' The primary agenda of this campaign this year was attracting domestic and international tourists and various participants globally. Significant rise and evolution have been witnessed throughout the years in celebration of Ganesh Utsav and now have become grand public affairs bringing people closer and together from various backgrounds. Various cultural programs by renowned artists and cultural artists from all over Maharashtra were conducted at major places in Mumbai to attract tourists. Apart from small and medium pandals found all over the city, few large and famous pandals that attract tourists are Keshavi Naik Chawl Girgaon, Mumbaicha Raja Ganeshgalli, Lalbaugcha Raja, GSB Seva Mandal Matunga and Wadala and many more (Shankar et al., n.d.). Not only pandals or local celebrations but local food from Mumbai is also a major attraction and is a byproduct for tourists. There are various itineraries designed by tourists' operators for various tourists visiting Mumbai

during Ganesh Utsav. The itineraries covered 4 major cities from Maharashtra like Mumbai, Pune, Ratnagiri and Palghar. Mumbai being the hub of this celebration the itinerary started with exploring Mumbai city. It covered the famous Ganesh pandals like Ganesh Galli in Lalbaug , then iconic Siddhivinayak temple and GSB pandal proceeding to experience the serene Girgaon Chowpatty.

### **Challenges of Cultural Tourism in Mumbai During Ganesh Utsav**

Apart from the benefits and potentials of this grand celebration there are many challenges and drawbacks associated with managing the entire festival (Economic Impact of Festivals: Evidence from Diwali Effect on Indian Stock Market, 2017). While offering a myriad and rich experience to people during festivals there many challenges associated with cultural tourism which impacts both the tourists and the host community. Overcrowding during and before Ganesh Utsav at various places in Mumbai is commonly seen thus creating a challenge for crowd management. Iconic pandals or popular places around Mumbai are always overcrowded creating stampede or major issues leading to an overall increase in security, local police management affecting both tourists and the locals. Overcrowding can also lead to a poor experience for the tourists thus creating a negative impact of the host city and not promoting revisit (Pavluković et al., 2017). Overcrowding can also be a problem with respect to health and hygiene especially with an ongoing global health issue. Traffic management and congestion is another task to manage as there is huge increase in the footfall of various devotees and tourists affecting the overall mobility and transportation for them. During such grand festivities due to increase in footfall and large gatherings, waste management also becomes a challenge (Wang, n.d.). Providing excellent sanitation and waste management with the resource's available leads to an overall increase in load. There are many environmental impacts of Ganesh Utsav, especially the Ganesh idol preparation, immersion and the noise pollution associated with it. Though many households' celebration and small pandals have moved towards a sustainable celebration by buying



naturally made idols, a lot of large pandals still face challenge making big idols with natural based materials. All major and famous pandals are still buying and making POP based idols for their pandals thus creating challenge during immersion. Similarly, most of the household and small pandals have started immersing the idol in artificial ponds made in their housing societies or BMC made artificial ponds. However, still a lot of large pandals are immersing the Ganesha idols in natural water bodies creating challenges for overall marine life and water pollution. With large crowds and gatherings of various tourists from around the country and world, at times they are not aware of the cultural nuances and religious practices of the host community. This can lead to unintentional misunderstanding and cultural insensitivity between the tourist and the locals affecting the host community. While there are many benefits of the celebration in terms of rise in economic activity there may be disparity witnessed in certain other sectors. Commercialization and over media coverage has also led to a loss and misconception of the culture and traditions followed by the host community (Jadhav, 2015). Gentrification is also a big challenge for such grand festival which leads to economic activity and employment generation. The authenticity of the culture and festival is lost somewhere in focusing only on attracting the tourists. To understand and address these various challenges many stakeholders must take responsibilities and a holistic approach is to be followed during this ten-day extravaganza (Gopinath, 2019). The pandals, organizers, government officials, local police and various tourism stakeholders need to come together for better management and planning of infrastructure, crowd management, traffic control, health and sanitation, environment sustainability and various public awareness campaign and creating a positive and pleasant experience for both the tourists and host community.

## Conclusion

In the diverse literature review conducted on enhancing cultural tourism during Ganesh Utsav

in Mumbai, this research provides valuable insights into relation between cultural tourism and Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai. This comprehensive review of literature highlights the relation between cultural tourism and its impact on social, economic, cultural and moreover tourism sector in the city of Mumbai. Festivals are an important part of every culture, and celebrating it brings various benefits to the host community and all associated with it. Thus, mainly contributing to the boost in cultural tourism during the festival celebration (The Impact of Cultural Festivals On Tourism, N.D.). Ganesh Utsav being one of the most celebrated festivals in the city of Mumbai, bring is various benefits to the society. After going through various list of articles, journals, government articles and visiting various pandals the researchers form a conclusion about the significance of various cultural festivals and their contribution to cultural tourism and economy. Thus, forming a concrete base for the objectives mentioned in this paper and contributing to the future scope of study in this area.

Festival tourism has emerged as one of the modern and trending tourism phases, including preservation of authentic culture and tradition of the locals and exploring heritage. Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai is an attraction to various tourists thus contributing to cultural richness and attracting domestic and international tourists (Gaur & Chapnerkar, 2015).

There are many economic benefits that accompany cultural and festival tourism, particularly generating employment, boosting local economy, huge revenue generation thereby contributing to retail, infrastructure, hospitality and tourism sector (Pereira et al., 2021). Moreover, it also fosters and leads to people coming together irrespective of their backgrounds leading to sense of belonging and attachment and healthy intercultural exchange (Pavluković et al., 2017).

However, it is also important to address the negative and alarming aspects of the celebration especially the environment concerns and ensure a sustainably celebrated cultural tourism initiative. Grand festivals like Ganesh Utsav also creates a pressure on the already existing infrastructure,

natural resources thus leading to waste management and disposal challenges, crowd management challenges and environment degradation (Hiray & Haram, n.d.). These adverse impacts can be overcome by implementing and promoting waste management practices, ecofriendly initiatives and involvement of all the stakeholders (Gopinath, 2019).

This ten-day festival has a huge economic, socio cultural and tourism contribution to the city of Mumbai. Organizing festivals in a flawless manner helps creating a positive destination image in minds of people associated. A lot of promotional activities before, during and after Ganesh Utsav can improve the destination image and Mumbai can be portrayed as a cultural destination throughout the ten-day extravaganza. Mumbai being a metropolitan and a busy city throughout the year, there is huge potential to attract tourists from not only the country but around the world during these grand festivities.

The Directorate of Maharashtra Tourism termed this year's Ganesh Utsav as International Ganesh Festival 2023 with the slogan of 'Harmonizing Cultures and Embracing Devotion.' Thus, making it a grand affair internationally and attracting domestic and international tourists and various participants globally. A significant rise and evolution throughout the years in celebration of Ganesh Utsav has been witnessed and now have become grand public affairs bringing people closer and together from various backgrounds and contributing to cultural tourism. Engagement and involvement of host community in the overall planning and execution of Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai can lead to strong sense of belonging and ownership. This sense of belonging can help the government and other stakeholders to manage the Utsav smoothly and shall help preserve the authenticity of our culture via the locals. Immediate attention and actions from various stakeholders mentioned in this research paper, to the recommendations mentioned above can help enhance the interests of various tourist to Mumbai during the Utsav, hence can witness an overall increase in tourist inflow.

This study has a lot of future avenues in terms of quality research and exploring the field of festival

and cultural tourism. Further research can be conducted by scholars and practitioners in the field of cultural tourism to explore the socio economic and environment impact of cultural tourism and identifying the best possible way for sustainable practices in the cultural tourism (Menon et al., 2021). Also, studies in cross cultural contexts and regions can be done to study the impact of diverse cultures and tourism in worldwide context. The study of Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai with respect to cultural tourism has a lot of potential in giving varied cultural experiences and fostering to sustainable development in the years to come.

### Recommendations/Suggestions

Festivals play an important role in promoting cultural tourism, and acts as a promotional tool for various associated activities during festival, Ganesh Utsav is one grand celebration and affair in Mumbai and is celebrated on a very large scale. Attracting tourists and giving the best experience to them is one of the primary agenda of all the stakeholders associated to the grand celebration. Following are a few suggestions and recommendation to promote cultural tourism and for better management of the host community during the celebration

- Implementing and promoting environmental sustainability and eco-friendly practices keeping the authenticity of the culture intact. Encouraging all the stakeholder of the Ganesh Utsav to adopt and implement sustainable practices like proper waste management and reduction, sustainable use of energy and ecofriendly practices for immersion, transportation.
- Research support and monitoring is required for evidence-based implementation of various policies for social, cultural, economic impacts of Ganesh Utsav on the locals and outsiders.
- Collaboration of all the stakeholders to foster and promote Mumbai as tourist attraction place during this ten-day extravaganza. Collaborative partnership of various stakeholders that are involved in the celebration like various researchers, academia,

NGO, government organizations, locals, small and large business organizations and private sector for better functioning.

- Involving and promoting local community and engagement in the overall planning and execution of Ganesh Utsav in Mumbai leading to strong sense of belonging and ownership. Also, helping the locals economically and socially from various activities related to cultural tourism and keeping the cultural heritage intact.
- Promoting cross cultural programs for all the stakeholders involved for a better cross-cultural understanding and leveraging the gap created during the celebration.
- Better crowd control measures and traffic management by the local police, government officials and locals, utilization of technology and crowd monitoring tools to be implemented.
- Investments in infrastructural development, capacity building, road connectivity, local transport for tourism and festival organizers, locals and tourists should be made available in excess considering the huge footfall in Mumbai.
- Implementation of diversified activities during the festival offering all the stakeholders a different perspective to look at managing and celebrating the festival. This can include niche tourism activities, sustainable practices, cultural and heritage trail of the city, many CSR activities thus catering to many segments of the festival.
- Enhancing security arrangements by thorough security measures and checkups ensuring safety for both tourists and locals.
- Providing personalized assistance for all the tourists with the help of maps, guidelines, event schedules, travel information with the help of digitalization.
- Emphasizing on robust waste management, as huge amount of waste is generated throughout the ten-day celebration.

- Preserving the authenticity of our culture while celebrating Ganesh Utsav and not losing its vibrancy because of over media exposure and commercialization. Making people aware about cultural preservation and its authenticity for years to come through various workshops, research and educational campaigns.
- Adapting to the changing environment in the tourism industry and implementing technological advancements in different policies and activities keeping in mind consumer preferences.
- Conducting various community programs to outreach and communicate the locals about responsible tourism, sustainable celebration, cultural sensitivity and significance of Ganesh Utsav.
- Implementing these recommendations can foster an overall rich experience and attract a lot of tourists to Mumbai thus making Ganesh Utsav a great economic activity and making it a positive, sustainable experience for tourists, locals and organizers.

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