

# Pilgrim tourism proposals in Dwarka, Gujarat, India

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**Abstract** - Dwarka is known as Dwarawati as well. In Sanskrit writing it is marked as one of the seven most prehistoric towns in the India. The renowned city of Dwaraka was the place of abode for Lord Krishna during a long span of his life. That has been one reason why he was named as 'Dwarkadhish'. It is alleged that due to destruction by the sea, Dwaraka submerged six times and therefore the seventh such city to be built in the area. There is a tremendous potential of development of tourism considering a golden history of it and the presence of not just a place of worship but marvelous geographical location of it. There are twelve holy shrines of Lord Shiva, near Dwaraka. Dwarka is also the site of Dwarka Pitha which is one of the four cardinal mathas established by Sri Adi Shankaracharya. Others being those at Sringeri, Puri and Jyotirmath. Adi Shankaracharya had visited Dwarakdish Shrine and had established the Dwarka peeth. Most of the tourists visiting Dwarka have a specifically religious purpose. Huge rush of people is observed during festival likes Janmasthmi, Diwali and Mahashivratri. Tourist population during the festival is five to six lacks in total during a year's time. The footfall of daily visitors is approximately four thousand to five thousand during such festivals. This paper attempts to highlight some of the issues related to the development and betterment of tourism activity in Dwarka.

**Key Words:** Dwarka, prehistoric, tourism, shrine, religious, festival.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dwarka is situated in the Jamnagar District of Gujarat state in India. It is close to where the river Gomti merges into the Gulf of Kutch. The city is situated in the westernmost part of India. The city was designed and constructed by Architect Vishwakarma on the orders of Lord Krishna. The Land was reclaimed from the sea near the western shores of Saurashtra region of Gujarat. Dwarka was a planned city on the banks of Gomati River. It was also known as Dwaramati, Dwaravati and Kushsthal symbolizing the new gate to the new life for people of Mathura. Lord Sri Krishna renounced war in Mathura for the greater good of people living in the region and was hence called by the name *Ranchodrai*-for the betterment and safety of the dwellers of Mathura he left his hometown and the battleground as well. Lord Sri Krishna had previously killed *Kansa* who was a cruel king ruled the city and his maternal uncle. Later Krishna made *Ugrasen*-Kansa's father the king of Mathura. The father-in-law of Kansa namely Jarasandha who was the king of Magadha with his friend Kalayavan attacked Mathura 17 times. For the safety of the people, Krishna and the Yadavas decided to move the capital from Mathura to Dwaraka. After Krishna left the earth for Vaikunta, about 36 years after the Mahabharat War (3138 BC), and the major Yadava leaders were killed in disputes among themselves, Arjuna went to Dwarka to bring Krishna's grandsons and the Yadava wives to Hastinapur, to safety. After Arjuna left Dwarka, it was submerged into the sea. Following is the account given by Arjuna, found in the Mahabharata:

Imposed on it by nature. The sea rushed into the city. It coursed through the streets of the beautiful city. The sea covered up everything in the city. I saw the beautiful buildings becoming submerged one by one. In a matter of a few moments it was all over. The sea had now become as placid as a lake. There was no trace of the city. Dwaraka was just a name; just a memory. The Vishnu Purana also mentions the submersion of Dwarka, stating On the same day that Krishna departed from the earth the powerful dark-bodied kali age descended. The oceans rose and submerged the whole of Dwarka.

### 1.1 Characteristics and features of Dwarka Town

The city was built by Vishwakarma on the order of Lord Krishna. Dwarka was a planned city, on the banks of Gomati River. It had six well-organized sectors, residential and commercial zones, wide roads, plazas, palaces and many public utilities. A hall called "Sudharma Sabha" was built to hold public meetings. The city also boasted having the possession of a good sea harbour. The city had 700,000 palaces made of gold, silver and other precious stones. Each one of Lord Krishna's 16108 wives had her own palace. Besides this, the city had beautiful gardens filled with flowers of all seasons and beautiful lakes. The city derives its name from word *dwar* meaning door or gate in the Sanskrit language. Dwarka is considered to be one of the holiest cities in Hinduism and one of the 4 main "dhams" along with Badrinath, Puri, Rameswaram. The city is especially respected by Vaishnavas. Jagatmandir temple which houses the idol of Dwarkadhish, which is one of the forms of Lord Krishna, is also located in Dwaraka. Nageshwar Jyotirling, one of the 12 holy shrines of Lord Shiva, is located near Dwaraka. The Lord here is dressed in Kalyana Kolam where he appears to be a Royal Wedding costume. The place is so sacred as Lord Shri Krishna himself had resided and his successors had built the temple. It is one of the 108 Divya desam.

## 1.2 Tourism in Dwarka

Tourism can be defined as a collection of activities, services that offers an experience of travel, together with transportation, accommodations, provision of food establishments, shopping activity, recreational businesses, commotion facilities and other hospitality services provided for persons or a group itinerant far from their home. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) claims that tourism is at present is the world's largest commerce with annual revenues of over 3 trillion dollars. Tourism provides over six million jobs in the United States, making it the country's largest employer. In India out of the total GDP, 9.6% is the contribution of this industry which was marked as world's seventh largest in the year 2017. Matheson and Wall (1982) created a good working definition of tourism as: "The temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs." The present temple was built in 16th century CE, while the original temple was believed to have been built by Krishna's grandson, Vajranabha. The 5-storied temple is made of limestone and sand. A flag hoisted in the temple tower five times each day. There are two gateways - Swarga Dwar, where pilgrims enter, and Moksha Dwar, where pilgrims exit. From the temple one can view the Sangam (confluence) of River Gomati flowing towards the sea. In Dwarka, there are also shrines for Vasudeva, Devaki, Balarama and Revati, Subhadra, Rukmini Devi, Jambavati Devi and Satyabhama Devi. There is a special temple for Rukmini Devi on the way to Bet Dwarka. A similar deity of Lord Dwarakanath is also kept in Bet Dwarka. The temple has many Shrines of Lakshmi Narayana, Trivikrama, Jambavati Devi, Satyabhama Devi and Rukmini Devi.

## 2. Methodology of study and analysis of Tourism in Dwarka

A group of 20 students accompanied by two faculties from the department of Civil Engineering had stayed and done the local surveys of people with sample size 0.5% and understood the overall socio economic scenario along with the Infrastructural facilities available especially from the point of view to study the Urban Planning and related subjects. The students visited local authorities, archeological survey of India office, government of Gujarat Tourism Department and all the potential sites where there was a possibility of development and strengthening the infrastructure to support and grow the tourism activity in order to uplift the overall socio economic scenario of city dwellers. Local tourists visit from many other districts of Gujarat. Other National tourists are observed from all the states of India since the presence of the Jyotriling of Lord Shiva, but out of those tourists visiting Dwarka from the other states of India, 65% of them are from southern part of India. There are foreign tourists who also seem to be interested to visit the place due to organizations like ISCKON and the other reason being the submerged Dwarka into the sea and the interest from the point of view of research in the field like archeology. Most of the times the foreign tourists are observed only during the winter time in December month. Below is the map indicating the proximity of tourist destinations from the Main shrine of Dwarkadhish, Here the Temple is marked with 00 meter distance and the other tourist spots are marked with referential distances from the main temple complex.

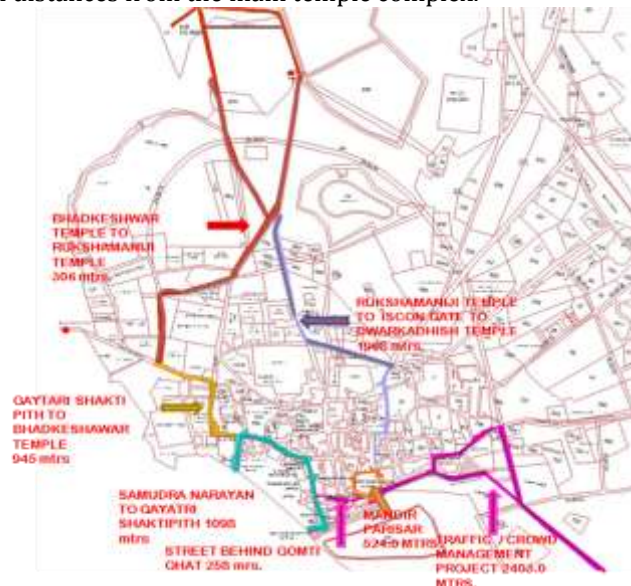


Fig: 1 Map showing the proximity of tourist interest from The Main shrine of Dwarkadhish

## 3. FINDINGS

Based on the site study and interviews of people residing in the town, the classification of purpose of tourists can be categorized in three main types. a.) Religious interest b.) Recreational interests c.) Archeological interests. The places included in the category a.) are Prikrama Path which includes some of the temples like Dwarkadhish Temple, Rukmini devi temple, Sharda pith Math, Satyanarayan temple, Gayatri temple, Geeta Mandir Temple, Bhadkeshwar temple, and Nageshwar Temple. The tourist destination in the category b.) are Dwarka Beach, Samudranarayan beach and Mahatma Gandhi smarak, The light House,

Bet Dwarka ferry ride, Gomti Ghat, Gopi Talav, Ravka Lake, Mayasar lake, Khara Talav. The attractions in the category c.) Are excavations and searching of underwater ruined Dwarka. Many foreign archeologists, students and scholars have conducted research and study based on the facts coming out of dating of some of the ruins from the excavations. Some scientists have claimed that the dating of some of the ruins indicates the time line of the civilization much older than the Sumerian period as well. Some have claimed the existence of Dwarka town older than 20000 years back from now. The office of the archeology has displayed some of the ruins, sculptures and stones excavated from the town. For all the above three categories, it was observed that the needed services like the facilities of hotels, parking, appropriate roads, sanitation and the most important thing is the awareness of people residing in the town to protect the great heritage were missing, Also, there was a need to develop paved roads, plazas, eateries, proper toilets at most of the sites in order to enhance the experience of tourists and give them better facilities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is in the form of design development proposals for some of the important tourist destinations of Dwarka town based on the analysis. The proposals include A.) Prikrama path which begins from Bhadkeshwar Temple leading towards Rukmini Temple. Another path can be designed from the Gayatri Shakti Pith to Bhadkeshwar Temple; similarly from Samudranarayan to Gayatri shakti pith, The area surrounded by gomti Ghat and the streets which is situated behind the Ghat. Development of the Main Temple complex of Dwarkadhish. These paths can have paved areas, proper parking, public toilets, hawker zones, food stalls, and small recreational activities for children like rides or Mela. B.)Development Samudranarayan Beach as a recreational hub which can include floating decks over the beach, some water sports activities, covered sitting areas; children play areas, hawker's zones, parking lots, public toilets etc.C.) Development of Gomti Ghat with reparation of the steps leading towards the water, pavilions which are covered for sit out for visitors, some platforms can be created for the rituals to be performed. D.)Development of Rawla Lake with walking trek and plazas surrounded to the periphery of the lake, food stalls, and children play areas, boating activity.



Fig: 2 Location of Samudra Narayan Beach



Fig: 3 Rawla Lake

Fig: 3 Gomti Ghat and the Gomti River

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