



The Saptapuri Model: Sacred Urban Anchors, Fluvial Symbiosis, and Circular Economy in India's Saptapuri

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Abstract

The present study formulates and validates the Saptapuri Model, a new analytical framework to understand the form of seven holy cities of India. Based on the Indian knowledge system, this model identifies the three foundational principles, i.e., a Sacred Urban Anchor (the central temple), Fluvial Symbiosis (a sacred river), and a Circular Pilgrimage Economy. These three principles ensured the historical resilience of the cities. The research confirms the presence of this triad across all seven cities, i.e., Saptapuri, arguing their millennia-long endurance reveals it is a result of this symbiotic structure. However, in today's time this model has a threat from urban crisis, including environmental degradation, population pressure, and the breakdown of the sacred-river relationship. This study shows that the Saptapuri model doesn't just help us to understand the past but also it offers a way to advance in the present. When we bring together sacred rivers, and pilgrimage economies, we find a framework deeply rooted in culture. This concept helps us to imagine urban futures that embrace sustainability while preserving tradition.

Keywords: Saptapuri model, Sacred Urban Anchor, Fluvial Symbiosis, Circular Pilgrimage Economy, Sacred Geography.

Introduction

In India 31.16% of population is resided in Urban areas among which some places have sacred significance¹. This research paper studies the Saptapuri (sevenholy cities) i.e., Ayodhya (birthplace of Lord Rama), Varanasi (the eternal city), Mathura (birthplace of Lord Krishna), Haridwar (Gateway to God), Kancheepuram (the city of temples), Ujjain (home of Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga), and Dwarka (kingdom of Lord Krishna). These seven cities are on Indian land from eternal times.

Many cities in India demonstrate settlement from millennia in which some cities have temple as core of the settlement and have relation with sacred water body. Indian sacred cities spatial form is essentially shaped by a temple-centric core that dictates pilgrimage routes and urban expansion².

Heritage-based revitalization recognizes the intrinsic value of preserving historical properties and cultural identity. By utilizing a city's unique cultural and historical assets, this approach aims to rejuvenate urban areas while maintaining their historical and cultural significance³.

"For millennia, India's spiritual texts have celebrated these seven cities as sacred portals. The ancient Puranas praisingly detail their power to grant liberation, weaving them into the very fabric of our spiritual geography as eternal cornerstones of faith." Religious tourism as tourism motivated by religious purposes⁴.

Driven by the constant flow of pilgrims, the economy of pilgrimage destinations is a resilient, non-extractive system that sustains localized service economies and community livelihoods⁵. India can be understood as a networked "sacred geography," where tirthas (crossing sites) and kshetras (sacred fields) create a landscape rich in spiritual values and connected by pilgrimage⁶.

This geographical analysis investigates a central question: "This research examines how the harmonious relationship between Sacred Urban Anchors, Fluvial Symbiosis, and a Circular Pilgrimage Economy forged a unique model of historical urban sustainability in India's Saptapuri—and examines the causes of the severe crisis. This same model faces in the modern era." We hypothesize that these cities are linked with cultural spiritual imperatives which drove population to settle in this area which also drove environmentally conscious and socially cohesive planning practices.

Study Area: The Saptapuri (Seven Cities)

The study area is of seven cities and the explanation is as below: Ayodhya is a city in Uttar Pradesh. It is the headquarter of Ayodhya District. Population of Ayodhya district is 24,70,996 as per the 2011 census. Ayodhya city is located at 26°47'56.72" N latitude and 82°12'16.92" E longitude^{1,7}.

Varanasi is a city in Uttar Pradesh. Population of Varanasi district is 36,76,841 as per Census 2011. Varanasi city is located at latitude 25°19'0.05" N and 83°00'37.48" E longitude^{1,7}.

Mathura is a city in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh. Population of Mathura district is 2,547,184 as per Census 2011. Mathura city is located at 27°30'12.60" N latitude and 77°40'19.74" E longitude^{1,7}.

Haridwar is a city in the Haridwar district of Uttarakhand. Population of Haridwar District is 1,890,422 as per Census 2011. Haridwar city is located at 29°56'52.48" N latitude and 78°09'36.90" E longitude^{1,7}.

Kancheepuram is a city in the Kancheepuram district of Tamil Nadu. Kancheepuram district population is 3,998,252 as per Census 2011. Kancheepuram city is located at 12°50'6.54" N latitude and 79°42'0.22" E longitude^{1,7}.

Ujjain is a city in the Ujjain district of Madhya Pradesh. Population of Ujjain district is 19,86,864 as per Census 2011. Ujjain city is located at 23°10'58.00" N latitude and 75°46'38.00" E longitude^{1,7}.

Dwarka is a coastal town in Devbhumi Dwarka district in Gujarat. Population of Devbhumi Dwarka district is 752,484 as per Census 2011. Dwarka is located at 22°14'21.98" N latitude and 68°58'4.01" E longitude^{1,7}.

The Sacred Geometry of Saptapuri Urban Form

The fundamental principle of Saptapuri settlement planning is the sacredness of places. In contrast to today's planning scenarios, which frequently prioritize economic efficiency as seen in modern Smart City Plans, these cities' urban form was determined by cosmological beliefs and a reverence for the natural world. The city was intended to be a mandala (a cosmic diagram), a microcosm of the universe, with the main temple at its spiritual and frequently physical center⁶. Saptapuri consists of seven holy cities which grant liberation. The glorification of

these seven cities is mentioned in verses of Garuda Purana in Sanskrit (Figure-1)⁸.

According to the verse (Garuda Purana), "Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kashi, Kanchi (Kancheepuram), Avantika (Ujjain), and Dwarka—these seven are bestowers of liberation including other tirthas and rivers^{9,10}.

Sanskrit Verse:

अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी काञ्ची अवन्तिका।

पुरी द्वारा वती चैव सप्तैता मोक्ष दायिकाः॥

Transliteration:

"Ayodhyā mathurā māyā kāśī kāñcī avantikā
Purī dvārāvati caiva saptaitā mokṣadāyikāḥ"

According to the verse Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Haridwar), Kashi, Kanchi (Kancheepuram), Avantika (Ujjain), and Dwarka—these seven are bestowers of liberation¹¹.

The description of seven cities (Table-1) are given as follows:

Varanasi: Varanasi is the spiritual heart of India. It is famous for sacred Ghats along Ganga River and Kashi Vishwanath Temple and other temples. This is believed that this city is situated upon the Trident (Trishul) of Lord Shiva and it is said by verse that Kashi is ten times more meritorious than Kurukshetra. A person who dies in Kashi attains liberation. This city is direct gateway to Liberation (Moksh). Any being those travels to Kashi to have the darshan of Lord Vishwanath, if he goes with a true search for the Supreme Truth, undoubtedly attains liberation, because the Lord himself is present there in a physical form¹². City is linked with Ganga River, which is sacred and has power to purify all sins. By seeing (the Ganga), by chanting her name, by touching (her waters), and by bathing in that water, one is released from all sins. And by remembering her at the moment of death, one is liberated¹².

एकाग्रचित्तमोऽप्यायः

सूत उवाच

सर्वतीर्थानि वक्ष्यामि गङ्गा तीर्थोत्तमोत्तमा । सर्वत्र सुलभा गङ्गा त्रिषु स्थानेषु दुर्लभा ॥ १ ॥
हरिद्वारे प्रयागे च गङ्गासागरसङ्गमे । प्रयागं परमं तीर्थं मृतानां भुक्तिमुक्तिदम् ॥ २ ॥
सेवनात्कृतपिण्डानां पापजित्कामदं नृणाम् । वाराणसी परं तीर्थं विश्वेशो यत्र केशवः ॥ ३ ॥
कुरुक्षेत्रं परं तीर्थं दानाद्यैर्भुक्तिमुक्तिदम् । प्रभासं परमं तीर्थं सोमनाथो हि तत्र च ॥ ४ ॥
द्वारका च पुरी रम्या भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायिका । प्राची सरस्वती पुण्या सप्तसारस्वतं परम् ॥ ५ ॥
केदारं सर्वपापघ्नं शम्भलग्राम उत्तमम् । नारायणं महातीर्थं मुक्त्यै वदरिकाश्रमम् ॥ ६ ॥
क्षेत्रदीपं पुरी माया नैमिषं पुष्करं परम् । अयोध्या चार्य्यतीर्थन्तु चित्रकूटश्च सोमती ॥ ७ ॥
वेनायकं महातीर्थं रामगिर्याश्रमं परम् । काञ्चीपुरी तुङ्गभद्रा भीरीलं सेतुवन्धनम् ॥ ८ ॥
रामेश्वरं परं तीर्थं कार्तिकेयं तथोत्तमम् । भृगुतुङ्गं कामतीर्थं कामरं कटकं तथा ॥ ९ ॥
उज्जयिन्यां महाकालः कुब्जके भीमरो हरिः । कुब्जाश्रकं महातीर्थं कालसर्पिश्च कामदः ॥ १० ॥
महाकेशी च कावेरी चन्द्रभागा विपाशया । एकाग्रश्च तथा तीर्थं ब्रह्माणं देवकोटकम् ॥
मथुरा च पुरी रम्या शोणश्चैव महानदः ॥ ११ ॥

Figure-1: Chapter 81 Sanskrit verse of the Garuda Purana⁸.

Table-1: It contains information about Saptapuri (Seven Holy Cities).

City	Sacred Water Body (Rivers & Kunds)	Primary Deity/Theme	Key Spatial Feature
Varanasi	Ganga River, Lolark Kund, Manikarnika Ghat, Durga Kund and other	Shiva, Liberation	Linear Ghats With serpentine or meander of river
Haridwar	Ganga River, Brahma Kund (at Har Ki Pauri), Sati Kund	Gateway to the Gods	Ghats focused on ritual bathing (e.g., Har Ki Pauri)
Ujjain	Kshipra River, Gomti Kund, Ram Ghat	Shiva (Jyotirlinga)	Temple-centric
Mathura	Yamuna River, Radha Kund, Vishram Ghat	Krishna (Birth)	Circular pilgrimage route
Ayodhya	Saryu River, Suraj Kund, Brahma Kund	Rama (Birth)	City with numerous temples
Kancheepuram (Kanchipuram)	Vegavathi River, Sacred Temple Tanks (e.g., at Ekambareswarar Temple)	Shiva & Vishnu	Temple town with sprawling temple complexes
Dwarka	Gomati River, Gomti Kund/Ghat	Krishna	Coastal city

Ujjain: Ujjain is situated on the bank of Kshipra River and the city where Mahakal temple is present. According to Kashi Khanda, Skanda Purana, Undoubtedly, the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi) is ten times more meritorious than Kurukshetra. And the Mahakal forest (Mahakal's forest, i.e., Ujjain) is considered in the scriptures to be ten times more meritorious than Kashi¹². Kshipra river in Ujjain is sacred and have spiritual power, which grants merit of bathing in all sacred water of the world to the person who bath in it. Kshipra has essence of all holy places and bathing in its water destroys all sins and grants liberation¹².

Dwarka: Dwarka is situated on western coast of India. Here Gomati River drains into Arabian Sea. It is famous for Dwarkadhish Temple. This acts as a magnet of religious tourism in Hindus. This city holds spiritual significance. In Sanskrit verses of Skanda Purana, it is said that merely seeing Gomati River destroys sins of person and after bathing and donating here, they will go to Sri Hari's abode. The water of Gomti destroys sins and evil and fulfils all the desires of humans¹². And only by remembering Dwarka it grants immense merit. And if anyone listens or read about Dwarka obtains fruit of performing Ashvamedha Yagya. And one who faithfully remembers the sacred city of Dwarka and Ujjain (Avantika) becomes free from all sins and attain abode of Lord Vishnu¹².

Ayodhya: Ayodhya is settled along the bank of Saryu River. In three Lokas (world), there is no sacred Kshetra (field) as Ayodhya. It shows Ayodhya's supreme status. And intention to die in Ayodhya leads to liberation (Ayodhya Mahatmay). Ayodhya is capital of Ikshvaku dynasty and birth place of Lord Rama. Ayodhya is landscape of epic of Ramayana written by Maharishi Valmiki¹³. It is one among seven cities (Saptapuri) which grants liberation (Moksh). Ayodhya's historical significance as a Sacred Urban Anchor is confirmed by the *Valmiki Ramayana*, which describes it as "a city founded upon dharma and justice"¹³. The city's continuing spiritual significance in India's sacred geography is highlighted by this scriptural foundation. The re-construction of Lord Ram temple

at the sacred birthplace of Lord Ram gives the devotees a monumental site to visit their Lord Ram in temple which act as giving boost to pilgrims and act as magnetic core in the region to attract the pilgrims and transforms Ayodhya into a powerful spiritual and economic hub. This surge in visitors leads to economic growth of city including hospitality, food services, transportation and other developments. Saryu ji has emerged from the toe of Lord Vishnu's left foot, it is a holy river, bathing in it on Ekadashi day gives salvation. This river is soul purifier and this is the river in which Lord Ram attained his eternal abode¹².

Mathura: Mathura is birth place of Lord Krishna. It is pilgrimage center on the bank of Yamuna River. The sacredness of Yamuna can be imagined by the given verse (Figure-2).

एकादश्याञ्चोपवासी कृतशौचः समाहितः ।
कालिन्यां तु नरः स्नातो मुच्यते योनिसङ्कटात् ॥३५॥

Figure-2: Verse of Varah Puran²⁵.

He who fasts on the Ekadashi day and baths in the river Yamuna liberated from cycle of rebirth^{14, 15}. The sacredness of Mathura is described as place that if one utters its name only gets free from its sins. If anyone want free from cycle of rebirth can come to Mathura. Mathura is one among the greatest tirthas and Shri Keshav is greatest among the gods^{14,15}.

Haridwar: Haridwar is a moksha puri (bestowers of liberation) means it is seven among the liberation granting cities. It is one among the Saptapuri. It is situated along the bank of river Ganga. Haridwar is a sacred pilgrimage site for the soul's purification. Ganga river is sacred river and bathing in it wash away sins, purify karma and cleanse soul¹⁶. It have many temples and holy places like Chandi Devi, Mansa Devi, Har Ki Pauri and others. It is said in the Brahma Purana and Padma Purana that even a drop of Ganga water in Haridwar can erase the burden of the karmas of many births¹⁷.

According to Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva 26.12, bathing at Haridwar (Gangadvara), Kushavarta Ghat (Kushavarta), Bilkeshwar Mahadev Temple (Bilvika Tirtha), Neel Parvat and Daksheshwar Mahadev Temple, Haridwar (Kankhala), a person becomes free from sins and attains the heavenly realms¹⁸.

Kancheepuram (Kanchipuram): Kancheepuram is a sacred place which is spiritually adored by devotees for the blessings from Shiva, Vishnu, and Shakti¹⁹. Kancheepuram is famous as the City of a Thousand Temples. It is spiritual hub famous for its temple like Kailasanathar temple, Kamakshi Amman temple, Devaraja Swami temple (Sri Varadharaja Perumal temple) and other temples. It is famous for its glorious culture, heritage and famous silk sarees. It is also called silk city²⁰. While Lord Brahma was worshipping Vishnu, Saraswati, due to a quarrel with Lord Brahma, took the form of a large river named Vegavathi and rushed towards the site of the yajna. She intended to disrupt Brahma's sacred ritual at Kancheepuram. Therefore, Lord Vishnu lay down here, resting his right hand on his head, to protect Brahma's yajna from Saraswati²¹. Then it is famous as Yathothkari Perumal temple of the reclining Lord at Thiruvekka. The sacredness of temple tanks (teertham) is also holy as major river. The source of the temple pond's water is linked to the story of Vegavathi river, where devotees purify themselves by performing puja²². This unique triple-layered water sanctity perfectly justifies Kancheepuram's place in the Saptapuri model, demonstrating a different but equally powerful form of the "Symbiotic River-City Relationship" where sacredness is derived from both a physical river and a profound theological belief.

All these seven cities are known as Saptapuri and have their spiritual connection with the water body. And the settlement is oriented towards the Ghats or riverfronts of these rivers. From ancient times to till date these ghats act as multi-purpose public spaces for ritual purposes, social gatherings, interactions, commerce and now as site of washing clothes and waste dumping into the river. This relation ensures perennial water sources for drinking, agriculture and transportation while maintain its sacredness.

The Saptapuri Model: Sacred Urbanism and Circular Economy

The three factors of Saptapuri Model are as follows: i. The Temple as the Sacred Urban Anchor, ii. The Primacy of Sacred Waterscapes or Fluvial Symbiosis, iii. A Resilient, Pilgrimage-Driven Economy or Circular Economy.

Temple as sacred Urban Anchor: In the Saptapuri cities, temples act as sacred urban anchor which acts as the fundamental principle for urban form, economic activity and social life. The central temple like Lord Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Kashi Vishwanath in Varanasi, Mahakaleshwar in Ujjain, Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple in Mathura, Dwarkadhish Temple in Dwarka, temples and ghats in Haridwar

and in Kancheepuram acted as the primary urban anchor. From the core of the city, it seems dense urban and then radiating outwards and forms the mixed use of lands of agriculture and bare lands.

A Mixed-Use Sacred Core and Compact and walkable Pilgrimage City: The sacred core of city seamlessly integrates religious, economic and residential activities. Religious infrastructure includes temples, Ghats, monasteries and pilgrimage rest houses known as Dharmshalas. Economic activity is linked to markets selling religious items, flowers, and other necessities for pilgrims. Residential zones provide housing for priests, artisans, service providers, and local residents.

The core area (area of Temple & its surrounding) is creating a compact walkable city where daily needs were met within a short distance, and within this path to bow to god or for darshan people prefer to walk to obtain maximum benefit of spiritual travel which minimizes the need for transport and fostering strong, localized community bonds—a historical precedent for the modern "15-minute city" concept.

The Primacy of Sacred Waterscapes or Fluvial Symbiosis: All seven cities are situated alongside the bank of rivers and have spiritual connection with the water bodies. The seven cities have river, sacred kundas (water tanks or reservoirs) and have sacred nature. This belief joined the cities with the water with the thread of faith and spiritualism. And the pilgrims visit these places for spiritual purposes.

For millennia, in Indian spiritual Grant has, the significance of these Seven cities is well explained that these seven cities have power to grant liberation. These seven cities are settled on the bank of rivers. The cultural significance of river is well known in Hinduism, as we treat river as goddess and its water is sacred. Other than rivers, water tanks or kund as are also found to be sacred in Skand Purana which includes Lolark Kunda, Sita Kunda, Surya Kunda and other Kundas.

Water is considered as one of the most sacred symbols in Hinduism as it is part of Panch Bhootas (Five elements). Humans everywhere settled along with the perennial waters source and most cities of south Asia developed along river and spring before further expansion around ponds, man-made tank and well²³. Fluvial symbiosis represent bond between city and river where both play their role in which river act as sacred water body as well as source of water in the city and city protect river by worship and management.

A Resilient, Pilgrimage-Driven Economy or Circular Economy: The economy of city is resilient and decentralised; this is generated because of constant flow of pilgrims (tirtha yatri). This results in the growth of non-extractive economic base. It includes local craftsmanship, where Artisans produce religious artifacts and goods, ensuring self-sufficiency.

A service-based industry focused on hospitality, religious services, and commerce and the agricultural hinterland provide the food supply to city. This economic model is cyclical in nature and it is renewed by pilgrimage. Figure-3 shows the Circular economy flow chart, it shows that religious tourism helps in the generation of economy in the area. The pilgrimage economy operates in a circular flow, where pilgrims spend on rituals, food, and accommodation, boosting the local economy and creating jobs. Because of this economic activity, it

generates revenue that funds the temple's maintenance and development, which ensure the heritage and sacredness preservation for future generation.

In the given Table-2 it is demonstrated that all three factors i.e., The Temple as the Sacred Urban Anchor, The Primacy of Sacred Waterscapes or Fluvial Symbiosis and A Resilient, Pilgrimage-Driven Economy or Circular Economy are valid for Seven cities.

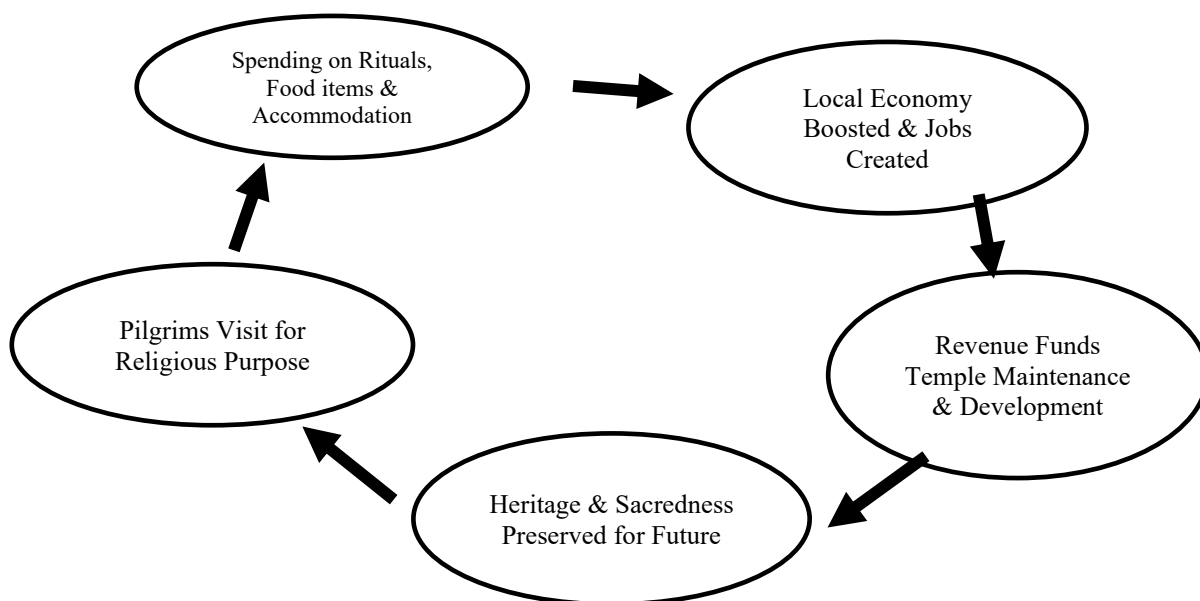


Figure-3: Pilgrimage Economy Cycle or Circular Economy Flowchart.

Table-2: Validity Table based on triad of Saptapuri Model in the Seven holy cities, where Y= Yes.

City	Sacred Urban Anchor	Primacy of Hydrology or Fluvial Symbiosis	Pilgrimage Economy	Validation Status
Ayodhya	(Y) Ram Janmabhoomi/Mandir as restructuring core	(Y) Saryu River central to rituals and identity	(Y) Pilgrimage circuit driven economy	Valid
Varanasi	(Y) Kashi Vishwanath Temple as a core	(Y) Ganga River; multi-functional Ghats	(Y) Pilgrimage service economy (priests, lodges, shops)	Valid
Mathura	(Y) Networked anchors (Janmasthan (Birthplace) + Vrindavan temples)	(Y) Yamuna River central to mythology and rituals	(Y) Braj Parikrama pilgrimage economy	Valid
Haridwar	(Y) Har Ki Pauri ghat as primary ritual anchor	(Y) Gangariver	(Y) Pilgrim/Kumbh Mela based service economy	Valid
Ujjain	(Y) Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga as magnetic core	(Y) Kshipra River essential for rituals	(Y) Pilgrimage festival-based economy	Valid
Kancheepuram (Kanchipuram)	(Y) Dual core (Ekambareshwarar + Varadharaja Perumal Temple)	(Y) Adapted: Vegavathi River + Temple tanks	(Y) Pilgrimage + temple-linked silk industry	Valid
Dwarka	(Y) Dwarkadhish Temple as central monument	(Y) Gomati River + Arabian Sea confluence	(Y) Pilgrimage based economy	Valid
Validation Status	Valid	Valid	Valid	Valid

Contemporary Challenges and Enduring Relevance

Saptapuri today are urban places and have immense pressure from modern urbanization, uncontrollable tourism and pollution and the result is that these are now congested areas. As anyone visits here still feel the same, how these places experience congestion of built-up area and population but still since people are connected with their deep roots which motivates them to visit these places to pray their deities and dip in sacred water in order to get rid of their sins and to obtain blessings.

Cultural Memory and Adaptive Reuse

Deep spiritual connection of people with these cities still preserved the cultural significance of the cities. Destruction by invading forces did not lead to abandonment of these places. Instead, it triggered cycles of rebuilding and re-construction of temples on the same sacred sites. This demonstrates that the city's identity was not in its physical structure but it also lies in the spiritual significance which preserves its places from millennia. The urban Principle of Saptapuri is found to be relevant today. Cultural Heritage-Led Regeneration occurs as pilgrims visit Cultural heritage sites, they spend on items of that area and give their contribution to economic growth which helps in creating jobs for local people, guides, and service providers. And some contribution is also used in the development or maintenance of temple and other religious places which leads to preservation of these sites and make them sustainable and living for future generations. This process makes the city's living culture and economy the river together, safeguarding its spiritual legacy for the future. The Figure.3 shows the cyclical flow of pilgrimage economy. It shows that spiritual practice promotes sustainable local development. It creates a self-reinforcing cycle of faith and preserves the heritage places by generating economic activity. The city follows the principle of human-scale, walkable neighborhoods, particularly in the temple area, where pedestrian-only zones reduce pollution, strengthen community bonds, and it symbolizes the historic pilgrimage experience for visitors. It follows the water-sensitive urban design by revitalizing riverbanks (Ghats) with integrated river basin management, and considering water as a sacred living entity. Decentralized circular economies are also enhanced by strengthening local service cooperative committees and artisan associations, which build robust non-extractive economic networks that lessen reliance on imports and retain wealth within the community.

Discussion

This Saptapuri model is based on the study of seven holy cities which have all three factors applicable i.e., Sacred Urban Anchor, Fluvial Symbiosis and a circular economy. As per the Table 2, it is valid that there is consistent presence of a Sacred Urban Anchor, Fluvial Symbiosis and a circular economy across all seven cities. It is clear that their historical longevity and

resilience is not accidental. It is the settlement from which development time radiated from sacred places. From Indian Knowledge system all seven have their sacredness either in temple or in river or in Kundas and the land itself have some sacredness. The Saptapuri model is also applicable to other holy places in which this triad validates like Prayag, Vindhyachal etc.

As Temples acts as anchored center and lies along river banks from ancient times, it acts as settlement for population and now in modern time these cities are urbanised and facing crisis of population pressure and urban sprawl and environment degradation and cultural erosion. These challenges lead to challenge to their future. As population is rising in urban areas lead to population congestion and act as pressure on land and vehicular congestion and all crises in the area. As the sprawl of area is uncontrolled which leads to treating of sacred rivers as sewage drains which leads to different environmental crises.

Conclusion

As study of Saptapuri (Seven Holy Cities) as per Indian knowledge it signifies that it is much more a pilgrimage centre and a sacred holy place. As Saptapuri model follows all three factors i.e., Sacred Urban Anchors, Fluvial Symbiosis and Circular Pilgrimage Economy. But in modern context these seven are experiencing urban concentration which impact Sacred Urban Anchor and is now facing sprawl and congestion, Fluvial Symbiosis is broken as river experiencing polluted water which comes from various sewage outlet and industrial waste. In addition to it, Circular Pilgrimage Economy is strained into an unsustainable, extractive economy tourism.

As this model is valid for all seven cities but it is not limited to these only, it also shows validity in other Hindu religious sites.

These sacred places are existing for millennia but now they have environmental crisis. To protect it and maintain its sustainability Saptapuri thus presents an immediate alternative that is consciously reintegrate their indigenous model—securing the urban anchor, restoring fluvial co-existence, and nurturing a circular economy. By looking toward their fundamental knowledge, we can ensure a sustainable future for these eternal cities, keeping these spiritual and cultural centres vibrant.

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