

Pilgrimage Tourism in India: Strategies for Tourism Promotion and Lessons for Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage tourism is a significant component of India's tourism industry, attracting millions of domestic and international visitors annually. With its rich spiritual heritage and well-developed infrastructure, India has successfully positioned itself as a global hub for religious tourism. This study employs qualitative research methods, including document analysis and case studies, to examine India's strategies in developing and promoting pilgrimage tourism. Key initiatives such as infrastructure investment, digital promotion, public-private partnerships, and cultural branding have played crucial roles in India's success. Drawing from India's experience, this article explores lessons applicable to Vietnam, a country with immense potential for pilgrimage tourism due to its diverse religious and spiritual sites. The study highlights the need for strategic planning, improved infrastructure, community involvement, and sustainable development practices. By leveraging these insights, Vietnam can enhance its pilgrimage tourism sector, attract more visitors, and contribute to socio-economic growth. The findings of this article offer policy recommendations for tourism authorities, industry stakeholders, and local communities aiming to develop Vietnam's pilgrimage tourism in a sustainable and competitive manner.

Keywords- India, Pilgrimage Tourism, Strategies, Lesson Learned, Vietnam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage tourism is one of the oldest and most significant forms of travel, deeply embedded in religious and cultural traditions worldwide (Polus, R., & Carr, 2023). It involves journeys to sacred sites for spiritual enrichment, cultural exploration, and historical appreciation. Throughout history, religious tourism has played a crucial role in shaping societies, fostering intercultural exchanges, and contributing to economic growth. Among the leading destinations for pilgrimage tourism, India stands out as a country with a rich spiritual legacy, attracting millions of domestic and international visitors annually.

India is one of the oldest living civilizations and a great reservoir of history, culture, philosophy, and religion. It is home to a diverse religious heritage that includes Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and

Islam, making it one of the most sought-after destinations for religious travelers (Anilkumar & P. Adinarayana, 2019, p.1). The country is particularly renowned for its Buddhist cultural heritage, which holds immense significance not only for its spiritual value but also for its architectural brilliance. From the sacred city of Varanasi to the revered sites of Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Amritsar, India has successfully preserved and promoted its religious tourism, making it an essential part of its overall tourism industry. The magnificent structures of ancient temples, monasteries, and spiritual festivals reflect the country's deep-rooted religious traditions, attracting pilgrims and travelers seeking both faith and cultural immersion.

The Indian Buddhist heritage is of great interest to followers of Buddhism worldwide. India is the land where Buddhism originated, and it remains an inspiration for traditions and customs associated with

Buddhist teachings. Over the years, Buddhist tourism in India has expanded due to government efforts to preserve heritage sites, improve accessibility, and enhance the overall pilgrimage experience (Ritu Mishra, 2024). These initiatives have made India a premier destination for those seeking spiritual enlightenment and historical insights into the life of Lord Buddha.

To support and promote pilgrimage tourism, the Indian government, in collaboration with private stakeholders, has implemented a range of policies and initiatives. Key strategies include significant investments in infrastructure, the development of tourist circuits, digital marketing campaigns, and public-private partnerships. Projects such as the Buddhist Circuit, which connects key Buddhist pilgrimage sites across India and Nepal, have improved accessibility and boosted religious tourism (Kiran A. Shinde, 2022). Additionally, the government has focused on sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that these sacred sites are preserved for future generations while also generating economic and social benefits for local communities. The dramatic growth of pilgrimage tourism in India over the last 25 years is one of the most remarkable transformations in the country's tourism sector, positioning India as a leading spiritual and cultural destination.

Vietnam, like India, possesses immense potential for pilgrimage tourism due to its rich spiritual traditions (VietnamNet, 2017), including Buddhism, Confucianism, and indigenous religious practices. However, despite the presence of significant religious sites such as Yên Tử, Truc Lam Zen Monastery, and the Perfume Pagoda (Huong), Vietnam has yet to fully capitalize on its potential in this sector. Challenges such as underdeveloped infrastructure, limited international promotion, and lack of strategic planning hinder its growth. By analyzing India's successful strategies in pilgrimage tourism, valuable lessons can be drawn for Vietnam to enhance its religious tourism industry.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is grounded in Sustainable Development Theory, which emphasizes balancing economic growth, environmental conservation, and socio-cultural preservation. As pilgrimage tourism continues to grow, ensuring its sustainability is crucial for both present and future generations. According to the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sustainable development refers to meeting current needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs. In the context of pilgrimage tourism, this theory highlights the need to develop religious tourism in a way that benefits local communities, protects the environment, and preserves cultural heritage.

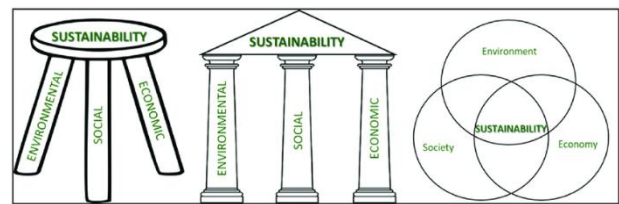


Image 1: The conceptualizations of sustainable development

Source: Spiliotopoulou M, 202, p. 4

Economic sustainability in pilgrimage tourism involves generating long-term benefits for local communities, such as creating jobs, fostering small businesses, and improving infrastructure (Ceyhun Elgin, Adem Yavuz Elveren, 2024). India has effectively implemented strategies such as public-private partnerships, investments in tourism circuits, and heritage conservation programs, which have contributed to the economic growth of pilgrimage destinations. For Vietnam, adopting similar strategies could boost its pilgrimage tourism sector by investing in infrastructure and local tourism services.

Environmental sustainability is another key component. Pilgrimage sites face environmental challenges such as overcrowding and waste accumulation. India has addressed these issues through eco-friendly initiatives, including green transport and waste management. Vietnam can adopt similar practices to ensure the environmental preservation of its sacred sites.

Finally, socio-cultural sustainability ensures that religious sites retain their cultural and spiritual integrity (Christopher D. Ives & Jeremy Kidwell, 2019). India has implemented community-based tourism and heritage conservation to preserve the authenticity of sacred sites. Vietnam, with its rich spiritual traditions, can implement policies that involve local communities and protect the cultural significance of pilgrimage sites.

This framework helps examine how India has successfully developed its pilgrimage tourism sector and offers valuable insights for Vietnam to build a sustainable tourism model that promotes economic, environmental, and cultural benefits.

III. FINDINGS

3.1 The significance of pilgrimage tourism in India

Pilgrimage tourism holds significant importance in India, serving as a cornerstone of both cultural and spiritual life. India, as the birthplace of four major world religions, has long been a favored destination for religious tourism, attracting millions of domestic and international visitors annually. Pilgrims come to India not only to visit sacred sites but also to seek spiritual fulfillment and connect with divinity. Religious tourism in India has been a key contributor to the country's economic, cultural, and social development, with major pilgrimage destinations acting

as vital hubs of commerce and cultural exchange (Shinde, 2015). These sites offer more than just religious experiences; they embody the country's rich heritage and history, showcasing architectural marvels, rituals, and traditions passed down through centuries. Pilgrimage tourism also plays a critical role in sustaining local economies, especially in rural areas, where these sacred places drive demand for accommodations, transport, and local goods (Tirosh Samuelson, 2018). Moreover, the significance of pilgrimage tourism extends beyond religious observances, as it fosters intercultural dialogue, promotes peace, and strengthens communal bonds among people from diverse backgrounds. The immense cultural diversity and spiritual significance of these pilgrimage sites make India a unique and powerful destination for those seeking both religious and cultural enrichment. Religious tourism, particularly pilgrimage, has thus been deeply woven into the fabric of Indian society, continuously shaping its identity and fostering the preservation of its sacred cultural landscapes (Terzidou et al., 2018).

3.2. “Incredible India” campaign and Branding of India for tourism

Incredible India officially began as a marketing effort by the Government of India in 2002 to encourage tourism and represent India as a reputable tourist destination. The immense diversity of India, whether in terms of people and cultures or landscape, lends itself ideally to the tagline “Incredible India”. The Ministry of Tourism has actively pushed the Incredible India brand across the world and through numerous abroad offices, particularly in Asia (Geary, 2013). For example, as part of the "Act East policy", the Ministry recently launched a media campaign targeted at tapping into source markets in East Asia, especially Japan, in order to attract a bigger number of visitors with a specific interest in Buddhist monuments (Press Information Bureau, 2014). In this perspective, Buddhism, with its cross-border Asian cultural and historical roots, represents a substantial investment potential that aligns with India's broader global nationalist goal.

With its Incredible India campaign, it builds an integrated media strategy with the aim of promoting India as a destination of choice for discerning travellers. The campaign portrayed India as an attractive tourist destination by introducing different aspects of Indian culture and history such as yoga, buddhist pilgrimage, etc.

In September 2017, the Ministry launched the “Incredible India 2.0” campaign in the country, signaling a shift away from generic global promotions and toward market-specific promotional plans and content creation. The campaign focuses on digital and social media marketing, as well as the promotion of niche tourism products (Press Release, 2020). It can promote various destinations and tourism products of the country including pilgrimage, medical and wellness tourism in important and potential source markets overseas.

In 2021 (Ministry of Tourism, 2021), the Government is designing the proposal to launch Incredible India 3.0 campaign with enhanced incentives to revive the tourism in India after the Covid-19 setback with the objective of creating awareness among the citizens about the rich heritage, culture, lesser-known destinations, and local destinations of the country to promote domestic tourism. Under this initiative, Ministry is carrying out promotional activities like webinars, online pledges, and Quiz programs to generate awareness among the public about the country and its tourism destinations/products including lesser-known destinations, Heritage, culture, and wellness, local tourism destinations etc.

Furthermore, one of the key tourism promotions by India to attract international visitors is the development of a Buddhist religious circuit, offering tailored itineraries that allow tourists to explore multiple sacred destinations over varying durations. A popular option is the seven-day tour, which covers six to seven significant Buddhist sites, including Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Kushinagar, Lumbini, Shravasti, and Sarnath. These locations are of immense historical and spiritual importance, such as Bodh Gaya, where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. For those with more time, the 15-day tour expands the journey to include up to 12 destinations (Mihir Bhonsale, 2019, p. 4), providing an immersive experience of India’s rich Buddhist heritage. This initiative helps India position itself as a premier destination for Buddhist pilgrims and spiritual travelers, promoting the country’s cultural significance and spiritual tourism offerings.

Destination	Significance	Major Religious Sites
Lumbini	Birth of Sakyamuni Buddha	Mayadevi Temple*, Tilaurakot, Devdaha.
Kapilvastu (Piprahwa)	Buddha’s father Sudhodana’s palace	Stupa and Museum where Buddha’s ashes lie buried.
Rajgir	Monsoon Retreat for 12 years	Saptaparni Caves, Vishwa Shanti Stupa.
Bodh Gaya	Enlightenment under Bodhi tree	Mahabodhi Temple*, Pragbodhi Caves.
Sarnath	Turned the Wheel of Law	Deer park, Stupas erected by Ashoka.
Shravasti	Favourite rainy retreat	Jetavana Monastery, KacchiKuthi and PakkiKuthi.
Nalanda	Ancient university where Buddha preached	Remains of the NalandaVihar*.
Sankisa	Descended from heaven through a ladder of gold	Shrine marking the descent.
Kesariya	Delivered the Kalama Sutta	Stupa commemorating Kalama Sutta
Kaushambi	Spent sixth and ninth year after enlightenment	
Vaishali	First halt after becoming an ascetic	Stupa and Ashokan pillar.
Kushinagara	Mahaparinirvana	Nirvana Stupa.

*UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Image 2: The Buddhist Circuit Route
 Source: New Delhi: Goodearth Publications, 2009

To promote India as a prime destination for spiritual and religious tourism, the Union Ministry of Tourism has identified five “Pan-India Mega Circuits” focusing on showcasing the country’s Buddhist heritage (Press Information Bureau, 2016). This initiative, launched in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, replaces the previous model of promoting state-wise circuits through Indian missions. A key element of this promotion is the strategy outlined in the 2014 document, "Investing in the Buddhist Circuit - Enhancing the spiritual, environmental, social, and economic value of places visited by Buddha in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (2014-2018)" (Mihir Bhonsale, 2019, p. 10). This strategy, supported by the central government, state governments, Buddhist monasteries, and the World Bank Group, advocates for public and private investments totaling INR 1,000 crore in infrastructure development and site improvements (Mihir Bhonsale, 2019, p. 10). The strategy also focuses on targeting a range of pilgrims, including budget pilgrims, comfort pilgrims, budget explorers, and high-end explorers.

The transnational Buddhist circuit is already a well-established route among Buddhist pilgrims. To further enhance its appeal, India aims to attract comfort pilgrims and budget explorers from key source markets such as Japan, Korea, Thailand, Singapore, China, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Abdul Qadir, 2016). By targeting these markets, India hopes to draw in a broader range of tourists seeking spiritual and cultural experiences. Additionally, emphasizing products centered around meditation and wellness could help extend the duration of stays at various destinations within the Buddhist circuit, enriching the overall experience for visitors while boosting the local economy.

3.3. Evaluation strategy for promoting India's image through Buddhist pilgrimage

India has made significant progress in promoting pilgrimage tourism, particularly by leveraging its rich Buddhist heritage, which has become a major attraction for both domestic and international visitors. The country's efforts in infrastructure development, strategic marketing, and cultural preservation align with the broader framework of religious and cultural tourism, emphasizing the role of sacred destinations in attracting pilgrims. Pilgrimage tourism has evolved into a crucial component of India's tourism economy, catering to a diverse array of visitors, particularly from countries with substantial Buddhist populations, such as Vietnam, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. These efforts are in line with the growing recognition of pilgrimage tourism as a key economic driver, with a focus on enhancing the spiritual, cultural, and social value of sacred sites while fostering tourism development in India.

One of the most notable successes in the sector is the increasing number of international tourists visiting India's Buddhist sites. In 2022 and 2023, a total of about 130 million tourists visited the pilgrim city. The success

from this project was also implemented in other parts of the country, including Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh (Bulbul Dhawan, 2024). Between 2016 and 2019, the number of Vietnamese tourists visiting India grew by an average of 17% annually (Nguyen Thu Trang, 2023, p. 5). The travel and tourism sector in India has made significant contributions to the country's GDP from 2019 to 2023 (see Image 3), playing a pivotal role in the nation's economic growth.

In 2023, the sector contributed approximately 9.1% to India's total GDP, amounting to over 11.10 trillion U.S. dollars. This marked a notable increase of 12.1% compared to the previous year, underscoring the resilience and recovery of the industry. Throughout these years, the tourism sector's consistent growth has been fueled by various factors, including the expansion of domestic and international travel, the promotion of pilgrimage and cultural tourism, and substantial investments in infrastructure. Additionally, the sector has had a multiplier effect on job creation, local economies, and other industries, further solidifying its importance to India's overall economic development. This trend highlights the increasing significance of travel and tourism as a key driver of India's economic performance in the past five years. This rise reflects India's successful outreach to countries with significant Buddhist populations. The government's promotion of key Buddhist pilgrimage sites, including Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Kushinagar, where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, delivered his first sermon, and passed away, respectively, has solidified India's position as a significant destination for Buddhist pilgrims from across the world.

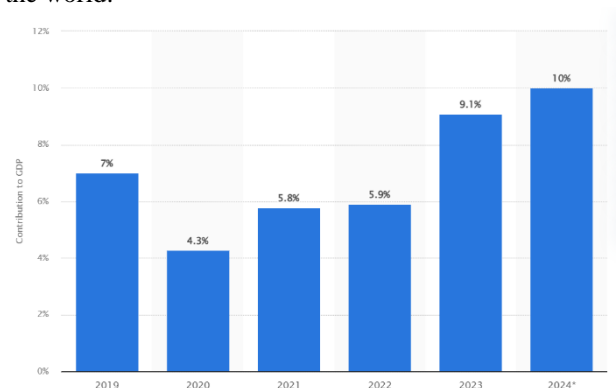


Image 3: Contribution of the travel and tourism sector to the GDP of India from 2019 to 2024

Source: Sandhya Keelery, 2024

To enhance accessibility to these vital pilgrimage destinations, significant infrastructure improvements have been made (Charmaine Jacob, 2024). New roads, airports, and railways have been constructed, making travel to these sites more efficient and convenient for pilgrims. For instance, the Kushinagar International Airport, which opened in 2021, has enabled direct international flights to one of Buddhism's most important pilgrimage destinations (The

Economic Times, 2021). This improvement has eased travel for foreign tourists visiting this sacred site. Additionally, efforts have been made to upgrade facilities at Bodh Gaya and Sarnath, providing better accommodations, medical services, and amenities for pilgrims, ensuring a more comfortable experience for religious visitors.

The Ministry of Tourism has also played a crucial role in promoting pilgrimage tourism through initiatives such as the Buddhist Conclave (Mihir Bhonsale, 2019, p. 11). This event brings together international tour operators, religious scholars, and stakeholders, helping to position India as a leading Buddhist pilgrimage destination. Furthermore, India's expansion of marketing outreach via online platforms, including social media and targeted campaigns in countries like Vietnam, Japan, and Sri Lanka, has strengthened India's appeal as a pilgrimage tourism hub. The "Incredible India" campaign has also highlighted the country's diverse religious tourism offerings, not only focusing on Buddhist sites but also attracting visitors to Hindu, Sikh, and Jain temples, thereby diversifying the country's tourism landscape.

These efforts have contributed significantly to the growth of India's tourism revenue, with the sector expected to contribute over \$512 billion to the country's GDP by 2028 (Invest India, n.d). Pilgrimage tourism, in particular, is considered one of the key drivers of this growth, contributing to the development of local economies through increased demand for accommodation, transport, and other services.

Despite the growth in pilgrimage tourism, several limitations hinder its full potential (Rajiv Mishra et al, 2024). Infrastructure at some sites still needs improvement, with poor road conditions, inadequate public transport, and lack of hygienic accommodations deterring visitors. While the government has focused on human resource development, local personnel still require specialized training to offer high-quality services. Cleanliness remains a significant issue, as many sites suffer from neglect, especially during peak seasons, with littering and poor sanitation tarnishing the visitor experience. The commercialization of religious sites is another concern, as it often overshadows the spiritual aspects and threatens the preservation of sacred places. Security concerns, including crime and terrorism, particularly affect women travelers, making safety a priority for tourism development. Additionally, connectivity between pilgrimage sites, especially in rural areas, needs improvement to facilitate easier access for pilgrims. Addressing these issues is crucial for the continued growth of pilgrimage tourism in India.

3.4. Suggestion for Vietnam

To develop religious heritage tourism sustainably and establish it as a leading economic sector, the Vietnamese needs to create a comprehensive system of policies that address both long-term and short-term needs. These policies should be reflected in the national

tourism development strategy and planning, aiming to promote cultural heritage tourism effectively. The government should also establish direct travel routes from major cities to Buddhist destinations and religious sites, creating convenient access for tourists. Additionally, building more hotels and rental apartments around these sacred sites will allow tourists to stay for extended periods. To enhance the visitor experience, the government should encourage local restaurants to offer a variety of Vietnamese dishes, showcasing the country's culinary heritage, and set up medical service points to ensure the health and safety of tourists.

Furthermore, Vietnam can enhance its spiritual tourism offerings by encouraging Buddhist monasteries to open meditation retreats and offer vegetarian cuisine, allowing visitors to purify their bodies and minds during their spiritual journeys. The local authorities should invest in the development of meditation rooms, food halls, and exhibitions on Buddhist art to diversify spiritual tourism products. This can include organizing exchange programs where tourists interact with monks and nuns, attending sermons and Dharma talks to deepen their spiritual experience. Moreover, effective communication strategies and the promotion of digital transformation are essential to stimulate demand and revitalize the tourism market. This can be achieved through e-marketing, social media campaigns on platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, and the development of smart tourism. A focus on enhancing the skillset of tourism professionals and improving the competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism industry will also be crucial in attracting international tourists.

Changing the local perception of spiritual tourism as a valuable and meaningful experience is another important task, helping to overcome any misconceptions about pilgrimage practices being mere superstition. The government should also encourage and facilitate private investments in the construction of Buddhist temples and related infrastructure. Public-private cooperation will be key to restructuring the tourism industry to meet new trends, focusing on quality and sustainability. This includes developing new tourism products and destinations that cater to tourists' changing needs and improving existing ones.

On the business front, it is essential for tourism enterprises to ensure cleanliness and environmental sustainability around Buddhist sites. The restoration of temple grounds, the addition of green spaces, and the planting of more trees will create serene and peaceful environments for pilgrims. Businesses can also develop libraries within temples where visitors can borrow books on Buddhist teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and Dhammapada, to further enrich their experience. Offering dharma talks and lecture tapes at reasonable prices will help tourists deepen their understanding of Buddhism. Training tour guides with expertise in religious and cultural knowledge is another important aspect, ensuring that tourists receive accurate and

meaningful information about the spiritual significance of the sites they visit. Local communities must also be educated about the importance of preserving the sanctity of temples and preventing practices that could detract from the sacredness of these sites, such as selling goods along pilgrimage routes or littering.

Tourism businesses should also focus on enhancing the quality of their products and services, creating new offerings that appeal to tourists' interests and ensuring a comfortable, safe, and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage experience. By leveraging advanced technologies and participating in global tourism forums and seminars, businesses can help raise awareness of Vietnam's Buddhist tourism and enhance its global image. In addition, tourism companies should engage in social responsibility initiatives, such as charitable activities, to support local communities and strengthen the ethical foundations of tourism.

Finally, local communities should actively engage in learning more about their cultural and religious heritage, as well as improving their English language skills, to better communicate with and guide international visitors. By investing in education and fostering a deep connection to their own spiritual traditions, locals can help make the tourist experience more meaningful and enriching. These collective efforts will contribute to the sustainable development of Vietnam's Buddhist tourism, turning the country into a premier destination for spiritual travelers while benefiting both the economy and local communities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Pilgrimage tourism, particularly Buddhist tourism, plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of India, highlighting its potential for cultural, spiritual, and economic growth. This study has demonstrated how India has successfully developed and promoted its Buddhist tourism industry and how its strategies can provide valuable insights for Vietnam. India's rich cultural heritage, combined with strong governmental support, has positioned the country as a global leader in pilgrimage tourism, with Buddhism serving as a key driver for spiritual enrichment and economic prosperity.

India's Buddhist cultural heritage is celebrated worldwide, not only for its religious significance but also for its architectural grandeur and historical value. Pilgrims from across the globe visit India to experience the spiritual richness of sites such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Kushinagar. These sacred sites offer a deep connection to the history and teachings of Buddhism, drawing millions of international visitors annually. The cultural integration of Buddhism into India's tourism strategy has played a major role in attracting people from diverse backgrounds, showcasing how cultural heritage can act as a form of soft power to appeal to international tourists. Even though India faces environmental

challenges and does not boast the same level of infrastructure as other tourist destinations like Thailand or Singapore, its ability to offer a transformative spiritual experience has made it a destination of choice for those seeking deeper connections with their spirituality.

In promoting its Buddhist tourism, the Indian government has taken significant steps to improve its tourism infrastructure and marketing. Initiatives such as the Incredible India campaign and the development of the Buddhist Circuit have been instrumental in positioning India as a premier destination for pilgrimage tourism. The Incredible India 2.0 campaign, which focuses on targeted marketing and social media strategies, has further helped India tap into new international markets. The government's investment in infrastructure, including transportation, facilities, and the preservation of sacred sites, has created an environment conducive to religious tourism. These initiatives not only enhance India's image globally but also generate economic benefits, providing local employment opportunities and supporting small businesses in the tourism sector.

Vietnam, with its rich Buddhist heritage, shares a long history of cultural exchange with India. The mutual influences of Buddhism and Hinduism between the two countries have created a natural connection for cooperation in promoting religious tourism. Vietnam, like India, boasts significant Buddhist sites such as Yên Tử, the Perfume Pagoda, and Trúc Lâm Zen Monastery, which have the potential to become popular pilgrimage destinations. By learning from India's successes, Vietnam can better promote its Buddhist heritage while ensuring that sustainable tourism practices are implemented to protect its cultural and environmental assets.

Vietnam can take important lessons from India's approach to sustainable tourism. The Indian model emphasizes balancing the economic advantages of tourism with the preservation of sacred sites and environmental protection. The government's focus on integrating public-private partnerships, developing sustainable infrastructure, and promoting eco-friendly practices can serve as a model for Vietnam to follow. By ensuring that tourism growth does not come at the expense of cultural integrity or environmental sustainability, Vietnam can achieve long-term success in the religious tourism sector.

One of the key lessons for Vietnam lies in the importance of government policy and support. The Indian government has consistently shown a commitment to promoting Buddhist tourism through strategic investments, heritage conservation, and tourism infrastructure development. Vietnam could benefit from similar government-led initiatives aimed at protecting sacred sites, improving access to pilgrimage destinations, and creating targeted marketing campaigns to attract international tourists. Through a comprehensive national strategy for tourism

development, Vietnam can foster growth in the pilgrimage sector while ensuring the preservation of its cultural and spiritual heritage.

Religious tourism, particularly Buddhism-focused tourism, can be a powerful catalyst for economic growth, cultural exchange, and spiritual enrichment. India's success in promoting its Buddhist tourism sector has not only made it a leader in global pilgrimage tourism but also provides a valuable reference for countries like Vietnam. By learning from India's experiences and adapting strategies to their local contexts, both countries can maximize the benefits of religious tourism while ensuring its sustainability.

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