



# Kumbh Mela :Its Significance (Positive and Negative Aspects)

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## Kumbh Mela: the Hindu Pilgrimage

India is such a magnificent country which is known worldwide for its unity in diversity. Being world's biggest democratic nation, India is also known for variety of festivals, some of them have global fame, too. Kumbh Mela is such a mega event with global reputation. Millions of devotees across the country throng at Prayag, Ujjain, Haridwar and Nasik to witness this magnificent festival. They take a holy bath in the river which is said to bestow salvation to the devotees and absolve them off sins and sufferings. Such is the religious magnificence of Kumbh Mela that tourists from different parts of the world come to witness this grand festivity of India.



## Kumbh Mela: Spiritual Festival of India



## Kumbh is our festival of Socio- Spiritual not of River Pollution

## Significance/ Postitive Aspects of Kumbh Mela

The Kumbh Mela is a congregation of God fearing people. When people attend this festival they seem to forget all distinctions of caste, creed, language or region. They become part of the universal soul. It is a great example of **UNITY IN DIVERSITY**.

In fact, the Kumbh Mela is different from other congregations because no advertisements are issued, no propaganda is launched and no invitations are issued for it.

To millions of Hindus, the Ganga is not merely a life-giving, life supporting river. It is the goddess incarnate. To bathe in the river, to drink its holy waters, to have one's ashes scattered over its surface; these are the greatest wishes of every devout Hindu. According to an ancient Sanskrit verse, the people who "participate" in the Kumbh Mela and "bathe" become free from temporal bondage and get spiritual salvation.

Hundreds of foreigners joined Indian pilgrims in the festival which is thought to be the largest religious gathering in the world. In this way, it is also a source of income through Tourism.

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## Negative Aspects of Kumbh Mela

Unfortunately, sometimes the crowd at Kumbh Melas becomes unmanageable despite elaborate arrangements made by the Mela authorities to regulate the flow of pilgrims. At the Maha Kumbha Mela at Haridwar, as many as 47 persons were killed and 35 injured in a stampede on 14th April, 1986. This tragedy occurred when thousands of pilgrims rushed for a holy dip at the Brahm Kund (Haridwar). This was not the first Kumbh Mela to end in tragedy. In the past also, there have been many worse tragedies resulting in much heavier loss of lives-18,000 in 1760 A.D., 500 in 1795 A.D. and 500 in 1953 A.D.

During the Kumbh Mela, congregation of such a huge gathering for a short period of time imparts impact on the environment. The sustenance of water quality of the river during such congregation is an important aspect because everybody takes a dip in the river water. In year 2003, Kumbha Mela at Nasik about two lakh Sadhus and about twenty lakh pilgrims enjoyed sacred bath in the holy river Godavari. The faeces and urinary of the mass goes into the river and create river pollution.

## Results and Discussion

The Kumbh Mela is a socio-spiritual parliament of men and women, young and old, who are in quest of salvation. Even the most unsophisticated people who throng to the Kumbh Mela understand that this rare congregation is a symbol of the country's unity and emotional integration. These melas can promote national integration and lead to universal brotherhood.

At kumbh mela for performing rituals, flowers are being used, so there must be some proper dumping facility for tons and tons of flowers. Flower ritual practices mostly performed by common man. The Saints used mantras to pay their regard to the holy Ganga water. So public must be aware about the consequences of polluting river.

There should be ban on pollution of river water. During the Kumbh Mela, there should be arrangements for the promotion of pollution free festival otherwise we have to face the problem of polluted river during the next Kumbh Melas. There should be sustainable use of river during Kumbh Mela.

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## Classification of Kumbh Mela

Normal Kumbh  
After every 3 Years

Ardh Kumbh  
After every 6 Years

Kumbh  
After every 12 years

Maha Kumbh  
After every 144 years

## History of Kumbh Mela

According to the Puranas, at the dawn of creation, gods and the demons started "Samudra Manthan" i.e., churning of the ocean which, it was thought, had infinite wealth. Out of 14 gems found in the ocean, one was "Amrit" i.e., Nectar. A sip of this rare Nectar was enough to make a person immortal. Therefore, both gods and demons clamoured for it. Gods entrusted Jayanta, son of Indra, to keep the pitcher containing Nectar in his safe custody for the exclusive use of the gods. Shukracharya, the king of tire demons ordered the demons to snatch the pitcher (Kumbh) from Jayanta. The gods and demons fought a 12-day battle (according to the gods' calendar, but 12 years as per human calendar) to gain control of the pitcher. Jayanta had to run from place to place but he took rest at 12 places out of which 4 were on earth. The four places on earth where he took rest and where a few drops of Nectar spilled over and made the place holy are Haridwar (Har Ki Pauri), Allahabad (Prayag), Nashik (Godavari Ghat) and Ujjain (Shipra Ghat). Since then Kumbh Melas have been taking place at one or the other of these four places every 12 years.