



Analyzing the Engagement Patterns of #RamMandir on Instagram**

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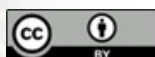
Abstract

This study investigates how people communicate their opinions about the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, India (religious site dedicated to Rama) on Instagram**, with a focus on hashtags and social media dynamics. Instagram** has emerged as a significant platform for community interaction, enabling individuals to express their religious beliefs and cultural identities. This study examines Ram Mandir-related posts, comments, and hashtags using thematic analysis. Key themes have been identified, reflecting the diverse ways in which individuals articulate their emotions and perspectives concerning this significant cultural and religious site. The study's analysis of these digital contacts sheds light on the broader societal ramifications as well as the function of social media in changing public discourse on religious and cultural concerns. The findings underscore the interplay between traditional religious sentiments and contemporary digital communication, illustrating Instagram's** role as a platform for community engagement and cultural expression. This study contributes to our understanding of how social media platforms facilitate the expression of collective identities and religious fervor in contemporary contexts. The study emphasizes social media's transformative impact on religious practices, cultural identity, and communal cohesion, as well as its role in encouraging conversation, event promotion, and the preservation of collective memory. Managerial implications include leveraging social media to enhance engagement, communication, and relationship building.

** – A social network owned by “Meta”, which is recognized as extremist in Russia

Keywords

Ram Mandir; Ayodhya; Instagram**; Social Media; Community Engagement



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Исследование моделей вовлеченности с использованием хэштега #RamMandir в социальной сети Инстаграм**

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Аннотация

Данное исследование анализирует, как пользователи выражают свои мнения о Рам Мандире (храм, посвященный Раме) в Айодхье (Индия) на платформе Инстаграм**, уделяя особое внимание хэштегам и динамике социальных сетей. Инстаграм** стал важной площадкой для общественного взаимодействия, где люди делятся своими религиозными убеждениями и культурными ценностями. Анализ охватывает публикации, комментарии и хэштеги, связанные с Рам Мандиром, с использованием тематического подхода. Были выявлены ключевые темы, демонстрирующие разнообразие эмоций и взглядов на этот значимый культурный и религиозный объект. Изучение цифровых взаимодействий проливает свет на более широкие социальные аспекты и роль социальных медиа в трансформации общественных дискуссий на религиозные и культурные темы. Результаты подчеркивают взаимосвязь между традиционными религиозными взглядами и современными цифровыми коммуникациями, раскрывая значение Инстаграм** как пространства для диалога, обмена мнениями и культурного самовыражения. Исследование вносит вклад в понимание того, как цифровые платформы помогают формировать коллективную идентичность и выражать религиозные чувства в современных условиях. Оно также показывает, как социальные сети влияют на религиозные практики, культурную самобытность и общественную сплоченность, способствуя диалогу, организации событий и сохранению исторической памяти. Практическая значимость работы заключается в применении социальных медиа для укрепления связей, улучшения коммуникации и развития взаимодействия.

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Ключевые слова

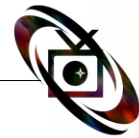
Рам Мандир; Айодхья; Инстаграм**; социальные медиа; вовлечение сообществ



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Introduction

In recent years, social media has emerged as a significant platform for individuals and communities to express their religious beliefs, engage in cultural dialogue, and connect with like-minded individuals globally (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020). The introduction of social media platforms has fundamentally altered how people express and share their feelings. Social media platforms have revolutionized the ways in which individuals show and wring out their emotions and experiences (Döveling et al., 2018). Among the various social media platforms, Instagram¹ is notable for its role in facilitating the sharing of visual content and fostering community engagement using hashtags. Hashtags are digital labels that categorise and organise content, allowing users to find and engage in conversations about certain topics of interest (Omena et al., 2020). People express their thoughts on Instagram** through images and the smart use of hashtags, emphasizing the importance of these behaviors on communication and social interaction (De Paola et al., 2022). Among the numerous social media platforms, Instagram** stands out as a popular tool for posting visual material and encouraging community involvement via hashtags (Jones & Lee, 2022). The expression of emotions on Instagram** using images and hashtags represents a substantial shift in digital communication in the modern era. Users can convey complex emotional states and engage with larger communities by using visual assets, subtitles, and hashtags strategically (Hudders et al., 2021). This study analyses Instagram** hashtags relating to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya, two deeply significant and contested themes in India's socio-religious milieu. Religious themes are prevalent in this digital landscape, underscoring the enduring significance of spirituality and faith in contemporary society (Toron et al., 2023). One such topic that has sparked great interest and discussion is the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, India. Ayodhya, recognized as the birthplace of Lord Ram, holds immense religious importance for millions of Hindus worldwide (Kapur, 2024). The construction of a great temple dedicated to Lord Ram on the disputed site in Ayodhya has long been a goal for Hindu devotees, serving as both a religious endeavour and a symbol of cultural identity and national pride.

The construction of the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya has long been a divisive issue, evoking strong emotions and sentiments among Hindus both in India and overseas (Rao, 2020). Ayodhya, supposed to be Lord Ram's birthplace and holds immense religious importance for Hindus., making the making of a temple devoted to Lord Ram a deeply aspired goal for millions of believers. After decades of legal disputes and social instability, the Indian Supreme Court declared in 2019 that a Ram Mandir could be built on the disputed site in Ayodhya, marking a landmark milestone in the Hindu nationalist agenda (Jacobsen, 2024). Understanding the dynamics of digital discourse surrounding the Ram Mandir and Ayodhya on Instagram** is therefore critical for getting insights into current expressions of religious identity,

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cultural belonging, and community participation. By analysing hashtag usage, we can discover theme trends, community feelings, and the broader ramifications of digital media on religious and cultural narratives. Furthermore, investigating the impact of social media in shaping public conversation on sensitive religious matters provides valuable insights into the intersection of technology, politics, and religion in the digital era. In this context, social media has played a critical role in shaping public debate, mobilising support, and encouraging community engagement around the Ram Mandir project (Potnis & Tahamtan, 2021). Instagram**, with its graphically driven interface and widespread use of hashtags, offers a unique perspective on the digital discourse around Ram Mandir and Ayodhya. This study seeks to reveal theme tendencies, community participation patterns, and the broader consequences of digital discourse on religious and cultural identity by analysing the use of Ram Mandir and Ayodhya hashtags on Instagram**.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance the understanding of how social media platforms affect religious and cultural expression in modern society. By examining how users engage with hashtags related to the Ram Mandir and Ayodhya, we can gain insights into the role of digital platforms in shaping religious narratives, promoting community cohesion, and facilitating collective action. Moreover, this research can illuminate the intricate interaction between religion, politics, and digital media in the context of the Ram Mandir project, offering valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners.

Review of literature

Social Media and Religious Expression

Yau et al. (2019) investigated how social media platforms such as Instagram** enable people to express and negotiate their religious identities. They demonstrated how people use visual content and hashtags to communicate religious experiences, rites, and symbols, creating a sense of community and belonging in the digital sphere. Hinings et al. (2018) began to investigate how digital technologies impact religious practices, beliefs, and institutions. They explored how social media platforms function as virtual congregations, where people may join in religious discussions, seek spiritual advice, and express their beliefs in new and innovative ways. Rogers (2021) studied how visual culture affects religious expression in the digital era. They looked at how social media platforms make it easier to share visual content, such as photographs of religious symbols, rituals, and sacred sites. This research emphasized the significance of visual storytelling in communicating religious views and building a sense of community among believers. Chukwuma (2018) studied the changing dynamics of religious authority in the digital age. They investigated how religious leaders and institutions use online platforms such as Instagram** to engage with followers, disseminate religious teachings, and answer theological problems. This research highlighted the intricacies of online religious discourse, as well as the problems and opportunities it brings to traditional



religious leaders. Baulch & Pramiyanti (2018) have investigated the influence of visual culture in creating religious representation on social media platforms such as Instagram**. They investigated how users utilize visual imagery, including images, artwork, and memes, to express religious ideas, rituals, and symbols, highlighting the importance of visual storytelling in conveying religious narratives and creating a sense of community among believers.

Hashtags and Digital Discourse

During this time, there was a significant discussion about using hashtags as markers of digital discourse. Munuku et al. (2017) investigated the influence of hashtags in altering public debate and mobilising support for religious and cultural issues. They emphasised hashtags' ability to magnify voices, catalyse movements, and impact public opinion, particularly on sensitive issues such as religious monument construction. During this time, there was a significant discussion about using hashtags as tools for online activism and mobilisation. Dobrin (2020) investigated how hashtags connected to religious and cultural concerns, such as the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, are used on social media platforms to amplify voices, organise protests, and promote awareness. This research highlighted the importance of hashtags in altering public discourse and accelerating social change. Qurashi & Sharpley (2018) investigated the concept of digital pilgrimage and its implications for religious practices in the digital era. They investigated how platforms such as Instagram** allow users to embark on virtual pilgrimages, sharing their experiences and encounters with sacred sites and religious rites. This research emphasised the importance of social media in forming virtual communities of believers, overcoming geographic barriers, and instilling a sense of global religious unity. Zahra (2020) investigated the use of hashtags for online advocacy and activism in religious communities. They looked at how religious and cultural hashtags, such as the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, are used on platforms to rally support, promote awareness, and advocate for social and political change. This research highlighted the importance of hashtags in amplifying voices, galvanising movements, and changing public discourse on controversial religious issues. Bideci & Bideci (2019) investigated the concept of digital pilgrimage and its relationship with emerging technologies such as virtual reality. They investigated how platforms promote virtual pilgrimages, allowing users to visit sacred sites and participate in religious rites via immersive visual content and VR technology. These studies emphasised the transformative potential of digital platforms in reinventing traditional forms of pilgrimage and developing a sense of religious connection in an increasingly digital environment.

Cultural Heritage and Identity

Oteros-Rozas et al. (2018) examined the interaction between social media, cultural heritage, and identity formation. They emphasised how platforms allow users to share and commemorate cultural practices, artefacts, and monuments,



especially sacred locations such as Ayodhya. These studies emphasised the significance of digital platforms in preserving cultural heritage and instilling a sense of collective identity in diverse societies. Jamil et al. (2022) investigated the function of social media in promoting community involvement and participation. They discussed how platforms allow users to interact with others who share their interests and mobilise behind common objectives, including religious and cultural projects.

Cultural Identity in Digital Spaces

The fluid, hybrid, and performative character of identity in digital settings is highlighted by contemporary theories of digital religion and cultural identity (Evolvi, 2022). By enabling people to navigate international religious discourses while preserving their local cultural links, social media platforms play a significant role in the negotiation of religious and cultural identities. An emerging topic of study called “digital religion” examines how religious communities, practices, and beliefs interact with digital technology (Lövheim and Campbell, 2017). In this sense, cultural identity refers to how people collectively see themselves in digital spaces based on their ethnicity, nationality, language, and religious affiliations. Online religious and cultural identity construction, negotiation, and expression are greatly influenced by social media platforms (Campbell, 2013). According to Campbell’s “Religious-Social Shaping of Technology” (RSST) paradigm (2010), religious organizations actively influence how technology is used in accordance with their cultural and theological beliefs rather than passively embracing it. The idea of cultural identity in digital settings is being studied more and more from the perspectives of fluidity and hybridity (Al Zidjaly, 2019). As users balance local, national, and international ties, cultural identity in this sense becomes more complex and flexible. Social media in particular enables people to create hybrid identities by fusing elements of their cultural and religious heritage with globalized values and customs (Chayko, 2020). Facebook**, Instagram**, Twitter, and other social media sites have grown to be significant venues for the performance and negotiation of cultural and religious identities. The use of social media by Muslim youth in Southeast Asia to interact with Islamic teachings and discuss religious authority is examined (Lim, 2005). Hutchings (2011) investigates how Christian identity is expressed through digital media, especially in evangelical settings. Hoover (2016) argued that the conventional ideas of religious validity and authority may be called into question by digital religion. Digital media, not only transforms how people express who they are, but it also puts into question the conventional frameworks used to create cultural and religious identities (Campbell and Vitullo, 2016). Social media platforms have become important venues for negotiating cultural and religious identities. Through social media, public personas can be created that are influenced by cultural and religious standards as well as the performance demands of online audiences. Knott (2015) emphasizes that because social media is public, users must negotiate both religious and secular audiences, which intensifies the performance of religious



identity. As people maintain their public and private personas in digital spaces, this performative element of digital religion is consistent with Goffman's (1959) concept of the "presentation of self" in daily life (Goffman, 2023).

The Role of Photographs in Emotional Expression

Photographs have become a powerful tool for expressing emotions on social media. Studies have shown that images often convey feelings more effectively than text alone, allowing users to share their experiences in a more nuanced and immediate way (Zappavigna, 2016). The visual nature of photographs provides an instant, visceral connection, enabling users to communicate a wide range of emotions, from joy and excitement to sorrow and anger. One significant aspect is the role of selfies in emotional expression. Selfies, which became increasingly popular during this period, offer a means for individuals to present themselves and their feelings in a controlled and curated manner. Pounders et al. (2016) highlighted that selfies are often utilized to project positive emotions and to receive validation through likes and comments, thereby reinforcing users' emotional states and social connections. Photographs on social media are effective tools for expressing emotions (Highfield & Leaver, 2016). Sherlock & Wagstaff (2019) conducted a study indicating that users on platforms such as Instagram** frequently submit photographs that represent their current emotional states. The study discovered that photographs representing nature, selfies, and ordinary activities are regularly utilized to indicate joy, whereas darker, less colorful images are frequently connected with sadness or reflection. The visual aesthetics of an image, including color, brightness, and composition, are critical in conveying the intended emotion. The integration of visual and verbal data provides a comprehensive perspective on emotional expression. For example, by merging picture recognition algorithms with natural language processing techniques, researchers may match the visual content of photographs with the hashtags that accompany them. Zhao et al. (2019) identified that multi-modal analysis enhances emotion identification accuracy and offers deeper insights into how users express and perceive emotions on social media. Instagram**'s emphasis on visual material has given it a distinctive venue for emotional expression (Lim & Childs, 2020). Photographs can convey a broad spectrum of emotions without the need for verbal expression. Visual signals in images, such as facial expressions, colors, and environmental features, have an important role in emotional communication (Ko, 2018). Warm colors such as red and yellow are frequently connected with enthusiasm and excitement, whereas colder tones such as blue and grey might indicate sadness or peacefulness.

The platform's features, including Stories, Reels, and enhanced hashtag functionality, have augmented users' ability to share and discover content. Cuevas-Molano et al. (2021) found that Instagram**'s expanding features have enhanced user engagement and expanded the ways people express their cultural identities and opinions. Instagram** photos continue to be a popular way to convey feelings and cultural connections (Sheldon et al., 2017). The combination of powerful photo-



editing tools with augmented reality capabilities has improved the quality and impact of visual information. Bertrand et al. (2021) investigated how technological developments enable users to create more compelling visual narratives with greater emotional resonance.

Captions and hashtags boost the emotional impact of Instagram** photos (Giannoulakis & Tsapatsoulis, 2016). Captions add context and personal reflections that enhance visual content, but hashtags connect posts to larger subject communities. This dual method allows users to express their feelings more fully (Barnwell et al., 2023). For instance, a photograph of a sunset may be accompanied by a commentary reflecting on a serene moment, along with hashtags to engage users who share comparable sentiments. The utilization of hashtags fosters community development and social support on Instagram** (Thomas et al., 2020). By using certain hashtags, users can identify and connect with others who share similar experiences or thoughts. This is especially visible in support forums for mental health, where people share their experiences and receive encouragement from others. Instagram**'s synergy of images and hashtags boosts the depth of emotional expression (Li & Xie, 2020). Lee & Chau (2018) note that the use of visual and textual elements enables a diverse portrayal of emotions. Instagram** uses hashtags to establish emotional communities. McLean & Wilson (2016) identified that users often establish virtual support networks founded on shared experiences and emotion. The convergence of social media and cultural heritage is becoming an increasingly relevant field of study, particularly in terms of understanding how people express their feelings and opinions on various platforms (Bouadjenek et al., 2016). Instagram**, a visual content platform, offers a unique environment for users to publish photos that express their personal and communal identities (Adami & Jewitt, 2016). Fisher (2016) investigated how Instagram** users may construct a curated visual narrative, rendering it an effective instrument for articulating emotions and cultural sentiments. Instagram** hashtags help to organize material, improve discoverability, and connect individuals with similar interests (Gon, 2021).

Instagram** photos are an effective means of conveying emotions (Au & Chew, 2017). Manikonda et al. (2015) investigated in their study that photographs accompanied by hashtags and descriptions provide context that aids in the comprehension of the sentiment behind the post. Instagram** remains an effective medium for visual storytelling and cultural expression (Bainotti et al., 2021).

Hashtags in Emotional and Social Communication

Hashtags serve as a crucial mechanism for categorizing and amplifying the reach of emotional content. They enable users to tag their photographs with relevant keywords, making their posts discoverable by a broader audience who shares similar interests or experiences (Yang et al., 2016). Hashtags such as #love, #happy, #sad, and #blessed have become commonplace, reflecting a wide spectrum of emotions. Beyond individual expression, hashtags also facilitate community building and collective emotional experiences. For example, De Blasio & Selva (2019)



found that during significant events or crises, individuals utilize hashtags to share their feelings and seek solidarity. This communal aspect of hashtags helps individuals feel connected to a larger group, providing emotional support and fostering a sense of belonging.

Emotional Dynamics and Audience Engagement

Social media platforms are intended to foster interaction, and the emotional content of posts frequently influences the level of engagement they receive. Rietveld et al. (2020) found that emotionally charged photographs, particularly those tagged with popular hashtags, generate heightened levels of engagement in the form of likes, shares, and comments. This involvement not only reflects, but also intensifies the emotional tone of social media platforms. Users often construct their messages to evoke specific replies, resulting in a feedback cycle wherein emotional expression and audience reaction continue to affect one another. This dynamic can have both positive and negative consequences, as it may result in enhanced emotional validation or, conversely, contribute to emotional discomfort if predicted engagement levels are not exceeded (Stsiampkouskaya et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

The research technique for analysing Instagram** hashtag data connected to #RamMandir, #RamTemple, and #Ayodhya #AyodhyaDham was modified to fit the specific context of religious and cultural discourse around these hashtags. The new methodology sought to collect and analyse user-generated material and engagement relevant to these religious themes on social media platforms.

The study focused on hashtags directly related to the Ram Mandir or Ram Temple in Ayodhya, such as #RamMandir, #RamTemple, and #Ayodhya #AyodhyaDham. These hashtags were chosen because they are directly relevant to the religious and cultural significance of Ayodhya's Ram Mandir. These hashtags are commonly used in public discourse surrounding the temple's construction and related events, making them ideal for capturing a comprehensive range of user-generated content and engagement on Instagram**. The selection was further guided by an initial review of popular Instagram** posts to ensure the chosen hashtags were highly active, indicative of ongoing discussions, and reflective of public sentiment. Due to its distinctive features, vast user base, and diverse demographic, Instagram** was chosen as the platform for this study's analysis of #RamMandir engagement patterns. Instagram**'s ability to accommodate a wide variety of content types makes it a platform that is well-suited for researching engagement trends related to visually oriented subjects. Instagram** has more than 1 billion active users, which gives it a large sample size and a diverse demographic that fits the study's target audience. Instagram**'s real-time data, engagement metrics, and hashtag-driven discussions allow for thorough analysis. Instagram**'s emotional



resonance, community building, and influencer culture also offer more profound insights into sentiment and public opinion. Instagram**'s visual emphasis and younger audience make it a better platform for researching #RamMandir engagement patterns than Twitter and Facebook**. Utilizing Instagram**'s advantages, this study offers valuable information about sentiment, public opinion, and community development regarding #RamMandir.

Instagram** hashtag data was acquired via the platform's API, with a focus on public posts containing the selected hashtags. The data was collected until 15th May 2024 available on Instagram**. This allowed for the retrieval of a wide range of user-generated content connected to conversations, events, and attitudes around the Ram Mandir and Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Rigorous validation procedures were put in place to assure the dataset's accuracy and authenticity. This includes checking the relevance of posts to the given hashtags, as well as looking for any irrelevant or unrelated content that could distort the results. The investigation focused mostly on quantitative measures, such as the number of posts, likes, comments, and shares linked with each hashtag. This quantitative data provided insights into the volume and reach of Instagram** discussions about the Ram Mandir and Ram Temple, showing user engagement trends and patterns. Multiple validation stages were used to reduce the possibility of biases in the data collection process. To guarantee relevance to the hashtags, posts were first methodically vetted, eliminating any information that was thought to be irrelevant or promotional. Additionally, content was sampled from a variety of accounts to prevent over-representation of user categories or geographical areas. This study reflects a defined timeframe without selective post-hoc sampling because the data collection was restricted to public posts to protect user privacy. Only posts that were accessible at the time of data collection were included.

A thematic analysis method was used to discover recurring themes, subjects, and storylines in the hash-tagged content. This qualitative investigation revealed a wide range of viewpoints, ideas, and discussions about the religious and cultural significance of the Ram Mandir and Ram Temple. In terms of data interpretation, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied to minimize subjective biases.

Findings and Analysis

The dataset includes hashtags, and the number of Instagram** posts associated with them, with an emphasis on travel and places, particularly Ram Mandir. Below is a more in-depth analysis of these hashtags, grouped into larger categories to help facilitate an understanding of their popularity and details in ascending order (Table 1).



Table 1. Hashtags and occurrences

| Sr. No. | Hashtags | Occurrences (Posts) |
|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | #hindu | 20212015 |
| 2 | #Ram | 16855187 |
| 3 | #ShriRam | 16005196 |
| 4 | #bhakti | 7395570 |
| 5 | #Ayodhya | 4780628 |
| 6 | #darshan | 4042518 |
| 7 | #RamMandir | 2842920 |
| 8 | #shreeram | 2775886 |
| 9 | #RamMandirAyodhya | 1711230 |
| 10 | #ayodhyarammandir | 1397852 |
| 11 | #Sprituality | 1083462 |
| 12 | #JaiSiyaRam | 899129 |
| 13 | #rambhakt | 760533 |
| 14 | #Aarti | 484831 |
| 15 | #AyodhyaDham | 237347 |
| 16 | #RamLala | 224374 |
| 17 | #Ayodhawale | 155589 |
| 18 | #Ramlalla | 135591 |
| 19 | #Ramtemple | 93459 |
| 20 | #RamMandirPranPrathistha | 88489 |
| 21 | #AyodhyaRamTemple | 75095 |
| 22 | #Ayodhyaji | 62717 |
| 23 | #Ayodhyarammandirnirman | 61965 |
| 24 | #rammandirsong | 56563 |
| 25 | #ramamndirstatus | 37129 |
| 26 | #rammandirbhumiujan | 28088 |
| 27 | #rammandirinaugration | 27112 |
| 28 | #AyodhyaTemple | 22412 |
| 29 | #kanakbhawan | 20303 |
| 30 | #rammandirayodhya | 16553 |
| 31 | #RamLallaVirajman | 15275 |
| 32 | #rammandiropening | 13567 |
| 33 | #KanakBhawanAyodhya | 11571 |
| 34 | #HarDilAyodhya | 11306 |
| 35 | #rammandirnirman | 10910 |
| 36 | #rammandir2024 | 10910 |
| 37 | #RamLallaPranpratishta | 8520 |
| 38 | #rammandirnidhisamarpan | 5159 |
| 39 | #rammandirreels | 5127 |



| | | |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 40 | #rammandirtrust | 4002 |
| 41 | #rammandirnews | 3985 |
| 42 | #rammandirscam | 2536 |
| 43 | #rammandir4bharat | 1807 |
| 44 | #RamlallaDarshan | 1317 |
| 45 | #RamKeDarshan | 104 |

Thematic Analysis of Instagram** Hashtags Related to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya:

Thematic analysis of the Instagram** hashtags related to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya has been given below in the dominant themes and emerging themes.

Dominant Themes: This section provides the hashtags that are dominant and highly used on Instagram**. The dominant themes in this study are religious significance and devotion, focus on Ayodhya and Ram Mandir, specific aspects of the Ram Mandir, spiritual practices and experiences, localized and niche interests, events and campaigns, and social and cultural commentary, which are discussed below.

Religious Significance and Devotion

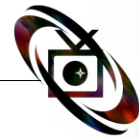
Hashtags: #ShriRam (16,005,196 posts), #Ram (16,855,187 posts), #Hindu (20,212,015 posts), #Bhakti (7,395,570 posts). Hashtags such as #Ram (16,855,187 posts), #ShriRam (16,005,196 posts), and #Hindu (20,212,015 posts) have a high degree of interaction, demonstrating the deep religious significance and devotion to Lord Ram and Hinduism. These tags are frequently used in postings commemorating religious holidays, ceremonies, and personal demonstrations of faith. The significant number of postings using these hashtags implies a great emphasis on religious devotion and Lord Ram's cultural significance. These hashtags demonstrate broad reverence for Ram and his essential role in Hindu worship and identity.

Focus on Ayodhya and Ram Mandir

The hashtags #Ayodhya (4,780,628 posts), #RamMandir (2,842,920 posts), #RamMandirAyodhya (1,711,230 posts), and #AyodhyaRamMandir (1,397,852 posts) emphasize the importance of Ayodhya as a sacred city and the Ram Mandir as a significant religious site. The number of posts demonstrates a strong interest in and participation in the ongoing activities in Ayodhya, as well as the construction of the Ram Mandir.

Specific Aspects of the Ram Mandir

The hashtags #RamMandirPranPrathistha (88,489 posts), #rammandirinauguration (27,112 posts), #rammandirbhumi puja (28,088 posts), and #RamLallaVirajman (15,275 posts) identify significant events and milestones in the Ram Mandir's construction and consecration. The levels of participation indicate that the public is interested in the temple's establishment procedures and ceremonies.



Spiritual Practices and Experiences

Popular hashtags #Aarti (484,831 posts) and #Darshan (4,042,518 posts) indicate that spiritual practices like Aarti and seeking Darshan (divine sight) are important for devotees. These practices are fundamental to the religious experience and are regularly discussed on social media.

Localized and Niche Interests

The hashtags #Ayodhyaji (62,717 posts), #KanakBhawanAyodhya (11,571 posts), and #AyodhyaTemple (22,412 posts) reflect interest in specific areas within Ayodhya, implying that users are also interested in investigating and photographing lesser known but culturally significant sites.

Events and Campaigns

The hashtags #rammandirsong (56,563 posts), #rammandirreels (5,127 posts), and #rammandirnews (3,985 posts) show how events, media coverage, and social media trends surrounding the Ram Mandir are engaging the audience. They demonstrate how modern modes of communication and entertainment are linked with traditional religious ceremonies.

Social and Cultural Commentary

Insightful hashtags #rammandirscam (2,536 posts) The presence of this hashtag indicates that there are ongoing discussions and potentially controversies around the Ram Mandir's construction. It denotes a space where critical and investigative conversation takes place.

Emerging Themes: The emerging themes, such as pride and identity, promotion, and support, identified in this study are discussed below.

Pride and Identity

The hashtags #RamKeDarshan and #HarDilAyodhya demonstrate the pride and identity associated with the Ram Mandir and Ayodhya. They suggest a communal cultural consciousness and a unified identity for the Hindu community.

Promotional and Supportive Hashtags

Hashtags #rammandirnidhisamarpan and #rammandirtrust refer to efforts and actions aimed at raising support and finances for the Ram Mandir. They demonstrate a concerted effort to incorporate the community in the temple's construction and upkeep. Thematic analysis of hashtags related to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya reveals a multifaceted fabric of religious devotion, cultural identity, and social involvement. The high level of involvement with these hashtags emphasises the centrality of Ayodhya and the Ram Mandir in modern Hindu awareness, indicating both popular devotional practices and the religious symbols' larger cultural relevance.

The huge popularity of hashtags such as #Ram (16,855,187 posts) and #ShriRam (16,005,196 posts) demonstrates a deep cultural and religious devotion to Lord Ram. These hashtags represent not only individual acts of worship but also



a cultural identity founded in Hindu traditions. The level of participation shows that Lord Ram holds a central role in millions of people's spiritual life, functioning as a symbol of morality, responsibility, and righteousness. The creation of the Ram Mandir is a source of communal pride, as indicated by hashtags like #RamMandir (2,842,920 posts), #RamMandirAyodhya (1,711,230 posts), and #Ayodhyarammandir (1,397,852 posts). These tags underline both the temple's symbolic and physical significance. The frequent debates and updates posted under these hashtags demonstrate a shared commitment to the temple's progress, highlighting its significance as a unifying project for the Hindu community. Hashtags like #RamLala (224,374 posts) and #Darshan (4,042,518 posts) focus on the pilgrimage aspect, with devotees expressing their spiritual experiences and moments of worship. This suggests that the Ram Mandir is more than just a religious site; it is also a destination for personal spiritual journeys, encouraging pilgrims to feel connected and fulfilled. The widespread use of #Bhakti (7,395,570 posts) and #Spirituality (1,083,462 posts) indicates a strong devotional culture centered on the Ram Mandir. These hashtags represent the greater *bhakti* movement, which is defined by personal devotion and direct interaction with the holy. The active engagement of the community in these conversations highlights the temple's role in sustaining and nurturing devotional traditions.

Hashtags like #RamMandirPranPrathistha (88,489 posts) and #RamMandirBhumipujan (28,088 posts) highlight important religious rites and milestones in the temple's development. These events are significant in the liturgical calendar and receive considerable attention, demonstrating that the community wants to acknowledge and celebrate progress in a systematic and ceremonial manner. The widespread interest in #Ayodhya (4,780,628 posts) and #AyodhyaDham (237,347 posts) demonstrates the city's long-standing cultural and religious significance. Ayodhya, as the birthplace of Lord Ram, has a spiritual significance that resonates emotionally with followers. This relationship to the site highlights the temple's cultural and historical importance. Hashtags such as #RamMandirOpening (13,567 posts) and #RamMandir2024 (10,910 posts) highlight the community's eagerness and forward-thinking engagement. These tags imply excitement for future events and milestones, reflecting a continual investment in the temple's future and its significance in the community's spiritual life. Despite fewer posts, hashtags such as #RamKeDarshan (104 posts) highlight personal narratives and testimonies, allowing a window into individual pilgrimages and spiritual experiences. These stories provide a personal dimension to the larger communal conversation, supplementing it with private reflections and experiences.

Less prevalent hashtags, such as #RamMandirTrust (4,002 posts) and #RamMandirScam (2,536 posts), highlight administrative and contentious aspects of the temple's development. These discussions indicate a level of scrutiny and debate, reflecting the intricacies and challenges inherent in such a large enterprise. This study shows a deep and varied interest in religious devotion, cultural identity,



and community involvement. The Ram Mandir project's immense significance is demonstrated by the community's passionate participation in a range of activities, from spiritual experiences to construction updates. This engagement strengthens the temple's standing as a pillar of contemporary Hindu devotion by fostering a shared cultural identity and preserving a vibrant dialogue that encompasses individual experiences, ceremonial milestones, and future expectations.

Discussion

Thematic analysis of Instagram** hashtags associated with Ram Mandir and Ayodhya indicates a complex interplay of religious, cultural, and social forces among the Hindu community. The engagement patterns demonstrate not only the depth of devotion, but also the Ram Mandir project's cultural relevance. The use of hashtags like #Ram and #ShriRam suggests that Lord Ram is an important figure in Hindu devotion and cultural identity. This high degree of participation emphasizes the role of religious leaders in preserving cultural continuity and communal harmony. The widespread usage of these hashtags implies a shared identity that crosses geographic and demographic boundaries, bringing followers together in a communal display of faith. The broadly use of construction-related hashtags such as #RamMandir and #RamMandirAyodhya demonstrates the community's active involvement in the temple's development. Instagram** and other social media platforms are critical for spreading information, exchanging updates, and developing a sense of community. This digital participation complements conventional modes of engagement, providing a hybrid paradigm of community contact that is both instant and far-reaching.

The emphasis on pilgrimage and personal experiences, as evidenced by hashtags such as #Darshan and #RamLala, emphasizes Ram Mandir's status as a pilgrimage destination. Sharing personal spiritual journeys on social media allows people to connect with a larger audience, creating a sense of shared experience and community support. These narratives personalize the community's religious experience, increasing its depth and authenticity. The focus on specific events and milestones, such as #RamMandirPranPrathista and #RamMandirBhumipujan, highlights the significance of ceremonial activities in religious practice. These hashtags represent the community's desire to commemorate major milestones in the temple's construction, as well as a planned approach to religious observance that blends traditional rites with modern forms of celebration.

The expectation of future events, as seen by hashtags such as #RamMandirOpening and #RamMandir2024, reflects a positive and forward-thinking communal outlook. This forward movement is critical for maintaining engagement and instilling a sense of continual participation. The excitement for upcoming milestones reveals that the Ram Mandir project is not merely a religious undertaking but also a symbol of hope and progress for its devotees. The use of hashtags like #RamMandirScam and #RamMandirTrust demonstrates



the project's multidimensional discourse, which includes examination and debate. These debates emphasize the issues and conflicts that can arise when large-scale religious undertakings are undertaken, demonstrating the importance of critical participation in ensuring transparency and accountability. Such hashtags suggest that, while the project is widely acclaimed, it is equally open to public scrutiny and debate.

The analysis of Instagram** hashtags related to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya provides a thorough insight into the community's involvement in this crucial religious initiative. The high levels of participation across multiple themes, from religious practices and construction updates to personal tales and future expectations, showcase the temple's diverse impact on the Hindu community. This involvement exemplifies a dynamic interplay of tradition and modernity, with social media serving as a vital instrument for strengthening communal bonds, sharing information, and maintaining religious fervour. The continuous discussion, which includes both joyful and critical viewpoints, emphasizes the project's complexity and the community's active engagement in crafting its narrative. Our study on #RamMandir symbolizes the Ayodhya Ram Temple movement and unites Hindus worldwide by illustrating the intricate interplay of religion, politics, and nationalism on social media. The current study provokes discussions on secularism and religious freedom while reflecting nationalist feelings by associating Hinduism with Indian identity. The study provides examples of how social media hashtags are a crucial digital artifact of modern Hindu nationalism, shaping and reflecting religious identity, cultural narratives, and sociopolitical discourse.

Conclusion

The examination of Instagram** hashtags related to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya reveals a profound and multifaceted involvement among users, reflecting the historical project's religious, cultural, and social significance. The analysis of hashtag usage sheds light on the community's collective identity, devotional practices, and the ways in which social media platforms support contemporary displays of religion and engagement. Hashtags are widely utilized, expressing significant veneration for Lord Ram and a shared cultural identity that unites the Hindu population globally. The extensive usage of hashtags demonstrates the community's active interest and involvement in the temple's construction, highlighting the project's importance as a unifying initiative. Engagement with hashtags underscores Ram Mandir's position as a pilgrimage site, demonstrating how personal spiritual experiences are shared and celebrated throughout the community. The emphasis on specific milestones via hashtags such as #RamMandirPranPrathistha and #RamMandirBhumipujan demonstrates the community's devotion to recognizing and commemorating major events in the temple's history. Hashtags such as #RamMandirOpening and #RamMandir2024 demonstrate the community's progressive viewpoint and excitement about future milestones, indicating ongoing



interest and involvement. The prevalence of hashtags such as #RamMandirScam and #RamMandirTrust demonstrates that the project's discourse has both critical and managerial components, indicating a need for transparency and accountability.

The results of this study provide significant new insights into the intersection of religion, culture, and technology, and greatly enhance our understanding of hashtag-driven religious communication on Instagram**. This research specifically utilizes social identity theory to demonstrate how hashtags like #RamMandir help users feel that they belong and form their religious identities. Our research examines how Instagram**'s online discourse shapes cultural narratives and transforms traditional ideas of faith and spirituality through the lens of cultural studies. Additionally, by examining the transformative effects of technology on religious practices, expression, and representation, the current study addresses the field of digital humanities. This present study offers a comprehensive view of the intricate dynamics governing online religious communication by merging these theoretical frameworks.

Implications

Findings of the present research study illustrates how social media can serve as a significant medium for religious and cultural expression, enabling a synthesis of traditional devotion and technological engagement. The extensive use of hashtags related to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya illustrates that digital platforms can aid in fostering community relationships, disseminating information, and facilitating collective participation in significant cultural initiatives.

Theoretical implications

The investigation of Instagram** hashtags relating to the Ram Mandir and Ayodhya has various theoretical implications, particularly in the domains of digital religion, cultural studies, and social identity theory. The findings indicate that social media has facilitated a transition in religious practices, which aligns with digital religion theories that underscore how digital platforms reshape worship and devotion. The use of culturally pertinent hashtags reflects the construction and reinforcement of cultural identity, supporting cultural studies perspectives on the role of media in shaping collective identities. Engagement with specific events and anniversaries illustrates the preservation of collective memory through digital platforms, highlighting social media's significance in generating and sustaining cultural narratives. Additionally, the sense of belonging and group cohesion generated by these hashtags is in accordance with social identity theory, suggesting that social media fosters group identification and solidarity. The concept of digital pilgrimage emerges, expanding traditional definitions of pilgrimage to include virtual participation.

Moreover, the availability of critical interaction and public discourse on social media substantiates concepts of networked publics and participatory culture, illus-



trating that digital platforms facilitate debate and diverse opinions. The current research contributes significantly to the body of knowledge regarding how text and visual cues interact to shape religious narratives and user engagement. It also clarifies the significant influence of social media on religious practices, cultural identity, and community involvement in the digital age. Through the integration of theoretical frameworks such as framing theory and social identity theory, the current study elucidates the intricate dynamics of religious communication driven by hashtags, revealing how hashtags influence public discourse, community development, and the formation of religious identities. The study demonstrates how hashtags foster community cohesion, assist in establishing and performing religious identities, and impact public discourse on faith and spirituality. The study's conclusion underscores the transformative power of social media in reshaping religious landscapes and urges scholars to re-evaluate traditional notions of religion, community, and cultural identity in the digital age.

Practical implications

The research offers valuable new perspectives on religious communication online, emphasizing the influence of hashtags on public discourse, community development, and the formation of religious identity. The findings underscore the importance for religious groups to effectively utilize social media, demonstrating how hashtag-driven engagement patterns influence offline religious activities. The findings of the current study provide practical recommendations for stakeholders based on the key findings. Religious groups can leverage hashtags for outreach, platforms and policymakers should regulate hate speech and encourage inclusive dialogue, and religious organizations can design targeted social media strategies. Our study offers direction for further understanding the dynamics of online religious communication. Future research could explore user interaction patterns, sentiment analysis, and network analysis.

Managerial implications

The research of Instagram** hashtags relating to Ram Mandir and Ayodhya has important management implications for organisations, religious institutions, and community leaders. Insights from popular hashtags can be utilized to inform content creation strategies, enabling more meaningful engagement with followers on topics such as religious devotion and cultural identity. Organizations can employ hashtags as conversation starters to initiate dialogue and address community concerns, thereby enhancing engagement and fostering a sense of belonging. Additionally, hashtags can be leveraged to promote events, manage crises, and monitor reputation, enabling organizations to more effectively manage their online presence and respond to public sentiment. Moreover, social media serves as a platform for engaging with stakeholders, promoting cultural heritage, and anticipating future trends, enabling organizations to strengthen relationships and adapt their strategies to meet the evolving needs of their audience. Overall, these implications highlight



the value of using social media as a tool for engagement, communication, and community development in the digital age.

Limitations and Scope of Future Research

Although the present study elucidates on the engagement patterns and thematic trends of Instagram** hashtags relating to the Ram Mandir and Ayodhya, it is not without limits. To begin with, the analysis is confined to Instagram** data, which may not encompass all the online discourse surrounding the topic. This study is based on the data available from Instagram** over a specific time period. Future research could expand the scope to include other social media platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook**, as well as online forums, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of community interaction. Moreover, the study primarily focuses on a quantitative analysis of hashtag usage, which may overlook the nuanced qualitative elements of discussions. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of users' motives and perspectives, future research could incorporate qualitative methodologies such as content analysis or interviews. Additionally, the study centers on user-generated content rather than the impact of organizational or institutional accounts. Future research could explore the role of official accounts and influencers in shaping online discussions and community engagement. Finally, due to the dynamic nature of social media, the findings are subject to change over time. Future research could incorporate longitudinal studies that analyse changes in engagement patterns and thematic trends over time.

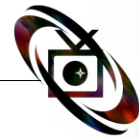
Overall, while the present research illuminates on the digital discourse surrounding Ram Mandir and Ayodhya, there is significant potential for future research to further investigate and contextualize these findings within the broader landscape of online communication and community participation. Further research should investigate the effects of social media use on offline religious activities and community cohesion. Moreover, examining the role of social media in shaping public opinion and discourse regarding contentious aspects of the Ram Mandir project could offer deeper insights into the complexities of modern religious movements.

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** – A social network owned by “Meta”, which is recognized as extremist in Russia