

# livelihoods

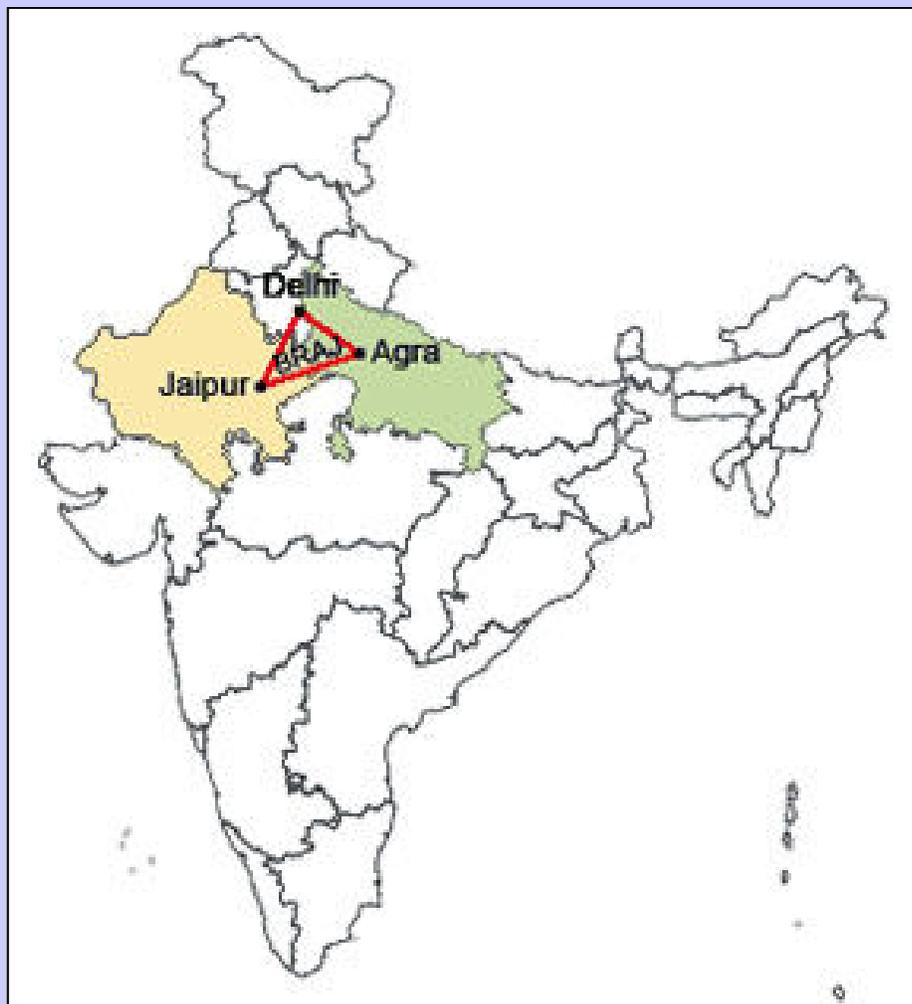
*today and tomorrow*

June 2018

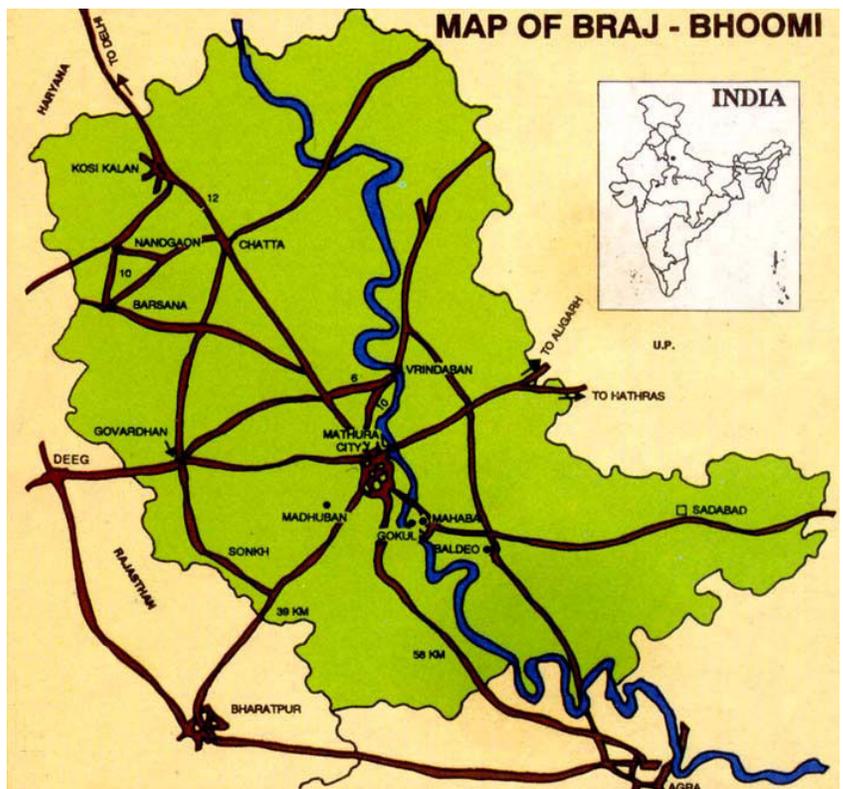
‘Kshetram’

## Braj Bhoomi

Located in middle of Ganges-Yamuna Doab region is Braj Bhoomi, spreading across 4000 sq.km., It is land of Krishna, region largest state of India-Uttar Pradesh. The region lies on fertile banks of river Yamuna. The region is home to numerous beautiful forests, umpteen water bodies and cattle herders. The region comprises of districts, which are located both in Uttar Pradesh and as well in Rajasthan state. Mathura district lies in centre of Braj region.



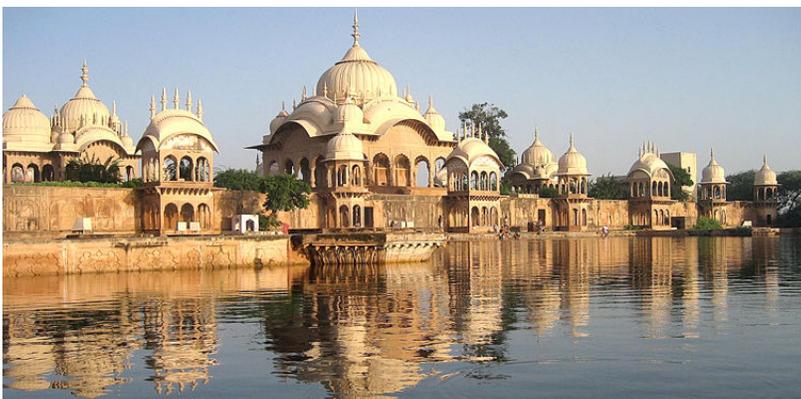
Located in middle of Ganges-Yamuna Doab region is Braj Bhoomi, spreading across 4000 sq.km., It is land of Krishna, region largest state of India-Uttar Pradesh. The region lies on fertile banks of river Yamuna. The region is home to numerous beautiful forests, umpteen water bodies and cattle herders. The region comprises of districts, which are located both in Uttar Pradesh and as well in Rajasthan state. Mathura district lies in centre of Braj region. The other districts in Uttar Pradesh which encompass Braj region are Aligarh, Mainpuri, Etah, Kasganj, Gwalior, Mornea, Bareilly, Firozabad districts. In Rajasthan small parts of Bharatpur and Dholpur district and few towns of Palwal district from Haryana state. Braj region is bounded by Rajasthan to the West, Haryana to North-West, Madhya Pradesh to South and rest of Uttar Pradesh to the East.



The region has major cities, which are famous and have their distinct identities and they include Mathura, Agra, Aligarh, Jalesar, Etah, Firozabad, Bharatpur, Hathras, Auraiya, Kasganj, Dholpur, Mainpuri & Etawah. Braj region is geographically divided by Major River that cuts across the region into two eastern belt and western belt. i.e., Yamuna. Population inhabiting the region comprise of many tribes and as well caste groups. They are Ahirs, Brahmins, Dalits, Gujjars, Jats, Jatavs, Kurmis, Rajputs, Rohilla Pashtuns, Chamars and Tyagis. Hindus, form majority of the population, followed by Muslims, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.

Languages in the region spoken are Braj, Hindi, Punjabi and Haryanvi. Population inhabiting the region is around 2 to 2.5 crore. Going by district wise details, Mathura district has population of 2,547,184 with a population density of 763 per sq km, whereas Agra has population of 4,418,797 with a density of 1093 per sq km. This district has high population, with high population density too. Aligarh district has a population of 3,673,889 with a density of 1007 per sq km. Firozabad district, 2,498,156 with a density of 1038 per sq km. Mainpuri district a population of 1,868,529 with a density of 677 per sq km. Etah district population of 1,774,480 and density of 730 per sq km. Etawah district has a population of 1,518,810 and density of 684 per sq km. Auraiya district, population of 1,379,545 and density of 684 per sq. Bharatpur District has a population of 2,549,121 and a density of 503 per sq km. Dholpur district has a population of 1,207,293 and density of 398 per sq km. This district has very low population density. Palwal district has a population of 1,040,493 and density of 770 per sq km. Hathras district has a

population of 1, 565,678 and density of 850 per sq km. Morena population of 288,303, Bhind had a population of 153,768. Gwalior had a population of 1,069,276, Bareilly City had a population of 898,167 Kasganj district has a population of 1,438,156 and density of 736 per sq km.



On the literacy front, Mathura has literacy rate of 70.36%, with Agra at 71.58%, Aligarh, 67.52%, Firozabad at 71.92%, Mainpuri with

**Mythological significance**

Braj Bhoomi is a place of much significance since ancient times and its mention can be found in the mythologies such as Ramayan, Bhagavatam and Mahabharata and in folklores. It is apparently the birthplace of Bhagwan Shri Krishna and was reportedly the place he spent his childhood, where he performed his various miracles, killed many Demons, played Raslila with Gopikas and of course met Radha. The immortal love story of Krishna and Radha and his other tales resonate in the hearts of people of the Braj region who are often called as Brajwasis. Therefore, it is a very holy region for the Hindus. Historically as well Braj was an important region, with Greek historian Megasthenes describing Mathura as a great city in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Moreover, during the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, the region was said to house a lot of Buddhist monasteries. Apart from Hinduism and Buddhism, influences of Islam can also be found in the monuments and writings due to the Muslim rulers of the region.

75.99%, Etah at 70.81%, Etawah at 78.41%, Auraiya literacy rate is 78.95%, highest among all other districts, Bharatpur at 71.69%, Dholpur district literacy rate is 70.14%, Palwal district literacy rate of 70.32%, Hathras literacy rate is 73.10%, Mornea Literacy was 80.28%; The literacy rate according to 2011 census is 58.5, which is lower than the state average 67.7 percent. Bareilly district ranks 44th in terms of sex ratio 887, which is lower than the state average of 912 females per thousand males. Kasganj district has literacy rate is 62.30%, lowest among all the districts. As we are aware that literacy is key tool to make work force efficient, it enhances

professional, social and communication skills. On the whole it enhances working capabilities of people by providing them with skill development. On the sex ratio front, Mathura has 863 females to 1000 males, Agra at 868, Aligah 868, Firozabad 875, Mainpuri 881, Etah 873, Etawah 870, Auraiya 864, Bharatpur 877, Dholpur 845, Palwal 879, Hathras 872, Kasganj 879 females to 1000 males. Poor performers are Dholpur District, followed by Auraiya and other districts. Poor sex ratio, indicates the limit in women’s opportunities to secure employment and livelihood activities.

The region climate is extreme, summer months begin from April and last till August, with temperatures reaching mid 40 degrees and nights are bit cooler. Winter commences from November and lasts till February, days are cool with temperatures being around 20-25 degrees and night temperatures plummet to as low as 2-3 degrees. Fog is high during winter. Rain fall is from South West monsoon, beginning from July and lasts till September. Area being semi-arid and rainfall between 450mm - 500 mm, the humidity is very high. Soils of the region are very fertile and mostly form light textured loam and sandy soil. Economy of the region is centered around agriculture and allied activities. The region has very fertile land. Major crops cultivated are paddy, wheat, bajra, rapeseed, mustard, barley, potato, onion, sugarcane, mangoes, bamboo and other vegetables. Local populations are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The region is home to industries too, dairy, famous for milk and milk based products industry; famous sweets. Region having significant religious importance and presence of many monuments, tourism based livelihoods are prominent, as tourism provides livelihoods to many people directly and indirectly too. Major tourism attractions include- Krishna Janmabhoomi temple, Dwarakadish temple, Jama Masjid, Taj Mahal, Vishram Ghat, Radha Kund, Goverdhan hill, etc

On the livelihoods front, each district has uniqueness and identity that defines it and contributes to the economy. Mathura has industries; oil refinery, textile printing, fabric dyeing and manufacturing units, manufacturing wide variety of goods i.e, statues, handicrafts, water taps, cotton materials and sarees. The district is also home to milk and milk based industry. The local populations are

Major festivals of the region are Krishnashtami, Radhashtami, Guru Purnima, Braj Parikrama, Vasant Panchami, Pushmaar, Dhulendi and Laatmaar Holis, Jhulan Yatra Mahotsav, etc., which are celebrated with vigour, devotion and pomp. The folk songs of Rasiya and the dance forms of Charkula and Raslilas are famous here.

engaged in wide variety of activities. Tourism based livelihoods are also significant, as the district houses many temples, mosques and monasteries. Agra is home to tourism and many local thrive on tourism livelihoods. The

district is famous for leather, leather products industry, agriculture implements and marble based handicrafts and tourism related industries. The local livelihoods are centered on the above, along with agriculture & allied activities. Aligarh is home to small and medium industries, famous for brass, glass, brass fittings, raw cotton, butter production, thermometers, locks and etc., local populations work in these small and medium industries and eke out their livelihoods. Firozabad district has small and large scale industries, manufacturing glassware and bangle making and these industries provide livelihoods to close to 4 lakh local population. Mainpuri district too has industries i.e., oil, mining, transport, cotton ginning, glass, brick kilns and food related industries and these industries provided livelihood opportunities to local populations. However, in Etah key livelihood is agriculture and has agro-based industries along with readymade garments, embroidery, mineral and metal based industries.

Etawah has a weak industrial sector and is more involved in agriculture and small manufacturing. Agriculture is the main source of economy, with tourism supporting it. Manufacturing of wooden furniture, embroidered fabrics, food products and fertilizers makes up the industries. Auraiya district is home to many rice and pulses mills and district is famous for exporting rice, pulses and clarified butter to other districts and the district is famous for manufacturing of wooden furniture. Bharatpur district has many large industries, including manufacturing of building materials, cattle feed, milk based industries and making of baby food, processing of edible oils, ghee, grain and dal. Manufacture of leather footwear, matchboxes, nuts and bolts, steel wire, stoneware pipe and fittings. Dholpur district is dependent on agriculture and has agro based and forest based industries. Other industries include textile and handlooms, engineering industries, mineral based industries. Palwal district major industries include manufacturing of cotton clothes and processing of cotton. It has a booming software industry, processing of mustard edible oil and spices. It has sugar mills and dairy based industries. Hathras district has around 70% labour force is involved in agriculture. Apart from regular crops, it grows mangoes, apples. It has a huge industry for making asafoetida (hing) including 150 small and large scale units, milk products, woollen materials, cotton, jute, rubber, paper, wax products and handicrafts. The tourism is fourth major source of income after Agro Business, Retail sector and IT sector in Braj with Agra, Mathura being the tourist hotspots.

Kasganj district has agro based industries and cotton and readymade garments, making of wooden furniture and metal based industries. Gwalior is surrounded by 3 Industrial areas – Sitholi, Banmore and Malanpur. All three of these sectors are on NH - 75, NH - 3 and NH - 92 respectively, with Malanpur being the largest. Most of the Local population are involved with trading firms or are self-employed; livelihoods. Many run OMEs and SMEs with Gwalior and Agra as the local market. The city is scattered with coaching institutes and educational institutions, which provide employment to a large section of city's population. Local populations eke out their livelihood from both on-farm, non-farm activities and in recent past, with growth, expansion of various industries, local populations have taken to multiple livelihood activities. The region is very fertile belt, contributes to the food security. With globalization, the natural resources have been reduced and destroyed. The pollution due to archaic methods used in industries is a major drawback and the demand for Braj Pradesh which was raised a few years back citing the fact, that though the region contributes a lot to the economy of UP, the government has not improved the infrastructure including roads, health facilities, etc., and major parts Braj continue to remain backward. There is a need to give back to the region its due so that it can attain its full potential as a tourist hub. ❖