

**SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE**

**SRI LANKA**

**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)**

**Hindu Cultural Trails**

**Research Seminar, Research Grant and Publications**

**Celebration of a Timeless Tradition - Gods and Goddesses, Pilgrims and Prayers,**

**Temples and Texts**

**Annexure 1**

**Hindu Cultural Trails**

The Cultural Trails associated with Hinduism is many and varied. Since ancient times Hindus undertook “*Tirtha Yatra*[[1]](#footnote-1)” or pilgrimages visiting sacred places associated with Hinduism. The main Tirthas based on Puranic Texts are the *Daiva Tirthas*, the *Asura Tirthas*, the *Arsa Tirthas* and *Manusha* *Tirthas*[[2]](#footnote-2). The Shaktha Peetha (Sakta, Shakthi) associated with the Goddess Sati are revered as sacred sites and places of pilgrimage through the ages. The sacred sites associated with Shaiva and Vaishnava have created trails for pilgrimage. Since historical times identification of these locations in some case has proven difficult as different texts refer to the same sacred site in different names. Many of these sites are in India – home of Hinduism but a few are located in Bangladesh, Bhutan[[3]](#footnote-3), Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The list below is a basic list based on available information but the Tirtha Yatras and Trails of Hinduism are much more diverse and many yet to be identified. The Hindu Cultural Trails is an endeavour to increase our knowledge of Tangible and Intangible Heritage associated with Hinduism.

1. **Daiva Tirthas –** Sacred places where Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva have been associated with such as Brahma with River Sarasvati, Vishnu with River Ganga and Narmada River with Shiva[[4]](#footnote-4).
2. **Asura Tirthas –** Sacred sites associated with demons or Asuras. The sanctity of the site is derived from the Gods who subdued the demons such as Gaya where the demon Gaya was vanquished by Vishnu[[5]](#footnote-5).
3. **Arsa Tirthas** – Sacred sites consecrated by human actions of saints and sages such as Naimisa in Uttar Pradesh[[6]](#footnote-6).
4. **Manusha Tirthas** – These are the temples established by rulers for different deities and therefore sanctified by human actions[[7]](#footnote-7).
5. **Shaktha Trails**

# Adi Shakthi Peethas[[8]](#footnote-8) - Kamakhya/Kamarupa devi/Kamrup-Kamakhya, (Guhawati, Assam), Dakshina Kalika/Dakshineswar Kali Temple/Kalighat Kali Temple (Culcutta, West Bengal), Tara Tarini/Taratarini (Brahmapur, Odisha), Vimala /Bimala (Puri, Odisha) - India.

# Maha Shakthi Peethas[[9]](#footnote-9) – Kamakhya/Kamarupa devi/Kamrup-Kamakhya, (Guhawati, Assam), Avanti/Mahakali Devi/ Bhairav Parvat (Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh), Lalita /Madhaves Wari Devi/Alopi Mata ([Allahabad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh), Vishalakshi & Manikarni/Vishalakshi Temple/Vishalakshi Gauri Temple (Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh), Kashi Vishvanath (Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh), Bhramaramba Devi (Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh), Jogulamba Devi/Yogamba Devi (Alampur, Andhra Pradesh), Manikyamba Devi (East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh), Puruhutika Devi (Pithapuram, Andhra Pradesh), Biraja/Viraja/Girija Devi (Jajpur, Odisha), Chamundeshwari Devi (Mysore, Mysuru, Karnataka), Ekaveerika Devi/Ekvira Devi (Lonavala, Maharashtra), Mahalakshmi Devi (Kolhapur, Maharashtra), Kamakshi Devi/Kamakshi Amman (Kanchipuram, Tamilnadu), Shrikkhala Devi/Srigala Devi (Pandua, West Bengal), Vaishnavi Devi (Katra, Jammu Kashmir), Sarvamangala Devi (Gaya, Bihar) - India, Saraswathi Devi (Sharda, Kashmir) - Pakistan, Shankari Devi (Trincomalee, Eastern Province) - Sri Lanka.

* **Shakthi Peethas[[10]](#footnote-10)** - Kottari Devi (Parkai, Sindh, Pakistan), Mahishmardini Devi (Bakreshwar, West Bengal), Tara Tarini/Taratarini Devi (Brahmapur, Odisha), Aparna Devi, (Bogra, Bangladesh), Sundari Devi/Sunanda Devi (Shikarpur, Bangladesh), Papahara Devi, Visvamatrka Devi, Gandaki Devi/Gandaki Chandi Devi, (Muktinath,Nepal), Narayani Devi (Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu), Varahi Devi, Ambika Devi, Mahamaya Devi (Amarnath cave, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir), Mahalakshmi Devi (Kolhapur, Maharashtra), Avanti Devi/Mahakali Devi/ Bhairav Parvat (Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh), Chandrabhaga Devi (Veraval, Gujarat), Siddeshvari Devi, Bhramari Devi (Nasik, Maharastra), Kamala Devi, Daksayani Devi/Manasa (Tibet, China), Bhavani Devi/Chandranath Temple (Chittagong, Bangladesh), Mahadevi (Mithila, Bihar), Ratnavali Devi (Khanakul-Krishnanagar, West Bengal), Gayatri Devi (Ajmer, Rajasthan), Savitri Devi, Mangalachandi Devi (Ujjani, West Bengal), Bahulakshi Devi, Bahula Devi (Ketugram, West Bengal), Vakreshvari Devi, Tripurmalini Devi (Jalandhar, Punjab), Shivani Devi/Sivani Devi (Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh), Triputa Devi, Navadurga Devi/Jayadurga Devi (Deogarh, Jharkhand/Jarkhand), Vijaya Devi, Bhairavi Devi, Kokeshvari Devi, Vedagarbha Devi, Kali Devi/Kalamadhava (Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh), Sonakshi Devi (Anuppur, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh), Kamakhya Devi (Nilachal Hill, Assam), Subhachandi Devi, Chandika Devi, Jayanti Devi, Mahamaya Devi/Navadurga Devi, Amari Devi, Tripura Devi, Yogadhya Devi (Khirgram, West Bengal), Kalika Devi (Kalighat, West Bengal), Bhimarupa Devi (Purba Medinipur, West Bengal), Samvari Devi/Vimala Devi, Vindyavasini Devi - India.

1. **Shaiva Trails**

* **Jyotir Lingam[[11]](#footnote-11)** - Mahakaleshwar Temple (Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh), Kashi Vishvanath Temple (Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh), Trimbakeshwar Temple (Nashik, Maharashtra), Somnath Temple (Prabhas Patan, Gujarat), Baidyanathdham Temple (Deoghar, Jharkhand), Mamleshwar Temple (Island of Mandhata, Madhya Pradesh), Mallikarjuna Temple (Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh), Ghrishneshwar Temple (Verul Ellora, Aurangabad), Rameshwar Temple (Sindhudurg, Maharashtra), Nageshwa Temple (Dwarka, Gujarat), Bhimashankar Temple (Pune, Maharashtra), Kedarnath Uttrakhand Temple (Kedarnath, Uttarakhand) – India.
* **Pancha Bhutha Lingams[[12]](#footnote-12)**

1. **Prithvi Lingam** – Ekambareswarar Temple (Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu) - India.
2. **Jala Lingam** – Jambukeshwara Temple, Akhilandeshwari Temple (Tamil Nadu), Kaveri River (Brahmagiri Hill, Karnataka) – India.
3. **Agni Lingam** – Arunachaleswara Temple, Arunachalam Hill (Tamil Nadu) – India.
4. **Vayu Lingam** – Srikalahastheeswara Temple, Bhakta Kannappa Temple, Suvarna Mukhi River (Andhra Pradesh) – India.
5. **Akasa Lingam** - Nataraja Temple, Siva Kama Sundari temple (Tamil Nadu) – India.

* **Ancient Shaiva Monuments**

1. **Elephanta Caves** (Island of Gharapuri, Mumbai, Maharashtra) – India.
2. **Hampi Ruins** (Ballari, Karnataka) – India.
3. **Vaishnava Trails**

* **Divya Desam[[13]](#footnote-13)** – Tirumala Venkateswara, Ahobilam (Andhra Pradesh), Naimisaranya, Mathura, Gokul, Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh), Raghunathji, Badrinath, Jyotirmath (Uttarakhand), Dwarka (Gujarat), Muktinath (Nepal), Sri Padmanabhaswamy, Thirukatkarai, Moozhikkalam, Tiruvalla, Thirukadithanam, Sengunroor, Thiruppuliyoor, Thiruvaaranvilai, Thiruvanvandoor, Thiru Naavaay, Viththuvakkodu (Kerala), Thirumeyyam, Thirukoshtiyur, Koodal Azhagar, Azhagar, Tirumogoor, Srivilliputhur, Tiruththangal, Thiruppullani, Tirukkacchi, Ashtabujakaram, Tiruvekkaa, Tiruththanka, Tiruvelukkai, Tirukalvanoor, Tiru Oorakam, Tiru Neeragam, Tiru Kaaragam, Tirukaarvaanam, Tiru Parameswara Vinnagaram, Tiru Pavala Vannam, Tiru Paadagam, Nilathingal Thundam Perumal, Thiruputkuzhi, Thiruvallikeni, Thiruneermalai, Thiruvidandai, Thirukadalmallai, Thiruninravur, Thiruvallur, Thirukkadigai, Thiruvazhunthoor, Thiruindaloor, Kazheesirama Vinnagaram, Thirukkavalampadi, Thiruchsemponsey, Thiruarimeya Vinnagaram, Thiru Vanpurushothamam, Thiruvaikunda Vinnagaram, Thirumanimadam, Thiruthevanartthogai, Thiruthetriyambalam, Thirumanikkoodam, Thiruvellakkulam, Thiruppaarththanpalli, Thalai Sanga Nanmathiyam, Thiruchsirupuliyur, Thiruvali-Thirunagari, Thiruccithra Kootam, Thirukkannangudi, Thirunagai, Thiru Thanjai, Thirukkoodaloor, Thiru Kavith Thalam, Thiru Adhanoor, Thirupullabhoothangudi, Thirukkudandhai, Thiruccherai, Thirunandipura Vinnagaram, Thiru Naraiyoor, Thiruvinnagar, Thiruvelliyangudi, Thirukkanamangai, Thirukkkannapuram, Thiruvahithipuram, Tirukkoilur, Thirukkandiyur, Sri Rangam, Thirukkozhi, Thirukkarambanoor, Thiruvellarai, Thiru Anbil, Thirupper Nagar, Thiruvaramangai, Thirukkurungudi, Srivaikundam, Thiruvaragunamangai, Thiruppulingudi, Thirukkurugoor, Thirutthulaivillimangalam, Thirukkoloor, Thirukkulandhai, Thentirupperai, Thiruvattaru, Thiruvanparisaram, Thirupalkkadal, Paramapadam (Tamil Nadu) - India.

1. Tirtha Yatra means mental, spiritual and moral visit to sacred sites associated with Hinduism not just mere physical pilgrimage to a sacred place. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bhardwaj, Surinder Mohan, “*Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography, Geography, Religion, Asian Studies*”, University of California Press, 1983, p. 97-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A Shaktha Peetha is believed to be in Paro, Bhutan, however, evidence of a Shaktha Temple is yet to be discovered. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bhardwaj, Surinder Mohan, “*Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography, Geography, Religion, Asian Studies*”, University of California Press, 1983, p. 97-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.ishtadevata.com/ and https://www.templepurohit.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.ishtadevata.com/ and https://www.templepurohit.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Sircar, D.C., “The Sakta Pithas”, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https://www.ishtadevata.com/ and https://www.templepurohit.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. https://www.ishtadevata.com/ and https://www.templepurohit.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. https://www.templepurohit.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)