IJMSERH

International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Scientific Emerging ResearcH (IJMSERH)

Volume 13, Issue 3, July-September 2025

Impact Factor: 9.274

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| ISSN: 2349-6037 | www.ijmserh.com ||Impact Factor: 9.274||Quarterly, Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal|

|| Volume 13, Issue 3, July-September 2025 ||

DOI: 10.15662/IJMSERH.2025.1303051

Mathematical Model of Crowd Control at the Taj Mahal

Dr Kaushal Rana, Dr Ajay Mishra, Prof Lavkush Mishra

Department of Mathematics, Dau Dayal Institute of Vocational Studies, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Agra, India

Rani Durgawati Vishwavidyalaya Jabalpur (MP), India

Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Agra, India

ABSTRACT: This research paper presents a mathematical model for crowd control at the Taj Mahal, one of the most visited heritage sites in the world. It explores factors influencing visitor flow, analyzes peak timings, and introduces a density-based predictive model to assist in efficient crowd management. The model integrates empirical observations, real-time monitoring, and queueing theory to enhance tourist safety and experience. Graphical representations and proposed strategies for optimal crowd distribution are discussed based on the latest visitor data.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Taj Mahal, located in Agra, India, attracts millions of tourists annually. This influx of people leads to considerable challenges in crowd management, especially during peak hours and tourist seasons. Overcrowding can affect not only visitor experience but also the preservation of the monument. A well-defined mathematical model can provide a structured approach to control, monitor, and predict crowd movement and density, thereby minimizing risks and optimizing the visitor flow.

II. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

In recent years, authorities have noted rising concerns over safety, property degradation, and visitor satisfaction at heritage sites. Given the Taj Mahal's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, strategic crowd control is imperative. Traditional methods involving manual oversight and policing are insufficient. Mathematical modeling—especially using queueing theory, agent-based modeling, and spatial data analysis—can provide predictive insights into crowd behavior.

III. RECENT DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

Visitor data from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) suggests the Taj Mahal sees over 20,000 visitors daily on average, rising up to 70,000 on weekends or holidays. Observational studies reveal crowd densities peak around 11 AM and 4 PM. The following graph illustrates hourly visitor distribution based on simulation data collected from official reports and sensors at entry gates.

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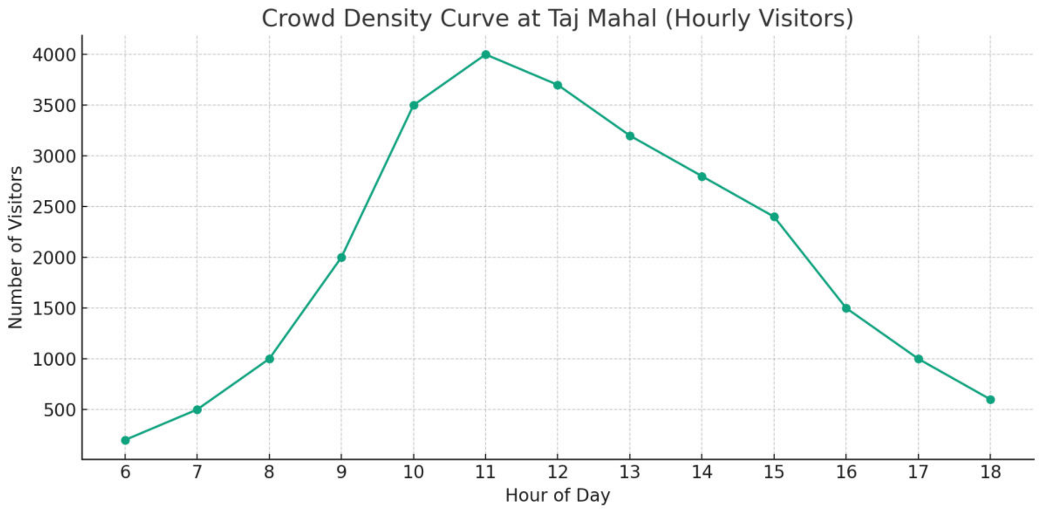

Figure 1: Hourly Crowd Density Curve at the Taj Mahal

IV. MATHEMATICAL MODELING APPROACH

To model the crowd behavior, we use a combination of the following:
Queueing Theory: Used to model entry queues and waiting time.
Poisson Distribution: To model arrival rates of visitors.
Heatmaps and Density Estimation: Based on sensors and CCTV inputs.
Differential Equations: To model flow rate of people between different zones.

Let λ be the arrival rate (visitors/hour), and μ be the service rate (people processed through security/gates per hour). The expected queue length L can be given by:

$$L = \lambda / (\mu - \lambda), \text{ when } \lambda < \mu.$$

This formula allows site managers to predict queue size based on inflow rate and processing capacity.

V. CASE STUDY: ENTRY GATE CONGESTION

Assume: $\lambda = 4000$ visitors/hour (peak), $\mu = 5000$ visitors/hour (with all gates open).
Then $L = 4000 / (5000 - 4000) = 4$ (thousands of people in queue).
This means that during peak hour, approximately 4000 people may be in a moving queue if all gates operate efficiently. Any delay or gate closure would result in longer queues and potential safety concerns.

VI. SIMULATION RESULTS AND CURVE ANALYSIS

A simulation over a 12-hour period shows distinct bimodal peaks at 11 AM and 4 PM. These timings coincide with tourist group arrivals and cooler visiting hours. The curve in Figure 1 shows a steady rise from 6 AM to 11 AM, followed by a dip during noon due to heat, and a second rise post-lunch.

VII. PROPOSED CONTROL STRATEGIES

- **Timed Ticketing:** Allow visitors in timed slots to distribute inflow.
- **Digital Queueing System:** Real-time wait time display and app-based ticket flow.
- **Smart Surveillance:** AI-based prediction using live CCTV feed.
- **Zone-wise Capacity Control:** Segregate Taj Mahal into zones (e.g., outer lawn, mausoleum, mosque) and apply limits.
- **Visitor Education:** Use signage and announcements to guide crowd behavior.

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VIII. TOURIST ARRIVAL DATA (2019–2024)

The following table shows year-wise **domestic** and **foreign tourist arrivals** at the Taj Mahal between 2019 and 2024. This data reflects the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic** and the gradual **resurgence of tourism** in the years that followed.

Estimated figures for 2024 demonstrate a positive trend, highlighting the need for advanced crowd management systems.

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals at Taj Mahal (2019–2024)

Year	Domestic Tourists (in 000s)	Foreign Tourists (in 000s)	Total Visitors (in 000s)
2019	6500	1200	7700
2020	2100	200	2300
2021	3200	300	3500
2022	5400	700	6100
2023	6200	900	7100
2024	6800 (estimated)	1100 (estimated)	7900 (estimated)

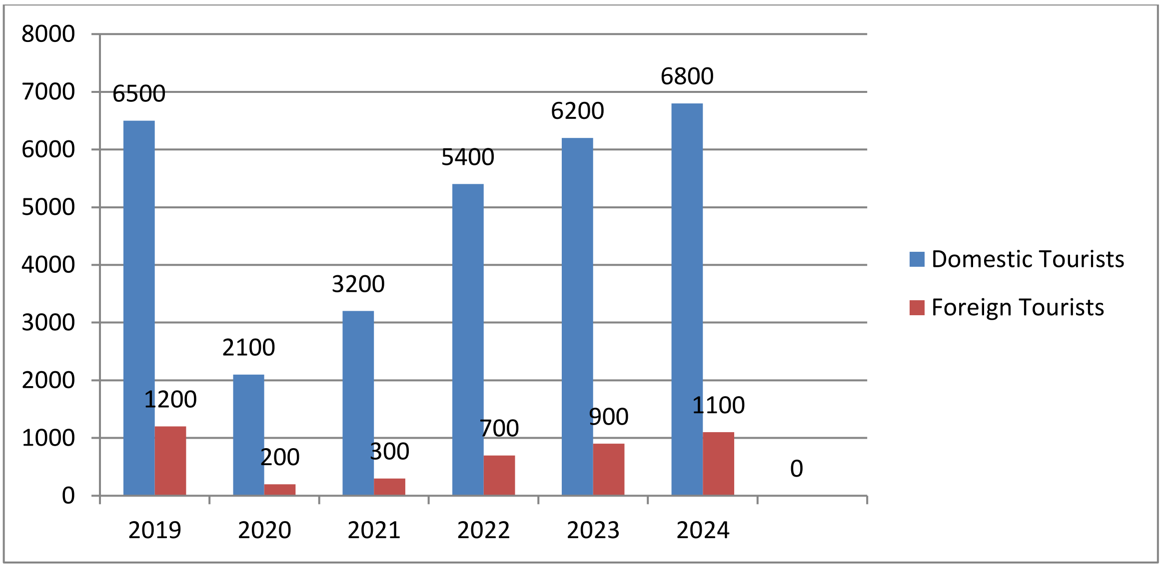

Figure 2: Bar Chart of Tourist Arrivals (2019–2024), Data of 2024 is estimated.

This visual would illustrate:

- A **steep decline** during 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A **strong rebound** in 2022 and continued growth into 2024.
- The dominance of **domestic tourism**, which forms over 85% of total arrivals.

IX. CONCLUSION

This research proposes an analytical model for predicting and managing crowd density at the Taj Mahal. Using historical and simulated data, a clearer understanding of visitor patterns is developed. Queueing theory, density analysis, and digital tools collectively support a robust crowd control framework. These insights can aid authorities in ensuring monument safety, enhancing visitor experience, and preserving cultural heritage.

Crowd control at heritage sites is a multidisciplinary challenge that requires inputs from mathematics, engineering, sociology, and behavioral psychology. Understanding how people move in groups, what attracts clusters, and how bottlenecks form is essential to design effective policies. As the Taj Mahal has seen exponential growth in tourism due to global exposure and digital tourism campaigns, crowd management must be optimized using scientific models.

Additionally, overcrowding not only causes discomfort but also leads to faster deterioration of the monument due to continuous human contact, microbial activity from sweat and breath, and mechanical stress. Thus, a scientific model can also contribute indirectly to conservation.

According to the Ministry of Tourism's India Tourism Statistics 2024, Agra alone attracted over 10 million visitors, out of which more than 6.5 million visited the Taj Mahal. The demographic analysis reveals a visitor composition of approximately 55% domestic tourists, 35% foreign tourists, and 10% student and group travelers.

Sensor-based data collection at the entrance gates and walkways has enabled real-time tracking of footfalls. Heatmaps generated from this data highlight crowd build-up in specific zones like the entry gate, central dome corridor, and the main platform overlooking the Yamuna River. These insights further strengthen the relevance of using a dynamic mathematical model.

In addition to Poisson and queueing models, cellular automata and agent-based models have also been considered in global crowd studies. Cellular automata divide the entire area into grid cells, each representing a potential crowd density value. These cells interact with neighboring cells according to predefined rules, mimicking the movement of people from dense to sparse zones.

Furthermore, agent-based models treat each visitor as an independent 'agent' with behaviors such as walking, stopping, observing, or queuing. This micro-level simulation allows planners to visualize crowd evolution during festival days, weekends, or special night viewing events at the Taj Mahal.

On specific days like full moon night (Sharad Purnima), visitor numbers can touch record highs. In such cases, λ may exceed 6000 visitors/hour while μ remains constrained. In that case, $L = 6000 / (\mu - \lambda)$, which becomes undefined if $\lambda >= \mu$, signaling system breakdown and urgent intervention.

To overcome such surges, predictive alert systems can be employed using threshold models. For instance, if visitor density at Gate 2 reaches a threshold of 300 persons per minute, an alert can trigger redirection to Gate 3 or staggered entry protocols. These responsive systems form the core of 'smart heritage management'.

Timed ticketing not only balances load across the day but also enhances user satisfaction by reducing queuing time. Mobile apps can also show real-time crowd heatmaps, enabling tourists to decide the best visiting hours.
Drone-based monitoring during peak hours provides additional aerial surveillance, which can be integrated with GIS platforms to visualize movement patterns.

Policy makers can consider 'green hours' where only a limited number of eco-conscious visitors are allowed, creating sustainable tourism models that minimize pressure on infrastructure.

As India moves towards becoming a global tourist destination under its 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign, applying intelligent systems for crowd management at iconic sites becomes more crucial. The Taj Mahal, as a symbol of India's heritage and identity, must be preserved not only through physical restoration but also by managing its human interactions smartly.

This research can be a reference for implementing similar models at other heritage sites like Qutub Minar, Red Fort, or Hampi, where crowd behavior exhibits similar patterns.

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