

Economic Environment of Etawah City: A Comprehensive Study

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Abstract

The economic environment of Etawah City is the result of interaction of agriculture, natural resources, industry, infrastructure, trade, and environment. The city lies on the banks of the Yamuna River in southwestern Uttar Pradesh, Etawah serves as a regional commercial center connecting major urban centers such as Agra, Kanpur, Gwalior, Lucknow, and Delhi. The city's economy remains predominantly agrarian, supported by fertile alluvial soils, livestock rearing, small-scale industries, bricks-Kiln, textile weaving, leather production, and a growing service sector. However, challenges such as ravine erosion, environmental degradation, limited industrialization, and youth migration continue to affect economic growth. This paper analyzes the economic structure, environmental influences, developmental challenges, and future prospects of Etawah City.

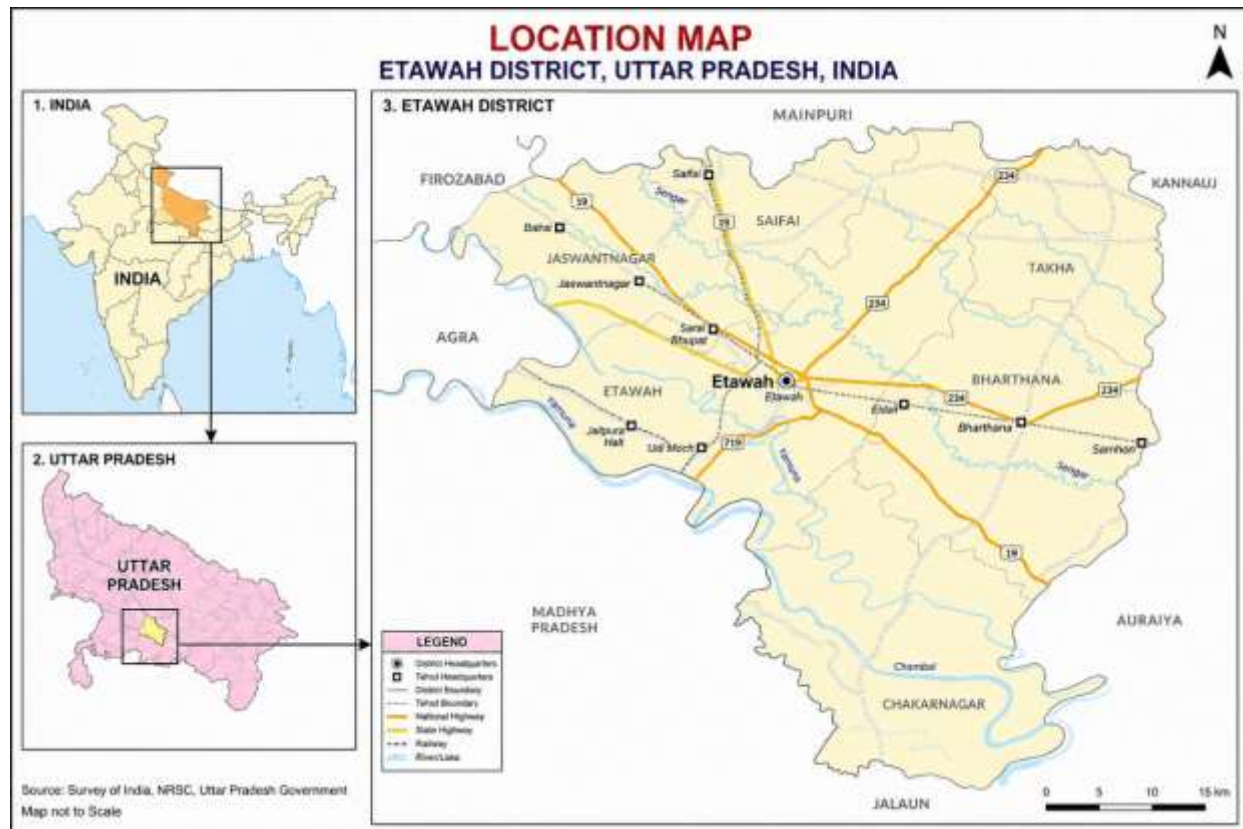
Keywords: - Fertile alluvial soils, Yamuna and Chambal river systems, Extensive ravine landscapes, economic environment, transport connectivity, Moderate groundwater availability.

INTRODUCTION

The city lies at 26°21'N latitude and 76°45'E longitude, strategically positioned along National Highway 19, which stretches 1,323 kilometers from Agra to Dankuni near Kolkata. Formerly known as NH-2, this route once extended from Delhi to Kolkata, but the Delhi-Agra segment has now been redesignated as part of NH-44. NH-19 also forms a vital link in the Asian Highway 1 (AH-1), an international corridor connecting Japan to Turkey. Meanwhile, the NH-2 designation has been reassigned to a northeastern route spanning 1,325.6 kilometers from Dibrugarh in Assam to Tuipang in Mizoram, traversing the states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram.

The economic environment refers to the combination of economic activities, resources, institutions, infrastructure, and environmental factors that influence production, employment, investment, and living standards. Etawah occupies a strategic position in the fertile Ganga-Yamuna Doab region and has historically been an important agricultural and trading center.

The city's development has been influenced by its geographical location along the Yamuna River, its proximity to major transportation corridors, and its role as a market center for surrounding rural areas. Economic activities in Etawah reflect a blend of traditional agriculture and emerging urban services. Different types of economic activities support the survival of the city.



Etawah lies within the fertile alluvial plains of the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. The district is drained by the Yamuna, Chambal, Kuwari, Pahuja, Senger and Sind rivers. These rivers have historically supported agriculture but have also created extensive ravine systems through erosion.

The physical environment significantly influences the local economy. Fertile soils encourage intensive cultivation, while ravine-affected areas reduce productive land and increase environmental vulnerability but it works as a carbon sink. The district receives moderate rainfall and supports intensive irrigated farming systems.

Objectives: -

1. To examine the overall economic structure of Etawah city with influence of its around.
2. To analyze the major sectors contributing to the economy of Etawah, including agriculture, industry, and services.
3. To study employment patterns and occupational structure in the city.
4. To assess the role of agriculture and allied activities in economic development.
5. To evaluate the impact of infrastructure, transportation, and market facilities on the local economy.
6. To identify the challenges and constraints affecting economic growth in Etawah.
7. To suggest measures for sustainable economic development and improvement of living standards in Etawah.

Hypothesis: -

1. Agriculture remains the dominant sector of the economy in Etawah district.
2. Infrastructure development has positively influenced economic growth in Etawah.
3. Economic diversification has increased employment opportunities in the city.

4. Regional disparities exist in the economic development of different wards of Etawah.

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design - The study will be based on a descriptive and analytical research design to understand the economic environment of Etawah city.

2. Study Area - The study area comprises Etawah city, Uttar Pradesh, located in the south-western part of the state.

3. Sources of Data - Primary Data - Household surveys, Interviews with local people, traders, entrepreneurs, and government officials, field observations, structured questionnaires. **Secondary Data** - Census of India reports, District Statistical Handbook, Etawah, Economic Survey of Uttar Pradesh, Reports of NITI Aayog and Planning Department, Agricultural and Industrial Department records, Research articles, books, journals, and government publications

4. Sampling Technique - Wards will be selected from Etawah city. Respondents will include local people, laborers, business owners, and service-sector employees.

5. Data Analysis Techniques - Tabulation and classification of data, Percentage analysis, Growth rate calculations, Comparative analysis, Graphs, charts, and thematic maps, Statistical tools such as mean, correlation, and trend analysis (where applicable)

6. Limitations of the Study - Dependence on availability and accuracy of secondary data, Possible variation in respondents' perceptions and responses.

Study Domain: Structure of the Economy

Economic Base of Etawah City

The economic foundation of any urban area is shaped by its productive capacity across various sectors and the influence of surrounding regions. Fluctuations in financial activity—whether growth or decline—directly impact the pace and nature of urban development.

Etawah, despite being a tehsil and district headquarters, has evolved into a prominent agricultural and service center within the region. In 1981, the city's workforce participation rate was 26.52%, with 20.40% engaged in the primary sector, 24.60% in the secondary sector, and 55% in the tertiary sector. By 1991, participation slightly declined to 25.55%, but the sectoral composition shifted significantly: only 5.87% remained in the primary sector, while the tertiary sector surged to 69.78%, and the secondary sector held steady at 24.60%.

In 2001, the participation rate further dipped to 25.20%, with 5.29% in the primary sector, 9.69% in the secondary sector, and a dominant 85.02% in the tertiary sector. These figures highlight a rapid transition of the workforce from agriculture and industry to service-based employment. Between 1981 and 2001, the overall participation rate declined by 1.32 percentage points, but the tertiary sector's dominance became increasingly pronounced.

According to the Etawah Master Plan 2031, the region is projected to have a working population of 1.5 lakh by 2031, with 3% in the primary sector, 20% in the secondary sector, and 77% in the tertiary sector. The plan emphasizes that strengthening the city's financial structure—particularly through industrial development—is essential for sustained growth. It is also projected that the active workforce will constitute 30% of the city's population by 2021, rising to 35% by 2031, although these figures may vary depending on the pace of development over the next 10–15 years.

S.No	Sector	1981		1991		2001		2011	
		No of workers	Percentage	No of workers	Percentage	No of workers	Percentage	No of workers	Percentage
1	Primary	7767	20.4	1860	5.87	2802	5.29	5005	6.54

	sector								
2	Secondary sector	9360	24.6	7721	24.35	5141	9.69	5609	7.33
3	Tertiary sector	20926	55.0	22125	69.78	45086	85.02	65917	86.13
	Total	38053	100	31706	100	53029	100	76531	100
Percentage of working population to the city population		26.52		25.55		25.20			

Table 1 Occupational structure of Etawah city

Primary Sector: Agriculture

Agriculture remains the backbone of Etawah's economy. A substantial share of the population depends directly or indirectly on farming and allied activities. Major Crops: Wheat, Potato, Mustard, Pulses, Maize, Barley, Millet, Oilseeds, Vegetables, Guava etc. The extensive canal network and groundwater irrigation support multiple cropping systems throughout the year. Intensive cultivation has enabled the district to remain an important agricultural producer within Uttar Pradesh. Farmers of Etawah district come to Mandi of Etawah to sell their produce per day, which supports the non-basic activities of the city. It is the second largest producer district of potatoes in the state.

Livestock Economy

Animal husbandry serves as a major supplementary source of income. Important activities include: Dairy farming, Buffalo rearing, Goat farming, Poultry farming the famous Jamunapari goat breed, native to the Yamuna basin, contributes significantly to rural incomes and livestock trade, A variety of fishes are found here like Rohu, Mullet, Mugri, Dingar, Haren, Bas, Kalwas, Chal, Katiya, Ghegra, Bighun, Jhingra, Grach, Bam, Papta, Pariyashi, Gudheya, Tengan, Siland, Jhinga, have a great potential about fish industry. Through the social forestry initiatives, green cover, reinforcement soil conservation and reduce erosion, large scale tree planting along riverbanks, wastelands and community lands.

Minerals and Mining

It is poor in mineral endowment but Chambal and Yamuna River deposit sand. It is only a commercially significant mineral.

Secondary Sector:

Industry - Industrial development in Etawah remains relatively limited compared with major industrial cities of Uttar Pradesh.

Agro-Based Industries - The most important industries are linked to agriculture: Oilseed processing, Flour mills, Dairy processing, Food processing, Animal feed production

Sr. No.	Types of Industry	No of Units	No. Of Labour	Manually operated	Hp operated
1	Large				
2	Medium	24	1880	10	14

3	Small	312	4501	75	237
4	Cottage				
5	Dangerous				

Table -2 Industry Etawah (2020) Source: Deputy commissioner

Sr. No	Types Of Industry	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	Cottage															
2	Small	03	03	15	10	12	09	06	04	06	15	04	20	56	102	47
3	Medium					01					01			08	05	09
4	Large															

Table-3 Tendency of Industry (City Level) Etawah

These industries depend heavily on locally available agricultural raw materials. Etawah has emerged as a moderately growing industrial base, steadily progressing toward becoming a regional industrial hub and playing a significant role in the economic development of the district. The city hosts a range of revenue-generating establishments, including insurance firms, construction companies, IT services, financial institutions, and engineering enterprises, which contribute to its urban economy. While the district is home to several medium-scale industries, there are no large-scale industries within the jurisdiction of the Etawah Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP). The textile sector—encompassing wool, silk, synthetic yarn-based fabrics, readymade garments, and embroidery—dominates the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) landscape, followed by agro-based industries. Historically, Etawah developed as a center for cotton and silk weaving.

Modern textile activities include: Gamcha production, Bedsheet manufacturing, Lungi weaving, Shawl production, Suiting fabric production. The textile sector continues to generate employment through family-run enterprises and small-scale production units. Traditional crafts continue to thrive in the region. Handloom weaving is practiced in villages west of Etawah tehsil, and high-quality Daris (mats) are produced on a small scale in the city. A niche group of artisans is engaged in crafting horn-based items such as combs and peacock feather fans, which are exported to other regions. In Jaswant Nagar, artisans manufacture brass decorative pieces, musical instruments, and religious utensils.

A notable industrial establishment is the U.P. Sahakari Spinning Mills Ltd., a large-scale cotton yarn producer located on Mainpuri Road, established in 1958. Additionally, small-scale units across urban areas manufacture a variety of goods including oil, flour, pulses, rice, chemicals, engineering products, plastics, glassware, electrical items, leather goods, and textile-related products. Numerous factories registered under the Factories Act of 1948 are operational, and small and cottage industries in rural parts of the district provide employment to several thousand workers. Within the Etawah NPP, there are 336 registered industries, comprising 24 medium-scale and 312 small-scale units, collectively employing 6,381 people. Although large-scale industries are absent, the city's industrial ecosystem continues to expand, driven by its diverse economic activities and entrepreneurial spirit.

Leather Industry

Under Uttar Pradesh's One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, leather footwear has emerged as a significant economic activity. Small manufacturing units produce footwear for regional and state markets.

Brick Kilns and Construction Materials

Numerous brick kilns operate in and around Etawah, supplying construction materials to growing urban and rural markets. These industries provide seasonal employment opportunities. Etawah city has been engaged in the brick industry since ancient times, due to brick production its ancient name was Ishtikapuri, even in present times Etawah is leading in brick production. At present, the registered number of brick kilns in Etawah is 145 which is more than any other district. There are brick kilns here which have the capacity to produce 8 lakh to 14 lakh bricks at a time. It is sold in the surrounding districts like Agra, Firozabad, Bhind, Porsa, Gwalior etc. Each kiln makes at least 4 to 5 rounds in a year.

Import of coal for kilns: - Coal is required for brick production and to meet this demand. Coal is imported from various places. Most of the kiln owners import coal from Jharia, Ramgarh, Raniganj. It uses about 36 tons of coal in one round by a brick- kiln. Each kiln bakes 4 to 5 rounds of bricks in a year. Thus, approximately 180 tons of coal is consumed in the furnace by a brick -kiln in a year. Most people use peat coal, which is a low-grade coal.

Employment from brick kilns:- There are 145 registered kilns in Etawah city, each kiln provides employment to around 100 people. Around 14,500 people get employment from the kiln in the entire district. About 80 percent of the workers employed in the brick kilns come from outside Etawah. Workers from Fatehpur, Kanpur district, Bilaspur of Chhattisgarh and districts of Bihar bordering Uttar Pradesh also come here to make bricks. Most of the workers come with their families and work here for the entire 8 months and as soon as the rains start, they return to their homes.

Tertiary Sector: The service sector has expanded rapidly over the past two decades. Etawah's main commercial hubs are concentrated in the old built-up areas of the city, forming the backbone of its urban economy. Beyond the Nagar Palika Parishad (NPP) limits, a prominent Mandi is located along the Kaimganj roadside, serving as a vital center for agricultural trade. The city's commercial activities span a wide spectrum, including retail and wholesale markets, hotels and restaurants, daily and weekly Mandis, shopping centers, multiplexes, function and wedding halls, warehouses, and petrol pumps—each contributing to the vibrancy of Etawah's urban life.

Etawah also hosts a variety of manufacturing units, such as printing presses and textile production facilities, which play a key role in local employment and economic growth. Vocational and computer training institutes equip aspiring candidates with skills for promising career paths, thereby enhancing the district's economic potential. The city's industrial base includes textile, agro-based, food-based, and leather-based enterprises, many of which operate successfully within and around the urban area. Additionally, consultancy services, career counseling, and placement agencies support job seekers by connecting them with employment opportunities. Field studies have identified active engineering companies in Etawah that offer technical jobs to qualified professionals.

Banks in Etawah: - Banking Services in Etawah City, Banks in Etawah play a vital role in delivering essential financial services to residents of the city and surrounding areas, primarily facilitating deposits, withdrawals, and other banking operations. Several public and private sector banks have established branches at strategic locations across the city to ensure accessibility and convenience.

Publishing companies in Etawah: - Publishing companies in Etawah are actively engaged in the printing and publication of books and various reading materials, contributing to the city's educational and literary landscape.

IT Companies in Etawah: - IT Companies in Etawah Local level in and around Etawah City, Provides web-based IT solutions. Apart from this, there are many other companies which are developing Etawah in the economic sector. Due to this, Etawah has an emerging economy.

Agriculture and Farming-Based Enterprises in Etawah: - Etawah is home to several agriculture and farming-based establishments that focus on the production of dairy products and other essential food items, contributing significantly to the local economy and food supply chain.

Other establishments: - Insurance, Manufacturing, and Consultancy Services in Etawah, Etawah hosts a range of insurance companies that offer health insurance plans and other financial products to residents across the city. In addition, consultancy and career service centers in Etawah play a vital role in skill development and job placement. These centers assist candidates in fields such as fashion design, mechanical engineering, and computer networking, and also offer guidance for overseas employment.

Consultancy, Finance, and Textile Enterprises in Etawah: - Etawah is home to a variety of consultancy services that offer career guidance, pharmacy-related support, and placement assistance for overseas employment. These centers cater to professionals across diverse fields including fashion design, mechanical engineering, and computer networking. In the financial sector, several companies in Etawah provide business and personal finance solutions, supporting entrepreneurship and household needs across the district. The city also hosts a number of textile-based companies that contribute to the local economy by producing items such as bed sheets, cushion covers, and other fabric goods. These enterprises form a vital part of Etawah's manufacturing landscape, offering employment and sustaining traditional craftsmanship.

Major service activities include:

Education - Growth of educational institutions has generated employment for teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Healthcare - Medical facilities, particularly around Saifai and Etawah city, attract patients from neighboring districts, creating economic opportunities in healthcare services.

Banking and Finance - Commercial banks, cooperative banks, and microfinance institutions support agriculture, trade, and small enterprises.

Tourism capacities - Etawah district holds significant potential as a tourism hotspot, offering a blend of natural, cultural, and institutional attractions. Key destinations include: Gharial Breeding Centre, Sarasinavar Wetland, Lion Safari, Pilua Hanuman Ji Temple, Tixi Temple, Neelkanth Temple, Kali Bahan Temple, Bhairav Temple, Jain Temple, Panchnada Bhareh Region. Railway rest rooms, guest houses, hotels, and Dharamshala are available for tourists. It is connected through Kheria Airport (Agra), Chakeri Airport (kanpur) and Chaudhary charan singh airport (Lucknow). Etawah station is connected to all major trains. It is connected to the bus services of Uttar Pradesh Road Transport Department and other states. The number of Indian tourists in the district has increased continuously from the year 2016 to the year 2019, But in the year 2020, due to the corona epidemic, there was a huge decrease in the number of tourists in 2020. This number decreased from 755466 in the year 2019 to 265839 in the year 2020. At the same time, the number of foreign tourists remained zero. In the year 2020, despite the weak revenue due to the Corona epidemic, a good increase of 426119 was registered in the annual tourist statistics of the district for the year 2021. According to UP Tourist Policy 2018, Etawah Safari Park has been included in the Wildlife and Eco Tourism Circuit in the tourism circuits of Uttar Pradesh.

Agricultural Engineering College - UP Rural Medical and Research Institute, Saifai.

Transportation and Logistics - Etawah's location on major transport routes promotes: Freight transportation, Warehousing, Retail distribution, Passenger transport services. The city functions as an important distribution center for agricultural products and consumer goods.

Transportation & Communication in Etawah District - **Traditional Mobility** Before the arrival of railways, Etawah's transport relied on age-old methods: Palanquins, horses, camels, Bullock, buffalo, and camel-drawn carts. These modes shaped the rhythm of life and trade across the region. **Modern Transformation:** The construction of metalled roads revolutionized movement, ushering in: Mechanized transport- Bicycles, still widely used in both rural and urban areas. Auto rickshaws and cycle rickshaws, replacing ekkas and tangas in cities. Motor trucks and buses, connecting Etawah to neighboring districts: Kanpur, Jalaun, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri, Agra, Gwalior, Delhi etc. **Rail Connectivity:** Etawah is part of the Northern Railway network, headquartered in New Delhi.

Challenges: By mid-2018, signs were removed and parts of the track were informally repurposed for parking, revealing gaps in infrastructure maintenance and public engagement. Etawah's evolving transport network—from bullock carts to cycle highways—reflects its journey toward modernization, sustainability, and regional connectivity.

Means of Transport of Etawah: - Vehicle Growth & Transport Infrastructure in Etawah: Rising Vehicle Numbers, Etawah district is witnessing a rapid surge in vehicle ownership, driven by Economic development, Urban expansion, Improved infrastructure. The region's strategic connectivity via the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway, and Chambal Expressway has attracted significant migration and settlement, contributing to the growing number of vehicles. **Road Connectivity:** Etawah is well-linked to major cities across Uttar Pradesh and neighboring states: National Highway 19 connects Etawah to: Delhi, Mathura, Agra, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Mughalsarai, Dhanbad, Kolkata. **Regional Road links to:** Gwalior, Agra, Kanpur. **Expressway access points:** Etawah Road near Barlokpur, Etawah-Mainpuri State Highway near Karhal. **NH-19 near Bhadan.** **Public Transport Hub:** Etawah hosts one of the largest and busiest bus stations in Uttar Pradesh, serving: All major cities within the state. **Neighboring states via UP Roadways** Regional office for the Etawah zone

Vehicle Statistics –

Private Petrol Vehicles

Total: 233,569

Motorcycles: 210,952

Cars: 11,526

Others: Remaining share

Private Diesel Vehicles

Total: 25,250

Tractors: 13,243

Cars: 11,767

Others: Additional types

Electric Vehicles

Total: 328

E-rickshaws dominate the category

Growth driven by:

Government initiatives

Public awareness

Environmental benefits

LPG Vehicles

Increasing in number due to lower pollution levels compared to petrol and diesel.

Environmental Impact: - The rising vehicle count is contributing to environmental degradation, particularly air pollution. However, the growing adoption of electric and LPG vehicles offers a promising path toward cleaner mobility and a more sustainable urban future.

Infrastructure and Economic Development: - Infrastructure plays a critical role in shaping Etawah's economic environment.

Road Connectivity: - Etawah benefits from excellent road connectivity through: National highways, State highways, regional road networks. These routes connect the city with Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Delhi, and other major markets.

Railway Network: The Delhi-Howrah railway corridor passes through Etawah, enhancing passenger and freight movement. Electricity Power is supplied through the Uttar Pradesh power grid. Agriculture, households, industries, and commercial establishments constitute major electricity consumers.

Environmental Challenges Affecting Economic Development: -

Ravine Erosion - Ravine formation along the Yamuna and Chambal rivers represents one of the most serious environmental challenges. Consequences include: Loss of cultivable land, Reduced agricultural productivity, Increased rural poverty, Infrastructure damage, Ravine erosion has historically limited economic development in parts of Etawah district but ravines work as carbon sink.

Land Degradation: - **Continuous** cultivation and unsustainable land-use practices contribute to: Soil nutrient depletion, Salinity problems, Reduced productivity, Water Resource Stress. Although irrigation infrastructure is extensive, increasing groundwater extraction poses long-term sustainability concerns.

Biodiversity Threats: - The Chambal-Yamuna ecosystem supports important wildlife species including: Gharials, River turtles, Freshwater dolphins, Environmental degradation threatens biodiversity and potential eco-tourism development.

Investment Climate and Business Environment: - Etawah's business environment offers several advantages: Strengths-Strategic location, Large agricultural base, Growing urban population, Availability of labor, Strong transportation network. Weaknesses-Limited industrial diversification, Low technological adoption, Skill gaps among youth, Dependence on agriculture

The city possesses potential for investment in agro-processing, logistics, renewable energy, tourism, and small-scale manufacturing.

Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth

Agricultural Diversification - Farmers are increasingly adopting high-value crops such as strawberries and dragon fruit, demonstrating the potential for diversification beyond traditional cereals.

Agro-Processing Industries - Expansion of food-processing facilities can: Increase farmer incomes, reduce post-harvest losses, create employment, Eco-Tourism, The Chambal ecosystem and wildlife resources provide opportunities for sustainable tourism development.

Digital Economy - Improved digital infrastructure can support: E-commerce, Online education, Digital financial services, Rural entrepreneurship

CONCLUSION

The economic environment of Etawah City is characterized by a strong agricultural foundation, emerging industrial activities, expanding service sectors, and significant environmental influences. Fertile land, livestock resources, transportation infrastructure, and regional market access provide substantial opportunities for growth. However, environmental degradation, ravine erosion, limited industrialization, and excessive dependence on agriculture continue to constrain economic progress. Sustainable development in Etawah requires integrated policies focusing on agricultural modernization, environmental conservation, industrial diversification, infrastructure expansion, and human capital development. If these challenges are addressed effectively, Etawah can evolve into a model of balanced and sustainable regional development in Uttar Pradesh.

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