

KASHMIR TOURISM: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Jammu and Kashmir has been a famous tourist destination for decades, making it one of the world's most popular places. As long as there have been lush forests, refreshing springs, beautiful gardens, perennial rivers, spectacular alpine landscapes, and pleasant temperatures, the state of Jammu and Kashmir will continue to be recognised as a famous tourist destination across the globe. Resources have been opened up, both in terms of investment and generation, resulting in job creation and socioeconomic development for the local community; poverty reduction and sustainable development have also been achieved. Jammu and Kashmir's integration with the rest of the globe has been facilitated by tourism. The region's social and economic environment is impacted by the influx of tourists, who number in the millions each year. It is estimated that between 50 and 60 percent of the people in J&K are employed in the state's tourism business in some capacity. The tourist sector contributes around 15% to the state's gross domestic product. In spite of its prominence in the state's economy, substantial attempts have not yet been made to determine the impact of J&K's most important industry. Both real and perceived threats in the local community may be blamed on tourism. Cultural identity may be at risk due to tourism's move toward catering to tourists' expectations and needs, particularly those from local and global markets, according to some experts. In Jammu and Kashmir, concerns have been voiced about the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental consequences of these trends. This study aimed at shedding light on the prospects as well as issues confronting the Jammu and Kashmir tourism industry.

Keywords: Tourism, Employment, GDP, Economic Development, J&K

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourist industry has grown at an incredibly quick pace in recent years. For the first 10 years of the 21st century, it was widely recognised as a "tiger" sector. Aside from providing services to people of all socioeconomic classes, tourism does not produce any goods. Traveling from one's home or place of employment to a specific area for pleasure and enjoyment, as well as the amenities that satisfy the needs of the tourist, is included in this category. The tourism sector has indeed been an important social activity for humans since the dawn of humanity. Traveling to new places, both within and beyond one's own country, has been a human desire since the dawn of recorded history.

Almost everywhere in the world, the tourism sector contributes considerably to the development of money, employment opportunities, and GDP. The local populace can improve their standard of living by gaining access to more employment opportunities. Approximately 270.7 million jobs are produced worldwide by tourism, which contributes more than 10% of the global GDP, according to estimates from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) for 2011 (GDP). In addition, the exchange of ideas between the two civilizations is essential. There are many benefits to learn about other people's customs and traditions.

Visitors are also intended to generate friction among the locals, which offers an opportunity to adopt the excellent features of many cultures in the other direction by introducing new lifestyles and gradually promoting social, cultural, and religious upheavals. Tourists can help maintain the cultural history of a particular place, preventing it from being destroyed by development. It makes it possible to keep local dance, art, craft, music, theater, costume, and dress, as well as old historic sites and landmarks, alive.

2. METHODOLOGY

The current research uses secondary data to inform its descriptive nature. The secondary data came from a variety of journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, research articles, books, the internet, as well as public and unpublished records of the Ministry of Tourism, the Government of India, and J&K tourism.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to describe and assess the opportunities and difficulties facing the Jammu and Kashmir tourist industry. It will also emphasize the positive and negative impact of Kashmir tourism.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

4.1 Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Sector

Kashmir is India's northernmost state. This state includes Jammu and Kashmir. J&K's primary economic sectors include agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, forestry, and tourism. Tourism is a major industry. Because industrial growth is confined to steep terrains, J&K views tourism as an economic advantage. J&K is an Asian tourism hotspot. J&K's tourism has led to many sights. Jammu and Kashmir has magnificent backwaters, hill towns, and terrain. Historical sites, forts, religious locations, and hill resorts enhance the state's beauty. They attract global travellers.

Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector is a major economic contributor and major employer. This labor-intensive business offers much employment. The fragmented tourist industry employs hotel managers, receptionists, tour guides, tour operators, travel agencies, and photographers, among others. J&K might become a significant medical tourism hotspot if government authorities focus on this potential. The state has several woods, lakes, and rivers. Jammu & Kashmir is known for its stunning valleys, lakes, snow-capped peaks, invigorating temperature, valleys, cold climate, hiking, fishing, and skiing, as well as its variety of archaeological, historical, cultural, and religious monuments, cool atmosphere, and welcoming people. J&K's Kashmir valley provides several tourist opportunities. Skiing, rafting, adventure travel, and religious tourism are examples. Kashmir has a diverse culture. Coexisting art, religion, and philosophy.

Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and others cohabit in Jammu and Kashmir. Millions of Hindus visit Amarnath in Kashmir and Vaishno Devi in Jammu each year. Jammu and Kashmir's religious landmarks make it a popular pilgrimage destination. Forts, museums, and historic monuments preserve the state's history. Tourism must encompass Jammu & Kashmir's physical and intangible cultural elements. Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh make up J&K. Both local and foreign visitors might visit all three places. It affects transportation, hospitality, gardening, handicrafts, and small-scale manufacturing. Kashmir is "Earth's Paradise." Kashmir is a tourism hotspot. Kashmir's natural beauty has earned it the nickname "Switzerland of the East." Snow-capped mountains, rivers, and lakes provide hiking, rafting, skiing, and mountain climbing. Dal Lake, Mughal Gardens, Nishat Bagh, Gulmarg, Yousmarg, and Pahalgam are in Kashmir. Kashmir's natural splendour makes it a favourite adventure tourism destination.

Jammu is known for its gardens, forts, Hindu shrines, and temples. Only Mata Vaishno Devi has greater mystical power than the Maha Kali temple at Bahu Fort, also called Bawey Wali Mata or Bahu. After Maharaja Gulab Singh's 1822 coronation, the temple was built. Gauri Kund Temple, Shudh Mahadev Temple, Shiva Temple, Peer Khoh Cave Temple, Ranbireshwar Temple, and Parmandal Temple Complex are others. Ancient Jammu constructions combine Islamic and Hindu themes. Ladakh, India's third-largest area is a popular adventure travel destination. This section of the Greater Himalaya has desolate peaks and precipitous valleys. It was formerly the subcontinent's silk route to Asia. Ladakh's Buddhist minority lives there. They've kept their culture for ages.

In 1846, Kashmir's current tourism business began. Kashmir didn't have a tourist sector until 1846, despite many pilgrims, sages, seers, missionaries, and businesspeople. The British Raj's 1885 installation in Kashmir was a turning point in the region's history. As British Rulers, they influenced government policy and tourism. This era saw transportation and communication advances. In 1925, the roadway, telephone connection, and airport landing strip linking Jammu and Srinagar were finished.

Kashmir was made independent by the state government. Tourists from throughout the globe visit. The 1989-1990 political upheavals derailed these efforts. In 1987, India received 1.164 million visitors, 7.21 lakh from Jammu & Kashmir and 5.50 lakh from the valley. Tourism almost stopped in 1989-1990 owing to a reduction in visitors. Those who relied on this sector lost jobs and couldn't maintain themselves. In 1989, there were 5.5 million visitors; in 2011, there were 8.52 million. In 1995, 1996, and 1997, the valley's population expanded by tens of thousands due to political changes. Arrivals fell until 2010.

2011-2012 saw a big jump. More Indians and foreigners visit Kashmir. According to Survey-2014-15, 13, 09,000 individuals visited Kashmir Valley in 2012, 2013, and 2014. 11, 71 and 1168 people. Before 1989, Kashmir was paradise. The early 1990s eruptions have hurt this site's tourist business. Tourism's near-collapse in 1991 affected the state's economy and every household. This state had 1 million tourists in 1988. Due to persistent conflict, the state's tourism has fallen considerably over the last two decades. Travel and leisure have helped Kashmir's key businesses since the onset of unrest. State officials wasted hundreds of millions of dollars in tourist money between 1989 and 2002; the state lost 27 million visitors, resulting in a \$3.6 trillion loss in tourism profits.

4.2 Positive Economic Impacts of Tourism

Positive economic consequences of tourist industry

Local businesses in Jammu and Kashmir are profiting substantially from pilgrimage tourism, which has risen dramatically in recent years. The following are some of the beneficial economic impacts of the tourist business as indicated by the study:

Employment

Pilgrimage tourism has the power to reduce much of the burden of unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir, a state with a fast rising population and a high unemployment rate. Cukier (2002) says that tourism may produce three sorts of jobs: direct, indirect, and induced. In many developing nations, tourist expansion produces employment and helps residents to earn more. Notably, tourism is a labor-intensive business, which means it may produce a lot of employment in developing countries with huge populations. The UNWTO (2002) cites numerous reasons why tourism is crucial for revenue development in emerging and LDC countries, since it produces jobs and improves work habits. Tourism benefits natural and cultural capitals. Moreover, tourism employs more women and has a stronger influence on the lives of the underprivileged than other economic sectors. In Jammu and Kashmir, the increase of pilgrimage tourism makes it impossible to measure the number of persons involved in tourism-related industries.

Lack of employment figures and the belief that this information is a business secret that should not be disclosed with outsiders are two main causes for this. Several additional studies on the effect of tourism have demonstrated the same result. J&K tourism employs people via hotel and restaurant services as well as photo-shoots and Shikara excursions. Jobs in building, real estate development, poultry, transportation, finance, and commerce are generated in Jammu and Kashmir. J&K's tourism industry provides 42,000 full- and part-time employments. 56,000 people work in hotels, restaurants, and photo processing during busy seasons. Transport employs 280000 people. Tourism employs 69239 taxis, buses, and vehicles in Kashmir (20 years perspective plan for tourism development in Jammu and Kashmir).

The owners' wealth and earnings depend on tourism. J&K has 1929 tour guides. During peak season, many tour operators work part-time. Handmade shawls and wood sculptures employ 39,000. 20,000 people sell tea, coffee, water, sunglasses, etc. Echtner defines self-employed or small business operators as tour guides, store owners, shop employees, and vendors (1995). Construction in Jammu & Kashmir has risen. This industry employs 65000. Rapidly expanding travel and tourism amenities. Many real estate corporations build second-home apartments.

67% of pilgrimage tourism workers are full-time, and 38% work at least nine months a year. Tourism-related workers include poultry farmers, vegetable and flower growers, seafood sellers, and landlords. Expanding Jammu and Kashmir pilgrimage travel has produced employment. Tourism is more successful in creating jobs and revenue in LDCs, according to Pandey (2006).

Jammu and Kashmir's traditional industries, such sheep herding and horse riding, depend on tourism. In hotels and restaurants, non-natives are paid more than locals. Tourism generates employment for non-local guys. Temporary hotel and restaurant employees are mostly locals and earn less. Burns and Holden (1995) (1992). Core and peripheral staff operate differently.

67% of Jammu & Kashmir's hotel and restaurant staff aren't natives. Most locals (32%) lack formal education and skills. According to the report, poor literacy hinders competition for skilled employment. Most natives are cleaners, gardeners, security guards, porters, and chefs. Locals have low-paying tourist occupations, according to Long (1991) and Cukier (2002). Tourism employs the most women globally. Baum. Jammu and Kashmir field study reveals women make up just 7%-11% of the workforce. Receptionists are less common than cleaners and chefs. According to Burns and Holden (1995), women in underdeveloped countries have a "triple role" in tourism: reproductive, productive, and community management. Formal employment is scarce. Few women in J&K have official occupations. Many women generate food, poultry, decorations, and handicrafts in the informal economy. This lady sets her own hours. To sustain their families and live respectably. This improves Kashmiri women's views. Women in this state were underpaid despite doing most of the housework. Women without money couldn't influence families or society. As more women work, power dynamics are shifting. They have more prestige and power. True for working women.

Jammu and Kashmir's tourism benefits. Tourism jobs are among the most demanding, with long hours and no insurance, pension, or paid time off. Senegal's tourist industry uses it. Jobs and money are more essential than excuses. Hotel employees and management seem paternalistic. Hotel owners aid ill or needy staff. Hotel staff seemed happy. Other tourism-related sectors employ many people besides hotels. Tourism literature only mentions hotel and restaurant workers. Street sellers, hotel maids, construction workers, and cleaners are common jobs for children. This research supports the ILO's (1997) assertion that 10%-15% of tourist employees are under 25. Most children work for little pay. A youngster worker's mom says he's a student. He offers ice cream and drink. He does this since we're impoverished and have few income possibilities. Earnings assist improve their level of living and pay for their education. Jammu & Kashmir's destitute population welcomes any opportunity to make money. Poor families care more about their children's wages than their jobs. Bliss (2002) says child labour isn't exploitation of disadvantaged households. His tourist profession allows them to afford top schools and a private tutor. He may now invest and profit. He has access to affluent individuals via work. His lovely hotel guests developed social networks. The job has freed him from his political past. His liberal ideals intended to boost this industry.

4.3 Negative Economic Impacts of Tourism

Tourism has helped Jammu and Kashmir's economy, but it's also had detrimental effects. According to the survey, tourism harms the local community and state.

Land and rent prices increased

High land prices, land grabs, exorbitant rents, and a lack of affordable housing are negative effects of tourism. Tourism's impacts are well-documented. Akama and Kieti excel (2007). Rapid tourist infrastructure growth requires more land. Before the 1980s, most infrastructures were developed on government land. In the 1990s, private development increased land demand. The government acquired private property to construct a tourist attraction. Many lost land. Once privately held for farming and residences. When the government acquired private property and offered it to investors, built-in tourist infrastructure sounded great. Tourism demand boosts land costs. Small and medium-sized landowners may sell for more. Losing land lowers people's standard of life. Archer, Cooper, and Ruhanen (2005) found that to enhance tourism, farmers and other landowners must sell their property. Many real estate companies are creating apartments for rich individuals in Srinagar, Jammu, and other cities. These apartments are as pricey as in Srinagar and Jammu. Many awful tales abound of villagers' land being stolen by force, terror, and authority. Poor folks don't obtain justice. Lacking political authority, they must go to rural areas. Land mafias aim to seize land from tourists. Long-term, this may produce social and political unrest, harming Jammu and Kashmir's tourist business.

Income Inequality

Tourism in LDCs benefits the elites, not the majority of the people. This research found. Tourism is the state's major source of revenue, yet economic disparities have developed. Employers pay low salaries and provide nothing more to the vast workforce. People feel powerless owing to unemployment, according to reports. We must accept the offer. Can we?

Outsiders and local elites possess most tourist resources, while natives lose land. Most locals depend on official and informal wage employment since they can't compete with foreigners and elites for tourist resources. People's salaries fluctuate since they don't possess tourist resources.

Like much of India, most Jammu & Kashmiris possess little resources. Jammu & Kashmir inhabitants can't exploit new tourist possibilities. People don't enhance their income and style of life for several reasons. Here are the biggest:

- ✓ Locals don't enter the market soon enough since they don't understand tourist industry. None of the locals know this and can get in on time. Non-locals entered the market early, making it difficult for locals to do so.
- ✓ The state's high literacy rate and poor skill level mean residents don't take advantage of tourism.
- ✓ Tourism resources are biased toward the wealthy.
- ✓ Governments' lack of money and tourist resources is a concern.

Seasonal impact

Jammu & Kashmir's seasonal changes hinder tourism. The researcher hinders tourism's seasonality. Seasonality influences local revenue and tourism. We're afraid to invest extensively in Jammu & Kashmir since seasons vary. Wall and Matheson (2006) study seasonal tourism.

This impacts service quality. Jammu and Kashmir has many summer visitors. Many travellers complain about the quality of service at hotels and other amenities. Butler found that some hotels and service providers use this to charge more (1992).

Photographers, small business owners, and auto rickshaw pullers are affected by seasonality. Tourist numbers determine these staffers' wages. During peak season, they earn well, but off season is tough. Off-season, these workers struggle to cover basic costs owing to a lack of second employment and other income. Seasonality affects tourism insiders and outsiders.

Unleashed hotels operate

Since their government leases have expired, influential hoteliers operate illegally. These influential hoteliers haven't renewed or paid rent. Hoteliers encroached on land. Without a lease, they may add beds. Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA) said 79 parties took 54 kanals of public land for hotels, restaurants, and shops. PDA officials also stated that the present rent

structure doesn't reflect the land's market value and that new lease agreements should be drafted to reflect the altered rates.

4.4 Challenges for Jammu & Kashmir's tourism industry:

Over the last two to three decades, tourism in Jammu & Kashmir State has grown significantly, but much of its development potential remains untapped and unrealized. This industry's growth in the state has been limited and unsatisfactory due to a range of challenges and obstacles. Jammu and Kashmir's tourist industry has been hampered by a lack of suitable transportation and road infrastructure. There is a lack of basic sanitary facilities at rest sites, inconsistent rates and fees, spots that have been neglected in the past. Insufficient capacity, lack of devoted and experienced professionals, security and harassment problems fuel surcharges, faulty flight planning, and inadequate infrastructure, such as substandard roads, filthy facilities, communication issues, etc., all contribute to rising travel costs. Security and safety breaches, trespassing by travelers and other forms of harassment are all too common. Growth of village tourism, a lack of understanding of the sorts of visitors, guides who aren't literate etc., are all examples of uneven development.

5.CONCLUSION

The Jammu and Kashmir region's growth is mostly due to tourism, according to a new research. Over the last several decades, tourism development has had a considerable impact on the growth of the area. Because of its natural splendour and cultural attractions, maybe the state has a lot to offer. Jammu and Kashmir's economy is benefiting from tourism, according to the findings of a recent study. Developing a country's economy via tourism is currently a primary focus for many countries throughout the globe. In both established and developing nations, studies and investigations on tourism growth and its many repercussions have grown more important. In Jammu & Kashmir, where industrial growth is very low, this is seldom the case. Tourism growth is the only industry Jammu and Kashmir can depend on completely in the current scenario.

The tourist industry is the state's primary source of income. Indeed, Kashmir is known as "Paradise on Earth" in the tourist industry. As a result, the state of Jammu and Kashmir should make every effort to preserve, protect, and grow the region's tourism industry. Tourism creates new prospects for resources, both investment and revenue production, which leads to job creation, a rise in income, and the socioeconomic growth of the state. Analysis shows that tourism is the most important sector in the economy of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. One of the most popular tourist destinations in India, the state of J&K has the potential to draw a large number of visitors from both domestic and foreign countries. Over the years, the tourism industry has grown tremendously in terms of employment and income, and this trend is expected to continue. If the situation continues stable and visitor arrivals expand in a desirable way, income creation is likely to continue to rise.

The development of tourist infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir is critical to attracting more and more visitors, including large highways, air and rail transportation, upgraded hotels, and improved infrastructural development of tourist destinations. Building alternate roads in certain areas is a need to improve connectivity. In order to preserve the historic sites, a number of procedures must be followed. The three areas of Jammu and Kashmir need to be prioritized for the construction of basic infrastructure in order to attract large numbers of pilgrims. To sum up, newer approaches and instruments must be brought in to help travellers in a new manner. The data demonstrates that tourism has a significant impact on the lives of residents of the state, thus the business has a bright future in the valley. This may be done by creating a welcoming atmosphere and upgrading the different amenities that were previously highlighted. For the state's economic growth to be more successful, the government must implement more liberal policies, which will lead to more jobs and a better quality of life for its citizens.

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