

PLACE OF TOURISM AND ECO-TOURISM IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Tourism plays a very significant role in the development of J & K economy. The state of J&K is known all over the world for its scenic beauty of the valley of Kashmir and the famous temple of Vaishno Devi in Jammu region and Ladakh for Gompas & adventure tourism. Employment provided by tourism industry is labour-intensive in nature and requires low investment. This sector brings a number of social, culture & economic benefits. It is estimated that around 60 percent of total population of J&K is directly or indirectly engaged in tourism related activities. The contribution of tourism to State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) is 6.98 percent (2018). It also caters to the sectors like handicrafts, handlooms and transport. Tourism has played an effective role in integrating J&K with the entire world. It has opened up a new window for resources, leading to poverty alleviation, sustainable development as well as socio-economic development. The tertiary sector in the State contributes nearly 56% to the State's GDP (2018). Amongst the various sectors coming under tertiary sector, tourism is a key contributor to the sector. The role of tourism industry in the development of J&K economy has become an area of great interest for policy makers. This paper attempts to examine the potential, opportunities and challenges of tourism sector in J&K and also attempt to draw attention towards the eco-tourism in J&K economy. The main purpose of this study is to know the impact of tourism on J&K economy.

Keywords: Tourism, Opportunities, Challenges, Economic Development, Tourist inflow, Eco-tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism denotes the temporary, short-term or prolonged movement of the people to destination outside the place where they normally live and work or undertake their regular activities. Tourism is a travel for recreational or leisure purpose. It is the business or industry of providing information, accommodations, transportation and other services to tourists. This word was first documented between 1805 and 1815. Tourism is the fastest

growing industry representing a major source of GDP, employment, exports and taxes. It is considered as major tool of economic development round the globe . Tourism is a key engine for continued global growth and job creation. According to the estimates from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism generates around 313 million jobs worldwide or 9.9 % of the total employment and contributing about 10.4% to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in 2017. Tourism plays a vital role in cross-cultural exchange of the two cultures. It helps to learn different languages, life styles and traditions.

In India, the number of foreign tourist arrivals recorded as 17.42 millions, in 2018 and contributed US \$ 28.59 billion as Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE). Number of employees in tourism sector across India is increasing continuously and was responsible for 80.63 million jobs in 2018. An important aspect of tourism industry in India is that it contributes to national integration and preservation of natural as well as cultural environments and enrichment of the social and cultural lives of people.

Tourism in J&K is playing a huge role in the overall development of state's economy. Jammu & Kashmir which is popularly known as the "Paradise on Earth" is one of the most popular tourist destinations of the world. It has been estimated that the number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting J&K in 2016 were 94.15 lakh and 0.62 lakh respectively, registering a positive growth of 2.95 % and 7.92 %, respectively over 2015.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the impact of tourism on the economy of J&K.
2. To identify potential, opportunities, challenges and problems of tourism industry in J&K.
3. To study the growth and trend of tourism industry in terms of tourist arrival.
4. To make people aware about Eco-Tourism in J& K.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive and is based on the secondary information/sources. Information has been collected from various official sources like Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India, United Nations World Tourism Organization, J&K Tourism Development Corporation and Directorate of Tourism, Annual Economic Survey of J&K, World Travel and Tourism Council. In addition to this, data have also been collected from other reliable online sources like various published Journals, Periodicals, Research articles, Internet, Newsletters etc. This study has been conducted for the period between 2002-2018.

POTENTIAL OF TOURISM SECTOR IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

A. Economic Effects

Income Generation:-Tourism sector is the most popular source of income in J&K. This sector generates sufficient revenue for Government, private sector and public sector undertakings which has shown significant increase over the years. Estimates show that amount of revenue generated by tourism mainly in the form of taxes, foreign exchange and export earnings contributes around 6.98% to the SGDP, which is expected to increase manifold provided the situation remains normal and the tourist inflow to the state increases in a desired manner. As per the J&K Economic Survey, revenue realized in the financial year 2011-12 has touched to Rs. 4692.92 lakhs.

Employment Opportunities:-Tourism gives employment to people engaged in pursuits like handicrafts, transport, trade, catering service etc. It generates large scale direct and indirect employment. As per World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates, an investment of 10 lakh in travel and tourism industry will generate about 90 jobs which are much higher than its competing sectors like Agriculture and Manufacturing which generates 45 & 13 jobs per lakh respectively. Estimates show that there is positive impact of tourist inflow on employment i.e with the increase in tourist inflow, total employment (direct & indirect) also rises. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of such tourist inflow, there is a need to carry forward the development process in a coordinated and desired manner.

Foreign Exchange Earnings: - The state of J & K attracts tourist from all over the world. In this way J & K earns a lot from the tourists. Foreign exchange is a pre-requisite for economic development of a state. The foreign tourist on an average spends (more-than-two-times) compared to domestic tourists.

Transformation of Regional Economy: - Tourism help in developing or transforming backward & rural areas into prosperous or developing areas. There are many places in all the three provinces, which were relatively unknown villages. If these unexploited tourist destinations will be thrown out for tourists, the economy of the region and standard of the local people can be promoted. The arrival of tourists in these unexplored places may promote local art which includes Handicrafts, Handloom and other small scale industries will be boosted and will significantly promote the economy of the region and can give fillip to the economic conditions of the residents. With the economic activities these

destinations can become well known tourist resorts. As per J&K Economic Survey, estimates show that Handicrafts in J&K generate a revenue of Rs.1,000 to 1,500 crore on an annual basis with about 4-5 lakh artisans being employed in this sector (2018).

Up-Gradation And Expansion Of Basic Infrastructure: - The investment on infrastructure for tourism in the form of roads, transport & communication etc. increases the mobility of men and material, extends the size of market and help in accelerating the rate of growth of the state economy. Tourism and development of infrastructure are interrelated sectors in the sense that better infrastructure, will provide the way for more tourism related activities. Lack of infrastructure is among the main causes of underdevelopment of tourism. Development of infrastructure includes good infrastructure facilities, better sanitary conditions and more intake capacity during peak seasons and proper human resource development. As per the Economic Survey 2018, there are 1674 registered hotels and 326 registered restaurants in the state apart from 193 tourist huts and 43 bungalows, generating around 7% of the state's GDP. The government is taking all possible steps and making all efforts to develop world class tourism infrastructure at tourist destinations and Circuit house.

B. Social Effects

Social Transformation: - Tourism is very helpful in changing the outlook of the people. The people of different places and regions meet with each other, people becomes more scientific towards economic & social problems. The socio-cultural impacts of tourism described here, are the effects on host communities of direct and indirect relations with tourists, and of interaction with the tourism industry. Changes often occur in community structure, family relationships, collective traditional life styles, ceremonies and morality.

Living Standard: - Another important role of tourism is that with increasing employment opportunities and income level, the people of the region would enjoy better standard of living. Tourism also helps in setting up the region's social life. The Sociologist Peters Michael acknowledges the social benefits of tourism. In his observation "Inter-national tourism has undoubtedly contributed to widening people's interest generally in world affairs and to a new understanding of foreigners and foreign tastes".

C. Cultural Effects

Revival and strengthening of cultural heritage is found to be an outstanding benefit of tourism industry. Tourism helps in boosting the growth of Art, and it helps in protecting,

preserving and maintaining monuments. Some of the monuments like Martand temple, Shankaracharya Temple, Ancient ruins at Awantipora, Patan, Pari Mahal, Hari Parbat are supposed to be the permanent structures of our cultural heritage in the state.

D. Environmental Effects

Tourism also helps making people environment-conscious. The tourist spots like National Park, hill stations, wild life & bird sanctuaries, gardens etc help in maintaining the ecological balance. Thus, it has a two- positive impact. First, the environment is kept free from the pollutants and second, the tourist centres directly contribute to the ecological balance. Thus, Tourism leads to all round progress of J & K economy. The progress of Horticulture, Sericulture, Apiculture and Floriculture--all depends on the progress of tourism.

GROWTH AND TREND OF TOURISM IN J&K ECONOMY

TOURISM ARRIVAL IN JAMMU

Jammu is the sub-tropical region having hot and humid climate. Jammu is famous for its temples. In fact, it is known as the city of temples. Tourists visiting the state constitute a huge chunk of religious devotees. The holy cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi Ji is one of the most popular shrines of the country. The State has also won considerable recognition in pilgrim tourism over a period of time and most significantly after the establishment of Shrine Boards. The pilgrims from almost all the States/Union Territories of the country visit Katra throughout the year in large numbers. The number of pilgrims is showing constant increase and the monthly turnout is counted in lacs. The total tourists visiting Mata Vaishno Devi Ji has increased from 54.00 lacs in the year 2003 to 104.95 lacs during the year 2012. During the year 2005, the number of devotees has crossed the figure of sixty two lacs showing an increase of about one and a half lac or 2.32 % over the previous year 2004. Year 2012 has made history in terms of surpassing all previous records of pilgrim arrivals. A steep decline has been witnessed in tourists arrival in the year 2013. After that the number of visitors to Mata Vaishno Devi Ji is constantly increasing. In fact the number is swelling year after year. The arrival of tourist flow is expected to increase manifold provided appropriate steps are taken by the authorities which includes developmental processes in a coordinated manner.

Tourists Arrival at Mata Vaishno Devi (Jammu), Kashmir Valley and Ladakh (In Lakhs)

Year	Mata Vaishno Devi	Kashmir Valley	Ladakh
2003	54.00	1.91	0.28
2004	61.10	3.76	0.35
2005	62.52	6.05	0.38
2006	69.50	4.32	0.44
2007	74.17	4.41	0.65
2008	67.92	5.72	0.72
2009	82.35	6.01	0.78
2010	87.49	7.36	0.76
2011	101.15	13.14	1.79
2012	104.95	13.12	1.79
2013	93.24	11.72	1.37
2014	78.03	11.67	1.81
2015	77.76	9.28	1.49
2016	77.23	12.96	2.36
2017	81.78	12.25	2.77
2018	85.87	7.86	3.27

Source: Directorate of Tourism (Jammu & Kashmir)

TOURIST ARRIVAL TO KASHMIR VALLEY

The Kashmir valley, mainstream tourist destination of the State attracted 1.92 lac tourists in 2003. The recovery accelerated its pace in the next two years with tourist arrivals of 3.77 lac and 6.05 lac in 2004 and 2005 respectively. In the year 2006, the tourist traffic witnessed a significant fall of 28.49% by receiving only 4.33 lac tourists, consisting of 4.13 lac Indian tourists and 0.20 lac foreigners. The damped growth in Indian tourists, which has pulled down the overall number of tourists, was due to sporadic incidents of violence in 2006. After that tourist inflow has revived touching 13.15 lac and 13.12 lac in 2011 and 2012 respectively. A steep decline has been witnessed in tourist influx in the year 2015. The number of tourists visiting to valley was approximately 1225.61 thousand in the year 2017, down from about 1296.59 thousand tourists in 2016. The figure reached to 786.44 thousand tourists in 2018. The number of tourists to Kashmir valley over the years is given in table below: -

TOURIST ARRIVAL IN LADAKH

Foreign tourists are lured to visit Ladakh, land of Gumpas, situated in the lofty Himalayas. The attractive feature of Ladakh is that it is free from cultural, environmental and

atmospheric pollution. Ladakh is known as the land where snow never melts. It is also land of many springs and lakes, rich in hills and natural beauty. Ladakh attracted 43.90 thousand tourists during the year 2006 of which 17.82 thousand were from foreign countries and the remaining 26.07 thousand were domestic tourists. Tourists visiting Ladakh has shown constant increase from 2003 to 2006, the number has increased by 14.20% during 2006 over 2005 as against 9.55% increase during 2005 over 2004. The number of tourist arrivals, dropped to 149.50 thousand in 2015 but picked up again next year crossing 235.698 thousand tourists, including 38,005 foreigners in 2016. The tourist arrivals in 2018 crossed 3 lac mark for the first time, setting a new record. A total of 327.366 thousand tourists including 49,477 foreigners, visited Leh in 2018, marking an increase of over 50,000 compared to the previous year 2017. Ladakh had a steady growth in arrivals as given below:

Origin of foreign tourists

- Foreign tourists are generally recorded from Malaysia, U.K., U.S.A., South Africa, Italy, etc.
- Contribution of Malaysia remained highest in the number of foreign tourists. United Kingdom is the next country followed by U.S.A.
- Almost one fourth foreign tourists are reported from these three major countries leaving three fourth share for all other countries.

Revenue Earnings

Revenue earnings by various authorities has shown a remarkable change over the years. During the year 2010-11, revenue realized from various sources was recorded as 4362.68 lacs showing an increase of around 33.19% as compared to the previous year 2009-10 . Revenue realized in the year 2011-12 has touched to 4692.92 lacs of which Rs. 2250.00 lacs (47.94%) has been earned by J & K Tourism Development Corporation (TDC), followed by Rs. 1957.00 lacs (41.70%) by Cable Car Corporation. Revenue earnings has shown a significant rate of increase for the last few years.

The details of revenue realized for the 5 years is given in the table: -

S . No	Name of the Department/Organization	R e v e n u e e a r n e d 2 0 0 7 - 2 0 1 2 (i n l a k h s)				
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
1 .	Director General Tourism (J & K).	6 2 . 0 6	5 4 . 0 0	5 6 . 6 5	7 2 . 6 3	9 6 . 3 0
2.	J&KTDC	1763.00	1963.00	1894.00	2697.58	2250.00
3.	SKICC	64.00	71.20	65.00	110.00	114.50
4.	Gulmarg Dev. Authority.	48.50	51.17	34.35	37.32	145.00
5.	Pahalgam Dev. Authority.	19.00	12.73	6.68	23.40	31.00
6.	Patnitop Dev. Authority.	79.00	20.00	19.54	30.00	26.00
7.	Sonamarg Dev. Authority	32.50	45.00	39.00	79.40	10.00
8.	Royal Spring Golf Course	50.06	45.66	44.25	64.35	63.12
9.	Cable Car Corporation	798.81	839.14	1116.00	1248.00	1957.00
	T o t a l	2916.93	3101.9	3275.47	4362.68	4692.92

Source: Tourism Department (J&K)

PROBLEMS:

Tourism being a complex and sensitive phenomenon `needs to be tendered and promoted through rightful thinking and planning. The problems faced by the tourist industry in the State of Jammu & Kashmir are as follows:-

- Mismanagement and poor maintenance of heritage sites.
- Lack of supportive infrastructure.
- Lack of transportation facilities.
- Inadequate capacity.
- Lack of basic hygienic amenities at halting points.
- Lack of sound marketing and promotion strategies.
- Growing competition from neighbouring states.
- Lack of co-ordination and untrained Guides.
- Non- standardization of rates and fares.
- Lack of passionate and trained professionals.
- Militancy in the state.
- Natural Factors.

The Analysis of the Tourism Industry in the State is as follows: -

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rich culture, Heritage.• Three distinct Regions with diversity.• Flora, Fauna, lakes, Mountains, Pilgrimage places.• Springs, palaces, monuments, horticulture.• Handloom, Handicrafts, Shawls.• Kashmiries are hospitable, hospitality in their nerves.• Various kinds of tourism available to be exploited.• High Awareness of J & K as Tourist .• Kashmir the heaven, Switzerland of India.• Scenic beauty.• Well known for its Cricket bat industry.• Famous Kashmiri cuisine "WAZWAN".• Pashmina shawl and paper machie is famous in whole world.• Local residents have experience in tourism related activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No tourism policy• Under developed destinations.• Poor connectivity.• Low awareness level.• Low promotional activities.• Less Govt. spending• Economy dependent on tourism• Poor coordination between Departments.• Stress only on few developing sites.• Less tourists diversion to new places.• No culture of perspective planning in State Department.• No accountability in financial matters & services.• Less Tourism Research.• Lack of Training infrastructure & Hospitality Industry.• No diversion of tourists from specific tourism to other type of tourism.• Lack of guidance facility.• Non cooperation by travel Agencies.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can cater to almost all Tourist tastes. • High Returns from Tourism Industry. • Development of circuits. • Un exploited Ladakh. • Pilgrimage circuits. • Package tours. • Higher spending of people on recreation, entertainment. • Linkage with specific circuits in other states. • Professional Approach. • Govt. role as care taker and facilitator. • Customer oriented and friendly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security. • Competition. • Diversions of tourists to other safer places. • Better facilities from competitors. • Non awakening of Govt. • Non treatment of tourism as service industry. • Low information dissemination, access and training. • Environmental pollution poses a serious threat. • Political instability in the State. • Militancy.

It is evident that the strengths & opportunities can out- way the weaknesses if properly exploited.

Eco-Tourism

Eco-tourism is entirely a new approach in tourism. Eco- tourism is a travel to natural areas to appreciate the cultural & natural history of the environment & not to disturb the integrity of the untouched ecosystem. It is a type of tourism that appeals to ecologically conscious individuals. Eco-tourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas. Tourism does not typically encourage the protection of the environment and is a profit industry. But eco-tourism provides opportunities for visitors to experience nature & to learn about the importance of biodiversity conservation & local cultures. The primary difference between tourism and eco tourism is the earth-friendly focus of the latter. Eco tourism is now one of the fastest growing segments of the economy in many parts of the world. It signifies travel to relatively remote and undisturbed natural settings where flora ,fauna and cultural heritage are seen as the main attractions. Besides protection, conservation of the environment, natural resources of that place and sustainable use of biodiversity ,it also involves empowerment and participation of the local communities as important beneficiaries of the tourist activity. It is now being widely recognized that ecotourism, if properly envisioned, can have a substantial impact on both rural economy and poverty alleviation.

Jammu and Kashmir state has number of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and wetlands providing an opportunity to the state to promote eco-tourism. These natural assets make J&K state as one of the best destinations for the ecotourism in the world. J&K with its natural diversity is one of the unspoilt places of the country for eco-tourism. Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Kokarnag are some of the best spots which are visited by tourists for

eco tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. In a mega push to promote eco-tourism in J&K, the Administrative Council, approved the development of 7 new trekking routes in various wildlife protected areas by the Wildlife Department in coordination with the Tourism Department. To sustainably promote eco-tourism in the forest hinterland without disturbing the ecological balance in the protected areas, the Administrative Council also approved opening-up of the existing infrastructure and resources of the Forest Department including rest houses/inspection huts to tourists and wildlife enthusiasts. Majority of the tourist i.e, 31% visited state because of Eco tourism followed by pilgrimage tourism (21%), Heritage tourism (19%), Cultural tourism (11%), Adventure tourism (9%) and others as well.

Eco-Tourism Board

- The J & K Environment Department has pushed a proposal to the Govt. for constituting a J & K Eco-tourism Board in 2012) to recommend measures & identify potential sites for promotion of Eco-tourism in the state.
- J& K has great potential for Eco-Tourism. The Govt. has taken the issue seriously and is making every effort to ensure a major breakthrough in the promotion of Eco-Tourism. The creation of the J & K Eco-Tourism Development Board will prove a major step forward in this direction.

Eco-Tourism Sites in J&K

- Eco-Tourism places in Kashmir are Gurez, Dudhpathri, Bangus Valley, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Kokarnag.
- J & K Govt. is to develop Mughal Road as Eco-Tourism site.
- Department of Forest, Tourism & Wild life, in a joint project of Rs. 1.50 crore, are planning to develop potential eco-tourism destinations along the historic Mughal Road.
- The project envisages public participation in the conservation of nature, besides providing employment opportunities to the locals.
- It also aims at massive afforestation & conservation of wild life habitats, besides creation of sustainable tourism infrastructure.

Eco-Tourism Fair:

- J & K Govt. recently organized an 'Eco-Tourism Fair' in Dera-Ki-Gali (a region located between Poonch & Rajouri) to develop the tourism potential of the region.
- Dera-Ki-Gali (near Mughal Road), is being developed as the first Eco-Tourism project in the state by the forest department towards showcasing the scenic beauty & the heritage of the area.

Eco-Tourism Steps Being Taken:

- Eco- Tourism project in Leh to be funded under 13th Finance Commission Award.
- Identification & declaration of Eco Zones.
- Different tourism products being identified.

- Potential for Rural Home-stays.
- Involvement of local population to generate livelihood opportunities.
- Dispersal of tourist traffic from congested destinations.
- The tourism department has taken many initiatives to identify lakes, caves, rivers, forests as the natural resources having potential for development of Eco-Tourism.
- The Tourism Department has become the member of Eco-Tourism society & first workshop held in 2011 in Jammu followed by workshop in Srinagar to sensitize people about eco-tourism.

SUGGESTIONS

From the above discussion it is clear that tourism is an important sector of development for J&K economy but there are some weaknesses and threats, which if extracted properly could become main strengths and opportunities for J&K tourism. Following are some of the suggestions with regard to the future development process of tourism in J&K.

1. The first and the foremost thing in this regard would be to have safety to the tourists in the valley and political stability in the state.
2. Second important thing is that there should be a well developed tourism policy for J&K economy.
3. Infrastructure development with regard to tourism is lacking. So there is an urgent need for proper improvement and maintenance of infrastructure in J&K.
4. The state has number of new unexplored and unexploited tourist destinations. Such destinations should be explored and needs to be given more publicity.
5. The state has number of destinations suitable for eco-tourism, which needs to be explored more and more and thus giving a new sense of hope to tourism.
6. There is a need to open more and more institutions which could provide proper training to the unemployed youth to enhance their skills regarding tourism related activities.
7. All the new projects, having an impact on environment and tourism should be carried out in a sustainable way without damaging the fragile ecology of the state.
8. Funds generated by tourism industry should be exclusively used for the conservation and development of the sites.
9. Public relation centres should be setup and through social media, tourism can be advertised to make tourists to visit the state.
10. Development of a strong network among government and various agencies, needs to be done.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the foregoing discussion can be concluded with a view that Tourism Industry is the backbone of State Economy. Its full and proper exploitation will lead to mass employment, revenue generation and thus eradicating poverty from the region. All these parameters are expected to increase manifold provided the situation remains normal and the tourist arrival

increases in a desired manner. It is the leading industry in the state and proves to be the life line of J&K. The State can be made a top tourist destination among the precious States of India. All the stakeholders should work in a coordinated manner and effective measures need to be undertaken for retaining, maintaining and sustaining it and thereby becoming an attractive tourist destination spot all over the world. It is apt here to conclude with Mahatma Gandhi's statement: "The earth has enough for man's need but not for his greed."

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