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Potential of tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

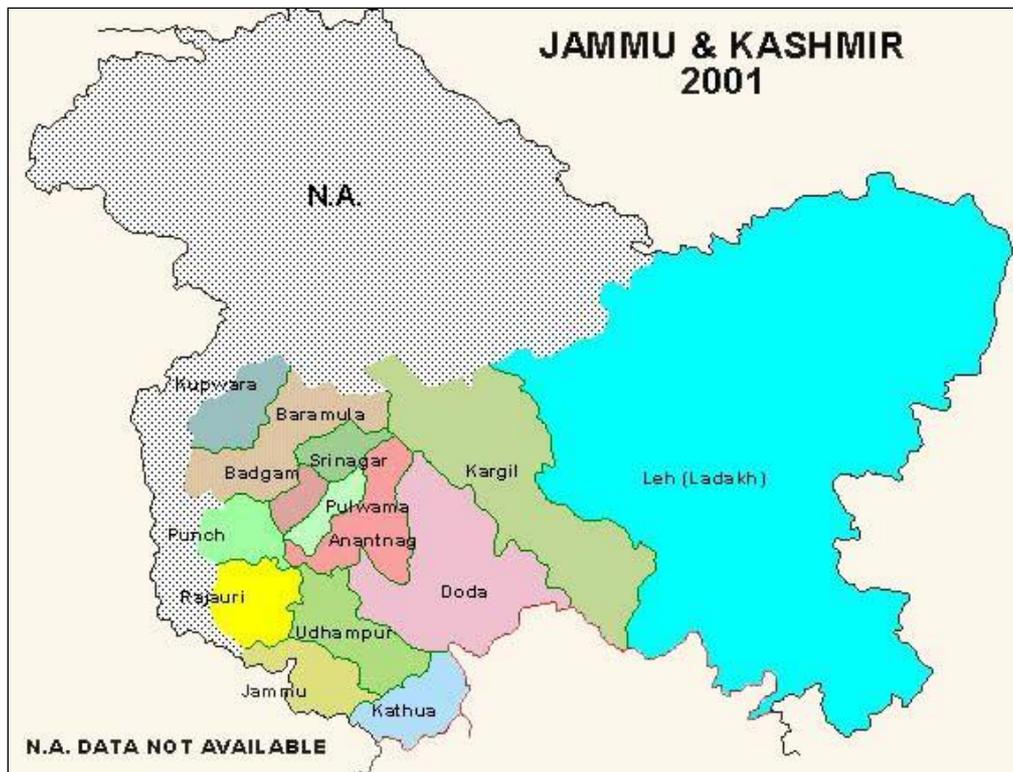
Jammu and Kashmir is home to several valleys such as the Kashmir valley, Chenab Valley, Sindh valley and Lidder valley. Some major tourist attractions in Jammu and Kashmir are Srinagar, the Mughal Gardens, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Patnitop and Jammu. Every year, thousands of Hindu pilgrims visit holy shrines of Vaishno Devi and Amarnath which has had significant impact on the state's economy. Kashmir Valley is one of the top tourist destinations of India. Gulmarg one of the most popular Ski resort destinations in India, is also home to the world's highest green golf course. Tourism has suffered a lot during past thirty years and it is still in mess. People associated with tourism and other private businesses are facing potential challenges and always suffer huge losses due to the unprecedented situation in the territory. Jammu and Kashmir is also famous for its scenic beauty, flower gardens, apple farms and more. It attracts tourists for its unique handicrafts and the world-famous Kashmiri shawls. The beautiful crown of India, Kashmir is popularly known as the mini Switzerland in India. This is largely due to the snow clad mountains, pine trees, the pleasant weather all year round and abundance of mountains, lakes, landscapes, gardens and valleys.

Keywords: ski resort, scenic beauty, Kashmiri shawls, pilgrims, tourist's destinations

Introduction

Tourism industry has become a very fastest growing industry in the modern period. It is recognized as an important "tiger" industry for the first decade of the current century. Tourism does not produce goods, but it is mainly a service industry and extends services to different classes of people. It consists of the activities undertaken through travel from home or workplace for the pleasure and enjoyment of certain destinations, and the facilities that cater to the needs of the tourist. Travel and tourism have been important social activities of human beings from time immemorial. The urge to discover new places within one's own country or outside and try to find a change of environment has been practiced from ancient times. Almost in every economy of the world, tourism sector plays a vital role in the contribution of generating revenue, employment opportunities and in economy's GDP. It provides opportunities to local populace to increase their living standards by increasing employment opportunities. According to the estimates from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in 2011, tourism generates around 270.7 million jobs globally and accounts for over 10% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It also plays a key role in cross-cultural exchange of the two cultures. It helps to learn about different languages, life styles and tradition. It provides opportunities to adopt the qualities of different cultures vice-versa, as tourists are also bound to cause tension among the local population by introducing new life styles and progressively promoting social, cultural and religious disruptions. Tourism serves as a means of conserving the cultural heritage of the local area which otherwise might be lost due to development. It provides scope for conserving local dance, art, craft, music, drama, dress and old historic monuments.

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Source: http://img1.findthebest.com/sites/default/files/1155/media/images/Jammu_and_Kashmir_163834

Fig 1: District Map of Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir is a region administered by India as a union territory and consisting of the southern portion of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and between India and China since 1962. The Line of control separates Jammu and Kashmir from the Pakistani administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan in the west and north. It lies to the north of the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and to the west of Ladakh, which is also subject to the dispute as a part of Kashmir, and administered by India as a union territory. Provisions for the formation of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir were contained within the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 which was passed by both houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. The act re-constituted the former state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, with effect from 31 October 2019. The numerable research studies has been conducted by; Balaguer, J. & Cantavella, J., M. (2012) ^[1], Bhat, A. H. & Bhat, G. M. (2006) ^[2], Connely, M. (2011) ^[3], Gadoo, M. (2011) ^[4], Jay W. P. (2011) ^[5], Shafi, M. (1994) ^[6], Thoker, A. A. (2018) ^[9], Torres, E. N. and Kline, S. (2006) ^[12], Thomas, J. Z. & Goldfried, M. R. (1971) ^[10] and Torres, E. N. and Kline, S. (2006) ^[12]. Keeping the inferences and gap reported in these research studies the researcher selected the research problem as under:

Problem in hand: The statement of the research problem is reported as under:

“Potential of tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir”

Objectives of the study: The objectives of the study are given as under:

- To show the tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir.
- To highlight the famous tourist places.

Methodology: The present study is descriptive and is based on the secondary information. The secondary information was collected from various Journals, Periodicals, Magazines, Newspapers, Newsletters, Research articles, Books, Internet and published and unpublished records of Ministry of Tourism Government of India and J&K tourism.

Justification of the study

Jammu & Kashmir tourism has been described as a paradise so many times that one feels it is the ultimate homage you could pay to it. But somehow, there is a vagueness in it which does not do justice to this part of the country. Tourism is the key sector of Jammu and Kashmir's economy and accounts for 6.98 per cent of the state's GDP. The Valley of Kashmir, also known as the “Paradise on Earth” is among the most important tourist destinations of the globe. The growth in the tourism industry in the region is due to the rise in tourist arrivals and diversification of tourism product. The present paper highlights the role of tourism industry on economic development in J&K by examining the different parameters such as employment generation, development of infrastructure and State Gross Domestic Product (SGDP). It is found that despite being a leading industry of J&K, tourism industry has not been developed optimally so as to harness its economic benefits. Emphasis needs to be put on the rich heritage and culture, great hospitality and beautiful landscape which provide a unique tourism product in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. The upward sloping curves in the figure 1 show that there is a positive impact of tourist inflow on employment i.e. with the increase in tourist inflow, total employment (Direct & Indirect) also rises. It means that if the current trend continues, total employment would reach to 34.06 lac from a tourist inflow of 227.08 lakhs till 2020. However it is important to note here that in order to meet the needs of such tourist inflow, there is a need to carry forward the

developmental process in a coordinated manner. Jammu and Kashmir is the Northern most State of the India. Geographically it is a unique State with three different regions within the State i.e. Jammu, Kashmir. Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal husbandry, Forestry and Tourism are the main source of economy of the J&K State. Among all industries, tourism is an important industry in the state. Tourism is considered to be economic bonanza for J&K state because industrial development is very limited to hilly terrains. J&K is one of the popular tourist destinations in Asia. The tourism in J&K offers a wide array of places to see. The delighting backwaters, hill stations and landscape make J&K a beautiful tourist destination. Historical monuments, forts, places of religious importance, hill resorts, etc. add to the grandeur of the union territory. Thus, they attract tourists from all over the world. Tourism has now become a significant industry in J&K, contributing enormously to the economy and providing employment to a large number of people. Being a labour-intensive industry, the scope of employment is very vast. Tourism is regarded as multi-segmented industry, therefore provides different types of jobs like hotel managers, receptionists, guides, tour operators, travel agents, photographers & many other jobs which are required to strengthen the tourism. Additionally, J&K is also likely to become a major hub for medical tourism if timely steps are taken by the government authorities to exploit this opportunity as well. The state is bestowed with beauty & rich forests, natural lakes, fresh water. The state of Jammu & Kashmir is known all over the world for its beautiful valleys, lakes, snow-capped peaks, invigorating climate, valleys, cool climate, opportunities for trekking fishing, skiing & number of archaeological, historical, cultural & religious places, cool climate & hospitable people. J&K especially Kashmir valley offers various categories of tourism. These include adventure tourism, medical tourism, water rafting, skiing, religious tourism, etc. Jammu and Kashmir has a composite culture. There is a harmonious blend of art, religion and philosophy. Religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism etc. has co-existed in J&K since hundreds of years. The Hindu holy shrine of Amarnath in Kashmir attracts millions of Hindu devotees every year and Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu region also attract tens of thousands of Hindu devotees every year. The wondrous state of J&K is bestowed with holy spots that make it an ideal pilgrim destination in India. The history of the state still lives in the forts, museums, ancient buildings and other heritage spots within the state. Jammu and Kashmir is blessed with both tangible and the intangible heritage which should be incorporated into the wider tourism circuit. As stated above, the state of J&K has three distinct regions viz., Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. All the three regions have immense potential for tourism from both domestic as well as international tourists. Its impact is visible in the service industry sectors, such as transport, hospitality, horticulture, handicraft and small scale industry. Kashmir is popularly known as "Paradise on Earth". For centuries Kashmir has been centre of attraction. Kashmir is also known as "Switzerland of East" and is famous for its wealth of beauty, its snow-capped mountains, rivers and fresh water lakes offer tourists ample opportunities for trekking, rafting, skiing & mountaineering. Some notable tourist places in Kashmir Valley are Dal Lake, Mughal gardens, Nishat Bagh, Gulmarg, Yusmarg, Pahalgam etc. Kashmiri's natural

landscape has made it one of the popular destinations for adventure tourism in South Asia. Jammu is also known for its ancient temples, Hindu shrines, gardens and forts. The temple of Maha Kali (better known as Bahu or Bawey Wali Mata), located in the Bahu Fort, is considered second only to Mata Vaishno Devi in terms of mystical power. The temple was built shortly after the coronation of Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1822. Other temples in the city include the Gauri Kund Temple, Sudh Mahadev Temple, Shiva Temple, Peer Kho Cave Temple, Ranbireswar Temple and the Purmandal Temple Complex Jammu's historic monuments feature a unique blend of Islamic and Hindu architecture styles. Ladakh the third and important region of the State has emerged as a major hub for adventure tourism. This part of Greater Himalaya called "Moon on Earth" comprising of naked peaks and deep gorges was once known for the silk route to Asia from subcontinent. Ladakh is home to the minority Buddhist community in the state. Tourism is the life line of Jammu and Kashmir and all possible efforts need to be undertaken for retaining, maintaining and sustaining it. Tourism can play an effective role in integrating the entire universe. Tourism opens up new window for resources, both investment generation and revenue generation leading to employment generation as well as socioeconomic development of the local populace Even though tourism creates jobs and contributes significantly to economic growth, it is not automatically a solution for poverty reduction. Therefore, it is important for government of the state, local investors and other stakeholders to actively participate in tourism and its related activities. The local workforce can also help by engaging and encouraging the use of local companies for the provision of transport, services and food in order to assist in alleviating local poverty. The different terrains of the State coupled with law-and-order problems have contributed to poor connectivity in the region. The rail- road mix of transport in the state is very low. There is dire need to build alternative roads in some places to ensure better connectivity. There is also a need to upgrade many of the existing roads from two lanes to four lanes. The State, sparsely populated and scattered as it is, needs more airports and better air connectivity as well. The tourism infrastructure like wider and smooth roads, transport including provision for Airlines and Rail services, up gradation of hotels, development of tourist places in Jammu and Kashmir should be strengthened. There is dire need to build alternative roads in some places to ensure better connectivity. The State, sparsely populated and scattered as it is, needs more airports and better air connectivity as well. Steps should be taken to restore the ancient splendor of the monuments. The religious sites in all the three regions of Jammu and Kashmir need a very special focus for the development of basic infrastructure to attract pilgrims in huge numbers. The above analysis reveals that the Tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir suffered a sudden downfall due to the massive political disturbance which stuck the state in late 1980's. Even though tourism creates jobs and contributes significantly to economic growth, it is not automatically a solution for poverty reduction, the different terrains of the State coupled with law-and-order problems have contributed to poor connectivity in the region. The rail -road mix of transport in the state is very low. There is dire need to build alternative roads in some places to ensure better connectivity. Steps should be taken to restore the ancient splendor of the monuments. All it requires is

intelligent planning and iron will. Finally, Kashmir is an area with great tourism potential & is a leading edge of development. Kashmir is considered as a most elite destination in the world. Tourism is the main industry in the state. It is regarded as multi-segmented industry therefore, provides different types of jobs like hotel managers, guides, travel agents and others. The enchanting geographical landscape & range of ecosystems leaves a lasting impression on the tourists in Kashmir. The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir holds unlimited tourist potentialities. Gulmarg is a hill station in the western part of the valley of Kashmir. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community believes it to be the place where Jesus once lived. The landscape here is more beautiful than anything you will ever see. Gulmarg has everything going for it: snow-dressed mountains, greenery, lakes, pine & fir forests and different types of flowers. It is snug in a valley in the Pir Panjal Range. Its name means, the meadows of flowers, and you will come across a lot of meadows decorated with daisies. Most of all though, Gulmarg is the best skiing destination in Asia, has the highest green golf course in the world as well as the highest cable car project. Sonmarg means a “meadow of gold”, is one of the best tourist places in Jammu and Kashmir for sightseeing & adventure. Its landscape is marked by a glacier, forests and snow-capped mountains. Any tourist visiting the top 10 places in Jammu and Kashmir will always visit Pahalgam. Located in the Anantnag district, it is located on the banks of the River Lidder. It is a visual treat with its meadows, forests and pristine environment. Aru Valley, Betab Valley and Baisaran are some of the places which make Pahalgam the best in Kashmir for a sightseeing tour. For six months, the Gurez Valley is cut off from the rest of the world, and that enhances its appeal as a famous tourist destination in Jammu and Kashmir. The people who live here are one of the oldest tribes in Kashmir called the Dard Shin Tribe and speak a language called Shina. Verinag is a town in the district of Anantnag, where the Verinag Spring is a must see attraction. The stone basin & arcade surrounding it were built by Jahangir, while the beautiful garden next to it was built by Shah Jahan. Srinagar finds a place on this list because it is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir as well as the top honeymoon destination. The presence of many Mughal Gardens, religious & historical sites as well as Dal &

Nageen Lakes has led Srinagar to being called the “Land of Gardens and Lakes”. Among the other things that will surprise you, one is the floating vegetable market on Dal Lake. The largest Tulip gardens in Asia are also in Srinagar. The hill station of Patnitop is included among the popular tourist places in Jammu and Kashmir for its meadows, gorgeous views & lovely views of the Himalayan peaks. If you are looking for winter getaways in Jammu, this is where you should be. Doda is a district located in the eastern part of Jammu and has plenty of opportunities for sightseeing and even adventure. Those who are spiritually inclined should certainly visit Doda, since there are plenty of temples and a splendid mosque too. Kishtwar is a sleepy peaceful town and a top tourist spot in Jammu and Kashmir as much for its waterfalls and numerous trekking routes as for its rare blue sapphire and high quality saffron that is found here. Sanasar is named after the villages of Sana and Sar and can be counted among the most beautiful places to visit in Jammu and Kashmir. It is a meadow situated in Jammu and has the appearance of a cup. The numerical justification of the above reported events is reported as under:

Table 1: Showing generation of employment on implementation of Tourism development plan

S No.	Year	Direct Employment (in lacs)	In-Direct Employment (in lacs)	Total Employment
1	2002	1.57075	7.85375	9.4245
2	2003	1.68575	8.42875	10.1145
3	2004	1.809	9.045	10.854
4	2005	1.9415	9.7075	11.649
5	2006	2.084	10.42	12.504
6	2007	2.237	11.185	13.422
7	2008	2.4015	12.0075	14.409
8	2009	2.57825	12.89125	15.4695
9	2010	2.76825	13.84125	16.6095
10	2011	2.97275	14.86375	17.8365
11	2012	3.1925	15.9625	19.155
12	2013	3.429	17.145	20.574
13	2014	3.6835	18.4175	22.101
14	2015	3.95725	19.78625	23.7435
15	2016	4.25225	21.26125	25.5135
16	2017	4.5695	22.8475	27.417
17	2018	4.9115	24.5575	29.469
18	2019	5.28	26.4	31.68
19	2020	5.677	28.385	34.062

Source: Santek Consultants Pvt. Ltd New-Delhi

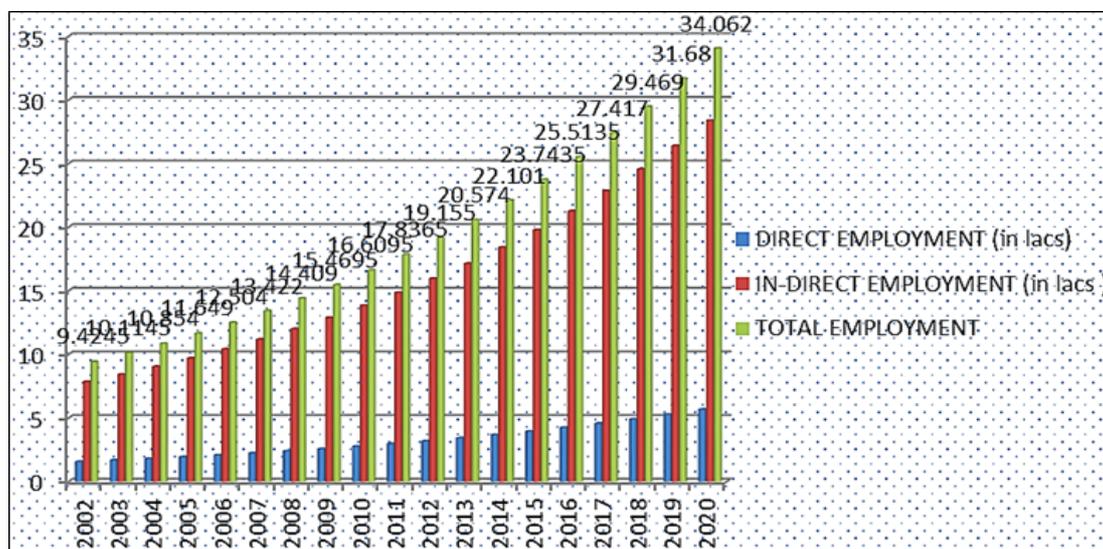


Fig 2: Showing graphical representation on generation of employment on implementation of Tourism development plan

The results obtained in the above reported table reveal that rampant increase has been seen in both direct employment as well indirect employment. Besides, while observing the total employment. Thud, the researcher after observing the data analyse justify that since 2002 tourism has emerged as a high potential in generating the employment of the people in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 2: Projected benefits from tourists 2011-2020

S No.	Year	Total Benefits (Direct and In-direct) to J&K in crores
1	2011	7455.46
2	2012	8080.51
3	2013	8767.00
4	2014	9522.17
5	2015	10354.34
6	2016	11272.96
7	2017	12288.84
8	2018	13414.39
9	2019	14663.79
10	2020	16053.34

Source: Santek consultant’s pvt. Ltd. New-Delhi.

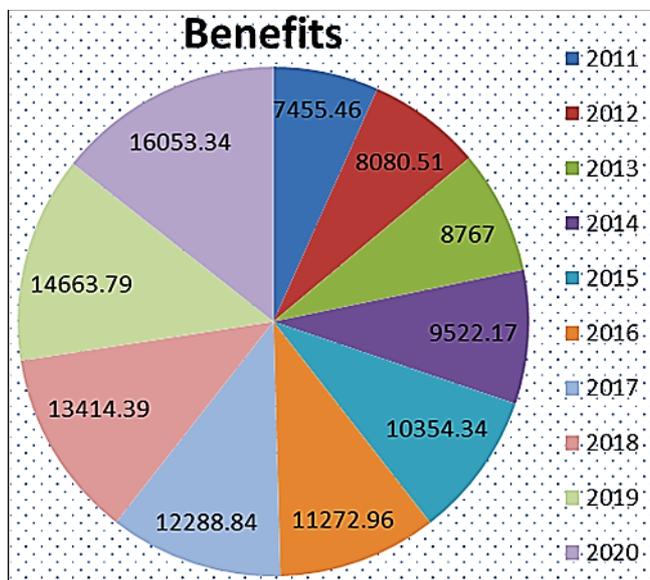


Fig 3: Projected benefits from tourists 2011-2020

The results revealed in the above mentioned table reveals that the increasing trend has been seen in the domain of tourism. The benefits in context of the above table justify that gradual increase in the benefits has taken place since 2011 to 2020. In pursuance to same, it has been seen that that tourism hold utmost potential in fostering the economic benefits in union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Conclusion

Jammu and Kashmir has tremendous potential in tourism sector. The scope of large scale industrial development is very limited in the State. Tourism being a labour intensive industry provides a very vast scope for employment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir. The policies of government in future will determine how much tourism industry will prosper in upcoming years. The government need to establish better road, rail, air connectivity, presence of branded hotel rooms, ease of doing business etc. in order to make tourism industry flourish. If we were successful in making this industry prosperous it will create lot of

employment opportunities to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is the northern most state of India which is well known for tourism activities. J&K shares India’s international borders with Pakistan, China and Afghanistan; Moreover, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (two Indian States) also share their borders with J&K. The mountainous border districts of Jammu and Kashmir have immense potential for tourism. There are several ancient temples, monasteries, forts, traditions and rituals, food, costume etc. which are highly impressive and worth promoting.

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