

# TO STUDY THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM SECTOR IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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*Abstract: The economy of any developing Country, aiming to pursue tourism, as a development strategy needs fast and efficient implementation of Environmental Management principles in order to achieve its desired growth potential. Land and other bio-physical resources are finite. Therefore, the only way to enhance economic growth is better innovation and efficient management of resources. This paper examines the present economic and environmental factors and its role in achieving sustainable tourism development. It further aims to explain the environmental management to clarify the interrelationship between sustainable tourism and environmental management.*

*The paper gives a brief analysis of the development of economy and environmental issues through the Tourism perspective in Jammu and Kashmir. Tourism sector is the back boon of Jammu and Kashmir's business community. Many business ventures are economically dependent on this vary industry.*

*The Department of Tourism, J&K is the main developmental, promotional and regulatory arm of tourism development in J&K. Its main role comprises of overall planning and execution of schemes for the development, up-gradation and improvement of the tourism infrastructure in different parts of the State.*

**Key words:** *Tourism development, Environmental management, Economic development.*

## OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To study the role of J&K tourism in employment generation, income generation and regional development.
- 2) To study the impact of tourism sector in economic and environment development.
- 3) To study the promotion of good environmental practice within the tourism sector.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in nature. The study has been done in a completely natural and unchanged natural environment. The result from a descriptive research which is based on the secondary information and primary information is also used as supplementary in the form of comments, interviews, and observations etc. The secondary information has been collected from journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, books and websites. Descriptive research design is a valid method for researching specific subject. The presents study highlights the development of tourism sector in J&K in relation to economic and environmental matters.

## INTRODUCTION

The growth of tourism as the world's fastest growing industry in the 21st century has brought with it major environmental problems, which need to be addressed and resolved in order to achieve sustainability on the short and long term. Land degradation, pollution, waste, damage of species and inadequate utilization of natural resources have caused many natural resources to be endangered or even destroyed. The environmental management legislation involved both inter-governmental and public-private partnerships in order to promote and maintain the ecosystem services to serve the natural assets. The environmental management actions by the government as well as public and private sectors have contributed significantly in producing and maintaining adequate utilization of resources, elimination of air and water pollution, and biodiversity. Moreover, it has been noted through the research that the private sector has limited access to investment in most tourism development areas particularly protected areas, the government organizations and public sector have sole mandate to invest and manage protected areas with outsourcing of certain types of expertise from the private sector. Tourism in J&K has been dependent to a large extent on environment; yet, major environmental needs have received no proper attention to preserve the environmental assets for sustainable tourism today and for the new generations of tomorrow. This paper provides a critical analysis of the current environmental management strategies in J&K, providing recommendations to improve environmental management techniques to achieve sustainable tourism.

Jammu And Kashmir State is based on three regions viz Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. All these regions are well known for tourism potential all round the world. Jammu also known as 'City of temples' is an important destination of pilgrimage tourism. Some of the famous pilgrimage sites located here are Vaishno Devi temple, Rangunath temple and Bahu Fort which attract tourists from across the world.

J&K has a tremendous potential to become a major global tourist destination. Importance of tourism in J&K economy is known for decades now and its role in the economic development has been an area of great interest from policy perspective. It is estimated that lakhs of tourists are visiting J&K every year and millions of tourist inflow in the year 2012 was recorded.

## INTRODUCTION TO J&K TOURISM:

The Department of Tourism, J&K is the main developmental, promotional and regulatory arm of the J&K Government. Its main role comprises of;

- Overall planning and execution of schemes for the development, up-gradation and improvement of the tourism infrastructure in different parts of the State.
- Support to the private sector industry in the form of incentives for setting up various tourist facilities as well as for promotion and marketing of their products and services.
- Promotion and marketing of various tourist destinations and products of the State.
- Regulation of the travel-trade by enforcement of provisions of J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act.

The Department of Tourism has Tourist Offices in all the tourist resorts of the State. In addition, there are 6 promotional offices outside the State, one each at New Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmadabad, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata. Also, there is one provincial Director of Tourism each for Jammu and Kashmir Divisions. The Department also has Engineering Division under its control for the implementation and execution of various schemes. For formulating and monitoring the plan schemes, the Department has a Planning Wing and for overall marketing and promotion the Department has a Publicity Wing.

For safeguarding the interest of tourists, visiting Jammu and Kashmir, the State has enacted a special legislation titled the "Jammu and Kashmir Registration of Tourist Trade Act, 1978/1982". Under this act, all the Tourist Officers posted in different resorts have been vested with special powers as Prescribed Authorities to register and regulate the tourist trade in their respective areas of jurisdiction, and to look into complaints from tourists visiting the State, the Department has an Enforcement Wing headed by a Superintendent of Police on deputation from the Police Department who is designated as Deputy Director Tourism (Enforcement). For cases requiring prosecution, written complaint of a tourist is admissible as evidence even if he may have left the State. The commercial activities in the tourism sector from the Government side are looked after by a public sector corporation known as the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (J&K TDC). It operates and manages Government accommodation in Tourist Centers at Srinagar and Jammu, and the Tourist Complexes, Hotels, Tourist Bungalows in various resorts. The Corporation also runs a Travel Division, which organizes package tours to various parts of the State and also arranges transport facilities for the tourists. Other related organizations of the Tourism Department are the Jammu and Kashmir State Cable Car Corporation (J&KSCCC) and the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC).

The Cable Car Corporation operates a Gondola Lift at Gulmarg and at Makhdoom Sahib<sup>RA</sup> shrine in Srinagar. It is also planning to set up similar facilities in different tourist resorts of the State. The Convention Centre namely the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre located in Srinagar, the summer capital of the state has Conference facilities of International standards.

As a measure to speed-up infrastructure development in select tourist resorts, Development Authorities, headed by Chief Executive Officers have been constituted for Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Yousmarg, Dodpathri, Verinag, Kokernag, Leh, Kargil, Patnitop, Lakhanpur - Sarthal, Aharbal, Wular - Manasbal, Zanskar, Rajouri, Poonch, Bhaderwah, Kishtwar, Gurez and Mansar.

## TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN J&K

J&K has a tremendous potential to become a major global tourist destination. Importance of tourism in J&K economy is known for decades now and its role in the economic development has been an area of great interest from policy perspective. It is estimated that lakhs of tourists are visiting J&K every year and millions of tourist inflow in the year 2012 was recorded.

### 1. Tourism and employment generation:

Tourism has played a vital role in the employment generation from past with a great potential to increase it further in coming decades. J&K possesses lot of tourist attractions in the form of pilgrimage, Heritage and Eco-tourism with enormous scope to transform the whole economy as a tourist driven economy by providing jobs through trickling down effect. Being a labor intensive industry, its scope in employment generation is vast and the level of investment required here is low as compared to other sectors of the economy.

Tourism in J&K is a multi-segmental industry by providing different types of jobs like hotel managers, guides, tour operators, chefs etc which further strengthens the J&K economy by increasing income and standard of living of the people.

### 2. Tourism and income generation:

Tourism industry in J&K is also of much significance in the sense that J&K is considered as one of the industrially backward states of the country. Apart from agriculture, tourism industry is the most popular source of income in J&K.

### 3. Tourism and regional development:

Tourism act as a catalyst in the development of backward and far flung regions of a particular area. Development of tourism will lead to the progress in rural and backward regions. It is often seen that most of the scenic and beautiful destination of a country are located in backward areas which have a significant contribution in the economic development of local industries. Same is the case of J&K where tourists are attracted towards the areas which are located in remote regions of state like Lolab and Bangus valley in Kupwara, Sura Valley in Kargil, Daksum valley in Anantnag, Gurez Valley in Bandipora and Tousamaidan in Budgam which are known for their scenic beauty and charming climate and for greater tourist potential than those offered by famous destinations like Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Mughal gardens among the likewise. Tourists visiting such unexplored attractive spots can give flip to the economic condition of the residents by promoting local art like Handicrafts, Handlooms, Cricket bat industry and Ayurveda. It is estimated that handicrafts (paper mashie, wood carving, pashmina shawl) in J&K generate a revenue of more than Rs.1000/- crore with about 4-5 lakh artisans being employed in this sector.

## TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Himalayan region and particularly J&K is needed to be looked from the point of view of tourism. In the context of world tourism, the area is lacking the experience and expertise. The prestige and beauty of the region's socio-cultural and manmade environment may attract millions of tourists every year. The size of the industry requires the national management of the resources which make up tourism.

Mountain regions and communities often have fragile environments and socio-economic relations. The problems associated with tourism in mountain regions include sewage pollution of rivers, sedimentation and emission of construction activities, erosion and landslides, water extraction from streams to supply resorts, damage to habitats during constructions and use.

In many mountain areas, concern has grown about the negative impacts of tourism on the natural environment, village economies and cultural traditions; but these concerns can be addressed by practicing multiple land use methods of resources management combined with sustainable community development. If all activities are carried out with the full participation of local people and communities which make them guardians of their resources and area designed to ensure that local people benefit from tracking tourism and conservation, then also these could be addressed.

## CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

### ✓ Direct financial contribution

Tourism can contribute directly to the conservation of sensitive areas and habitat. Revenue from park-entrance fees and similar sources can be allocated specifically to pay for the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas. Special fees for park operations or conservation activities can be collected from tourists or tour operators. The tourists and many tour operators of the state make an annual financial contribution by different means at various tourist destinations of the state.

### ✓ Contribution to government revenues

Some governments collect money in more far-reaching and indirect ways that are not linked to specific parks or conservation areas. User fees, income taxes, taxes on sales or rental of recreation equipment, and license fees for activities such as hunting and fishing can provide governments with the funds needed to manage natural resources. Such funds can be used for overall conservation programs and activities, such as salaries and park maintenance.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the tax is being collected from pony wallas (Horse Riders) and slage owners (slage is *an instrument to carry tourists on hard snow*) for the increase in government revenue and maintenance of that particular tourist destination. The pony wallas or the slage owners make their livelihood at these tourist destinations of Jammu and Kashmir particularly in the areas of Gulmarg, Sonamarg and Pahalgam. They earn their lively hood and pay taxes to the government which results the income generation for the J&K tourism department.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

There are number of challenges related to the environment that need to be addressed by the tourism sector. These challenges are there in almost all industries which can be rectified through different motivational and technological means. The challenges that the tourism industry is facing include:

- Promoting the principles and practice of sustainable tourism throughout the industry.
- Achieving greater regional and seasonal spread of visitors.
- Improving energy efficiency, waste management and water conservation within the sector.
- Dealing with traffic congestion and damage to roads in some areas particularly the roads which are snow bound seasonally.

## STRENGTHS OF J&K TOURISM

The scope of tourism in J&K is better than other states of the country. There are many factors responsible for the huge potential of tourism in J&K which includes:

- ✓ J&K is a prominent and well known destination for its great hospitality, rich cultural heritage and scenic beauty.
- ✓ J&K is a suitable destination for several other types of tourism activities which are yet to be explored like adventure tourism, medical tourism, eco tourism, and polo-tourism.
- ✓ Handicrafts of J&K like pashmina shawl and paper mashie is famous in the whole world. J&K is also well known for its bat industry,
- ✓ The local residents of J&K have lot of experience in tourism related activities.

It is evident that J&K tourism has vast potential by looking through the prism of strengths which can out way the weaknesses like unexplored destinations, poor infrastructure and security concerns provided the strengths and opportunities are properly maintained.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

As tourism moved into the 21st century, the enterprises have to make the environment a priority. Because tourism now is the world's largest industry, the environment is taking centre stage in tourism development. Tourism is not only a powerful economic force but a factor in the physical environment as well. Any form of industrial development brings impacts upon the physical environment in which it takes place. In view of the fact that tourists have to visit the place of production in order to consume the output, it is to mention that the tourism activity is associated with environmental and climatic conditions as well.

In many tourism projects the conservation of the natural, cultural and built environment is an important motivation for the initiation of the project. Moreover, some of the projects tend to deter local communities from illegal use and overuse of natural resources as well as they try to integrate the protected natural areas in regional and local development plans and programs. Therefore, tourism could and should contribute positively to environmental preservation. This sentence has more sense when we think about tourist motivation in visiting one specific place.

The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential for tourism. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops and golf courses. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends. On the other hand, tourism has the potential to create beneficial effects on the environment by contributing to environmental protection and conservation. It is a way to raise awareness of environmental values and it can serve as a tool to finance protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance.

## RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Tourism has the potential to increase public appreciation of the environment and to spread awareness of environmental problems when it brings people into closer contact with nature and the environment. This confrontation may heighten awareness of the value of nature and lead to environmentally conscious behavior and activities to preserve the environment.

The tourism department of Jammu and Kashmir is also taking steps to increase the number of foreign tourists as well, with the aim to develop the economy of the state. There are also many destinations which are not yet functional for the tourism purpose. Recently a very beautiful place namely TOUSAMAIDAN has been opened for the local, domestic and foreign tourists.

TOUSAMAIDAN is a good looking, based on vast land of beautiful meadows which is sophisticated for adventure tourism also. The place is located in the Budgam district having its route as Srinagar via Magam and Khag.

The destination was occupied by Indian Army for many years but in the year 2014, the lease was not extended further and hence was opened for common people and tourists as well.

It is to mention over here that the construction should not be there which results a well versed environment and economic development. The economic development is possible when the alternatives will be there in place of constructing the large buildings and hotels. If it is to be sustainable in the long run, tourism must incorporate the principles and practices of sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption includes building consumer demand for products that have been made using cleaner production techniques, and for services - including tourism services - that are provided in a way that minimizes environmental impacts. The tourism industry can play a key role in providing environmental information and raising awareness among tourists of the environmental consequences of their actions. Tourists and tourism-related businesses consume an enormous quantity of goods and services; moving them toward using those that are produced and provided in an environmentally sustainable way, from cradle to grave, could have an enormous positive impact on the planet's environment.

## SUGGESTION:

The environmental factors depend ultimately on the climatic conditions and level of living habits of the people of that particular area. The construction of heavy assets should be as low as possible at these places which are meant for visiting and adventure tourism. Local communities and natural resources In general, the tourism industry should engage in promoting sustainability as a hole-mark for investors. More specifically, the investors in tourism should strive to adopt environmentally sound technologies or other measures to minimize the consumption of the local ground water. Using various types of resources in a sustainable manner is of course also crucial. There is a need to use ecological materials and installation of renewable sources of energy systems (solar energy) in all new buildings and new constructions. Furthermore there should be an acceleration of installation of solar/wind power in all public work projects of communities where tourism will be introduced. Appropriate waste disposal systems and ways to separate garbage into organic and non-organic waste should be developed. Organic waste can be composted and possibly reused on hotel gardens or even for local farming. This could be done through collaboration with local residents. Residents could organize themselves and manage the allocated dumping sites and hence benefit from the system in receiving payment from the hotel for services rendered. A proper system of dumping sites for the different waste material should also be properly managed.

By empowering local populations and have their participation in the entire process, sustainability will be ensured as it becomes accepted by and adjusted to the local communities. A protected area may certainly also be a suitable tourist-attraction, where tourists can experience amazing nature and learn about conservation and traditional uses of natural resources in the area.

In regard to this the communication and consultation with the local communities about resource-use are important. Tourism investors should not exclude local people from using local resources, and thus take away what they depend on for maintaining their well-being. The tourism industry can and must take initiatives to implement the polluter-pays principle for pollution related to tourism operations. This may be organized and carried out through local tax systems or through funds established by the tourism industry for local community development.

## CONCLUSION:

Whenever the Tourism is well managed and properly located, should be recognized as a positive activity which has potential to benefit the host community, local environment itself and the visitor alike. Sustainable tourism requires a balance to be struck between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community. The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential for tourism. However, relationship of tourism with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops and golf courses. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends.

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