

Paying Guest Tourist Accommodation Catalyst for Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case of Pahalgam Valley

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Abstract— The valley of Kashmir which is noted as the vale painted by God himself is sketched with destinations of great tourism potential. The valley of Shepherds (Pahalgam) is the leading destination which holds 60-70 percent of the tourist flow visiting Kashmir valley. The flow of visitors to Kashmir is being estimated to be doubled in next 15 years which gives a serious challenge for requirement of accommodation in Pahalgam valley. The fast infrastructure development in terms of accommodation has some environmental and socio-cultural impacts in terms of natural environment depletion, environmental degradation, and deforestation. However, the concept of paying guest tourist accommodation (PGTA) is the best mechanism to manage the capacity of tourist accommodation demand. This study has used both primary and secondary methods, the primary method is based on survey of existing Paying guest tourist accommodation units in the valley. The aim of this study is to develop a framework for implementing Paying Guest tourist accommodation units in Pahalgam valley to bridge the gap between required demand and supply of accommodation amenities, which has potential to generate job opportunities for local population and will encourage sustainable development of tourism. The study reveals that 20 percent of the tourists prefer paying guest tourist accommodation in Kashmir valley.

Key Words— Sustainable tourism, Development, PGTA

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism sector, known worldwide for its potential to generate income and economic growth. It is the fastest growing sector estimated to get double in next 15 years (WTTC, 2005). In 2016 the tourism industry directly supported 3.6% of the total employment, which is predicted to rise by 2.1% in 2017 and is expected to create 4.0% of total employment in 2027 (WTTC, 2017). The destinations which are mountainous attract 50 million tourists each year (Mountain partnership, 2008). As the tourism practices become more wide spread day by day, the fast development of tourism around the world have created a threat to some of the most endangered ecological systems (Blagy & Mehla, 2006). According to WTO, 1990, The environmental problems trend to increase and there is greater need to access these problems. The tourism was initially seen to have no impact on environment so a limited number of studies are done on impact of tourism on environment. In order to keep in consideration, the environmental issues the sustainable tourism development concepts need to be adopted in tourism industry.

It was seen from last few years that the arrival of tourists in

the valley is increasing continuously and is being estimated to be doubled in next 15 years. So accommodation is one of the basic requirements that need to take care of for the increasing tourist arrival in the valley as the existing infrastructure for accommodation is not sufficient. In this case the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism department introduced the paying guest accommodation scheme under which a tourist stays within a residential house in one or two rooms on payment basis. The Govt. of J&K has encouraged the unemployed youth for that scheme and subsidy up to 40 percent of the total cost of project will be provided by government to the owner for conversion of residential house into Paying guest tourist accommodation. The concept is said to be so economical as it covers the locals and is minimizing the environmental impact and is economically beneficial to the local community as it provides direct employment for unemployed educated youth. The Paying guest tourist accommodation concept generates a good income to households with minimum investment. It has been seen a successful step that have been taken by the government to provide accommodation to the tourists by protect-

ing the ecology of the destination too.

2. Area of study

The valley of Pahalgam "*The Valley of Shepherds*" is located in south Kashmir in Anantnag district. The valley is located at confluence of the streams which flow from *Sheshnag & river ladder*. The Pahalgam is one of the premier destinations of Kashmir which remains cool even during the height of summer. The maximum temperature of the valley does not exceed 25 deg. C. The valley is 95 km from Srinagar at a height of 7200 ft. surrounded by forests, breath taking vistas of meadows and snow covered Himalayan Mountains. The destination serves as a base camp for Amaranth yatra. Apart from being a pilgrimage site Pahalgam is also famous for Adventure, Horse riding, Golf, Fishing, Trekking, Clubs, and Shopping. Since Pahalgam is the most visited destination in J&k where Accommodation is one of the basic requirement. The present study covers the different destinations of valley of Kashmir where the Paying guest tourist accommodation is being offered, which include Verinag, Srinagar, Aharbal, Gulmarg, Mansbal, Kangan, Naranag.

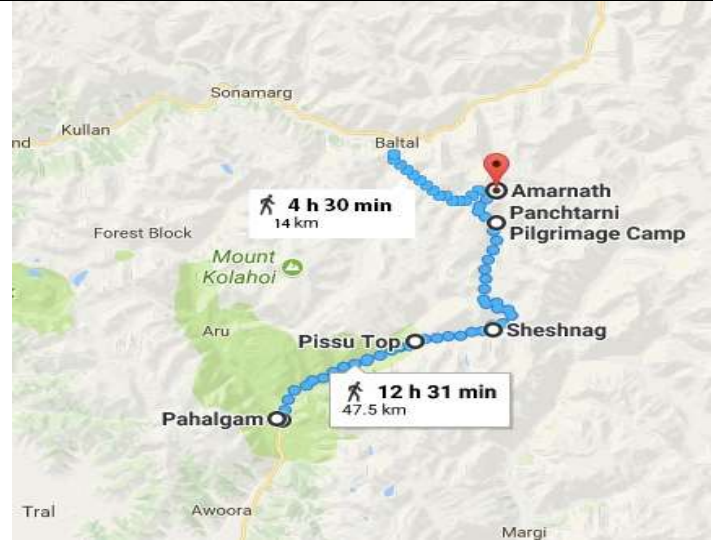


Fig 1. Location map of Kashmir valley and Pahalgam

3. Best practice of paying guest tourist accommodation

The term paying guest tourist accommodation is associated with the accommodation in terms of special cultural associations where a household or farm house is being used to accommodate tourists with affordable cost in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir. The scheme is being encouraged as it minimizes the environmental impact by giving maximum economic benefits. In order to encourage the scheme the Government of Jammu and Kashmir have financially encouraged the paying guest tourist accommodation scheme with subsidy up to 40%. The paying guest tourist accommodation was seen to be more economical and pleasant than to stay in hotels. Malik M. I (2014) identified about 20 percent of the tourists prefer to accommodate themselves in paying guest tourist accommodation as it is the best way to understand and explore the culture, hospitality by participating in the daily activities of households.

4. Research Methodology

The present study has used both primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was used to study the economic impact of paying guest tourist accommodations on the households and was generated by a structured questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was used on the current Paying guest tourist accommodations located in different destinations of Kashmir valley. On the spot visits to Paying guest tourist accommodations was also been done to understand the perception of the household members. The secondary data used in the study was obtained from Department of Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir and other published reports.



5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Population of local area

The socio-economic analysis is important to get an insight about the social characteristics and the level of economic empowerment of local population. Based on the census estimates population under (PDA) Pahalgam Development Authority is projected from 31,500 in 2011 to around 59,000 by 2032, Apart from town area there are sixteen villages falling under PDA having population of 23,200 souls.

5.2 Economic base

According to census the level of economic development and index of employment with the workforce participation rate of main workers being just 21% the area has 63% non-working population. It deflects that local people in the valley of Pahalgam are directly dependent on tourism and allied activities therefore the development of tourism will help in building economic platform of people in those areas so the local youth shall be encouraged to take courses regarding tourism in IIT's and Polytechnic institutes

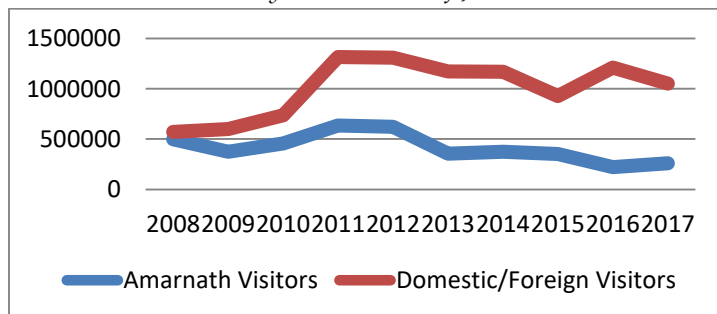
5.3 Tourist flow & Demand Forecast

Pahalgam is one of the most visited destinations which receives maximum share of tourist flow in Kashmir. According to the reports the arrival of tourist in Pahalgam is 70% of the total flow of tourist in the valley.

Table 1: Tourist Arrival of Kashmir Valley

Year	Amarnath visitors	Domestic/Foreign visitors	Year	Amarnath visitors	Domestic/Foreign visitors
2008	498075	572100	2013	353969	1171130
2009	373419	601250	2014	372909	1167618
2010	458046	736448	2015	352771	927815
2011	634000	1314432	2016	220490	1211230
2012	621000	1308765	2017	260003	1050480

Source: Economic Survey, Government of J&K (2017)



Tourist Arrival of Kashmir Valley

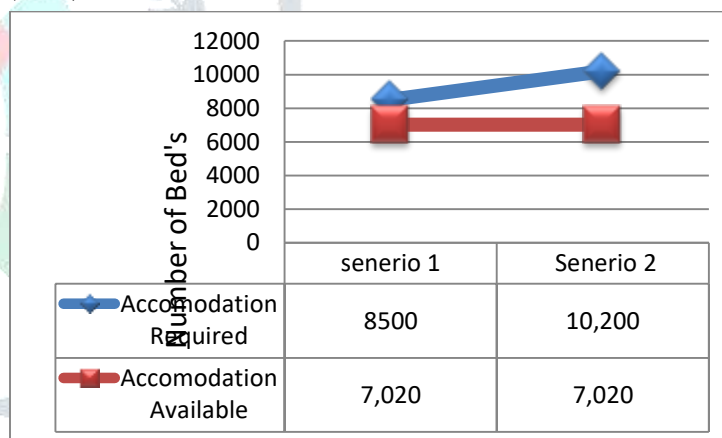
Table 2: Tourist accommodation facility in Pahalgam

Category	Units	No. of Rooms	No. of Beds
A	11	630	1260
B	16	420	840
C	53	1220	2440
Guest-Houses	150	1240	2480
Total	230	3510	7020

Source: Department of Tourism & Pahalgam Development Authority (2018)

	Assumed tourist flow of state	Percentage tourist flow to Pahalgam	Cumulative demand
Senerio 1	2.5 Million	70 %	8500 Beds per day
Senerio 2	3 Million	70 %	10,200 Beds per day

Source: Master plan- 2032 Pahalgam Development Authority (2016)



The above table and the graph show the current available accommodation in the Pahalgam valley that is already there for the accommodation of tourists. It is clear from the data that the Hotel A Category consists of 11 units of accommodation which comprises of 630 rooms and gives the accommodation capacity of 1260 beds. The B Category hotels similarly constitute of 16 units with the availability of 420 numbers of rooms which makes the accommodation capacity of 840 beds. The C Category hotels comprise of 53 units in the said valley which comprises of 1220 rooms and adds the capacity of 2440 number of beds.

While as when we go through the guest house the destination has already 150 guest houses with the capacity of 1240 rooms and provide the capacity of accommodating 2480 beds.

5.4 Infrastructure

The infrastructure that is already available at Pahalgam valley as guest houses hotels and other shops are almost of the owners who does not belong to the valley of Pahalgam. About 80% of the accommodation infrastructure belongs to the Economists / business persons who get the maximum profit from tourism activities without local community being involved. The existing tourism infrastructure is not sufficient to accommodate all the tourists. As Pahalgam have already about 230 accommodation units which are not enough to accommodate but on the other hand in the name of developing accommodation infrastructure the environment is being degraded. Thus a balance between the development and the degradation of environment needs to be maintained by using the concept of paying Guest Accommodation facilities in the Pahalgam Valley.

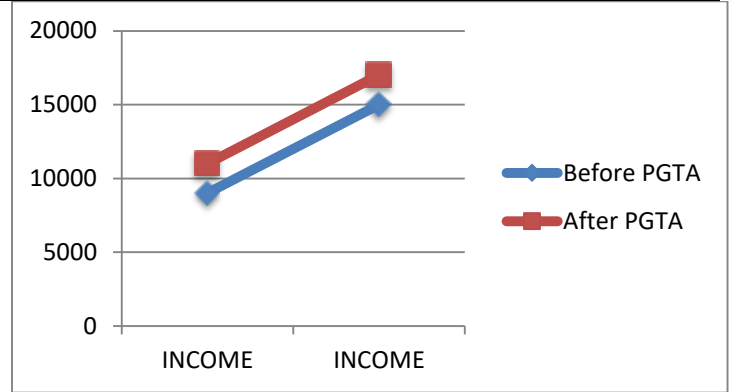
6. Economic Impact of PGTA scheme

Tourism has become a priority in rural areas (Augustyn, 1998) in order to break the benefit of tourism to the bottom of the pyramid. which generates substantial house hold income (Fleischer and tchetchik 2005, wangchuck, 2009). The tourists coming from different parts of the world mostly differ on the basis of income and willingness to spend for accommodation. It has been seen that tourists mostly prefer to take paying guest accommodation so that they can interact directly with the household to experience the culture, living standard, and way of living of that particular community. The existing PGTA units in the valley have been seen a success which have directly benefited the households by generating their income level. It was identified that the income of the households providing PGTA facility have been raised up to 15000 to 17000 per month which was just 9000 to 11000 before proving the PGTA facility.

Table 3: Monthly income of households offering PGA

	Monthly household income before PGTA facility	Monthly household income after PGTA facility
Existing PGTA units	9000 - 11000	15000 – 17000

Source Primary Survey, 2018



The ministry of tourism has widely appreciated the concept of PGTA scheme as it directly benefits the local community and the non-employed youth & woman by involving them in tourism activities. The concept creates a balance between the development and degradation of environment.

7. Conclusion

The valley of Pahalgam one of the most visited destination of Jammu and Kashmir is facing the problem of shortage of tourist accommodation during the peak season and the problem of degradation of environment due to building of infrastructure and wastage made by these infrastructures. This gave rise to the concept of introducing the concept of Paying Guest Tourist Accommodation to tourists which will give direct benefit to the local community of Pahalgam valley and will help in making a balance in the ecology. The concept will also fulfill the demand of the accommodation required in Pahalgam.

Under this scheme the local community will get involved in the tourism industry and will create employment to the community. It is the effective concept of sustainable tourism development for Pahalgam valley and an encouragement to rural tourism.

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