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Political Turmoil Impacting Pilgrimage Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir: A Geographical Study

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ABSTRACT

Tourism which was thought to be the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir has been rapidly affected by the evolution of armed conflict. Previously, State of Jammu & Kashmir has been amongst the widely travelled destinations of India because of its natural beauty. Terrorism has affected the economy of the state very significantly. With the increase of violence, tourists have hastily been reduced which affected serious problem for the local people who profoundly depend on the tourism incomes. The study is directed towards impact of conflict and terror on tourism as is the case of Jammu and Kashmir. The tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir has a very strong impact on the overall development of Kashmir. Kashmiri people face many problems that economy is decreasing and is leading to unemployment. These effects also include the destruction of life and property belonging to the state. All this becomes especially intriguing when situated within the new era of increased global interactions and politics.

Keywords: Conflict, Religion, Tourism, Pilgrimage.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Situation of Tourism Related Industries

Jammu and Kashmir has agro-climatic condition best suited for cultivation and gardening. Cultivation is the premise of the provincial economy, giving work to huge number of local populaces. The state's offer in the aggregate apple deliver in India extended from 65.97 per cent in 2013-14 to 69.15 per cent in 2015-16, with the aggregate of apple in the state in year 2015-16 extending to around 2.00 million metric

tons (MT). The state is furthermore a significant exporter of walnut and its global market share is around 7%. At current price, the gross state domestic product (GSDP) of Jammu and Kashmir in 2015-16 was US\$ 17.73 billion and has extended at a compound annual report (CAGR) of 10.2% from 2004-05 to 2015-16.

As of November 2015, Jammu and Kashmir had an aggregate electricity generation of 3.142 thousand Megawatts (MW), including 1.579 thousand MW under central government, 1.511 thousand MW under state administrations and 51.00 MW under private administrations' (<http://ecostatjk.nic.in>).

There is an external demand for these products, which is a very important earning for the state. The negative image of the state of Jammu and Kashmir that travels outside due to its impact on tourism also possibly affects other kind of trade including horticulture, floriculture etc. Apart from food processing, handicraft is a very important industry of Jammu and Kashmir and is directly related to tourism because the demand for handicraft is directly generated from tourism. Therefore, a negative impact of terrorism on tourism industry is also impact for the handicraft industry. A lot of small scale and cottage industries also suffer because of this problem.

The Situation of Pilgrimage Tourism

Tourists come to Kashmir for pilgrimage in huge numbers, both Hindu and Muslims, every year. Whatever happens they keep coming because it is a religious matter. Even if they do not come for pleasure tourism, they will come for pilgrimage tourism. Therefore, pilgrimage tourism deserves a special section. Almost half of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir depends upon pilgrimage tourism. Important pilgrimage places for Hindus are Amarnath, Vaishno Devi etc. and Charar-i-Sharif, Hazratbal etc. for Muslims.

As indicated by the Economic Survey of Kashmir, 2015-16, it was accounted for that 'Tourism and its sub segment which are quality of Kashmir economy came to unending break amid the period. While the number of religious tourists amid 2015 and 2014 to Jammu territory was 77.77 lakh and 78.03 lakh, the extent of pioneer sightseers to Kashmir valley was 3.53 lakh and 3.73 lakh. In perspective of the way that explorer sightseers don't enhance the economy of the areas along these lines, the expansion in number of traveler voyagers to Jammu or Kashmir does not have generous effect on economy of the area with the exception of that it builds some financial exercises in the nearby region of journey places. For the most part, traveler sightseers don't attempt extravagance visits and consequently, they spend less. Traveler visits are particularly of brief term which keep going for 2 to 3 days where as extravagance visitors remain for over 7 days'.

Geographical Personality of the State Location

Jammu and Kashmir, situated in the extreme north of India, is settled in the area of 32°17' (32 degrees and 17 minutes) and 37°05' (37 degrees and 05 minutes) North latitudes and 72°31' (72 degrees and 31 minutes) and 80°20' (80 degrees and 20 minutes) East longitudes (Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department, 2014). During the British India, the region of this state was 222,797 Sq. Kms. (Raina, 1981). Later on with the progressive banned occupations by Pakistan and China, the state has lost almost around 55 per cent of its territory to these two neighboring countries and the region of Jammu and Kashmir now covers just 101,387 Sq. Kms. Area within India (Census of India, 2011).

Statement of Problem

The study is addressed as “Impact of conflict and terror on tourism in Jammu and Kashmir”. There are many problems faced by Kashmiri people because of terrorism. Terrorism is one of the most challenging problems at the particular junction. The conditions of violence in Kashmir are beyond the minds of people. The tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir has a very strong impact on the overall development of Kashmir. Kashmiri people face many problems that economy is decreasing and is leading to unemployment. These conflicts are disturbing the next generation’s life styles, Education system. Children are not getting a peaceful environment. These effects include the destruction of life and property belonging to the state.

Review of Literature

Meaning of ‘Conflict’: Ho.Won Jeong (2008) in his book titled ‘Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis’ has said, it is the incompatible values that lead to conflict. The most ‘critical types of conflict such as political and civil wars consist of a coercive, violent mode of confrontation among adversaries (Jeong, 2008, p.3). Conflict manifests violence and power. The knowledge of conflict is so basic that its destructive effects spread too many features of a community’s life. Ho.Won Jeong in his book has also said, each year 20 to 40 armed conflict of various size affect places around the world. Some conflicts have been successfully handled, but others have transported about extensive destruction.

Meaning of ‘Terror’: Terror is a sense of fear. Terrorism is an act of creating and spreading terror or fear. ‘The origin of the term ‘terrorism’ times back to the 1789 French Revolution. In its prevalent understanding, terrorism tends to refer to an act that is wrong, evil, illegal, and a crime’ (Conte, 2010). Terrorism is therefore the spreading of the feeling of hatred. Indiscriminate violence as a mean to create terror or fear has been increasing by the day. Terrorism is considered a major threat to society and an obvious illegal act especially under anti-terrorism laws. The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against the civilians, tourists and outsiders is most problematic (as perceived by local Kashmiris during primary survey).

Difference between Conflict and Terror: Conflict is only a disturbance in the society, it need not create fear but terror is a state of fear. Conflict may not lead to deaths but terrorism does. Conflict is a state of problem among communities or countries and when this problem is not solved for years, it may create terror (Bugajski, 2011).

Tourism industry and pilgrimage industry: Tourism is the one of the fastest growing industries in India. Tourism makes a significant role to local economies through job creation and sustainable development. Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir is a very important industry, contributing heavily to the state’s GDP and earns good revenue and helps the country to earn foreign currency. (Bhat, 2011).

Political instability causes a hindrance to national as well as international investments which thus prompt to the misuse of huge natural assets to which the state of Jammu & Kashmir is known for. Political instability also routed the local venture and investments into non-developmental expenses instead of beneficial areas. (Habib and Fatima 2017).

2. OBJECTIVES

Present study has been initiated with certain research objectives enshrined as under:

1. To inspect the effects of peace and turmoil on the decline and growth of religious tourism in Jammu and Kashmir state.
2. To find out the major glitches in the tourism development in Jammu and Kashmir.
3. Finally, to propose practicable suggestions for the growth and expansion of tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir

3. METHODOLOGY

In the contemporary study is mostly based on secondary data. The data has been collected through magazines, journals, newspapers articles, and in addition to this the data released by ministry of tourism, govt. of Jammu & Kashmir.

The Situation of Tourism Industry

There are two important truths about Jammu and Kashmir, one is that it is one of the most beautiful states of Northern India, which makes tourism an important economic activity of the state and another is that it shares borderneighboring countries of Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, which makes political instability or turmoil an important issue of the state. According to the Executive of Economics and Statistics, Jammu and Kashmir, 'Kashmir Valley is famous for its lakes and parks and Jammu is famous for its shrines, In 2015-16, total number of foreign tourists in Jammu and Kashmir was recorded to be 58,568. Jammu and Kashmir expects to witness 22.7 million tourist visiting FY 2020 is 9.5 million than the arrivals in FY 2014'. (<http://ecostatjk.nic.in>).

Therefore, the two phenomena of terrorism and tourism they are deeply related and affect each other. Therefore, terrorism is a negative impact of tourism which is a very important part of the economy of the state. Both these phenomena are deeply related to the lives of the people of the states and their negative relationship negatively affects the lives of the people on the daily basis.

Jammu and Kashmir is a chief, well established and well settled visitor destination (terminus) in India. The *Valley of Kashmir* situated in lap of the Himalayas has numerous globally admired tourism destinations. The lavish green vacationer hotels, resorts at *Gulmarg*, *Yousmarg*, *Pahalgam*, *Kokernag* and splendid dales of *Sonamarg* have remained attractions for several years. Tourism and hospitality industry are in fact part and parcel of the valley's custom, culture, and now more critically, its economy.

Jammu region is drawing in an extensive number of explorer travelers and the vital destinations has been the *Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine*. Alternate spots like *Shiv Khori*, *Mansar lake*, *Sukbrala Mata* and *Shahdra Shariief*, *Bhadervah*, *Rajouri* and *Poonch* are some of the other recently recognized and fast establishing tourist destinations.

The Ladakh region has also been a much looked for destination, particularly for the international tourists. The region resembles a cut of abandon high up in the Himalayas, complete with its marvelous lakes (salt water as well as fresh water lakes), camels, yaks and arid mountains. Its cloisters, some of which are exceptionally acclaimed like *Hemis Gompa*, the *Lama-Buddhist Culture*, the wonderful compositions, sculptures and old books safeguarded in the religious communities are an extra wellspring of appreciation for the vacationers.

The Tourism Department in the Jammu & Kashmir state is a promotional and regulatory organization, formed for the promotion of tourism and hospitality industry in the hill state. In 1988, the State Government decided the commitments and components of the Directorate of Jammu and Kashmir Tourism and what's more Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation. The Department finishes the errand of general arranging, progression presentation and publicizing, control of development trade terms of Jammu & Kashmir enrollment of Tourist Trade Acts of 1978 and 1982.

The tourism division expect fundamental part in the economy of the state. It has:

- great potential for creating work, despite for people without particular capacities, providing drive to joined forces sections viz., handicraft, handloom and transport.
- indirect and pay development practices for the all-inclusive community in area of set up resorts like *Gulmarg*, *Pahalgam* and *Sonmarg* in the midst of best guest seasons.
- capacity to give Jobs in the jumbled and sloppy zone.
- showcased States extraordinary and rich social, cultural and Heritage possessions.

Tourism division gets around 7 percent (precisely, 6.98) of State's GDP however Jammu & Kashmir State is not among the top 10 nearby objectives in the country in view of proportion of voyager section.

Administration of Tourism, Govt. of India under SWADESH Darshan plot imagining vision to make subject develop explorer circuits in light of the measures of high vacationer regard, forcefulness and viability coordinately. The Tourism Ministry has approved fifteen wanders on the price of ₹82.97 crores under this Scheme and has already released ₹16.59 crores as 20 percent readiness advance for the execution of projects. Improvements in the border tourism in *Suchetgarh* (with 4.92 crores), world class tourism extravagances with wide sun fueled (solar) light in *Katra* (with 3.48 Crores), construction of event gatherings in *Srinagar* (with 5.37 crores), base camp for the Hikers and Climbers in *Panikar* (with 7.00 crores) and development of wayside workplaces in *Shergole* on Kargil-Leh National Highway (with 2.50 crores) are ahead of time. Ice skating arenas in *Pahalgam*, development of wayside offices in *Bijbehara* and Eco-Log multipurpose lobby on site *Apple Resort* in *Chinni wooder* has also been finished at the cost of around ₹4.85 crores. Apart from the above developments and other than Light and Sound Shows with Water Fountain in SKICC Ghats over the cost of around ₹8.00 crores have been established and the trial run for these are also in advance.

Impacts of Insecurity on Human Lives

The beneath information gives an all-encompassing perspective of political flimsiness with which the territory of Jammu & Kashmir is experiencing, began trailing its tranquility for the shakiness and struggles in the 1989 and 1990, states' circumstances ended up shadier.

During 1990, there were around 3905 armed incidents in which 862 (eight hundred and sixty-two) local residents, 123 (hundred and twenty-three) army personnel and 183 (hundred and eighty-three) terrorists has been slaughtered. By 1992 such incidents mounted to 4971 wherein, 1909 lives perished and causing heavy destruction to the state property and its economy mostly paralyzed (Table 1). So also, the graph of human casualties including people, security personnel and terrorists has been continuously mounting upwards, however with the ceasefire maintained by Indian and Pakistani governments began to settle down until 2002 when again due to Kargil war, peace was disrupted in the state.

Table 1
Number of Casualties in Jammu & Kashmir, 1990-2011 (00')

Year	Militancy incidents	Civilians (Killed)	Security forces (Killed)	Militants (Killed)
1990	39.05	8.62	1.23	1.83
1991	31.22	5.94	1.85	6.14
1992	49.71	8.59	1.77	8.73
1993	44.57	10.23	2.16	13.28
1994	44.84	10.12	2.36	16.51
1995	44.79	11.61	2.97	13.38
1996	44.24	13.33	3.76	11.49
1997	34.37	10.30	3.55	11.75
1998	29.40	9.67	3.39	10.45
1999	30.73	9.37	5.55	10.82
2000	30.91	9.42	6.38	15.20
2001	45.36	10.98	6.13	20.20
2002	40.38	10.50	5.39	17.07
2003	34.01	8.36	3.84	14.94
2004	25.65	7.33	3.30	9.76
2005	19.90	5.56	2.44	9.17
2006	16.67	4.10	1.82	5.91
2007	10.92	1.70	1.22	4.72
2008	7.08	.91	.79	3.69
2009	4.99	.78	.64	2.39
2010	4.88	.47	.69	2.32
2011	3.40	.31	.33	1.00

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs.

Figure 1 is representing the fluctuation in religious tourism yearly. From this graph it can be easily analyzed that in the years (1990 to 2003) militancy incidents were quite high due to which there was very less religious tourism which was taking place in Jammu and Kashmir but with the passage of time as the militancy incidents were decreasing there has been an increasing trend in religious tourism (2004 to 2011) in the state (Figure 2).

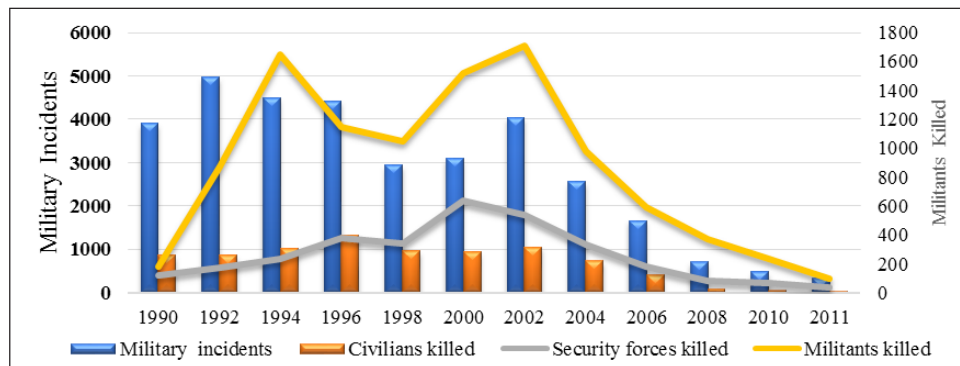


Figure 1: Impact of Political Turmoil

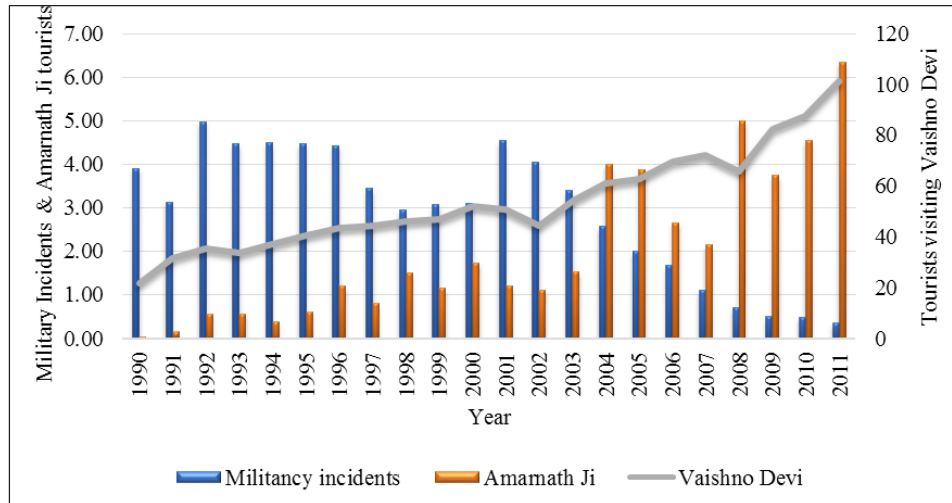


Figure 2: Fluctuations in Religious Tourism

Note: The data of Vaishno Devi and Amarnath Ji is in Lakhs while as the data of Military Incidents is in thousands

Table 2
Number of Tourists Visiting Religious Places (in Lakhs)

Year	Amarnath Ji	Vaishno Devi
1990	0.04	21.69
1991	0.15	31.51
1992	0.54	35.27
1993	0.56	33.68
1994	0.37	37.05
1995	0.60	40.32
1996	1.20	43.35
1997	0.79	44.34
1998	1.49	46.22
1999	1.14	46.68
2000	1.73	51.95
2001	1.19	50.57
2002	1.11	44.32
2003	1.53	54.00
2004	4.00	61.10
2005	3.88	62.52
2006	2.65	69.50
2007	2.14	72.22
2008	4.98	65.76
2009	3.74	82.35
2010	4.55	87.49
2011	6.35	101.15

Source: Directorate of Tourism, Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

Summarizing the Impact

To back to the basic problem therefore, it needs to be repeated, there are two truths about Kashmir; the first is that it is a very beautiful place which makes tourism an important industry of the state. Political instability has been a reality of the state for very long now. This is negatively affecting the economy the lives and the future of the people. Political instability not only affects tourism other related industries also like handicraft etc. Even if tourists do not come for pleasure tourism, they will come for pilgrimage tourism. Therefore, tourism is especially important. Year 2008 seems to be an interesting year for Hindu pilgrimage because Amarnath yatra has highest growth rate as compared to Vaishno Devi which has the lowest growth rate in that very year (Table 2). Though very recently the revenue earned from tourism from increased but the common people do not perceive the same. The main areas of *Jammu and Kashmir* are affected *Shopian, Rajouri, Anantnag, Baramulla, Kulgam, Kishtwar, Poonch, Sopore, Pulwama and Ramban* among a few others.

It is evident from the above analysis that Tourism is the leading industry in the Jammu and Kashmir economy and proves to be bench strength of the state economy. The paradise on the earth is under the control and influence of both terrorism and the armed conflict during last three decades and during this period hundreds of precious lives have been lost. Besides this, there has been considerable loss of revenue to the state's economy. Due to topographical reasons, there is hardly any heavy industry in the state. Unemployment problem is enormous among the employable youths. Tourism is the only suitable industry that can provide both employment and revenue to the state because of its natural beauty and landscape. The state comprises of three district regions each region of the state is attributed with distinct and different set of culture, social taboos and ethos. Due to civil disturbance and militancy in the state, no investor is willing to come forward for making any investment in any business avenue in the state. Almost every sphere of the state economy is under the eclipse of non-economic activities. School, colleges and universities remain shut down years together in fragmented manner and this is having a direct bearing over the prospective careers of the future generations. There are two important Hinduism tourists' attractions shrines in the state and they are Shri Mata Vaishno Devi and Shri Amarnathji shrine but number of pilgrimage and tourists have drastically been declining over the years for visiting these famous shrine. More particularly, economy of the Kashmir valley is the worst sufferer. During early 1980s, lacks of tourist used to visit to the Kashmir valley and now the same is considerably insignificance. Civic disturbance and militancy have not only affected the tourism but agriculture and handicraft industry too. Agriculture industry and handicraft industry are suffering because no skilled labor force is available. (www.dailyexcelsior.com)

Since Jammu and Kashmir State is one of the leading attractions for the domestic as well as international tourists, it tends to bring huge inflow of tourists who travel to seek pleasure. The Tourism sector has greater employment potential and generates sufficient revenue which has been showing significant rise over the years. The income generation is expected to be increasing with respect to the fact that the conditions remain normal and the arrival of the tourists increases in an anticipated way.

Future of Tourism in Kashmir and Scope of Further Research

The future of tourism in Kashmir is very beautiful and good because people are now aware about all of the conflicts and politics in Kashmir and they do not have unnecessary fears. On the other hand, there is a section of people in Kashmir who are worried about the future of the state. Therefore, overall there is a mixed opinion, as found out from field survey in the state. Kashmir has a great tourism potential and a

strong political will is needed to solve this long pending issue and take the tourism industry to greater heights which will prove beneficial for both the state and the country. Future could be better only if government makes efforts very seriously and try to make them better because both tourism and handling of political problems lies in the hands of the government. If the circumstances do not change, a time will come no one will be willing to come and enjoy here in Kashmir. Government need to take some serious and impact full action in order to bring back the peace in valley.

Therefore, extensive research on understanding of governmental laws and regulations and the political situation of Kashmir shall provide good ideas for future research. These aspects were not included in this study. This study was based more on local people's thinking. In fact, a unity of governmental efforts and people's thinking should be attempted. If that does not happen on time ruined and we will lose our 'Heaven on Earth'.

Suggestion for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir

Following are some essential suggestions for sustainable development of tourism in the state:

1. Linkages with respect to hospitality agencies and the state Government, viz a viz tourism industry, interest groups, host communities' and related industries.
2. Tourism related infrastructure like transportation, telecommunication, restaurants shopping, support services, health& emergency services, recreation & entertainment etc should be made available with full proof safety& security
3. Identifying new tourist spots will go a long way in enhancing tourism potential in Jammu & Kashmir
4. Necessity to fight adverse and conflict prone identity of the state by creating massive people's awareness programmes. A Tourism website required wherein visitors can state share their cheerful experiences with the people who would be the probable new visitors. Both electronic & print media can do this task. In addition to this, popular social networking sites like Facebook should be used for this purpose.
5. Different types of cultural programmes and events should be organised at different parts of the state this would further boost up tourism sector of the state.
6. Proper tourism marketing should be done so that tourism in Jammu & Kashmir shifted from uni-seasonal to multi-seasonal demand made on human recourses, including knowledge, skills aptitudes & numbers.

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