

Periodic Research

Potential Strategy for Diversification: Tourism in Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir



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Abstract

Tourism, now a days has become the largest sub-sector in the services sector, which contributes immensely to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the countries. India ranks 40th out of 136 countries in tourism and travel related competition (Travel and Tourism competitiveness report, 2017). Its travel and tourism sector ranks 7th in terms of its contribution to the country's GDP. The rich culture and heritage as well as the natural resources of the country make it an attraction for the tourists from all over the world. The state of Jammu and Kashmir also holds ample potential for tourism. The study shall aim to highlight how the diversification to the tourism sector can provide relief to those relying on monsoon dependent agriculture and also otherwise unemployed people and hence generate employment in Jammu region of the state.

Keywords: Tourism, India, J&K, Diversification, Unemployment.

Introduction

India is speculated to be the third largest economic power by 2047 and is presently one of the fastest growing economies of the world. It is known globally for its diverse resources, culture and traditions, and is also distinct in its climate which is known for monsoon dependence. This vast nation has majority of its population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. However, in recent years the share of agriculture and allied activities as a percentage of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has declined and accounts for only 15.35 percent of GVA 2015-16 at 2011-12 prices (CSO). It still provides employment to about 50 per cent of the work force though. Over 58% of the rural population of the country depends upon it for livelihood.

Jammu and Kashmir State, bestowed with innumerable natural resources, is the northern most state of India which has population of 125.41 lakh. The state forms 1.04% of India's total population according to census 2011. Majority of its population resides in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture sector for income and livelihood. Nearly 70% of the state's population derives its livelihood directly or indirectly from agriculture sector. The share of agriculture and allied sectors in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for 2013-14 is 21.95% at constant (2004-05) prices, and the percentage of population that is 70%. Though agriculture is the main source of living for rural people, the earnings from output are meager and in most of the cases not sufficient to sustain households. Moreover, the size of agricultural land has also emaciated due to the development of other sectors such as establishment of industrial units especially brick kilns and due to expansion in housing sector and roads. These led to reduced size of landholdings, available for cultivation.

The geographical location of the state poses numerous challenges to its population viz. distant location of markets, lack of credit facilities, deficit infrastructure, asymmetric information, delay in implementation of government policies, small land holdings, poor productivity, poor production management, labour shortages, pitiable post-harvest management, lack of market networks, lack of entrepreneurship, lack of awareness about government policies and inadequate technology. Owing to the typical climatic conditions of the state majority of the area of the state has only one crop in a year which makes the economic conditions worse. Thus in recent years, a shift is observed towards cultivating cash crops having low-volume and high-value, such as flowers, vegetables, mushrooms, quality seeds, aromatic & medicinal plants round the year.

The allied and non-farm activities are hence, becoming the alternative source of livelihood for the rural population. *This calls for the need to diversify the economy. Tourism is one sector that can guarantee numerous benefits for a sustainable growth.* Tourism which is one of the largest potential sectors in India as a source of income generation and a source of employment, due to its rich heritage and culture as well as other natural resources has been attracting a huge number of tourists from all over the world. The tourist sector is claimed to be a major sector in many economies of the world. It is a major source of foreign exchange to a number of developing countries. It has also become a major source of economic diversification for many countries such as Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and United Arab Emirates (Ayeni & Ebohon, 2012; Dwyer & Spurr, 2011; Herb, 2009). Therefore, the importance of tourism to economic growth, national development and poverty reduction cannot be over emphasized and has the potential of providing livelihood strategies to the poor.

The role of tourism in economic growth should not be ignored because of its wide range of contributions to the economy, which include creation of market, source of foreign exchange inflow, employment generation, and expansion of other sectors of the economy such as transport system, information, and financial sector. Jammu and Kashmir State, due to its geographical location and rich natural resources is no exception to attract the tourists from around the world. The state is known world over for its beauty, green lush valleys, snow clad mountains, etc. The state offers different type of tourism, of which adventurous and pilgrimage are most prominent.

Jammu and Kashmir has been administratively divided into three regions namely; Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Each of the three regions has been bestowed with different type of tourism avenues. While Jammu attracts mostly the tourist related to pilgrimage and few lakes, Kashmir offers tourism related to gardens, valleys, lakes and also pilgrimage tourism. Ladakh on the other hand offers tourism related to adventures; barren hills and mountain passes. Jammu region like other two regions has enormous potential to be developed as tourist destination in districts like Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri and Poonch. Due to the boundaries of these districts with the Kashmir region most of the topography of these districts is like that of Kashmir region.

In order to do away with the problems associated with the agricultural dependence other climatic ones, diversification to the non-farm activities is the way out. Tourism is one of the largest potential sectors in the state for diversification. If developed in lines with some other states like in the north-east it can for sure provide huge employment opportunities as well as revenues for the state. Diversification refers to the risk-management-means that ensure investments in different sectors, ruling out losses in one sector by gains in others. Ellis in 1998 has defined it 'as a process by which household members construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social

support capabilities in their struggle for survival and in order to improve their standards of living'. The major reason that has made diversification relevant is the environmental changes. The global warming caused by the nations' race to catch up with the industrialized world causes disasters for the Indian agriculture.

Amartya Sen, the noted economist has demonstrated that '*an increase in the non-agricultural rural employment leads to decline in rural poverty and vice versa*.' According to him, on-farm, off-farm, and on-off-farm rural employment can help overcome rural poverty. The small-holders and land-less agricultural labourers would thus be able to sustain their livelihoods. Diversification to allied and non-farm activities will not only offer a better source of income but will also reduce unemployment problem and contribute to development of the state's economy.

Objectives of the Study

The present study comprises of the following objectives:

1. To bring out the present level of tourism related facilities in Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To present the trend of tourist inflow in the state in the recent years.
3. To highlight the ways through which the tourism in Jammu region of the state can be enhanced.
4. To suggest how the diversification to the tourism sector in the state can complement income of people.

Review of Literature

It is difficult to give a precise definition of tourism as a concept. This is because it means different things to different people. Generally, a tourist and by extension; tourism is usually defined in terms of a person who travels for non- business purpose more than 30km away from his place of residence for sightseeing or visiting a place of landmark. Robinson, 2003, defined tourism as the movement and temporary visit of individuals from their usual place of residence or place of work to places of interest for the purpose of leisure, education, conference, festival etc. Williams (2000) defined the word "tour" to mean a journey that is a round trip, that is the act of leaving and then returning to the original starting point and therefore, one who takes such a journey can be called a tourist. Over the years, a lot of scholars and institutions have attempted to shed more light on this concept, and have drawn up many definitions to this regard.

Bond & Ladman (1972), in his study stated that a less-developed country that has the ingredients for an attractive tourism package, culture, climate, history, and geography, the tourism industry in that case is potentially a leading sector (facilitator) in the development process. He observed in his study that the world demand for tourism has grown and is expected to continue its growth. The product according to him, when compared to traditional exports of primary products, has many advantages like 1) a source of foreign exchange with growth potential; (2) a source of domestic savings and capital formation; (3) a means of implementing labor absorption; and whereby conditions become

propitious for changing traditional values. He further argued that when compared to exports of manufactures, tourism has the advantage of easier short-term implementation. Each of these advantages is extremely important to a country in the early growth stage.

Yan & Wall (2002), conducted Input-output analysis in their study and shown that in 1995, the direct value added generated by tourism was 45.0 per cent of tourism receipts, which was 1.6 per cent of the GDP in China. They added that the total value added by tourism was 2.9 times direct value added and was 4.7 per cent of the national GDP. Nearly half (43.2 per cent) of value added generated by tourism was in tourism-related categories whereas the other more than half of the value added generated by tourism spread into non-tourism categories. Its overall impact on these commodities was limited. They found out that the tourism household income coefficient for China was lower than for many other countries and areas, but the multipliers were higher. This reflects the size and diversity of the Chinese economy. Tourism-generated direct employment according to their study comprised less than 1 per cent of total employment but much more of indirect and induced employment. More than half of tourism-generated employment was in primary industry and about one-third was in tertiary industry.

Irandu & Shah (2016), in their study have observed that the age distribution of tourists was similar. The age group 31– 40 years was the most frequent, followed by 21– 30 and 11– 20; 40– 50; over 50 and 1– 10 years. According to them, the research carried out by Poria *et al.* (2004) in the worship sites of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and the Massada in Israel showed that the 20– 29 age group was the highest, followed by the 31– 40 age group, while the others were consistent. The findings according to them showed some variation and this could possibly be due to differences in levels of tourists' awareness of the cultural heritage products available highest number of domestic tourists. According to their study, the tourists were asked to indicate their favourite type of tourism. The results indicate that a majority selected both natural and cultural heritage, followed by cultural heritage and then natural heritage. This indicates that the preference for cultural heritage in the city is increasing. They also showed that respondents were also asked to state their reasons for visiting particular sites. They were given nine choices, which included education, branded product, relaxation, entertainment, cheap entrance, heritage value, sports, worship and biodiversity. Relaxation and biodiversity were rated the highest at 90% while worship was rated the least at 3%.

Harrison (2008), In his paper made an attempt to examine the emergence of pro-poor tourism (PPT) initiatives in the wider context of development studies, and to ask whether or not PPT

is, in fact, a distinctive approach to tourism as a development tool. In his study he came to the conclusion that it is not distinctive and, indeed, that it far easier to discuss what PPT is not than what it is! According to his study, in summary, however, critics have argued that PPT is based on an acceptance of the status quo of existing capitalism, that it is morally indiscriminate and theoretically imprecise, and that its practitioners are academically and commercially marginal. More substantive criticisms include accusations of narrowness and parochialism, a failure to 'deliver' benefits from tourism to the poor, and even to demonstrate clear links between PPT and poverty alleviation; critics also point to a similar failure to focus on equitable distribution of benefits or to make any attempt to change the overall system.

Methodology

The present study shall rely heavily on the data from secondary sources like Economic survey; data published by the government of the state, articles published in different journals, newspapers, data from published and unpublished sources of different departments of the government etc. The study being more of an analytical nature shall be restricted to the available data on the tourism related developments in the state. Besides, the focus shall be to highlight the ways and means through which the tourism in the state can be developed to reduce unemployment and generate more income for the state.

Findings and Results

Tourism has played important role in many economies of the world. It is often considered as a sustainable source of revenue generation and it attracts foreign investors. J&K is a well established tourist destination in the country. The lush green tourist resorts of Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Yousmarg, Kokernag and golden meadows of Sonamarg in the Kashmir valley have remained an attraction for the centuries and are also internationally acclaimed tourist destinations. Jammu region is also attracting a large number of pilgrim tourists and the important destination has been the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. The other places are Shiv Khori, Sukhrala Mata, Shahdra Sharief and Budha Amarnath. The newly identified and emerging destinations in Jammu are Bharderwah, Rajouri and Poonch districts. The Ladakh region has been a much preferred destination especially for the foreign Tourists. The region is like a slice of desert complete with salt water as well as fresh water lakes and sand dunes. Its monasteries, some of which are very famous like Hemis Gompa, the Lama-Buddhist Culture, the beautiful paintings, sculptures and ancient books preserved in the monasteries are an additional source of attraction for the tourists.

The present level of tourist inflow annually to the state both for pilgrim as well as leisure tourist has been show under table 1.

Table 1: Number of tourists (Indians & Non-Indians) visiting the state

Tourist arrival in the state up to ending oct,2017					(No. in lakh)
Year	Kashmir		Jammu	Ladakh	Total
	Amarnath Shrine	Domestic/ Foreign	Mata Vaishno Devi	Domestic/ Foreign	
2012	6.21	13.08	103.94	1.78	125.02
2013	3.53	11.71	92.87	1.37	109.50
2014	3.72	11.67	78.03	1.81	95.25
2015	3.52	9.27	77.76	1.46	92.03
2016	2.20	12.11	68.23	1.79	84.34
2017	2.60	10.50	57.39	2.59	73.09

Source: J&K Economic survey, 2017.

Table 1 shows the tourist arrival in the three regions of the state since 2012. In Kashmir valley the data shows that the tourist arrival for both the pilgrimage purposes as well as the domestic/foreign tourists who come for leisure and adventure tourism is available. Whereas, in Jammu region data about tourists coming for pilgrimage purposes is available only. This shows that in Jammu region development of places that attract tourists other than that of pilgrimage have not been adequately developed. The region also has failed to attract the foreign tourists. It can be observed from the above data that although the overall tourist inflow in the state has consistently been on decline, but the individual data about the three regions of the state shows a unique trend.

The total tourist arrival for Amarnath shrine shows a declining trend from 2012 to 2017, but the annual data shows that it declined up to 2013 and after showing some increase in 2014 it has again declined till 2017. Whereas the tourist domestic/foreign who came to the Kashmir valley for purposes other than that of pilgrimage a consistently declined from 2012 to 2015 but showing a new height in 2016 it has again started to decline due to some unrest in the valley in recent years. As far as Jammu region is concerned, the data available on tourists arriving for pilgrimage to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine has

shown consistently a declining trend from 2012-2017, that too in huge numbers. Whereas, the data available on tourist arrival in Ladakh shows a declining pattern in one year and rising in the other depicting an overall increase in numbers in 2017. Ladakh region, due to its mountainous and desert like topography has been successful in attracting the foreign tourists more than any other region of the state.

It is undeniable fact that Jammu region's topography does not match the Kashmir valley but some districts in Jammu region like Doda, Poonch and Rajouri too have their topography that is very conducive to adventurous tourism. The Pir Panjal range that separates Jammu region from Kashmir valley offers huge potential of tourism development, which has unfortunately been not paid heed to. In recent years the government of the state has taken certain steps to develop some tourist circuits that cover newly identified areas, but majority of places of tourism importance, still remain hidden.

The tourist facilities available in the state show the deplorable condition of facilities in the state. The tourist related facilities available in the state that too district-wise can be explained with the help of following data in table 2.

Table 2: Number of tourist huts and bungalows available in the state

S.No.	Kashmir		Jammu		Ladakh	
	Districts	Huts & Bungalows	Districts	Huts & Bungalows	Districts	Huts & Bungalows
1	Anantnag	63	Jammu	3	Leh	2
2	Srinagar	77	Samba	1	Kargil	-
3	Baramulla	19	Reasi	12		
4	Shopian	-	Doda	16		
5	Budgam	8	Kishtwar	-		
6	Kulgam	6	Poonch	-		
7	Ganderbal	8	Rajouri	-		
8	Pulwama	-	Ramban	11		
9	Kupwara	-	Udhampur	19		
10	Bandipora	-	Kathua	1		
Total	188		63		2	

Source: DOG, 2015-16

The data available in table 2 shows that out of 22 districts in the state, eight districts have no hut or bungalow at all. There are also some districts which have even one or two huts and bungalows only. In Kashmir valley there were a total 188 huts and

bungalows up to 2016. In Jammu region only 63 huts and bungalows are there and only 2 In case of Ladakh region. Although, the central as well as the state government have taken up different programmes to develop and improve the condition of

tourism in the state, yet the efforts needed to achieve the same are not adequate. Though the circuit development in case of tourism which is a recent initiative is a welcome step, but it may not be able to identify the true potential areas which can be tapped to attract the tourists from different places of the country as well as world.

Tourism in the state has adequate potential to provide employment to the people in the state as well as generate revenues for the state. It is one of the potential sectors in the state where diversification if made is having assured positive outcome. Tourism sector can provide employment of the local people nearby the tourist destination to be developed. If it is developed in lines with as developed in the north-eastern states of India it can for sure bring huge revenues to the state and can also reduce unemployment problem as well. The major areas that have enormous potential to be developed for tourist destinations are Mandi and Surankote in district Poonch, Bakori, Budhal, Thanamandi and Darhal in Rajouri, Bhaderwah in Doda district, and Padri in Kishtwar district of Jammu region. If trekking routes are developed at certain places that have potential in the mentioned area can for sure contribute the development of local area as well. By developing some parks like structures and by maintaining the places at these places local people of the area can opt to develop home stays for those who go for treks is on the one hand a source of self employment, and on the other carries spread effect of development in many ways.

In these selected areas there are lots of waterfalls and other beautiful places which the authorities in power are still oblivious of. Rather than conferring the responsibility to authorities at the state level if the authorities at the local level are conferred to identify the best places in their areas that can be developed for tourism, it can indeed contribute a lot to the areas to be developed for the tourism. If following suggestions are taken care of and also paid heed to, they can definitely bring Jammu region that lags behind the other two out on the developmental front. The tourism related development will offer a potential sector for development by overcoming the crisis associated with the farming sector. It will also bring large revenues to the state by attracting foreign exchange as most of the foreign tourists and even the domestic ones who come to visit the state limit their visit to Kashmir and Ladakh regions only.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study being analytical in nature has come out with the conclusion that if the efforts are made to improve the tourism level in the Kashmir and Ladakh regions of the state and the tourist destinations in the Jammu regions are identified and hence developed can indeed contribute to the balanced development of the regions as well of the state. It has been established that tourism has big potential to boost economic growth by generation of employment and eradication of poverty. This balanced development would offer the safe option to those dependent on monsoon-aided agriculture to diversify

to the sector bearing less risk and huge revenues. Besides, the sector if paid proper heed to, will contribute to reduce unemployment by offering huge potential for the same. This will in turn have trickle down effects in terms of generating income for the people in particular areas as well as the development of those areas. Thus, this kind of development will be more of sustainable nature. Even as tourism industry in the state is faced with numerous challenges like insufficient capital, insecurity, poor and inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor information system and poor attitude of locals towards tourism, the study reveals that tourism has the capacity to generate sustainable revenue if given the needed attention.

1. Confer responsibility of identification of tourist destination to local authorities: In this regards rather than keeping the power of developing local tourist sites in hands of one authority at state level, they can be decentralized to the authorities at district or sub-division level.
2. Hiring local people: if local people and staff for the development are hired, on the one hand it will generate employment and on the other can encourage them to develop places with more enthusiasm.
3. Reinvest the revenues: In the beginning the revenues thus generated even though small, should be reinvested to develop and maintain those places only.
4. Publicity of the destination through social as well as advertisements.
5. Develop many but small places: rather than developing one large destination, develop small places but at many places. This can also attract the tourists to large numbers.

If the above suggestion are implemented, it will for sure compensate the overdependence of people on the farming and hence their sufferings. Besides generating employment and revenues, the tourism sector in the state is one of the best options for diversification, which can sustain the livelihood of the people in the areas, irrespective of crop seasons. It will of course lead to a more balanced growth

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