

# Challenges & Opportunities in Tourism Industry: A Study of Jammu & Kashmir

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism being a smokeless industry is now a multi-billion, multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional activity in the world. Tourism is being considered as an agent of social change bridging gaps among nations, regions and people and helping them to open up. Tourism is a promoter of development-material and spiritual both at macro and micro level. J&K is an important tourist destination of the country and has been a place of attraction for tourists since centuries. The lush green forests, sweet springs, perennial rivers, picturesque, alpine scenery and pleasant climate of Kashmir valley has remained an internationally acclaimed tourist destination. Tourism industry in Kashmir is facing so many challenges for development like HR challenges faced by tourism industry, Peace disturbance challenge faced by tourism industry in Kashmir and many others. J&K tourism industry today is on the threshold of a big change for large economic gains. However, tourism is much more than an economic activity; it has become a way of life. Without ignoring the problems of tourism industry and its implications on the future development of tourism industry in Kashmir, an attempt is made to identify the potentials of tourism industry in the present liberal environment. This paper is an attempt to study various opportunities towards tourism industry & also stresses on the challenges faced by the tourism industry in Jammu & Kashmir.

**Keywords:** Challenges in Tourism Industry, Tourism Development, Tourism in new millennium.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business & other purposes. Tourism around the world is measured as one of the most important tools of economic development. From the last few years the tourism industry which was considered the backbone of the economic development has started getting paralyzed due to unavoidable situations prevailing in the state particularly in Kashmir valley. Results of huge challenges in the tourism industry in J&K particularly in Kashmir valley. Jammu & Kashmir is an important tourist destination and has been a place of attraction for tourists since centuries. Kashmir valley is well known for its lush green forests, sweet springs, perennial rivers, picturesque alpine scenery, pleasant climate, cool weather, snow-kissed mountain peaks, lakes & holy places all over the world. Tourism has historically remained an instrument of economic growth in the State of Jammu & Kashmir and has contributed a lot in developing the economy, particularly in Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. Jammu and Kashmir especially Kashmir valley offers various categories of tourism. These include adventure tourism, medical tourism, water rafting, skiing, religious tourism, etc. Jammu and Kashmir is one of the popular tourist destinations in Asia. Tourism industry employs a large number of people, both skilled and unskilled. Tourism is the right vehicle for developing the state's economy. Hotels, travel agency, transport including airlines benefit a lot from this industry. Tourism is the most vibrant tertiary activity and a multi-billion dollar industry in Jammu and Kashmir.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ▶ To study the challenges faced by tourism industry in j&k.
- ▶ To analyze the impact of tourism on the development of economy.
- ▶ To make an effort for the betterment of tourism industry in j&k.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data; information has been collected from various reports presented by the ministry of tourism, Govt. of India. Despite of this data has also collected with the help of articles, research papers, magazines, books etc.

### IV. OPPORTUNITIES: ECONOMIC STABILITY, EMPLOYMENT GENERATION AND TOURISM

As it is evident to the fact that tourism is the backbone of any prosperous nation's economy and therefore J&K too has a tremendous potential in tourism sector. Importance of tourism in J &K economy is known for decades now and its role and in economic development has been an area of great interest from policy perspective, which placed Jammu and Kashmir on 17th position where as Andhra Pradesh is ranked no 1 in the list of major destinations of India (Ministry of Tourism, GOI). Tourism being a labour intensive industry provides a very vast scope for employment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir. The inflow of inbound tourists from oversea nations brings out rise of hospitality industry i.e. setting up of five star hotels, resorts, travel agencies etc. as it is regarded as multi-segmental industry, therefore it provides different types of jobs like hotel managers, receptionists, accountants, clerks, guides, travel agents, chefs, transport operators etc. which give rise the multiplier effect and thus helps in stabilizing the economy and generates the employment generation particularly for the host community. There is also a huge opportunity for start ups and established entrepreneurs by flourishing their businesses in this multisegmental industry in J&K by stepping out in desired fields like hospitality, travel agencies, winter sports equipment business etc. there is also the scope of employment tourism development authority but unfortunately lacks capacity building. Therefore the policy makers, non-governmental organizations and other stake holders must work in coordination to create opportunities that centre on local communities promote conservation efforts and link with enterprise development.

### V. CHALLENGES: PEACE, CONFLICT.

There are many challenges that come across to this sector in J&K, but the most sensitive is the peace and conflict factor which is continuing since last two decades (The Kashmir issue). It has been very complicated political issue which have taken hundreds of innocent lives since decades which results in turmoil, violence and hence the distortion of environmental and cultural image of Kashmir which results in decrease in tourist flow particularly international tourist flow. Another factor or challenge in the tourism industry in J&K is the political instability which is the root cause of all the challenges and hindrances, which results in poor infrastructure, poor road connectivity, inadequate capacity in development authorities etc. hence there is the need to stop playing the game of thrones, resolving disputes, branding Jammu and Kashmir as most prosperous tourist hub not only in the country but all over the globe.

### VI. REVIVE OF TOURISM

Tourism is perhaps the only sector which starts paying off immediately as it has no gap period. Regardless of other sectors which involve the developmental activities like roads, railways, construction, mega projects etc which take time to complete function and payoff. Sometimes these projects are delayed due to displacement, land acquisition, environmental problem etc. Therefore the central govt and state govt. should take initiatives to revive the sector, generate employment opportunities within the prospects of tourism which in turn helps in stabilizing the economy and improving the GDP %age of the state.

### VII. SUGGESTIONS

- Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir needs an adequate number of measures to give proper security to tourists so that they feel secure & safe.
- Both government as well as non government organizations (NGO'S) should work hand in hand in order to explore the efficiency of tourism in the state.
- Bringing in existence the unexplored beautiful areas of the state and providing them with the status of tourist resorts shall boost the potential for the tourist attraction.
- Recent trends which include medical tourism, polo tourism, gliding, snow skiing & rafting should be introduced by the tourism sector so that more tourists will be attracted towards the state.
- Improving accessibility to the tourist destinations will be helpful to gain the better status of tourism.
- Use of multimedia, magazines & journals could be helpful in promoting the tourism in the state.
- Season based tourism should be oriented in a way to create distinct attractions for four distinct seasons.
- Advancement in the tourism sector is needed so that the state remains available for the tourists throughout the year.

- Effective planning, development & marketing progress should be resigned.
- Quality assurance is important to attract customers & encourage repeat visits.
- Service quality i.e., in hotels, airports, railway stations etc needed to be upgraded.
- Proper market segmentation should be done on the basis of criteria like demographic, socio-economic & geographic variables.

### **CONCLUSION**

Jammu & Kashmir is considered as a most elite destination in the world. Tourism is the main industry in the state which is regarded as a multi-dimensional industry which offers different types of jobs like hotel managers, travel agents, and tourist guides etc. Keeping in view, the population of j&k which dependent on the tourism sector, it becomes necessary to put in all efforts in order to retain, maintain & sustain tourism in the state. Due to unavoidable circumstances from the past few decades in the state, the sector of tourism has received its downfall. In order to regain the status of the tourism in the state, positive participation of the Govt. as well as NGO's is necessary. J&K has a certain inherent strengths & prospective that can be utilized to improve the inflow of people.

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