



The Linkage between Tourism and Environment A Study of Valley of Kashmir

Jahangir Ahmad Malik (Researcher)

Professor R. A. Sharma (Head)

School of Studies in Tourism and Travel Management

Jiwaji University

Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

Tourism is one of the world's best ever growing industries, has a multitude of impacts, both positive and negative, on the environment. With the advent of mass tourism demand for environmental resources has been increasing progressively. Valley of Kashmir prevalently known as "Paradise on Earth" is one of the three regions of Jammu and Kashmir State. Tourism is considered to be economic bonanza for J & K state because industrial development is very limited to hilly terrains. Tourism is mainly a service industry depends completely on natural ingredients like ingenious beauty, mountain peaks, hill torrents, sylvan canopy, invigorating climate and varied flora and fauna as its raw materials. Tourism holds mammoth appeal because of projected economic benefits of income and employment. Tourism has also some positive impacts on the environment but generally the negative impacts are more serious. The study is based on secondary data. The rationale of this paper is to enlighten tourism and environment linkages in the study area; then, refer to some challenges and recommendations regarding tourism and environment.

Keywords: *Challenges, Environment, Linkage, Sustainable, Tourism.*

Introduction

The Jammu and Kashmir state is bestowed with beauty & rich forests, natural lakes, fresh water. It is known all over the world for its beautiful valleys, lakes, snow capped peaks, bracing climate, opportunities for trekking, fishing, skiing & number of archaeological, historical, cultural & religious places, chilly climate and hospitable people. Among all industries, tourism is an imperative industry in the state. For centuries Kashmir has been centre of attraction. Tourism in Kashmir depends greatly on natural resources. According to Krippendorf, capital in tourism is land or landscape whereas capital in other sectors of economy can be lost and gained again – but not in tourism (Krippendorf, 1987). Kashmir being one of the most beautiful tourists destinations of the world, attracts a large chunk of tourists from India and abroad.

Review Of Literature

Tourism industry cannot be monitored in vacuity, but is inextricably linked to social,

economic and environmental changes happening at a destination. As a result, evaluation tools are needed to monitor areas where tourism interfaces with key sustainable tourism issues. The sustainable implementation of sustainable development necessitates the duties of the tourism industry, environmental supporters and community or the three 'cycles' to be interrelated (WTO, 1993). Environment is often used in its widest concept to and includes different aspects such as cultural, economic, political, social and physical or natural type. Physical environment is often referred as key element of tourism (Theobald, 1998). Despite its positivity and advantages, tourism phenomenon has various negative effects as well (Hunter, 1997) and this is true for India and all other world destinations. The activities which are undertaken by tourists in the name of tourism result in degradation of various socio-cultural, economic and institutional dimensions, if not monitored properly (Hall and Lew, 1998).



Objectives

1. To understand tourism and environment linkages.
2. To examine the existing scenario of tourism in the study area.
3. To find out challenges and recommendations to make tourism economically viable and ecologically sustainable.

Methodology

This study is based upon the collection of secondary data. The secondary data was collected from various sources of publications such as magazines, journals, research articles, internet and published and unpublished records of different departments of Jammu and Kashmir State.

Findings (Tourism / Environment)

Tourism is not merely an activity for entertainment. It is an elevating and refreshing activity. For a developing country like India whopping is on path of growth through structural transformation of economy, tourism is the right vehicle. With its forward & backward linkages with the host sectors transport, hospitality, education, health, banking etc. Kashmir is an area with great tourism potential & is leading edge of development. During the last few decades the development of tourism in the Kashmir valley has helped in the improvement of social amenities (roads, electricity, hotels, guest houses, cultural centres, etc.) at places like Gulmarg, Phalgam, Sonamarg, making the environment more hospitable. Tourism is the main industry in the state in general and Kashmir valley in particular. It is regarded as multi-segmented industry therefore, provides different types of jobs like hotel managers, guides, travel agents and others. The enchanting geographical landscape & range of ecosystems leaves a lasting impression on the tourists in Kashmir. It provides employment to numerous people directly or indirectly. The importance of tourism in the Kashmir valley lies as; encourage handicrafts, earns foreign exchange, develops transportation, develops new tourist potential places, acts

as source of income for Kashmiris, source of state finance, assists hoteliers and leads to all- round progress. Kashmir has the honour of being one of the influential tourist magnets in the northern Himalayan belt, gifted by nature with the assets of everlasting attractions for the tourists. The environment and aesthetic beauty of Kashmir has undergone drastic alteration during the last five decades as a consequence of domestic and international tourists. The water bodies, the scenic spots, the Margs (alpine pastures), the natural springs, the snow covered peaks, glaciers and trekking routes have been degraded because of the careless attitude of tourists and inadequate investment of the maintenance of environment in a healthy and sustainable condition. Dal Lake of Kashmir, the heart of Srinagar, is the second biggest lake of Kashmir known for its beauty the world over. The wretched condition of the ecology of Dal commenced with the misuse of its crystal clear waters negligent and inhuman hands of man. Today the lake is fighting a losing combat on many fronts, viz, illegal encroachment, unending pollution of every type, eutrophication, deforestation and ensuing threat to the very existence of plant and animal life that niche in the water body and its environs. Wrappers, plastic bags, old tins and cans, rags, vegetable peelings, empty cigarette cases and other constituents of garbage are seen floating in its water affecting the look of the lake. The other important lakes of Kashmir, Wular – the biggest in Asia, Manasbal – the deepest among all the lakes of the Valley and Anchar – the marshy lake are witnessing similar ecological imbalances as that of Dal Lake. The haphazard and unplanned plantation of willows is eating up the expense of the Wular Lake. The fish industry of Kashmir is receiving a setback as the water volume of this lake has reduced. Wular Lake is a paradise for bird watchers. The shrinking of this lake has a negative impact on life of both local birds and migratory birds. Phalgam (hill station) and Gulmarg (hill



station) are the world famous tourist resorts of Kashmir valley. The former located enroute to the Amarnath Cave and the later the only heli-skiing resort of the world after Canada. These resorts have been encroached for the construction of roads and buildings, rendering the soils weaker and erosive. Resort housing, construction of building and growth in transportation network has enhanced clearance of forest cover in these areas. Same is the case with Sonmarg (hill station). These activities lead to serious environmental impact on these mountain ecosystems. The vegetative cover and aesthetic quality of parks and tourism resorts is depleted under trampling effects of tourism. It is scarcely surprising that the springs of Kashmir are dying. Springs in Mughal Gardens, Srinagar are the latest examples of such an adverse effect.

Environment Challenges Of Tourism

- 1.The need to implement practical steps to achieve a practical balance between tourism and environment.
- 2.The need for sustainable growth in different types of tourism such as eco tourism, natural, adventure, and cultural tourism through adherence to international standards and principles.
- 3.The environmental consequences should be on the top of agenda while stepping up investment & boosting infrastructure activities.
- 4.The need to educate tourists and familiar local people with the value of natural resources and cultural heritages deeply.
- 5.The need to make closer cooperation among stakeholders who are involved in tourism and environment and their common interest lies in the encouragement of natural and cultural tourism.
- 6.The need to control transport related impacts of increased natural and cultural tourism on the physical and historic environment.
- 7.The need to not integrate tourism and environment into networks or geographical grouping, but also to establish quality

standards or systems of good practice to increase their effectiveness and efficiency, as well as to safeguard natural and man-made environment and heritages.

- 8.The need to find a right balance between encouraging the expansion of tourism and safeguarding the environment.

Suggestions/ Recommendations

According to findings of the study area there are some of the suggestions which may go a long way in making tourism in Kashmir economically viable, socially acceptable and ecologically sustainable.

- 1.Tourism should be planned and managed within environmental limits and with due regard to the long-term suitable use of natural and human resources.
- 2.Tourism planning, development and operation should be integrated into national and local sustainable development strategies.
- 3.Tourism should support a wide range of local economic activities, taking environmental costs and benefits to account, but it should not be allowed to become an activity which dominates the economic base of an area.
- 4.Local communities should be encouraged and expected to participate in the planning, development and control of tourism with the support of government and the industry.
- 5.All organizations and individuals should respect the environment, the culture, the economy, the way of life, and the political structures of the destination area.
- 6.All stakeholders within tourism should be educated about the need to develop more sustainable forms of tourism.
- 7.Eco tourism for sustainable livelihood must be encouraged.
- 8.Research should be undertaken throughout all stages of tourism development and operation to monitor impacts, to solve problems and to allow local people and others to respond to changes and to take advantages of opportunities.



Conclusion

- Tourism is an environmentally dependent activity. The linkage between these two however, might be complex; but it is very sensitive and close. In the above study, tourism is environment's enemy but they can be two close friends, if they planned correctly and also with cooperation of all other organizations or industries which are related to tourism in the study area directly and indirectly.

References

- Choi, H.S., & E. Sirakaya. (2005). *Measuring Resident's Attitude toward Sustainable Tourism: Development of Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale. Journal of Travel Research.*
- Hall, C.M., and Lew, A. A. (1998). *Sustainable Tourism: A geographical Perspective. Wesley Publishing Company, N.Y., U.S.A.*
- Hunter, C. (1997). *Sustainable Tourism as an Adaptive Paradigm. Annals of Tourism Research Vol.24, no.4, pp. 850-867.*
- Krippendorf, J. (1987). *The Holiday Makers- Understanding the Impact of Leisure Travel. Heinemann, Oxford.*
- Pirazizy, A. A. (1989). *Impact of Construction Activities on Environmental Changes in Kashmir Himalayas. In I Mohans (ed.) Environmental Issues and Programmes, Ashish Publishing House.*
- Santeek Consultants Private Limited Delhi, "Final Report of 20 years Perspective Plan for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir".
- Seba, J.A. (2012). *Tourism and hospitality: Issues and Development. Apple Academic Press, Toronto New York.*
- Theobald, F. W. (1998). *Global Tourism. 2nd edn, Reed Educational and professional Publishing Ltd. UK.*
- World Tourism Organisation (1993). *Sustainable tourism development: Guide for local planners. Madrid: WTO.*