

Relation between infrastructure development and tourism growth: A case study of Jammu And Kashmir State

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ABSTRACT

Tourism infrastructure as the basis to tourism development plays a significant role in attracting tourists to a destination and utilization of resources. Kashmir considered as heaven on earth, has all potential to be one of the top tourism destination in the world. Well-planned infrastructure is a primary requirement to attract both foreign and domestic tourists. In Tourism infrastructure a huge number of services, necessary to meet the needs of tourists and increase satisfaction during their stay at the destination are included. The subject of this paper is to study the relationship between the infrastructure and tourism development. The paper argues that for tourist activities to flourish in the state there is a need for government and other stakeholders to invest more on tourism infrastructure facilities including development and regulations in air travel, hotel industry, transport and utility as this sector of the economy generates more income to the individuals, companies and a country in general. It is being through this paper that future tourism development depends on intensive investment in infrastructure, its modernization, addressing the gaps and strong coordination among various stakeholders is an important factor of development of the tourism sector.

Keywords: Tourism industry, services, transport, infrastructure, study, and Jammu and Kashmir.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry one of the largest service industries in the world today, and especially in the last two decades it has been progressing with great pace. Tourism may be international, or within the traveller's country. As an industry it is dynamic and very competitive. As the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses, it needs the ability to adapt frequently to customers' changing needs and desires. Apart from providing recreation and pleasure it is one of the major sources of income for many countries, and affects the economy of both the source and host countries.

As tourism of a place develops, more and more people become involved in the industry both directly and indirectly. According to the World Tourism Organization, the tourism industry generates approximately 10% of the world's GDP, which is more than the world military budgets put together. Which annually generating more than 230 million jobs and contributes billions of dollars collectively to the economies of countries across the globe. In most developing countries, it is the major means of job creation and revenue generation. According to the long term forecast of WTTC report over the ten-year period to 2025, the recent and short-term strong growth of the Travel & Tourism sector is expected to continue, with forecast average annual Travel & Tourism GDP growth of 3.7%. By 2025 it is anticipated that Travel & Tourism will contribute US\$11.3 trillion in GDP to the world economy and will support 355 million jobs globally, which is expected to translate to approximately 10.5% of the world economy in terms of both GDP and employment. The provided data depicts that tourism has become a highly important element of the economic and social life in a growing number of countries, and implicitly in our own state Jammu and Kashmir. Due to its unmatched scenic beauty, the state has already made a place on world's tourism map. Kashmir is known as "Paradise on Earth". Some of the important natural resources are outstanding four seasonal climate, beautiful lakes, locations for adventure sports, wild life, famous Mughal gardens like Shalimar, Nishat, Harven, flora and fauna, alpine forests, natural waterfalls and streams etc. Apart from this the state has a rich cultural heritage also; famous religious shrines which attracts lakhs of domestic tourist every year, historical monuments, plethora of local festivals, distinct cuisine, craftsmanship skills for intricate and fine woodwork, woollens, carpets, textiles, paper Mache, inlay work etc. In other words, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has a great potential to attract tourists from within the country as well as

foreign tourists from all parts of the world. However, in spite of having such a huge tourism potential, it is also well known that we still lay behind other developed states with huge tourism potential in India.

Although Jammu and Kashmir has variety of destinations with natural beauty viz lakes, mountains and natural surroundings, there are a number of other corresponding factors that can be obstacles for growth of tourism. Prevailing security situation, lack of proper road connectivity and quality roads, lack of accommodation facilities and other infrastructural support can be major impediments. The subject of the current paper is to assess the relation between tourism and infrastructure and how improvement in infrastructure on modern lines can have direct impact on the growth and development of tourism industry. As Jovicic points out that a tourist destination develops in a particular area at a particular time, and that it directly and indirectly affects the shaping of that area, both physiologically, through various tourism infrastructure facilities, superstructures, and the presence of a large number of tourists, and by function, where the destination, next to the existing functions, gains the tourism function, which can be the dominant or the only function (Jovičić, 1980).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the role of infrastructure like hotels, restaurants and hospitality services for organising the required amenities for tourists.
- To explain the significance and establish relationship between local and long-distance modes of transport and tourism.
- To provide need to develop basic infrastructure in order to increase tourism potential in J&K.

Basic Elements and Importance of Tourism Infrastructure

For development of any tourism destination infrastructure is the basic component, as well as a base for application of destination resources. [1] The author is one among the first few authors who recognizes the importance of infrastructure and revealed it as an essential element for successful tourism development. Also induces the creation of new attractions and the growth of existing ones. The infrastructure for tourism includes basic infrastructure components like airports, railways, roads, waterways, electricity, water supply, drainage, sewerage, solid waste disposal systems and services. Moreover, facilities like accommodation, restaurants, recreational facilities and shopping facilities also comes under the ambit of Tourism Infrastructure. Planning for sustainable development of Tourism Infrastructure, therefore, involves the integrated development of basic infrastructure and amenities along with all the tourism facilities in a balanced manner. The significance of tourism infrastructure is revealed in the fact that it can contribute to increasing the efficiency of production and distribution of tourism services, and, in some cases, such as remote destinations, even increase the supply of tourism services. Infrastructure is defined as the provision of public safety, transportation services, medical systems, financial systems, education systems, and other services involved in the population's, as well as in tourists' demand [3].

Tourism infrastructure can be viewed as the physical elements that are intended and created to cater for visitors. The interdependence between tourism development and infrastructure has been theoretically established by a number of authors [2]. Many authors have written about the difference between tourism infrastructure and supra-structure, and many claiming that superstructure depend on infrastructure. As Tourism infrastructure includes main facilities and complementary facilities, equipment, structures, methods, and resources which are very much compulsory for the functioning of every tourist destination. Which mainly includes roads, railways, airports, and the like, or in other words we say that these are the basic elements which are compulsory for making a tourist destination accessible for tourists. In addition to such basic elements, infrastructure also includes health care systems, services, and public services. Making these infrastructural elements as base then comes superstructure which includes building facilities, which exist only because of tourism activities. Their main purpose is accommodation and meeting the needs and desires of tourists, in the form of hotels, campsites, restaurants, sports facilities, and the like [4].

The connection between infrastructure and tourism is emphasized in numerous professional studies, which underline, on the one hand, the special role of tourism development in the infrastructure's modernizing, and on the other hand, the reverse direction, the generation of multiplication effects of infrastructure development upon tourism [5]; [6]. Today, the infrastructure development represents a preoccupation of the decision factors and specialists from almost all fields, for the elaboration of detailed plans regarding the infrastructure development, the transport infrastructure having an important role [7]; [8]; [9]; [10]. Literature provides different views on the number and type of components representing tourism infrastructure. According to the Tourism & Transport Forum [11], tourism infrastructure is the supply chain of transport, social and environmental infrastructure collaborating at a regional level to create an attractive tourism destination.

Transport infrastructure in this chain provides destination access to tourists from the international and domestic markets, and includes roads, airports, and railways. Social infrastructure relates to accommodation facilities in the form of rooms to accommodate tourists and other supporting physical structures for various kinds of activities and services

that attract tourists. This infrastructure includes hotels, convention centers, stadiums, galleries, and other necessary facilities. Environmental infrastructure is a natural value, and refers to national parks, marine parks, and reserves which visitors can tour. In addition to these three types of infrastructure, tourism infrastructure includes the shared infrastructure, made of a network of regional, state, and national tourism organizations on the market where there is a tourist destination, and is engaged in the distribution of tourism products.

TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

From the tourist perspective in order to reach a tourist destination, developed transport infrastructure is a must as that serves as a pre requirement for consuming other tourism services of the destination itself. Transport is an indispensable element of tourism. By definition transport is the means providing connections between regions, domestically and internationally, and connecting attractions, accommodation and commercial services at a tourist destinations. [12]. Analysed the product on the basis of comparative and competitive advantage, revealed that without roads, airports, harbours, electricity, sewage, and potable water, tourism planning and development is not possible.

There is no doubt that Tourism is a basic element in promoting national and regional economies. It acts as a bridge between places of tourist origin and destination. It is a key for opening up a region by providing an access to its tourist destinations. one cannot think about the establishment of a tourist destination in absence of proper transport sector as all other fascinations and pleasantness can't be of any value. The arrival of tourists increases the productivity of human resources at the destination as well, as various kinds of services are required to feel comfortable during their stay at the tourist destination. In other words we can say once the arrival of tourists at a particular destination takes place increase in the demand for infrastructure services in terms of water supply, waste disposal, communication and electricity supply, as the necessary elements for comfortable functioning of tourists at the selected destination. [13], of Australia described transport as a big part of the equation.

It emphasises that the transport system of a place is responsible for connecting tourism-generating regions to destinations. The tourism structure involves a network of routes or means of transport and the modes of transport. By network of routes we mean air, sea or water routes. Inland routes include roads or the motorways and the rail transport. The modes of transport refer to aircraft, ships, steamers, cars, taxis, luxury coaches, buses and the railway trains. Taxis, cars, motor like auto rickshaws, tangas, mopeds, bicycles and trams are particularly important as items of local transport meant to carry travellers from airports, bus-stands or railway stations to hotels and tourist sites within a city. At high altitude places in tourist areas, one may come across ropeways and electric driven trollies, pony or tonga riding and sailing boats. Making public transport available and convenient to use by tourists and encouraging them to walk or using cycles more frequently can help to mitigate negative environmental impacts and manage seasonal peaks. [14] argues that a "destination should be easy to get to and easy to get around". Since past few years the nature of tourism has changed a lot, moving from simply recreation to "self-fulfilment" which has an impact on the selection of tourist destination as well. [15], in their studies analysed that with changing trend maximum number of tourists usually the citizens of developed countries, are habituated to modern and well-organized transport infrastructure, and they expect to experience same in the destination country and failing which they will try to find alternative destinations.

Self sufficiency of all possible types of alternative transport facilities both in its major and minor networks makes a region more attractive towards tourism. Here Private travel organisations can play a great role to look after the transport needs of tourists within the smallest local network as tourist requires not just an access to a tourist region but also an easy access in terms of cost, time and level of comfort. For instance, high altitude or of bad weather, alternative mode of transport must be at hand for a tourist. Many countries like Switzerland and Germany have promoted cycling and hiking for tourist purpose. In order to make this type of promotion successful, close collaboration is required between the different departments of the sector so that necessary and appropriate information regarding infrastructure, services and information is provided to the tourists. This will definitely help improve tourism growth as there will be a shift from traditional urban locations towards natural sites.

A. Air Transport

In modern society one of the most popular mode of travel is Air travelling and recently its share in the transportation market has grown significantly. It is Air transportation which has made possible to travel what earlier were long-lasting journeys in a short time period and increased the demand for long-distance trips. One of air transport's most important economic benefits is its effect on various industries. Tourism is one such industry, which is inseparably linked with air transport: tourism depends on transportation to bring tourists, while on the other hand transport industry depends on tourism to generate demand for its services. According to the reports presented by [16] "Air transportation plays a central role in developing tourism industry. Over 52 per cent of international tourists now travel via air transportation. Tourism is very important process of development for some regions especially developing countries. Air transportation provides the only global transportation channel, which makes it important for worldwide tourism and business." Kashmir being a mountainous region, air service is still the first choice of transportation for international tourists as well as for local passengers for traveling and prioritizing time, safety, comfort and aerial views of the Himalaya.

Planned air transportation system provides a safe, convenient, trustworthy, frequent, and consumer centred service. For travellers who want to reach the destinations fast prefer travel by air transportation. [17].

However, in recent years, while the numbers of airlines operating in the region have increased in number, the passenger inflow has grown many folds. This includes very high number of security personnel deployed in Kashmir travelling between valley and their home states. [18]in his study revealed that the cost of air travel directly stimulates the cost of the tourism product. The decrease in the cost of air transport makes the destination more viable for tourists. The reduction in the cost of airfares is derived from advancement of technology as new aircrafts have been designed in such a way that they are faster and capable of accommodating more passengers.

The high demand for airline travel has resulted in unregulated fares between Srinagar the Capital city and other connecting cities in India. In many cases, the prices for air tickets are two to three folds higher for travellers while comparing other tourist's destination with same distance and travel time. As such, in order to ensure smooth flow of tourists into Kashmir Valley, better management and regulations in air network is required. Discounted fares, in the form of concessions or easily manageable passes should be allowed for different age-groups, charged promotion of active tourism. Still in order to attract low budget leisure tourist, our public and private air services should offer concessional tickets because they form the largest proportion of air travellers. Moreover, high class travellers from rich countries coming as tourists like to pay for costlier air travel but in return they should be provided a good service. They do not mind foregoing any concessions offered by air travel companies because their main concern is to save time at any cost. The state government should ensure arrival and departure of evening/late-night flights, which will ensure more aircrafts plying between Srinagar and other destinations. This will also be a huge advantage for tourists to choose a flight of their choice and save time. Recently Govt. has taken a step ahead by starting a helipad services for site seeing within the Srinagar city and also to the nearby tourist points like Pahalgam, Gulmarg which should be maintained.

B. Rail Transport

Rail travel is one of the dominant forms of mass public transport before the age of the automobile. The railway network not only reflects the commercial needs of the national economy but the holiday tourist flow. The railway systems of several countries, notably in Europe, have seen massive investments for long-distance routes and high speed services. The Kashmir Railway in India is a broad gauge rail line which connects the state of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country. Officially termed the Jammu Udhampur and Srinagar Baramulla Railway Link, the railway line starts from Jammu and travel for 345 km (214 mi) to Baramulla on the north western edge of the Kashmir Valley. This network has emerged as a main source of travel for commuters and has been a huge success. However, there is no linkage between different tourist destinations through railway line which could have made travel easy for the tourists and would help bring some of the far flung areas on the tourist map. In India, most of the population prefers to visit the places by train because of its cost effectiveness and low budget. Several short rail lines can be started for tourists to visit local tourist destinations. The rail transportation can also be a touristic destination in itself as the train would be passing through the scenic beauty of the Valley. The railway network will provide an all-weather and reliable connectivity to the J&K State through rest of the country.

C. Water Transport

Jammu and Kashmir is a place with number of rivers and lakes originating from Himalayas. The most important river of the state is 'Jhelum' which flows through the interiors of the state. Other rivers flowing through the state are Ravi, Tawi, Chenab and Indus. Dal Lake is famous among not only the national tourists but also attract international tourists because of the breath taking views and its intricate waterways and channels, floating islands of vegetation, houseboats that look so firmly moored they could almost be islands and hotels on islands which look like they could simply float away. One of the most traditional and memorable ways for visitors to travel to and from a destination is Water-based transport. It is not only a way to travel but a tourism experience in of itself. Cruise tourism has been a growing market sector around the world, not only as a means to travel to a destination but as an experience. The development of water transport destination as a tool to attract tourists requires in-depth economic, environmental and social assessment. Successful cruise destinations must provide a unique experience for visitors, have well organised transport systems and public amenities, clustered tourism products and attractions and a variety of excursion and shopping options. Kashmir can be a highly successful region for backwater tourism. It should be able to retain a competitive edge through continual innovation in new water excursions and activities. There are a number of ways in which government of Kashmir can develop appropriate and effective water-based transport facilities and services.

ROLE OF HOTELS IN TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

The way people spend their vacations has gone through a great change during recent times. People while travelling not only explores new places across the world but also want to spend good times with family and friend. As a result the tourism industry across the globe has seen an unprecedented growth which in turn has also resulted in tremendous

growth in accommodation facilities. Accommodation facilities in the host country have become such an important part of tourist industry that it is now known as hotel industry by itself for promoting a tourist place. Comfortable hotels and accommodation facilities play a very important role. Good facilities and comforts provided to the tourist is bound to make a person attached to the place. On the other hand if the tourist ends up at a place where the hotels and accommodation facilities are not satisfactory, it is quite likely that they might never return to that place. [19] relate infrastructure to demand and supply analysis and describe how various components of the destination interact with tourists. [20] defines the product as a complex consumptive experience that results from a process in which tourists use multiple services (information, transportation, accommodation, and recreation). On the other hand, [21] acknowledges the role of service infrastructure in creating a product experience. He argues that service infrastructure is housed within the larger macro-environment of the destination and that infrastructure and technology in a destination is key features that can enhance experience. [21]

In Jammu and Kashmir, a great shortage of accommodation is being experienced in the tourist centres because of a constant increase in the traffic of all categories of tourists. Seeing the rate of growth of tourism and the number of rooms under construction within the existing hotel space or in a few new hotels, our requirements exceed the estimated availability. The change of land use rules for construction of more hotels and going in for special allotment of land for construction of motels are proposed as two immediate steps. The construction of hotels at wayside places and at sites within easy connectivity from there has taken place during the last few years. Furthermore accommodation facilities being made available at different tourists spots in Kashmir need to shift their focus on providing maximum comfort to tourists.

It is also vital to provide comfortable accommodation to people from diverse economic backgrounds. While five star hotels can cater to the needs of affluent visitors, small and medium range hotels and lodging houses can be made available for use to a middle class traveller. Therefore we can say that the need for accommodation in different classes of hotels matching the varying requirements of tourists is no less an important part of tourism infrastructure. Also arrangements can be made in guest houses or in people's homes as paying guests. In forests the sites for lodges can be chosen, spring grounds, close to camping grounds for putting up tents or water bodies for floating houseboats. In short such sites can be developed which are also considered as tourist friendly in tourist resorts.

Beside for high end tourists the provision of high level facilities and comforts, the big international hotels having large conference halls, communication linkage with internet facilities, cooking and recreational environment and even health clubs should be there. At the other end, hotels can be developed close to airports offering short term accommodation and facilities to outgoing and incoming tourists. Tourist youth hostels, Sarais or inns and holiday homes at various locations can improve accommodation for wayside tourists of different budget levels.

TOUR OPERATORS

A large number of trained backup staff is required to look after the different aspects for a successful management of tourism .which comprise trained tour guides, travel agents or tour operators, stewards, chefs and a host of their assistants. Out of these, the tour guides and tour operators are the main personnel of management staff. As They are the one who get linked with tourists sights from the preplanning stage of travel to the time they pack up for their homes. A tour operator is one who produces the trip, creates it. Tour operators arrange the transport, accommodation and leisure activities which make up the holiday packages. Tour Operators have a massive impact on the tourism industry as there would be no holidays if there wasn't any tour operator as they're the ones that make the holidays and give them to the travel agents or in other words we can say that it is there from where tourists buy their holidays.

The running of a sensitive service industry like tourism mainly depends upon their skill to bring about a fruitful interaction with the tourists. Their absence can create reduction in tourist arrival. As a tour operator, they play a significant role in the tourism market. Since they are so necessary for other businesses (such as travel agencies) and consumers (mainly travellers) and so can greatly influence their decisions. Being one of the strong pillar in tourism sustainability a tour operator can maximise social benefits for the local community like by suggesting customers about the purchase of local products, inform tourists about cultural values of the destination etc. In the long run, a tour guide induces the visitors to the attractions of a tourist place or a tourist area and conducts them around the actual tourist spots. At the lowest local level, tour guidance is the basic unit for promotion of the whole programme of tourism.

If they are absent from the scene or fail in performing a rightful role, the tourist arrival get reduced. And this industry is on the verge of collapse despite the big publicity drive to make it popular. Their work at tourist destinations stands on equal footing with that of the hotelier and professional hotel manager. so in order to be effective as a tour guide one needs to be well aware about the geography of the place, background of the localities of tourist interest, past history including legends about temples, shrines, monuments ruins of old sites and forts on the list of sightseeing. He should be well trained so that he talks about the relevant local traditions, culture, folk lore, performing art etc so that it can be an appealing story for the tourist. Each of these two jobs whether tour operator or travel agent requires picking up necessary skills through regular training programmes as the first important step. Both of these functionaries further

develop their skills by actually participating in the activity. The trainees then should be attached to a travel agency in order to get themselves equipped with details to function independently.

CONCLUSION

The development of infrastructural resources like an efficient transport network hotels hospitality service and various other amenities are keys for the management of modern tourism. The existence and growth of tourism, whether domestic or international, extensively depends upon an increased accommodation of all categories to meet the rush of tourists to tourist destinations especially during peak times. There is a constant need to develop and enhance transport facilities both for short distance and long distance travel. Various alternative modes of transport are to be provided for use in an integrated manner so that the one may also supplement the other.

A sensitive service industry like tourism equally depends upon the efficient work of various tour functionaries like tour guides and tour operators adopting their jobs as trained professionals. Both these jobs are now getting distinctly well-defined and are of a specialised nature. A foreign tourist depends on a tour operator in the country of his or her visit right from pre-planning stage to departure back home requiring prior information and confirmation of their visa clearance, insurance of necessary permits, ticketing and reservations during their travel and stay in hotels. While a tour operator's duty extends from the home country or home place of a tourist or a group of tourists preparing for a package tour, the tour guide takes up the job at a tourist spot.

Kashmir being a place bestowed with all four seasons is faced with absorbing seasonal tourist flows; while delivering adequate transport network performance as increase in the number of tourist arrival creates a number of challenges in terms of infrastructure of which transport and hotels head the list. In order to manage seasonal peaks, public transport should be made available for tourist use. The government will need to take initiatives in regulating air travel and increasing the number of flights; introducing railway linkage between various parts of the valley covering major tourist destination. There is also a huge potential of tourism development in train travel across destinations in Valley. Better road networks and introduction of tourist hop on hop off buses, regulation of traffic are some other initiatives that can help enhance the sector. Due to years of conflict, a huge gap has emerged in the number of tourist inflow and available accommodation.

The lack of availability of quality accommodation has emerged as a measure challenge that needs a series of immediate steps from the government and the business community. One of the very good immediate alternate is supporting and regulating the concept of home stays. This will help fill in the gap of demand and supply and at the same time create economic opportunity for small time entrepreneurs and households. Hotel industry, transport and professional tour operators play significant role in development of a region and helps it to form a successful tourist place. A close coordination is required between all the different sectors involved in order to carry forward this steep growth in tourism.

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