

# Sustainable Tourism: A Tool for the Economic Reconstruction of J&K

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## ABSTRACT

Kashmir, once called the paradise on earth, a relatively small piece of land in the Himalayas has been disputed since 1947-the year modern state of Pakistan was created. A large part of the India-Pakistan rivalry centers on competing claims over the Kashmir region. While both countries claim all of Kashmir, each of them controls only part of it. Often called one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints, The problem in Jammu and Kashmir, having caused three major wars between India and Pakistan, has since late 1980's become a serious internal security problem. This has had impact not only on the economy of both the countries but also on the state as well. Kashmir, rich in natural resources with outstanding lush green mountains, streams, rivers and lakes is splendid with natural beauty It attracts tourists all over the world. Tourism constitutes one of the main sources of income for vast sections of the Kashmiri population. Tourist destinations like Sonmarg and Gulmarg are known internationally for winter games such as skiing. However, most of these tourist attractions remain underdeveloped. Many other tourist attractions in the state remained untapped partly due to the conflict. The Violence has affected the development scenario in the state of J&K. The political instability and poor infrastructure are key causes of backwardness. The armed conflict has not only taken the precious lives but also it has shaken the economy of the state from its roots. The peace process initiated during the tenure of AtalBihari Vajpayee and the bilateral trade between the two countries has significant impact on the economic development of the State. The hope for a durable and sustainable development in the state has gained ground. After some theoretical and historical background, the paper argues that peace process between India and Pakistan provides enough space to carry on sustainable development activities in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The aim of the paper is to give readers an overview of the sustainable tourism as a tool for the economic development of Jammu and Kashmir State which is possible by the peace process between the two rival countries, India and Pakistan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Jammu and Kashmir continued to remain the most popular travel destinations in India and around the world due to its natural beauty and being a "seat of great learning." Kashmir is famously known as "Paradise on Earth". The state is offered with magnificence and rich woodlands, characteristic lakes, crisp water. The territory of Jammu and Kashmir is known everywhere throughout the world for its wonderful valleys, lakes, snowcapped crests, strengthening atmosphere, valleys, cool atmosphere, open doors for trekking angling, skiing and number of archeological, historical, social and religious spots, cool climate and hospitable people. Among all ventures, tourism is a vital industry in the state. Tourism is viewed as monetary bonanza for Jammu And Kashmir State on the grounds that industrial development is extremely restricted to bumpy territories. Being a labor-intensive industry, the extent of business is exceptionally immense. Tourism is viewed as multi-sectioned industry, along these lines gives diverse sorts of occupations required to reinforce the tourism. For centuries Kashmir has been the Centre of tourist attraction.

There are different spots of vacation destinations in the state visited by traveler. However, many tourist spots are yet untapped. Tourism in Kashmir depends incredibly on natural resources. Aharbal cascade, desire vegetation and snow secured mountains have come to symbolize what tourism industry in Kashmir can offer. At national level, our nation is additionally advancing admirably in this division. For a developing nation like India wallowing is on the way of development through auxiliary change of economy, tourism is the correct vehicle. In 2005 India rose as one among the main 40 tourism workers. With its forward and in reverse linkages with the host of sectors like transport, hospitality, education, health, banking etc. India is good to go to harvest maximum capacity of this lively segment. India has critical potential for turning into a noteworthy worldwide tourism goal. It has dependably pulled in individuals from everywhere throughout the globe through incomparable and brilliant accommodation, viz. *athithidevobhava* (Guest is equivalent to God).

Kashmir is otherwise called "Switzerland of East" and is celebrated for its abundance of beauty. The wondrous territory of J and K is offered with sacred spots that make it ideal pilgrimdestinationin India. Anyway Kashmir has been subject of revival claims by Pakistan and India, both of which are atomic forces and this issue has made the state a hot bed of hostilitysince from past seven decades. Tourist places of Jammu and Kashmir had pulled millions of tourists in the year 1988. With the changing of state of affairs in the Valley, the number of tourist's dwindled considerably. Tourism, one of the Kashmir's essential economic sectors has endured colossally because of the violence in the region. The state has lost billions of dollars in tourism income. It is assessed that state lost 27 million tourists from 1989 to 2002 prompting tourism income loss of us \$ 3.6 billion.

Since the partition, many governments changed both in India as well as in Pakistan but the issue is yet the biggest question of dispute between the two. As a matter of fact Jammu and Kashmir's economic growth could not maintain up with the national level and can display only 5.27 percent annual growth in comparison to the national average of 6.6 percent. In 2011 the per capita income of the state is only two-thirds of the nationalaverage in India. Many times peace talks were arranged, but every time either from the Pakistani side of from the Indian side these peace talks turned unfruitful. The peace procedure was initiated in 2004 as an endeavor to settle the Kashmir question. The peace procedure was a moderate moving one, however gave some hope to tourism division as the quantity of tourists visiting the state began grabbed since its introduction. Nevertheless terrorism and violence are not the only cause for Jammu and Kashmir's economic dejection but poor policy management, corruption and lack of infrastructure as well.

### **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN J&K:**

It is basic to investigate the standards and target of sustainabledevelopment tourism first to characterize the expression "sustainableDevelopment." Regardless of the far reaching acknowledgment of the term sustainable Development, there remains a lack of consensus over the real significance of this term. It implies diverse things to various individuals and can be utilized in numerous contexts, including tourism; in any case, the most broad however precise is the definition given by the Bruntland Report. As per it "'sustainable development is one that meets the needs of the present generation without comprising the ability for future generations to meet the own needs." This definition distinguishes some essential standards for organizers to plan sustainable destination development.

The idea of sustainable development depends on three columns: economic advancement, ecological assurance and social advancement. It is conceivable in Kashmir when every single pertinent partner and strong political authority will guarantee support and consensus building. Accomplishing sustainable tourism in Kashmir is a continuous processand it requires constant monitoring of the impact, introducing the necessary preventive and corrective measures at whatever point essential. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and guarantee important experience of the tourists, raising their mindfulness about sustainable issues and advancing sustainable tourism practices among them. Sustainable tourism is concerned especially on important viewpoints, for example, competitive and socially capable tourism organizations, the chance to take an interest in tourism for all natives, great business openings in the part and advantages from tourism exercises for the nearby network.

This requires the safeguarding of social integrity and the integration of environmental protection and cultural heritage resources in programs related in tourism. Broad endeavors to execute the standards of sustainable tourism advancement are made both at the local level and at the level of tourism enterprises. The overloaded or load pressure of the destination degrades natural resources which are more fragile. It is necessary to utilize the best possible system of carrying capacity in which the sightseers ought to be permitted to visit .The intensive crowds at the places will degrade these significant assets. We ought to pursue appropriate arranging and involve the community people and well talented individuals in this economic boosting segment to make Kashmir a well-planned world class sustainable tourist destination.

The tourism industry absolutely affects the environment. Its negative impact is very dangerous for the environment and the future generation. For this reason planning and sustainable tourism industry is very essential for every country. The growth of mass tourism has led to a range of problems, which have become more obvious over the recent years. It includes environmental, social, and cultural poverty. The tourism dependent nations are increasingly troubled by the negative aspects associated with the unsustainable tourism. The concept of ecotourism has been recognized globally as an apparatus that can be used to assuage poverty for indigent rural communities. Recently, tourism research has embraced the concept of sustainability, which is part of the development paradigm. Research evaluating alternative type of tourism development, including ecotourism, has become prevalent uncontrolled and unsustainable expansion will ultimately lead to the environmental degeneracy. From the late 1980's, sustainable tourism has transformed into a recognized field for examination.

These days, the encouraging thing is that reasonable tourism is getting simply more broadly affirmation to such a degree, to the point that UNESCO, the Assembled Nations Educational, Exploratory and Cultural Organization, now considers that it will go from substitute to regular inside a decade (Crest, 2015). In actuality, it is an unforgiving truth that till late 1980s, the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) used to draw huge amounts of national and furthermore outside sightseers, yet the tourism zone got a real evil with the upheaval of militancy in the year 1989. There have been numerous conferences and seminars held in recent years where stress have been given to advance tourism in J&K on sustainable basis. When we discuss sustainable tourism we can't bear to sit as quiet onlookers but have to be always alert and active to save our ecology and environment including our open areas and forests, very important for its sustainability. The Valley of Kashmir has abundant resource base for the promotion and development of tourism in general and ecotourism in particular. Keeping this aspect into consideration Kashmir valley presents itself as an important ecotourism destination as it has tremendous potential for development of ecotourism.

The tourism prospects of the valley can be used as a promotional tool for attracting tourists from across the globe. Valley of Kashmir is an unexplored hub for eco-tourism as its location; greenery, evergreen forests, mountains, hills, valley streams, cultural heritage, and rich bio-diversity provide a wide base for the development of community based- eco-tourism. The Valley with its ideal setting will surely capture the hearts and the minds of all visitors to the region. For an overall sustainable development of the Valley as a variable tourist destination, an integrated approach to tourism planning and conserving of the rich, natural eco-system is required. Thus traditional tourism in terms of accommodation, accessibility, road network, services and related marketing and economic development need to be combined and integrated with a tourism development plan that primarily focuses on the preservation of the existing ecosystem. Thus, there is an urgent need to discover and setup new ways and means through which negative impacts can be minimized and positive impacts can be strengthened keeping the basic concept of ecotourism in mind. If ecotourism practices are implemented in a proper way, it can contribute significantly to the growth and sustainability of tourism in Kashmir.

It is necessary to secure its sustenance which definitely would enhance and maintain the standards of services and amenities in this sector which is otherwise called hospitality sector. Any unplanned or disproportionate growth in this sector therefore is not advisable for the sustainability of tourism in a region like J&K. The plan of sustainable tourism is to guarantee that improvement which will bring a peaceful comprehension amongst tourism and environment. The regular and stupendous excellence of J&K has made such praise for it. Kashmir valley is delineated as a paradise on earth. Its natural greatness is remarkable and has abundance attractions for the tourists landing here from everywhere through the globe. With its unblemished and beguiling environment, thick woods spread and remarkable sorts of fauna and verdure, the state shows exceptional potential for ecotourism and cultural tourism. At present, in light of extended inflow of tourists, the state's wage and employment has grown yet then again the upgraded and unhindered flood of tourists are acting huge hazard to the basic resources of the state of J&K.

Thus, sustainable tourism is crucial for Jammu and Kashmir, since the arrival of both Indian and remote visitors are rising every year. Jammu and Kashmir being a little express, the passing on farthest point of the state similar to the size, workplaces accessible and the biological affectability should be systematically analyzed and taken into concern while permitting tourism; at exactly that point such tourism would be strong, as time goes on, for the state and its kinfolk. The 20-years game plan for the sustainable tourism advancement has, as of now, been organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for the condition of Jammu and Kashmir. The tourism strategy concerning tourism improvement in the state has in like manner been sorted out, yet this must be incorporated honestly on the remote possibility that we require tourism to be the fruitful story for the state. These are the sublime walks yet some new is yet to be executed.

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