



Tourism Opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir and Fresh Terror Attacks

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a large and growing part of the economy of many countries of the world. India is a country known for its lavish treatment to all visitors, no matter where they come from. Its visitor-friendly traditions, varied life styles and cultural heritage and colorful fairs and festivals held abiding attractions for the tourists. Beautiful sites and landscapes, forests and wild life, adventurous mountains, pilgrimage and medical treatment are some attractions for foreign and domestic population. Kashmir as a tourist destination has incomparable beauty and it is known as "Paradise on Earth". Kashmir is also known for its unique cultural ethos which has evolved through centuries in a seamless co-existence called Kashmiriyat, a second name for hospitality. Two major Himalayan ranges, the greater Himalayas and the Pir Panjal, surrounds the valley from the north and the South respectively. But unfortunately, the outbreak of terrorist incidents from 1989 toppled tourist inflow towards valley, which left its deep mark on the economy of the concerned territory.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism brings money to cities and countries with abundant. Tourism also provides jobs for the local residents. India has realized the profits through its growing economy and promoting itself as a culturally rich and diverse nation. India's tourism industry brings billions of dollars into the economy each year. In 2019, there was an increase of 3.5 percent in Foreign tourist arrivals over 2018 statistics amounting to US \$ 30058 in 2019 . There is a diversity in Indian Tourism Industry as there is a variety of factors.

Jammu and Kashmir contribute to the attraction to foreign as well as domestic tourists such as ecology, mythology, history, geographical diversity including of mountain, planes and plateaus and also the life changing Yoga & Ayurveda. Jammu and Kashmir showcase a variety of tourism options which includes Ecological Tourism, Pilgrimage Tourism, Historical Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Medical Tourism and an upcoming Ayurveda Tourism. Kashmir Valley has broken all the previous

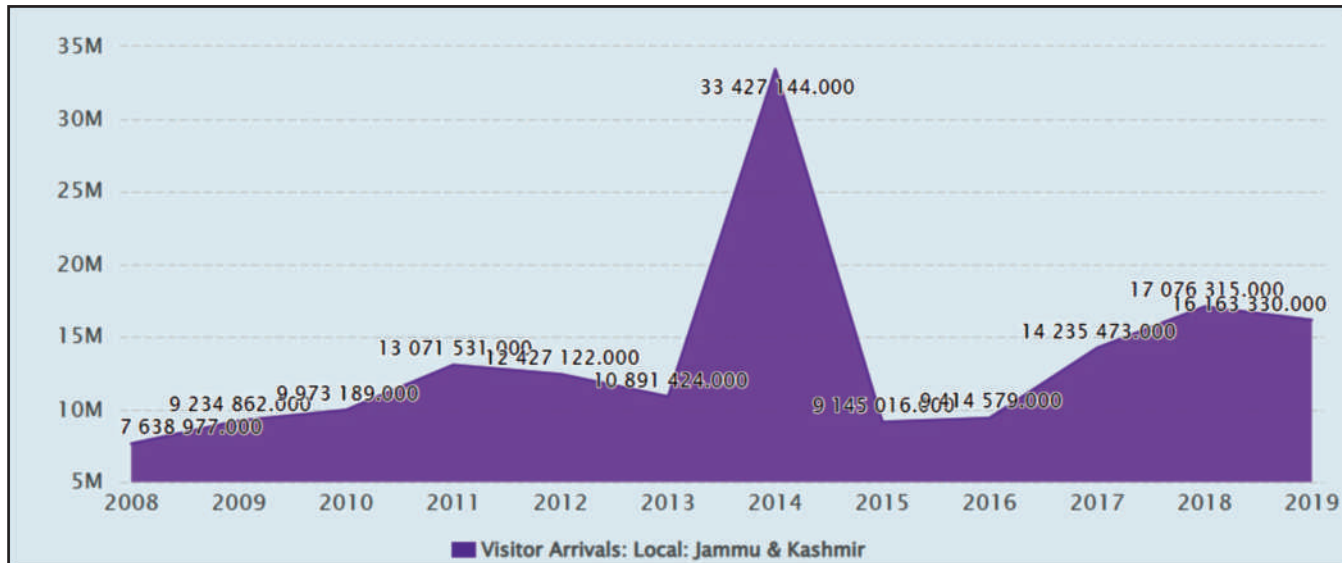
records of tourist arrivals in the last three months. The valley saw more than 3,40,000 tourist arrivals in recent months.

After years, such a huge number of tourist arrivals have been witnessed in the Kashmir Valley.

The Himalayan ranges with its two major parts the greater Himalayas and the Pir Panjal, surrounds the valley from the North and the South respectively are the main attraction. Kashmir is a multi faceted diamond set like a crown jewel on the map of India. The Mughals named it Kashmir – the Paradise on Earth. Thus, mighty Himalayan ranges provide a natural protection from invaders. Despite such natural barriers and isolation, invaders and often attracted towards the valley for rich wealth, mysterious beauty, true knowledge, exquisite artisanship and cultural heritage. Land of such strategic location with rare amalgamation of positive aspects, scenic beauty and splendid seasons must be flocked by tourists from all over the world year-round.

The state or Jammu and Kashmir is

Figure 1
Tourist Arrival in Jammu and Kashmir



Source: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/india/resident-visits-by-states/visitor-arrivals-local-jammu--kashmir>

divided into three zones viz Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, but the most beautiful of all the three is Kashmir known as paradise on earth. The valley of Kashmir is nestled securely at an average height of about 6000 feet above the sea level in the mighty Himalayan ranges with snow covered lofty peaks. This oval shaped vessel of Kashmir spreading approximately 8 miles in length and 25 miles in breadth and is filled with magnificent scenery at each and every inch.

Kashmir consists of numerous ethnic and cultural groups. Kashmiris are early immigrants from India. Traces of Aryans in India are found in Kashmir which explains the existence of people from olden days. Kashmiris made remarkable contribution to Sanskrit literature, mystical poetry, the Shiva philosophy, grammar and sciences. Thus, the intellectual capabilities of Kashmir are well established. Blend of various cultures is found among Kashmiris as they had contract with Roman, Greek and Persian civilizations. Jammu and Kashmir is a state now. PM Modi has done a lot to rehabilitate Jammu and Kashmir as a insurgency free state. Jammu and Kashmir state comprises three main areas- Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Before British rule Ranbir Singh's grandson Hari Singh ruled the state as king.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the effect of terror attacks on tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

- To study the suggestive areas to enhance the tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

3. TOURISM AND FRESH TERROR ATTACKS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The eye-catching natural beauty of the land and the coziness of season have created a positive impact on the tourist industry. Therefore, tourists flocked this land of unending glory since time immortal. Unfortunately, the outbreak of terror incidents from 1989 toppled tourist inflow towards valley. Kashmir is experiencing a period of relative stability and peace due to greater counter-terrorism operations, surveillance along the borders, and a drop in cross-border infiltration along the Line of Control (LoC). Despite this trend, there has been a series of targeted killings in the region in recent months. These killings demonstrate that insurgents may have intelligence, including full information of the area, as well as the operations and daily routines of their targets. There have also been several clashes between the security forces and militants in the valley. An operation by security forces in January, 2021 resulted in the death of five militants, including Zahid Wani, a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) leader responsible for many attacks in the valley.

The latest incidents indicate that violence is resurfacing through a new trend of localization and indigenization of terror in the

Figure 2
Map of Jammu and Kashmir



Source: <https://i0.wp.com/www.newsintervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/JK-Map-4.jpg?fit=1070%2C776&ssl=1>

region. The August 2019 abrogation of Jammu & Kashmir's (J&K) special constitutional status under Article 370, which had limited the Indian parliament's power to make laws for the state, prompted militant groups in Kashmir to change their tactics, including recruiting "hybrid militants" who are difficult to identify.

History has indicated that relative stability and peace is usually short-lived and temporary in the Kashmir valley. The Indian government's policies will continue to increase resentment among Kashmiris and encourage them to join the ranks of militant groups. Minor incidents can trigger mass protests despite the risk of a heavy crackdown by security forces. Kashmiris are likely to continue prioritizing their political ambitions over socio-economic incentives and promises of good governance. Peace building, education, and social cohesion campaigns are unlikely to be regarded as goodwill gestures. Social media warfare is also likely to continue as militant groups leverage these platforms to spread their propaganda and exploit local grievances. A series of demonstrations, strikes and attacks on Indian government began the Kashmir insurgency which during the 1990's escalated into the most important internal security issue in Kashmir. Such a feeling of insecurity wrapped the whole valley with fear.

Foreign, as well as domestic travelers are

worried about the current situation in Srinagar for tourists. Fearing unrest in Kashmir valley blocking internet services and social media sites and imposing of curfew have created hard times for tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir.

During the turmoil it is not only the expensive and valuable lives that have been lost but it has also affected the economic condition of Kashmir very badly. Reluctance of businessmen to set up business and decline in the number of tourist count has very drastically affected the economy of the Jammu and Kashmir. During the Pre-militancy era and favorite destination was the beautiful Kashmir valley, but with the eruption of violence the tourist lands were deserted but now the people visit to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine and Amarnath increased. From last few years Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed increase in number of the tourists in Jammu region and to Leh in Ladakh, though the number of tourists to Srinagar has increased with the launch of the peace process, their specific targeting by the militants have led to decline in their numbers. The local people bemoan this tragedy befalling on them. In Kashmir economy has been completely shattered due to ongoing turmoil. While earlier thousands of outsiders thronged to the city, now only hundreds visit the valley.

4. SUGGESTIVE MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE TOURISM IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Similar to the North Eastern region, the government is committed to the development and promotion of tourism in the Jammu & Kashmir. All efforts are made to ensure that these regions emerge as the leading tourism for domestic and international visitors in the country. Following are suggestive areas-

- a) Government should identify new tourist destinations so that those who had visited once Kashmir will not get bored to see the old destinations again.
- b) Government should organize the tourist fair and festivals in collaboration with the tourist departments of the J&K so that awareness regarding tourism in J&K can be developed by maintaining websites, advertising in print and electronic media.
- c) The Government of J&K in collaboration

with department of tourism should put hoardings in other states of India highlighting the beautiful scenes of valley.

d) The tourist destinations should be demilitarized.

e) The Tourism department should check bus fares and other needs of tourists, so that they may not get deceived by the private companies etc.

f) The tourism department should have its own protection force, which may check the quality of the food, transport, hotels, rides etc.

g) Tourists should be provided pamphlets and maps regarding the tourist destination of J&K.

h) Tourist guides should be made available to the Tourists on feasible rates.

i) Cultural programs should be held at the respective tourist destinations.

5. CONCLUSION

The tourism industry of India is economically important and growing rapidly.

India is a country known for its lavish treatment to all visitors, no matter where they come from. India's tourism industry now brings billions of dollars into the economy each year. The growth in the tourism industry is due to the rise in the arrival of more and more foreign tourists and the increase in the number of domestic tourists, Jammu and Kashmir is a land of such strategic location with rare amalgamation of positive aspects of scenic beauty and splendid seasons which must be flocked by tourists all over the world year around.

This way, Jammu and Kashmir have great tourism potential, if terrorism is abolished completely and peace is established there. Tourists are reluctant and afraid of turmoil and disturbances. This led all tourism activities to a halt. The study confirms that killings have deep impact on tourism. Government should take suggestive measures to boost tourism in the areas. ●

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