

Political Instability and Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir: A Comparative Analysis of Kashmir and Ladakh Region

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Abstract: Kashmir is basically an agro based economy, tourism can be the right engine for its growth and development. Also in order to fight the negative prone image of Kashmir valley one has to study first the impacts of conflicts and insurgencies on the tourism and to find out the ways in which tourism can help in order to curb the political instability and to bridge the gap between Kashmir and outer world. Since 1990s political instability has lead to huge diversion of resources from productive sectors to the maintenance of law and order problems. The violent situation of the state since 1989 has threatened the sustainability of tourism industry. Political instability on a major level of the state have been a major limitation to its development and progress levels. Tourism industry which is directly related to the issue cannot detach itself from these forces. The present paper examines the sequential changes in the flow pattern of tourists to the valley and also analyses the tourist nodes of the state which have witnessed phenomenal increase and decrease in tourist arrivals during turmoil period.

Keywords: Political Instability, Tourism, Economy, Sustainability, Insurgency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, Jammu & Kashmir was among the most popular travel destinations of India due to its natural beauty and being “a seat of great learning”. The state with its varied and diversified geographic, agro-climate and topographic features poses peculiar and unique problems of development. The tourism tag has always placed the State of J&K in the limelight at the national as well as international levels. However, efforts are being made to increase the tourist inflow in the state as with more the arrival of tourists, more economic activity gets generated which has multiplier effect on the income levels of the large chunk of population dependent on this sector (economic survey, 2013-2014) but with the increase of violence the number of tourists dramatically decreased which caused serious problems for the locals who heavily depended on the revenues of tourism.

Suicide bombings, attacks by militant groups and open fire by security forces are the main reasons for hostility (Aijaz, 2014). When we look from the psychological point of view of the decision making process of travelers, the decline of tourist arrivals is a logical consequence of rising terrorist activities since people choose their holiday destination according to the most benefits and least costs, i.e. risks (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). So taking the context further the impact of the conflict has not only taken the thousand and lakhs of lives it has also frozen the economic development of the state. The state which is very rich in all the natural resources and other things is lagging very much on their economic front. The main reason is the political instability. So in this study we have tried to identify the impact of political

instability on the tourism of state of Jammu and Kashmir and hence on economy.

Tourism is not only a growth engine but also an export growth engine and employment generator. The sector has a capacity to create large scale employment both direct and indirect, for diverse sections of society from the most specialized to unspecialized work force. Jammu and Kashmir has a great promise for development of tourism in view of its inherent potential.

1. Importance of Tourism in the State's Economy:

- Great potential for employment generation, even for people without specialized skills.
- Potential for Geographical Spread of Employment Opportunities
- Provides direct employment to various service providers (Guides, Ponywallas, Sledgewallas, Travel Agents; Jobs in Hotels/Houseboats).
- Provides impetus to allied sectors like Handicrafts, Handlooms & Transport
- Income augmentation of people in vicinity of established resorts (Gulmarg,
- Pahalgam, Sonamarg) during peak tourist seasons.
- Capacity to provide Jobs in the unorganized sector.
- Incentive to preserve Cultural and Heritage assets (economic survey 2013-2014)

Political instability set back to venture both domestic and foreign which in turn lead to exploitation of vast natural resources for which the state of Jammu and Kashmir is known for. Political instability also directed the local investment into non development expenditure rather than into productive sectors. Political instability, since 1990s has lead to huge diversion of resources from productive sectors to the maintenance of law and order problems. Regrettably there is insufficient attention paid by the state-run government into tourism sector of the State. It is now widely acknowledged fact that it is the responsibility of the state to provide essential infrastructure and other facilities for tourism development (Bilal & Raja, 2015).

During the Pre-militancy era the favorite destination was the beautiful Kashmir valley even for the Indian cinema, but with the eruption of violence the tourist lands were deserted and also the people who used to visit Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine and Amarnath also diminished. The state has lost billions of dollars in tourism revenue. It is estimated that state lost 27 million tourists from 1989 to 2002 leading to tourism revenue loss of US \$3.6 billion, their specific targeting by the militants have led to decline in their numbers. The count of the tourists has fallen from millions in 1980's to thousands during the peak of the turmoil. Violence has also directly affected other important sources of livelihood such as

agriculture, horticulture, and the handicraft industry. These sectors have become the survival mechanisms for the local people but are not thriving. From last few years Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed increase in number of the tourists to Vaishno Devi shrine, in Jammu region and to Leh in Ladakh. Nonetheless the number of tourists to Srinagar has increased with the introduction of the peace process (Aijaz, 2015). The peace process was started in 2004 as an attempt to settle that question of ownership over Kashmir. The peace process was a slow moving one but gave some hope to tourism sector as the number of tourists visiting the state started picking up since its initiation (Bilal & Raja, 2015).

A. Study Area

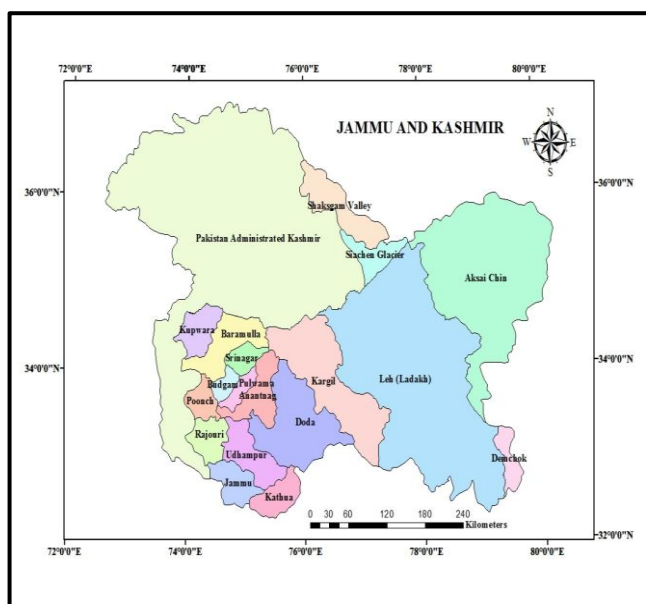


Figure 1: Location of Jammu and Kashmir in India, map by habib.u, in his unpublished thesis on socio economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu & Kashmir, located in the extreme north of the country, is situated between $32^{\circ}17'$ and $37^{\circ}05'$ N latitudes and $72^{\circ}31'$ and $80^{\circ}20'$ E longitudes (J&K Forest Department, 2014). It is bounded on the north by China, on the east by Tibet, on the south by Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and on the west by Pakistan. Geographically, this state is divided into four zones – the mountainous and semi-mountainous plain known as Kandi belt, hills including Siwalik ranges, mountains of Kashmir valley and Pir Panjal range, and Tibetan tract of Ladakh and Kargil. The area of this largest princely state in British India was 222,797 Sq.kms (Raina, 1981). Later on with the successive illegal occupations of Pakistan and China the state has lost around 55 percent of its area to these two countries and the area of Jammu and Kashmir now remains only 101,387 Sq.kms.

Pakistan attacked the State in October 1947. Indian strengths pushed Pakistan back yet in 1949 when a truce line was drawn around 33% of the territory i.e. 789,32 sq.kms i.e. the entire of Gilgit, Mirpur, Kotli and a piece of Poonch came into the ownership of Pakistan, deserting just 143,300 sq.kms on the Indian side. Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua and Anantnag regions stayed unaffected. Again in 1962 China possessed around 64000 sq.kms in Ladakh known as Aksai Chin. Pakistan again made an unlawful ownership over Chhamb, Deva, Chakla and Manawar picking up a zone of 3999 sq.kms. Thus, the total area left on the Indian side is about 12850 sq.kms. (Census of India, 2001), excluding area under the occupation of Pakistan & China, accounting for 3.20% of total

area of the country, makes it the 11th largest state in the country.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the past decade there has been an increased amount of research on the phenomenon of political upheaval as it pertains to society. Despite the increase in research, limited research has been done on the impact of political upheaval on the tourism of Kashmir. The purpose of this research was to analyze the phenomenon of political upheaval and its impact on the tourism industry of Kashmir valley. This literature review will define political instability, its sub-branches like terrorism, link its effect on tourism industry and describe political and government reaction to the instability it is estimated that almost 50-60% of total population of J&K is directly and/or indirectly engaged in tourism related activities. Tourism contributes about 15% to State Gross Domestic Product. Despite being a leading industry of J&K, concrete steps of its economic impact on state are still lacking (Mir, 2014), tourists are attracted to destinations because of the return they get on the expenditure they do in the tourist place, these could be satisfaction of psychological needs like appropriate, safe environment, affordable accommodation etc. so apart from developing physical tourism infrastructure, political instability must be cultivated as an important factor in influencing tourism. Secondly infrastructural growth is necessary for renewal of state tourism (Lone, Rather & Jain 2013), external factors related to terrorism such as media reports about the incidents, tourism authorized advisories, the recovery campaign and so on have influence on tourists perception of the affected destinations. The correlation between tourism and terrorism is undeniable in the modern era due to the strength of the industry and the fact that tourist sites are an ideal target place for terrorist attacks in order to cause large amounts of economic and social disruption. During period of turmoil all the tourist resorts were in a worst condition also the principal concern with the government was the maintenance of law and order rather than taking care of resorts. He found that the state has been lagging behind most of the states of the union of India in regards to the growth of NSDP at current prices (Ranga & Pradhan, 2014). The turmoil has put a negative sign on the state, as high risk is involved in visiting, no tourist was ready to visit the state. The youth was frustrated due to unemployment, income earning hand were putting guns for Azadi and nowhere there was a bit for prosperity (Hussain & Bhat, 2012). In this study we have tried to identify the impact of the turmoil on the tourism sector and overall economy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Objectives

1. To study the total tourist flow since the beginning of political instability in the Kashmir and Ladakh region.
2. To examine the impact of political instability on the tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir state and hence on economy.
3. To study the pattern of foreign exchange earnings during the period of instability.
4. To provide suggestions for full exploitation and development of Tourism Industry in Jammu and Kashmir.

III. METHODOLOGY

In the present study mostly secondary data have been used. Secondary data have been collected from various interim and annual reports presented to The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India. In addition to this, data have also been

collected from various journals, articles and newspaper archives. The research is also based on the referred sources – published, unpublished and electronic.

IV. DISCUSSION

Effects of instability on human lives

The below data provides a holistic view of political instability that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is suffering from, the state started losing its peace to the instability and conflict in 1989 and in 1990 the situation of the state became grimmer.

In 1990 there were around 3905 military incidents in which 862 civilians, 123 security forces and 183 militants were killed. In 1992 the state witnessed 4971 such incidents leaving around 1909 casualties and a huge loss to the property and economy of the state was paralysed. Similarly the graph of human casualties including civilians, security forces as well as militants kept on growing upwards but with a truce line formed by then prime minister of India Mr. Atal Bihari vajpayee and Pakistan's Nawaz Shareef the situation started to stabilize until 2002 when both India and Pakistan were involved in battle of Kargil.

Since the war of Kargil the situation of turmoil in Kashmir region got better with time and now a days again the tourists are flocking towards the valley in record numbers.

Table 1: Casualties in Jammu and Kashmir from 1990-2010

Year	Military incidents	Civilians killed	Security forces killed	Militants killed
1990	3905	862	123	183
1992	4971	859	177	873
1994	4484	1012	236	1651
1996	4424	1333	376	1149
1998	2940	967	339	1045
2000	3091	942	638	1520
2002	4038	1050	539	1707
2004	2565	733	330	976
2006	1667	410	182	591
2008	708	91	79	369
2010	488	47	69	232

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs Govt. of India

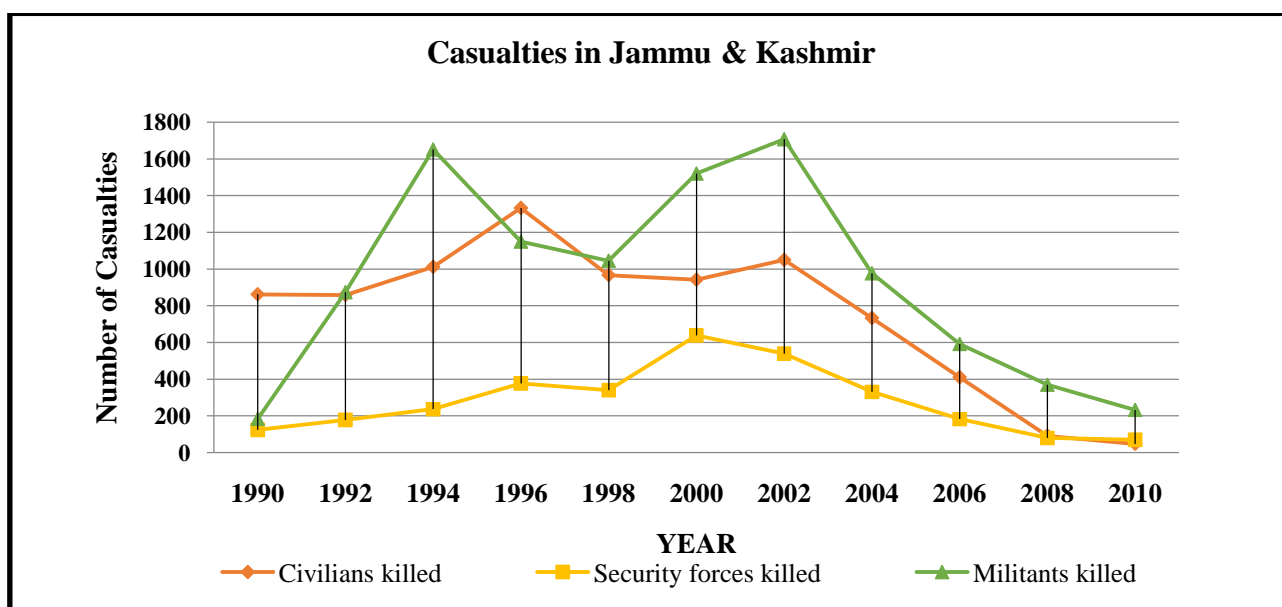


Figure 2: Showing the comparison of casualties in Jammu and Kashmir

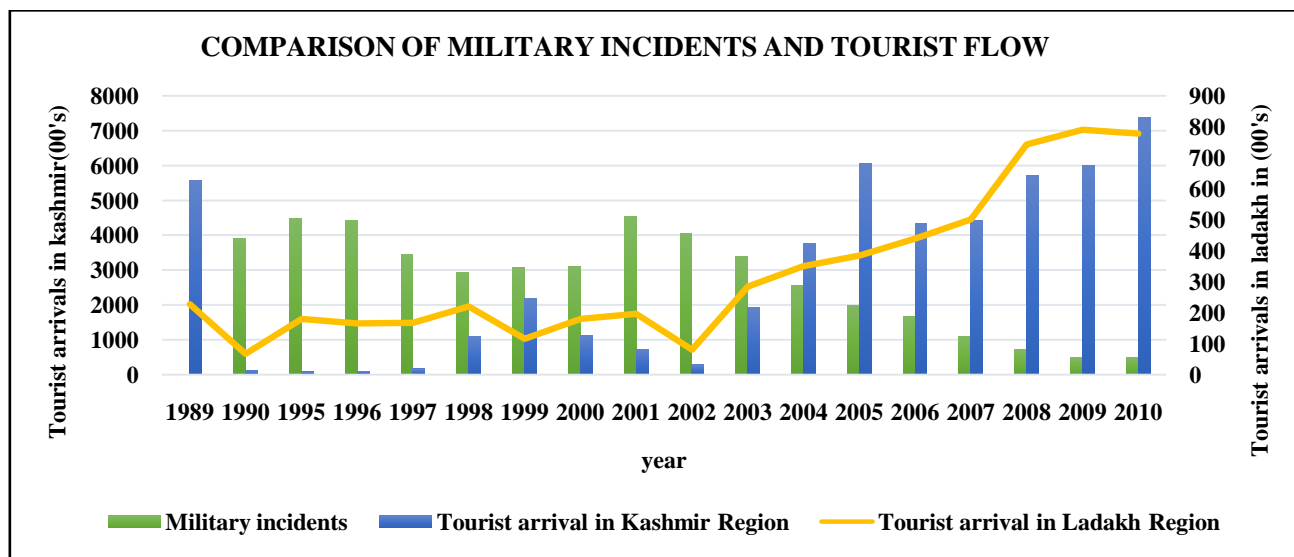


Figure 3: Impact of instability on tourist flow to Kashmir Valley

V. RESULT

Tourism as one of the main industries in the Kashmir valley has suffered tremendously due to violent activities. It has declined substantially since late 1980s when military gained momentum. It is estimated that state lost 29 million tourists from 1989-2002 leading to tourism revenue loss of about \$ 3.6 billion. There were 4477 military incidents in 1995 which declined to 488 in 2010, although the number has decreased during the end of first decade of twenty first century but the nature of instability shifted from militant incident to civil unrest therefore many civilians lost their lives. Before 1990, tourism was the second main driving engine of the economy of Kashmir. The tourist flow in the year 1989 was 557977 but during 1990-1995 when the instability was on its peak it dropped to 8520. The major set-back to the tourist flow has affected the economic stability of the state in general and pressed the employment opportunities. Suddenly the tourist flow reached to 109883 in 1998 as compared to 8520 in 1995 and the number went up to 217292 in the next year. The reason for the increase in the number of tourists after 1998 was that the socio-political conditions were better now as compared to the past years.

It was during this period that in the year (1996-97) elected government was established in the state after a gap of six years. And it is after the formation of a popular government that the situation began to improve considerably and tourism related activities started to pick-up speed again. The new government started the process of reconstruction and refurbishing infrastructure systems, on a huge scale, that had been severely damaged during the years (1989-97), because of armed struggle. As far as tourism in Ladakh is concerned, during the 1990's, tourism in Leh (Ladakh) started developing as an industry, with an enlarged level of organization (Jina, 1994). The tourist arrivals to Ladakh was 6738 in 1990 which increased to 77800 in 2010 (Table 2). However it was time when Kashmir valley was under severe political instability with remarkably high number of casualties. Though Ladakh being the part of Jammu and Kashmir State, but fortunate enough because of peace in the area and actually benefited by showing phenomenal increase in tourist arrivals with the onset of militancy in Kashmir valley.

Table 2: Arrival of tourists with reference to military incidents in Jammu and Kashmir

Year	Military incidents	Tourist arrival in Kashmir Region	Tourist arrival in Ladakh Region
1989	N.A	557977	22748
1990	3905	10722	6738
1995	4477	8520	17985
1996	4424	9967	16573
1997	3437	16131	16801
1998	2940	109883	22030
1999	3073	217292	11574
2000	3091	111912	18042
2001	4536	72591	19699
2002	4038	27356	8079

2003	3401	191164	28402
2004	2565	376729	35091
2005	1990	605382	38446
2006	1667	432888	43900
2007	1092	441840	50185
2008	708	572661	74334
2009	499	601256	79087
2010	488	736511	77800

Source: Department of Tourism Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Tourism industry in Kashmir is facing other more problems like Inadequate capacity, road connectivity between Srinagar and Jammu, costly travel, poor organization i.e. fragmented market, lack of supportive infrastructure, rough terrain and lack of infrastructure has been an endless hurdle, destruction to the physical infrastructure due to militancy and the instabilities have also eroded the intellectual capital, intervals in security and safety, irregular development and political instability. Political instability set back to investment both national and foreign investments which in turn lead to exploitation of huge natural resources for which the state of Jammu and Kashmir is known for. Political instability also channeled the local investment into non development expenditure rather than into productive sectors. Political instability, since 1990s has led to huge diversion of resources from productive sectors to the conservation of law and order problems. Unfortunately there is insufficient attention paid by the state government to tourism sector of the State (Bilal & Nasir, 2015).

Table 3: Foreign Exchange Earnings through Tourism in the State (1979-2000)

Year	Earnings in crores	Year	Earnings in crores
1979	5.41	1990	2.29
1980	4.47	1991	2.42
1981	11.27	1992	5.05
1982	11.04	1993	4.66
1983	10.59	1994	5.66
1984	9.39	1995	5.21
1985	9.79	1996	4.32
1986	20.81	1997	4.1
1987	23.81	1998	7.68
1988	26.96	1999	12.84
1989	30.56	2000	5.68

Source: 1. Tantary, M.Y, "Tourism Potential and Declining Tourism Industry in Kashmir Valley" an Unpublished thesis in the Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Dec-2004 2. Mirza, N.A, "Management of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir" Dilpreet Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000, P. 97.

CONCLUSION

Serenity in the destination area determines the tourist flow, people usually avoid the areas which have negative image

as far as political conditions are concerned. So political stability is must for promoting tourism. Tourism cannot flourish in warfare and conflict, with the result new areas within the state like Ladakh with peaceful environment attracted tourists. The existence of incidents like instability and insurgency in destinations like Kashmir valley, have direct bearing with tourist arrivals. The economy of the state has been badly affected with militancy because no foreign and private investment has taken place over the years (Shah & Wani, 2014). Tourism must be used as a bridge to create links between Kashmiris and rest of India. The state and its people could be helped at this stage by encouraging visitors to go to Kashmir (Nehru, 1989). It will help to remove alienation of Kashmiris. Visitors can better understand much about the host problem and the host will realise the importance of maintaining peace and security. The importance of tourism, as an instrument of economic development and employment generation, particularly in the remote and backward areas, has been recognized the world over, (Ministry of Tourism, Annual Report 2009-10). This option needs to be understood and adopted especially in Kashmir valley due to its location and potential for tourism.

Limitations of the study

The study has been conducted for the state of Jammu and Kashmir but because of the unavailability of the data of Jammu region the comparison has been done between Ladakh and Kashmir region only, and when we look at the condition of Ladakh and Kashmir we understand that political instability is mostly confined to the Kashmir province only. Further study can make an elaborative differentiation between the effects on the three provinces of Jammu and Kashmir to make it more specific. Also we have taken overall economic condition into consideration we can also look into different sectors like tourism industrial growth, handicraft industry etc. Also the graph of foreign exchange could have been better but because of the unavailability of the data of foreign exchange earnings after the year 2000 made the study slightly less effective.

Suggestions

1. Political stability is very important as the tourists should not feel any trust deficit while visiting to the tourist destinations of the state. Government policies should be made to promote tourism in a better way.
2. Militancy should be curbed so that tourists feel free from attacks and incidents
3. Need to fight the negative violence prone image of the state by creating massive awareness about the recent tourist influx. A website should be developed wherein people who visited the valley can share their joyous experiences with those who would like to come. In addition to this print and electronic media should be involved.

4. The absence of internationally-accepted services standards, our tourism is degenerating into a highly low end and low quality economic quality. So address would on internationally-accepted services standards
5. There should be equitable development of tourist destinations of the all the regions of the state so that the state will attract more and more tourists, because tourism sector plays a very important role in economy and job generation in the state.

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