PILGRIMAGE TOURISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI SHRINE, KATRA-J&K

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ABSTRACT

Globally Jammu and Kashmir, also known as the “Paradise on Earth,” is famous for its tourism throughout the world, besides, its enchanting natural beauty, J&K is also famous for ‘Pilgrimage Tourism’ as the state is full of world famous shrines for all religions which attract millions of domestic and overseas pilgrims every year. Consequently, the growth of pilgrimage tourism in J&K has been improved astonishingly. The rapid growth in the inflow of pilgrims helps a lot in the sustainable development of the region by generating socio-economic benefits such as promotion of national integration and international understanding, increasing educational facilities, creation of employment opportunities, increasing domestic incomes and effective demand, opening up new growth centers and removal of regional disparities. Further, if managed properly it could also prove beneficial for environmental conservation and protection by financing for the protection and increasing the economic importance of the natural area as well as by raising the awareness of environmental values among visitors and the local population, so that these natural resources could be preserved for the future generations too. On the other hand, being a double edged sword the unchecked and unregulated rapid growth of pilgrimage tourism also costs a huge in the form of ecological and environmental decimation, degradation local resources, and other socio-cultural and economic problems. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between the growth of pilgrimage tourism and other types of tourism and the growth of pilgrimage tourism contributes significantly to the sustainable development of the host population.

Keywords: Tourism, Environment, Sustainable Development, Economy, Pilgrimage Tourism, Conservation, Growth.

Introduction

“Harnessing tourism's benefits will be critical to achieving the sustainable development goals and implementing the post-2015 development agenda”.

(UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon on World Tourism Day 2014)

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is considered as the powerful magnet for tourists, as it cater to the needs of every type of tourist. It has world famous pilgrimage sites e.g. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji and Amarnath ji Shrine which attracts a large number of pilgrims every year. The increase in tourist arrivals in J&K is considered as blessing, as this increases the revenue and employment opportunities etc for local population. Pilgrimage travel and tourism in Jammu and Kashmir is not a new phenomenon, rather, it have been important social activities of human beings from ancient times, further, it is one of the earliest and most important forms of tourism in the state. Jammu and Kashmir has a composite culture and there is a harmonious blend of art, religion and philosophy, as the major religions of the world like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Sikhism etc. has co-existed in J&K since hundreds of years (Bhat, 2013). As a result, the state is full of pilgrimage destinations for almost all the major religions of the world such as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists, and most of these shrines are located in between the scenic surroundings of great Himalayas. In this way, the tourists get a chance not only to explore the spectacular landscapes of this paradise but also have the opportunity of worshipping at the respective religious shrines and this is the main aspect which is responsible for attracting millions of tourists every year, which has ultimately led to a boom in the state’s tourism industry.

Tourism in J&K is considered as backbone of the State’s economy as Tourism industry is a major contributor it accounts for around 6.98% of state’s GDP. Tourism has great potential to stimulate the local economy by providing significant economic multiplier effects such as, generating employment both direct and indirect even for the people lacking specialized skills e.g., Tourist Guides, Travel Agents, Ponywallas, Jobs in Hotels, street/roadside vendors and Houseboats etc.
The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at constant (2011-12) prices for the year 2017-18 is estimated at Rs. 109136.52 crore, as against the estimate of Rs 100597.57 crore for 2016-17, indicating growth of 8.49 per cent during 2017-18. At current prices, GSDP for 2017-18 is estimated to be Rs 140886.76 crore as against the estimate of Rs. 126230.91 crore for 2016-17, showing an increase of 11.61 per cent during the year. If we look at the sectoral composition of the state income, it has undergone considerable changes over a period of time. Over the last five decades, the share of primary sector has declined steadily from 17.47% in 2011-12 to 16.05% in 2017-18 (Adv. est.). Similarly, the share of secondary sector has also declined from 28.09% in 2011-12 to 27.88% in 2017-18 (advance estimates), while as the contribution of services sector has increased from 54.44% in 2011-12 to 56.07% in 2017-18 (Adv. est).

**Literature Review:**

Batta (2000) in his study has analyzed that owing to the needs of developing nations to generate incomes, such nations are inclined to tourism-related environmental destructions. The challenge therefore is to accomplish the harmony between rapidly growing demands of tourism and environmental conservation (p.77).

Christie (2002) in his paper concluded that Tourism can be a viable and sustainable source of growth and economic diversification and a powerful tool for poverty alleviation in rural and remote areas with few other options for growth.

Motiram (2003) in his study emphasized that no doubt tourism development has demonstrated positive relationship with generation of employment earning foreign exchange, alleviation of poverty etc but the haphazard development of mass tourism has resulted in spoiling the fragile environment of mountain resorts, landscapes, parks, sanctuaries, archaeological sites and natural habitats etc in many parts of the destination area (p. 129).

World Tourism Organization (2004), "The management of tourism affects the conditions of destinations and host communities, and more broadly, the futures of ecosystems, regions and nations. Informed decisions at all scales are needed so that tourism can be a positive contributor to sustainable development in keeping with its role as a significant source of both benefits and potential stresses" (p. 7).

Ramjit (2014) in his study analyzed that tourism if properly developed could bring great benefits to the region. He also highlighted that tourism can also help as an important instrument for sustainable human development(p.1-16)

UNWTO Annual report (2017), highlighted that “maximizing the social and economic benefits of tourism, while minimizing any negative impacts on host communities and the environment, should remain at the forefront of the sector’s efforts in the years to come, with policy-makers, companies and travellers all contributing to this overarching and shared objective”.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To analyse the potential of Pilgrimage Tourism in J&K.
2. To analyse the role of Pilgrimage Tourism for achieving sustainable development in the study area.

**Hypothesis**

H0: There is no significant relationship between growth of Pilgrimage tourism and general tourism.

**Study Area:**

The study area of researchers was Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Katra. The Holy town Katra, comes under the jurisdiction of Reasi district and is also the base camp for the yatra to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine and it is about 55km from the Jammu city, the winter capital of the state J&K.

**Research Methodology:**

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The study has been conducted on the basis of both primary as well as secondary data. For the primary data researchers prepared a questionnaire on the basis of the blueprint of given by UNWTO under the heading of "Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals" and conducted primary survey in the study area. Total 40 households were taken as a sample, keeping in view various constrains e.g. time, Money and other resources. Personal interviews were conducted for gathering information. Further, the simple random sampling technique was used in present study. The survey was conducted during the months June-July of 2018. The secondary data was collected from various sources viz., United Nations World Tourism Organisation, World Travel and Tourism Council, Ministry of Tourism-GOI, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation and Directorate of
Tourism (Jammu/Kashmir), books, journals, newspapers, economic survey of Jammu and Kashmir, and other online sources. Various theses, article and online resource have been referred and downloaded from ugc@inflabanet and other open access journals and magazines.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:**

**A) Potential of Pilgrimage Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir:**

1) Tourist inflow to Jammu and Kashmir

The table 1.1 given below is depicting the year wise tourist arrivals (domestic as well as foreign) in J&K from the year 1988 to 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kashmir Valley</th>
<th>Jammu</th>
<th>Ladakh</th>
<th>Total State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amarnathji Domestic/Foreign</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mata Vaishno Devi Ji Domestic/Foreign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>96055</td>
<td>722035</td>
<td>818090</td>
<td>1992595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>400000</td>
<td>377000</td>
<td>777000</td>
<td>6100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>388000</td>
<td>605382</td>
<td>993382</td>
<td>6215998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>265000</td>
<td>432888</td>
<td>697888</td>
<td>722318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>213565</td>
<td>441840</td>
<td>655405</td>
<td>722318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>498075</td>
<td>572100</td>
<td>1070175</td>
<td>72000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>373419</td>
<td>601250</td>
<td>974669</td>
<td>8235064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>458046</td>
<td>736448</td>
<td>1194494</td>
<td>787573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>634000</td>
<td>131432</td>
<td>1948432</td>
<td>179204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>621000</td>
<td>1308765</td>
<td>1929765</td>
<td>178750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>353969</td>
<td>1171130</td>
<td>1525099</td>
<td>9287871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>372909</td>
<td>1167618</td>
<td>1540527</td>
<td>7803193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>352771</td>
<td>927815</td>
<td>1280586</td>
<td>776604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>220490</td>
<td>1211230</td>
<td>1431720</td>
<td>6823540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Survey 2009-10, 2015-16

The analysis of table 1.1 shows that there is a significant increase in the number of tourist up to 2012, which reflects the increasing demand for tourism related activities. The table also highlights that there is tremendous increase in tourist arrivals from the year 1988 to 2012, but as tourism is also highly sensitive to the issues like the law and order, natural calamities, seasonal variations as a result after 2012 there is continuously decreasing trends in tourist arrivals and this decrease is because of the political disturbances in the state which is well known issue globally.

**Graph 2.1: Tourist arrivals in Jammu, Kashmir Valley, Ladakh and Total in J&K from 1988 to 2016**

Source: Table 1.1

With the help of Graph 2.1 we can observe that there is a consistent growth of tourist arrivals from 2004 to 2012 except in 2008. The trends of tourist arrival in Jammu are almost same as of the total state which clearly shows that this region and particularly Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine is contributing a lot in the total tourist arrival in J&K. Similar trends were found from Ladakh region, however the contribution of this region to the state is nominal but still it is showing a consistent increase. However, the graph also depicts that there is a great fluctuation in the tourist arrivals in Kashmir it is because of the political instability in...
the valley. Despite of being a well established tourist destination still the contribution of the state in the total tourist arrivals of the country is not satisfactory, as the state does not even fall in top ten in rank among the total states and union territories of the country.

Source: INDIA TOURISM STATISTICS 2016

It is clear from the chart-2.3 that the share of Jammu and Kashmir in foreign tourist visits is also not satisfactory.

Source: Table 1.2

If we look at the trends of tourist arrivals in the state, as shown in the table 1.2 we will come to know that in comparison of other types of tourism, pilgrimage tourism is the main contributor to overall tourist arrivals in the state.

Table 1.2: Percentage share of Pilgrims/Religious Tourists and Others tourist arrivals in J&K.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pilgrims/Religious Tourists Arrivals in J&amp;K</th>
<th>Percentage Share</th>
<th>Others Tourist Arrivals in J&amp;K</th>
<th>Percentage Share</th>
<th>Total State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2088650 Amarnathji + Mata Vaishno Devi Ji</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>746899 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2835549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6500000</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>412000 Other tourists</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6912000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>6639998</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>643828 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7283826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7215573</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>476788 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7692361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7435883</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>492419 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7928302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7074075</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>644100 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7718175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8608483</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>679823 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9288306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9207046</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>812503 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10019549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10749232</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>1493636 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12242868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>11015000</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>1487515 Domestic /Foreign Kashmir Valley + Ladakh</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12502515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that from 2004 to 2010 these two shrines have above 90% share to the total tourist arrivals. Further, after 2010 there is slight decline in total of of these two shrines but still these shrines remains major source of attracting tourists to the state and have 80% and above share. Another important point to notice here is that in case of pilgrimage, it is the share of only two pilgrimage destinations, Vaishno Devi and Amarnathji, but there are number of other major and small and untapped pilgrimage destinations but their contribution is not included here and still it is showing dominant trends in attracting tourists to the state.

B) The Pilgrimage Tourism and sustainable development in J&K:

Tourism and sustainable development:

Tourism, as one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world is increasingly recognized as a vital contributor to job and wealth creation, environmental protection, cultural preservation and poverty alleviation. Hence, a well-designed and managed tourism sector can help preserve the natural and cultural heritage assets upon which it depends, empower host communities, generate trade opportunities, and foster peace and intercultural understanding (UNWTO 2018). Therefore if managed properly tourism could become as a general solution of all the pains and problems for the overall development of less developed region, as tourism industry has a tremendous capacity to generate socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits to the region because this industry has a capability to influence the direction and options for local development. As per Brohman (1996) “community-based tourism development should try to bolster organizations which are expected to help in the host contribution and to empower the social, cultural and economic prosperity regarding the common dominant part”.

From time to time various organizations provided numerous blueprints for the development of tourism on the sustainable bases. As in 2004 the UNWTO released a “Guide Book” entitled “Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations”, which proved to a magical instrument for sustainable tourism on the sustainable bases. From time to time various organizations provided numerous blueprints for the development of tourism on the sustainable bases. As in 2004 the UNWTO released a “Guide Book” entitled “Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations”, which proved to a magical instrument for sustainable tourism development. As per (UNWTO, 2016), tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the goals. In particular, it has been included as targets in Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively. Further, UNWTO has published “Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals” in September 2016, highlighting the ambitious set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals such as:

i. End poverty in all its forms everywhere,
ii. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture,
iii. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,
iv. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,
v. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,
vi. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,
vii. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all,
viii. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all,
ix. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation,
x. Reduce inequality within and among countries,
xi. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,

Source: Source: Economic Survey 2009-10, 2015-16
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

(UNWTO “Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals”, September 2016)

These sustainable development goals and the indicators of sustainable developments could become useful if used in tourism planning and management processes, and could also become effective in creating better and more sustainable decisions. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has immense potential for the sustenance of tourism industry and no doubt pilgrimage tourism has remained an instrument for the development of the state.

Analysis of Primary Data:
It is clear from the table-1.3 that pilgrimage tourism has positively contributed to the employment generation in the study area as 62.50% of the respondents supported that pilgrimage tourism contributes to a large in the employment generation. Almost similar is the case in all other types of variables except climate change where 42.50% of the respondents opted that the contribution of tourism growth to combat climate change is negligible and 32.50% opted for even worse. But we can clearly observe that except the last one, the contribution of pilgrimage tourism growth in all other variables of sustainable development is positive and we can conclude that the growth of pilgrimage tourism contributes significantly to the sustainable development of the host population.

Table-1.3: Distribution of population on the basis of their view regarding growth of pilgrimage tourism and its contribution to sustainable development;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creation of productive Employment</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eradication of Poverty</td>
<td>57.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Equitable quality education</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Increase in PCI</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Eradication of hunger and achievement of food security</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Increase in health facilities</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Increase in Literacy</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>gender equality</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>women empowerment</td>
<td>22.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ensure sustainable consumption</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Improvement in Life Expectancy at birth</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Availability better water and sanitation facilities</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Availability affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Development of Infrastructure</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Reduction in inequality</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Overall Development of the area</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Safe and inclusive human settlements</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Higher social Status</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Higher Quality of life</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Protection and promotion of culture</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Promotes peace</td>
<td>72.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Contributes to combat climate change</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (5*= To a Large Extent, 4*= To a Considerable Extent, 3*= To Some Extent, 2*;-- Negligible, 1*= Not at All)

Principles of sustainable tourism:
Being a double edged sword the unchecked and unregulated rapid growth of tourism also leads to environmental decimation and degradation of local resources. Padilla (2015) argued that tourism is a double-edged sword; it provides resources and promotes sustainable development but it also has a negative impact on the environment.

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development was intended towards the creation of jobs and increase the income, ultimately improving the life condition of the population. However, the perspective of overall development was at the high cost of natural resources and it clearly brought negative ecological and social consequences” (p. 291)

Figure-2.4: The Materials Balance Model

![Materials Balance Model](image)

Source: Briassoulis, 1992, p. 14

**Hypothesis Testing:**

**Table: 1.4: Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pilgrimage Tourism</th>
<th>Other Types of Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.549*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table-1.4 shows that there is a positive relationship between the growth of pilgrimage tourism and other types of tourism. It is clear from the table that the Pearson Correlation is .549* and correlation between growth of pilgrimage tourism and other types of tourism is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Therefore, Null hypothesis is rejected.

**Suggestions:**

1) **Management of Environment:**
   - Ministry of planning and human resources an environment should be responsible for policies, rules and regulations in relation to the environment of these areas and for this they should carryout sound environmental management and planning for the controlled development of tourism as well as recreational and accommodation facilities such as construction of hotels, restaurants, houseboats, parks, roads and event the temporary sheds etc., which can help in avoiding the deterioration of the fragile ecology of the state.
   - Keeping in view the environmental resource of the area, tourism industry should be enforced to adopt eco-friendly practices.
   - Sources and the amount of pollutants in these areas should be identified and efficient measures should be taken to reduce them.
   - Further, promotion of environmental activities should be there in order to encourage the active involvement of host population.

2) **Environmental education and awareness programs:**
   - This could be achieved by making the visitors aware about impacts of their activities and how they can keep it as low as possible.
Further, educating the local population on why protecting the environment around them is essential is equally important.

In addition to policy makers and destination managers, the research also highlights the need for stakeholders to play a more active role in making the host population aware about the importance of environmental protection.

3) Waste management:

The main solution for waste pollution lies in proper management of these wastes and this could be achieved by taking proper care to avoid generation of waste by tourists as well as the host population.

Suitable number of dustbins especially 'Recycling Bins' should be installed at every nook and corner of these tourist spots.

More conservancy staff should be assigned for collection services and proper segregation system of waste should be followed and on that basis waste should be treated properly. Further, centre with technologies that use collected waste materials must be established and steps should be taken for its recycling.

Government should provide more and more subsidy for the products generated from recycled materials this will further encourage socio-economic changes.

Hazardous wastes e.g. hospital waste, should only be disposed within the area designated by the government and there should be complete ban on the use of polythene.

The information regarding wastes should be made easily available and slogans like "reduce, Reuse and Recycle" should be made popular. Furthermore, seminars, conferences, road shows, discussions etc on problems waste disposal should be organized.

4) Sewage and other liquid waste’s Problems:

Sewage and other types of waste tourism facilities and accommodations should be collected through a well managed waste treatment systems based on some scientific standards.

The drainage system should also be improved and steps should also be taken e.g. of septic tanks and construction of bio-toilets in order to avoid the mixing of drainage water and other wastes to the water bodies.

Further, strict laws should also be enforced and license of service providers should be canceled if they fail to perform on the basis of rule and regulations.

5) Deforestation:

Authorities should monitor all development and construction of tourism facilities.

Deforestation and rehabilitation must be avoided and native trees and shrubs should be conserved.

Further, the efforts should be made for massive afforestation in river catchments for climate Oriented Eco-restoration.

Upcoming projects, having an impact on the green gold of the area must be carried out in a sustainable way without damaging the fragile ecology of the area.

6) Air Pollution and Climate Change:

In order to curb the rising air pollution and climate change, measuring and monitoring of overall tourism based activities which are responsible for the emission of CO₂, SO₂ and other greenhouse gases should be done and efficient measures should also be taken to reduce them.

Intelligent transport system should be established and promotion of renewable energy use such as battery operated transport system, use of alternative fuel instead of liquid fuels, maximize the usage of solar power gadgets, CNG, cooking gas etc should be done at war footing.

CONCLUSION:

The main aim of the study which is described in this research paper is to emphasize how pilgrimage tourism could help in achieving sustainable development of the region. Jammu and Kashmir popularly is one among the most unique destinations of travel lovers and also occupy the status of most favored destination especially for pilgrimage tourism, hence, attracts large number of pilgrims every year, which has ultimately led to a boom in the tourism industry and made significant contribution to achieve the sustainable development in the State by generating revenue, leading to employment opportunities, increasing local involvement as well as infrastructural and socio-economic development.

The study has also revealed that J&K has immense potential for pilgrimage tourism and still there are numerous pilgrimage destinations which are untapped and their potential is yet to be harnessed, hence, if
managed systematically and with effective planning pilgrimage tourism can help immensely in achieving sustainable development in the region. Further, the study concluded that there is a positive relationship between the growth of pilgrimage tourism and other types of tourism and the growth of pilgrimage tourism contributes significantly to the sustainable development of the host population. The paper also highlighted various methods and processes to achieve sustainable development through pilgrimage tourism in the region. However, as is evident from the present study that the impacts of tourism are double edged and the study has also shown the possible impacts of its unchecked and unregulated growth of tourism. The study has navigated and discussed that how the uncontrolled tourism growth causes environmental decimation, ecological disturbances, degradation of local resources and other serious problems. Finally, the discussion concludes with some valuable recommendations to assist the local government, policy makers, researchers, ecologists, environmentalists and different interest groups (practitioners, academics, official, businessmen, tourists, and local community members) in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development of tourism.

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