



JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE POSSESSES POTENTIAL FOR ALL TYPES OF TOURISM IN INDIA.

HILAL AHMAD SHAH

Abstract:

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is famous for its natural scenery all over the world. Because of this natural scenery most of the Kings and spiritual personalities from early times who marched towards this blessed land called it, "heaven on earth" even some made it, their permanent abode or desire to breath their last in this blessed land.

Jammu and Kashmir is a mainstream tourist destination in view of its tourist potential .The state is endowed with world class tourism potential ranging from the historical and natural sites to its scenic beauty.

The Jammu and Kashmir state has the potential for all types of tourism like Leisure tourism, Adventure tourism, Pilgrim tourism, Sports tourism etc. Tourism sustains many sectors like trade, hotels and restaurants, transporters etc. and is considered as a key for economic development.

KEY WORDS:

potential , tourism , economic development , Pilgrim tourism.

INTRODUCTION:-

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is located in the extreme north of India between 32° 15'-37° 05'[N]Latitude to 72° 35'-80° 20'[E]Longitude and occupies a most position in the entire Himalayan region. It's borders touch China in the North- East, Afghanistan in the North-West, Pakistan in the west and states of Punjab and Himachal in the South. [1]

The geographical area of Jammu and Kashmir state comprises 6.93%of the total Indian territory and is the 6th largest state[area wise]of the Country .Out of the total area, Ladakh covers 70%,Jammu 19% and Kashmir 11%. [2]

The most part of the region is Kashmir Valley. It is most strategic region in the entire Himalaya, not only for India but also for the continent of Asia. If Pamir is said to be the roof of the World, Kashmir is the crown of the India. Kashmir Valley is an oval dun of tectonic origin. On a relief map the Valley of Kashmir looks like a white foot print set in the mass of black mountains. [3]

Sheikh Saadi,a famous poet of Persian has said "if there is any paradise on earth it is only the Kashmir Valley." [4]

Cheshma shahi spring , Shalimar bagh, Dal Lake, Jamia Masjid, Shankaracharya temple, Harwan, Nishat bagh, Hazratbal shrine etc. in Srinagar; Phalgam, Sonamarg, Gulmarg, Achabal , Verinag, Mughal garden Bigbehara,Aharbal, Amarnath etc. in the Valley; Vaishno Devi temple, Gulam Shah Badshah Shrine and Patnitop near Jammu etc. are important tourist centers in Jammu and Kashmir. [5]

The Jammu and Kashmir state government is making all out efforts to bring on rails the tourism

Title: JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE POSSESSES POTENTIAL FOR ALL TYPES OF TOURISM IN INDIA.
Source:Review of Research [2249-894X] HILAL AHMAD SHAH yr:2013 vol:2 iss:8

industry again which has received a major jolt due to 1990's insurgency by both development of tourism infrastructure as well as exploiting the available tourism potential to the optimal level. In this direction the following significant measures have been taken. [6]

- (1) 15 new tourism development authorities have been made functional during 2006-07.
- (2) 12 tourism development authorities are being funded under Prime ministers reconstruction plan with the central financial assistance of Rs 20.000 crore each authority for a period of five years.
- (3) 50 villages are being developed as tourist villages under Prime ministers reconstruction plan.
- (4) 3 tourist circuit viz. (1) Jammu –Poonch – Rajuri (2) Bhaderwah-Kishtwar-Simthan-Srinagar (3)Lakhanpur-Bani-Basholi-Sarthal have been sanctioned by ministry of tourism Govt. of India at a total cost of Rs 21.69 crore.
- (5) The tourism department is implementing two incentive package schemes having the twin benefits viz. (1)Reviving tourism in the state and (2)Providing self employment to educated unemployed youth.

Tourist season: - The tourist season in Jammu and Kashmir state is divided into three parts which are as under :- [7]

- (1) SUMMER _____ April to June.
- (2) AUTUMN _____ September to October.
- (3) WINTER _____ December to February.

The Jammu and Kashmir state has the potential for all types of tourism like leisure tourism, adventure tourism, pilgrim tourism, sports tourism which are carefully discussed as under:-

(1) LEISURE TOURISM:-Jammu and Kashmir is full of spots of leisure tourism. The important spots are:-

Pahalgam which is 96 Kms. from Srinagar is world famous leisure tourist resort. Pahalgam actually a shepherd village has now grown into a formidable holiday resort. River Lidder runs through it in a rushing grey green torrent. Sonamarg is located at a distance of 83 Kms. from Srinagar towards Zojila pass is a nature's wonder land extremely salubrious climate better than Phalgam. Gulmarg 57 kms. from Srinagar, a meadow of flowers, is a world famous tourist resort situated at an altitude of 2730 meters. Harwan is a huge Garden lined with flower beds and massive Chinar trees below Srinagar city. This spot is very popular in Srinagar for picnics and excursions. [8]

Verinag is famous for its Spring (In Kashmiri language Nag means spring)out of which flows the River Jehlum.This Spring of deep blue water is full of Trout (boneless) fish. Kokernag which is 27 Kms. from Anantnag is the heart of Bringhi valley, peaceful, invigorating climate, abundance mountains, Cold fresh swell spring waters are its chief characteristics. It has the best drinking water in the valley. The spring bubbles and resembles the shape of chickens paw. It's five camping grounds, Jeweled flower garden of roses, picnic spots, trout fishing pools are other sources of attraction. Dal Lake is a Jewel in the crown of Kashmir and is praised abundantly by the tourists. The Lake is 6x3 Sq. Kms. The Dallake is host to World famous Shikara and House boats. The Lake changes its moods and scenery throughout the day. Wularlake is the largest fresh water lake in Asia having a length of 24 kms. and 10 kms. breadth. This lake is situated between Bandipora and Sopore.[9]

About half a mile on the border of the Dal Lake is the famous Naseem bagh (Garden of Breezes) laid out by Mughal emperor Shahjahan . It contains hundreds of magnificent shady Chinars and is most delightful camping ground .On the north eastern corner is the Shalimar garden built by Mughal emperor Jahangir A.D. 1619. A few hundred yards from Gupta Ganga is the Nishat bagh (pleasure garden).It is situated two miles to the south of the Shalimar bagh. It was laid out by Asif Khan (Mughal queen Noor Jahan's brother). Proceeding 2 1/3 miles from Nishat bagh towards the south, one reaches the Chashmashahi spring, much esteemed for its pure, transparent and cold water. The spring is surround by three terraces small garden, laid out by Ali Mardan Khan by order of Shah Jahan.[10]

Few Kms. from District, Anantnag to the North lies the town of Bijbehara, here on both sides of river Jehlum is the famous Padshahi bagh laid out by Dara Shikoh son of Emperor Shahjahan, in which there are magnificent Chinars. One Chinar is so thick that its trunk measures 54 feet in circumference at the ground level. Achabal garden in District Anantnag is 467 feet long and 45 feet broad. It contains many fruit trees, some very large chinars and the ruins of a Hamam (Turkish bath). The water of the Achabal spring flows through the garden which is traversed by three canals. [11]

Kud, in Jammu region is a popular stop for lunch on the way to Srinagar, it is a hill resort in its own rights. Several visitors prefer to spend their holidays here. Batote, another 12 kms. ahead from

Patnitop is an overnight stop for visitors on the way to Srinagar. Patnitop is yet another hill resort in Jammu region. It has become the nucleus of tourist developments in the area, with a tourist bungalow, tourist huts and some small hotels. Sanasar at 2079 meters, is set in a beautiful valley. The place is a good tourist spot. [12]

(2) Pilgrim tourism:- The state of Jammu and Kashmir is full of pilgrim tourist interest right from the early period. From a very long time through the length and breadth of this state a network of Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist monuments was spread which are as shown below.

Apart from its natural scenery the Kashmir valley has a unique landmark -The Shankaracharya temple. It is located on a sharp hill 1000 feet high overlooking the Srinagar city. On the top of this hill stands a temple dedicated to lord Shiva. It was built in memory of the great Shankaracharya who came to Kashmir from Kerala some 1200 years ago. There is another famous stone temple of A.D. 8th century built by king Lalitaditya of Karkota dynasty at Mattan on the Anantnag-Pahalgam road (popularly K.P.road) known as Martand temple dedicated to the Hindu sun god Bhaskara. Ruins of ancient Buddhist settlement are found above the village Harwan near Shalimar garden. As one ascends the Lidder valley in Pahalgam, the scene is more majestic. Coming down again one passes the sacred cave of Amarnath where Hindu pilgrims came in thousands from all parts of India to have a glimpse of shivalingam formed from iced snow. The cave is situated amidst iced snow at a height of 13,000 feet and is totally cut off from the rest of world during winters. [13]

Srinagar is predominantly Muslim and the town has many mosques of interest for Muslim pilgrims such as the Jamia Masjid built by Sultan Skinder in A.D. 1402 is the largest in Kashmir. Another grand mosque is the pathar masjid (locally known as kane masheed) built by queen Noorjahan, Mughal emperor Jahangir's consort. The Pagoda like Shah Hamdan mosque on the Naseem lake claims to have a relic the sacred hair of prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H). [14]

Leh in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir is a town of Buddhist Monasteries. The most visited monasteries are Shey, Thiksey and Hemis, all spread along the river Indus. The best time to visit the monasteries is early morning or late evenings when the priests are saying their prayers and doing the mystical chanting. The ringing of bells and blowing of long brass horns lend a magical touch. [15]

In Jammu region Vaishno Devi, a famous Hindu shrine attracts millions of pilgrims every year. The devotees take an arduous route twelve km. uphill to reach the shrine to prove their devotion. The trek starts from Katra where buses terminate. But the most outstanding landmark in Jammu region is the famous Ragnath temple built by Maharaja Ranbir Singh. The temple is dedicated to Lord Rama. The temple is only a few minutes' walk from the tourist office of Jammu. [16]

(3) Adventure tourism:-

a. Hiking and trekking:- Hiking and Trekking are the best ways to see the mountains in the valley of Kashmir. There are many numbers of treks. Popular treks are to the Kolhnoi glacier from Pahalgam to several Himalayan lakes from Sonmarg. Trekking in Ladakh is spectacular as it goes through high mountains. However, it is advisable to be fully equipped before setting out and to take a porter and ponies from Leh, Lamayuru or Padam, from where the treks commence. Some famous treks are Leh-Kargil, Kargil-Suru-Zaskar, Kishtwar-Manali and Kargil-Suru-Wardwan-Kishtwar-Pahalgam. [17]

b. Mountaineering:- Kolahaki, Harmukh, Trattakutti, Sunset, Eiger, Sicklemoon, Brahmah I and II, Crooked finger, flat top, Shivaling, Arjuna, Pinnacle, stock kangari, Kangyurray, Gulab kangri etc. are the best spots for mountaineering in the celebrated valley of Kashmir. [18]

(4) Sports tourism:- Gulmarg which is about 50 kms. far away from Srinagar is famous for winter sports especially skiing. It is the cheapest skiing resort in the whole world. Ski-club of India the first of its kind was established here in 1927 during Maharaja Hari Singh's regime. Where as one can golf at the highest eighteen golf courses in the world at Gulmarg. At 3,730 meters the greens are overlooked by Gulmarg's picturesque vistas and different from anything you might have seen before. The chairman golf club here first opened its doors in 1904. Those interested in golf will find that Pahalgam too has a very lovely golf course. [19]

Jammu and Kashmir is also famous for water sports as it passes through Leh, in the Indus river runners congregate to navigate her waters, ice cold, clear and offering infinite variations of occupy all grades of enthusiasts. Options include a half day scenic run for amateurs on low waters from Phey along fast currents through canyons and along spectacular mountain views to Niemo, the confluence of the Zaskar and Karakoram ranges. Water-skiing on Dal and Nigin Lakes is a popular sport and especially for those who are trying it for the first time. [20]

CONCLUSION:-

Jammu and Kashmir state is famous for its natural scenery all over the world. The state is endowed with world class tourism potential ranging from the historical and natural sites to its scenic beauty. The state has the potential for all types of tourism like leisure tourism, adventure tourism, pilgrim tourism, sports tourism etc. Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir is considered as a key for Economic development.

REFERENCES

- (1) Itoo G.N, Bodha Shahbaz; Jammu and Kashmir at a Glance, Haroon Pub., Anantnag, 2004, P-136, 137.
- (2) K. Aseer; Focus on Jammu and Kashmir, Crescent pub., Jammu, 1990, p-27.
- (3) Singh R.N; Geography by National Geographical Society of India, UBS.Pub., Delhi, 1973, P-374.
- (4) Qazi S.A; Geography of India, APH. Pub., Delhi, 2008, P-207.
- (5) Sharma R.N.; Kashmir Autonomy, shubhi pub., Delhi, 1980, P-4, 5.
- (6) Chopra J.K.; General Knowledge, unique pub., Delhi, 2013, P-95.
- (7) Gourav Mahajan; know about Jammu and Kashmir, Vishal Pub., Delhi, 2009, P-47, 48.
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) Koul Pandith Anand ; Geography of Jammu and Kashmir state, Gulshan Pub., Srinagar, 2008, P-155-163.
- (11) Op.cit.P-166-171.
- (12) Seth Pran; INDIA a travelers companion, Sterling Pub., Delhi, 1996, P-206.
- (13) Op.cit. P-198.
- (14) Op.cit. P-196.
- (15) Op.cit.P-202.
- (16) Op.cit.P-205.
- (17) op.cit.p-211.
- (18) Gourav Mahajan; General Knowledge, Vishal Pub., Jammu, 2012, P-69.
- (19) Ibid.
- (20) Ibid.