

A Study of Entrepreneurship Opportunities in the tourism industry of J&K

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Abstract: *Tourism is one of the leading industries in the world that has kept growing significantly over the years. Due to the large-scale nature of this activity, it has a wide impact on various economies in the developed and developing world. There is a growing awareness of the importance of tourism entrepreneurship but little recognition of its specific operating characteristics. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the various facets of entrepreneurship in the tourism industry and discusses its role in developing the tourism sector in J&K. It also provides some feasible suggestions that can help improve the tourism industry in J&K through entrepreneurial efforts.*

Keywords: *Tourism, Entrepreneurship, Economic Development, Sustainable Development*

Introduction:

Tourism is one of the growing industries among all the leading industries globally. Undoubtedly, it impacts a wide variety of economies in both developing and developed countries. The tourism industry is a significant contributor to the country's foreign reserves and provides a wide range of job opportunities and direct income to a large portion of the population (Thommanandru et al., 2021). There is growing awareness of this importance, but somewhat little appreciation of the specific operating characteristics of tourism firms, particularly of tourism entrepreneurship (Shaw & Williams, 1990). Entrepreneurship is a key component of the development process. It can help boost the local economy and provide greater benefits to the population. In addition to being able to create jobs, entrepreneurship can also help improve the quality of life for the local population. Entrepreneurship in the tourism industry is also a vital component of the development process as it can help boost the local economy through the involvement of the local population in formal and informal sectors. This type of involvement can be seen as part of the balanced growth of the local

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population through better economic and social well-being. Schumpeter (1936) describes the entrepreneur as 'the innovator who introduces something new into an economy, and entrepreneurship is essentially a creative activity. Entrepreneurship in the tourism industry can help develop a class of entrepreneurial individuals. Host communities play a vital role in tourism and are responsible for developing the industry and the nation. In developing countries, this can be done through the involvement of local communities in business activities. Thus, it encourages indigenous entrepreneurship through self-employment and small-scale enterprises (Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2002).

Review of literature:

Tourism is a booming industry in India. Any business in the tourism sector will flourish in the long run as the industry shows impressive growth. India has considerable potential to become a globally preferred destination because of its diverse culture, abundant natural resources and innumerable attractive tourist destinations. Tourism is also an important component of socio-economic and political development in many countries and engages people in various activities. Understanding tourists and tourism processes are the first and the most important thing to making appropriate decisions in this regard and empowering the local community (Taskov et al., 2011). Various players (government authorities and private decision makers) associated with tourism consider it important to protect and strengthen the dignity of the local community and tourists, thus, considering sustainability as a guiding principle. An integration of economic development with environmental and social aspects in tourism policy is important (Creaco & Querini, 2003).

Creative industries are becoming more important (Lew et al., 2008) and creativity is an important strategy utilized in placemaking. Cities and regions are striving to increase their attractiveness to the creative industries to become 'creative cities' through their support (Richards, 2020). Including them in tourism development could be an important effort, as they have been used increasingly to promote cities and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness (Lew et al., 2008). Globalization allows many tourists to familiarize themselves with various technologies and knowledge of indigenous arts, culture and forgotten crafts. All this leads to an increasing interest in cities that can provide unique experiences and knowledge that one is not familiar with earlier. In many cases, social networks on the Internet, new technologies and communication between local communities also contribute to the overall increase. Creative placemaking with consideration of resources, creativity and

participation of the local community could be a way toward sustainable development. This highlights the need for entrepreneurial development in the tourism sector. Creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurial growth would lead to the development of the industry and local community, increasing foreign tourists' inflows and foreign exchange earnings, eventually contributing to economic growth. It would create employment opportunities for all sections of the society, create additional jobs in the sector and lead to an all-inclusive development.

J&K has a great opportunity for tourism development, given its intrinsic potential. Tourism is a domestic/ export growth engine and an excellent employment generator. The tourism sector can create both direct and indirect employment on a large scale, for diverse sections of society and from the most specialized to the unspecialized workforce.

Objectives:

- To highlight the importance of entrepreneurship in the tourism sector;
- To discuss the role of tourism entrepreneurship in the development of J&K;
- To provide some feasible for developing the tourism sector through entrepreneurial efforts in J&K.

Methodology:

The data for this study is generated through a review of existing literature on entrepreneurship and tourism and sustainable tourism development through entrepreneurship. In this analytical study, secondary data has been used collected from various books, journals, reports and other online resources. Economic Survey reports of J&K have also been consulted.

Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir:

The tourism sector has always played a significant role in the economic growth of Jammu & Kashmir, including the Ladakh region. It has been a major provider of jobs to many people and generated economic activities in the allied sectors. Tourism is one of the booming sectors of Jammu & Kashmir. It is considered the backbone of the J&K economy. Jammu & Kashmir, with its vast potential and growing economy, has immense potential for the sustenance of the tourism industry. J&K has been one of India's most popular tourist destinations since the time of the great Mughal emperors. Kashmir has vast tourism potential. Many tourist attractions include natural beauty, pilgrimage and heritage sites, culture of the region, handicrafts, food, etc. There are different kinds of tourism in the region, with

adventure tourism at the leading edge of development, catering to aerial, water, and land adventure (Lala & Bhat, 2008). J&K has always been famous for its rich culture and heritage, be it the Mughal gardens of Kashmir, the beautiful forts of Jammu or the attractive ancient architecture in Ladakh. All the regions of J&K are attractive destinations for heritage tourism which can lead to sustainable development.

Kashmir is a destination for ecotourism also. Gannon (1994) defines rural tourism as "The range of activities, amenities and services provided by farmers/ rural people so as to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their businesses". Ecotourism involves travelling to destinations renowned for their natural beauty and culture while keeping a check on ecological balance. Different ecotourism spots in Kashmir experience a good inflow of tourists yearly. These kinds of activities engage different segments of society, leading toward development. Rural communities are also developed by way of rural tourism. Therefore, rural tourism can be an important form of tourism in J&K, contributing to sustainable regional development.

J&K is a destination for pilgrimage tourism also. Various places for tourists to visit in J&K for pilgrimage include Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in Jammu, Amarnath Cave in Pahalgam, and other sacred sites. This kind of tourism benefits almost every sector and helps the region's overall development. Similarly, the area has different types of tourism, like culture, wellness, leisure, sports, etc. Table 1 describes various types of tourism available in J&K.

Types of Tourism	Purpose	Destinations
Adventure tourism	Involves exploration of remote areas and exotic locales and engaging in various activities.	Rafting, Mountain Biking, Skiing, Paragliding, Water skiing, Hot air Ballooning, etc
Pilgrimage tourism	Includes tourism for religious purposes.	Vaishno Devi, Amarnath, Shankaracharya, etc.

<p style="text-align: center;">Ecotourism</p>	<p>Entails travelling to places renowned for their natural beauty and social culture.</p>	<p>Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonmarg, Surinsar lake, Bagh e Bahu, etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Cultural and Heritage tourism</p>	<p>Exploring different destinations to experience and learn about the culture of that region/country; Exploring the history and heritage</p>	<p>Mughal gardens, Hemis Monastery, Hemis Gompa, Awantiswara, Parimahal, akhnoor fort, etc.</p>

Table 1: Various types of Tourism in Jammu & Kashmir

Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Societal Development in J&K:

The tourism industry helps in the development of society as a whole. It has been seen that tourism activities at a particular place are directly related to tourists' arrival. Therefore, the more the inflow, the more the generation of economic activities in the specific region. It, thus, helps in developing the economy of the state. It also leads to infrastructural development. As many opportunities are available in this sector, it is a great source of employment for the communities. Rural development, the central force of economic growth and development, is increasingly associated with entrepreneurship. As already discussed, it provides opportunities for entrepreneurship development. Since there are different kinds of tourism available in J&K, each of its types leads to the development of society in one way or the other. All kinds of tourism activities lead towards sustainable development of the region and the country.

Entrepreneurship is an important channel for sustainable products and processes, and new economic and social ventures are considered solutions to many social and environmental concerns. Small tourism setups are important in contributing to the sustenance of entrepreneurship development which is an important catalyst in technological innovations and the driving force in the dynamic market structure. Entrepreneurial ventures could act as critical forces in restructuring industries and providing national competitive advantage (Hart, 2003; Porter, 1990).

Tourism entrepreneurs can find many opportunities and target regions to pioneer tourism ventures. It is to be recognized that tourism has a range of backward linkages and that its utilization depends on entrepreneurial activity. Tourism involves mostly small enterprises, so the role of tourism entrepreneurs can be very important in developing this sector. Tourism is

among the most important sectors of economic growth; therefore, high involvement of entrepreneurs is needed in formulating sustainable development strategies (Ramjit, 2015).

The Rio Earth Summit (UNCED, 1992) identified Travel & Tourism as one of the most important sectors within an economy that could positively contribute toward achieving sustainable development. However, the challenge is to orient the industry's future growth to minimize its harmful impact on the host communities and the environment. If the industry is not managed well, it can destroy local cultures and have an unfavourable environmental impact. There is a need to focus on maximizing the industry's benefits in terms of jobs, local culture support, and natural environment protection. (Tourism and Sustainable Development: The Global importance of Tourism, 1999). As the sector is an important player in the global economy, it must contribute toward sustainable development.

Opportunities for Entrepreneurs:

- Marketing and promoting Jammu and Kashmir as major tourist destinations is critical for the industry to achieve its potential. Therefore, a greater marketing push is required to project the image of J&K as an attractive destination. It is not only the government tourism departments of J&K responsible for marketing the tourism products. Private organizations need to be set up that will work for marketing and promoting tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. Entrepreneurial involvement is thus very important in marketing Kashmir as an important tourism destination.
- Regarding tourism development, infrastructure is one of the important considerations. Infrastructure in Jammu & Kashmir is not that developed compared to other states/UTs of the country. Therefore, there is an opportunity for entrepreneurs to engage themselves in businesses related to infrastructural development. It can make tourism more attractive and profitable as well. It can also lead to the development of the state.
- There are many unexplored places in Kashmir which have the potential to be beautiful tourist destinations. Entrepreneurs can engage themselves in efforts to help develop such areas into attractive destinations. Small businesses can be set up which can collaborate with other organizations to develop a particular tourist destination.
- During peak season, tourist hubs in Jammu & Kashmir like Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonmarg, etc. have a lot of accommodation issues. Problems occur due to insufficient

accommodation facilities as fewer hotels are available. Therefore, entrepreneurs can start their ventures by setting up hotels, PGs, apartments, etc., for tourists. It can help solve the issues related to accommodation and help entrepreneurs earn profits.

- Women harassment has been found to be an important issue in Indian Tourism. To ensure the safety of women tourists' different agencies could be set up by entrepreneurs for grievance handling and ensuring women's safety.
- Kashmir is a place where tourism activity mostly remains high in summer. Although tourism activities are going on during the winter, the inflow of tourists is not as high as in the summer. Thus, the economic activity gets hampered during the lean period. Entrepreneurs should try to make innovative tourism products that may attract people throughout the year to visit Kashmir. Efforts like winter skiing programmes have been introduced. Still, there need to be some innovative tourism activities that would attract people worldwide during the winter season to increase tourist outflow and boom tourism activities.

Suggestions:

- Jammu and Kashmir has vast potential in the tourism sector. It needs to be properly channelized.
- Discovering new tourist destinations, developing such destinations to offer innovative tourism products or experiences could be an important step. Furthermore, the image of J&K needs to be outwardly projected as a safe tourist destination with secure environment.
- Tourism entrepreneurship must be encouraged in the region to create employment opportunities and improve tourism activities.
- The government needs to identify its role in stimulating entrepreneurial development in the tourism sector; appropriate schemes for providing financial and training assistance to budding entrepreneurs are necessary. Skill development programmes for such entrepreneurs are also important and must be implemented through government interventions. Such entrepreneurs should also be provided with marketing assistance so that they can promote the tourism of Kashmir all over the world.

- Local community involvement may be encouraged through awareness programmes and workshops related to sustainable development and maintenance of tourism in J&K.

Conclusions:

Tourism is one of the most important sectors of the J&K economy. The tourism industry of J&K has a vast potential for business opportunities, paving the way toward entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial opportunities to capitalize on the growth of this industry are very important. Creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurial growth would lead to sustainable tourism in the region, contributing to economic growth and job opportunities. However, the potential of the tourism industry needs to be utilized efficiently and effectively. The participation of the government and local population in this endeavour is necessary. Tourism entrepreneurship would contribute to the region's economy, eventually leading to sustainable development.

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