PRIORITY RANKING OF DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS
PARAMETERS: A TOURISTS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is bestowed with rich natural scenic environment, natural resources, water bodies, pleasant climate, etc. The state offers huge economic and entrepreneurial opportunities for the tourism industry. The state has endeavored to leverage upon its tourism opportunities by developing various tourist destinations across its three regions i.e. Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. However, the geopolitical situation prevailing in the state and changing dynamics of the tourism industry across the world has hindered the growth and development tourism industry in J&K. The tourism entrepreneurs are struggling for the survival and growth. The tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir requires strategic re-orientation for keeping momentum with the changing industry standards at the international and national levels. This requires focusing on the industry with a strategic perspective and analyzing industry through new dimensions like destination attractiveness. Destination attractiveness forms an underlying premise in increasing the performance of the tourism industry, especially in developing nations like India. It is an important element for attracting tourists for the vacations/recreation. The present study attempts to understand the tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir in an inclusive manner and analyze the attractiveness of tourist destination of the Kashmir region. The study has selected Srinagar district of Kashmir region for this purpose. The study is exploratory in nature and based upon the primary data collected through well-structured questionnaire. The results of the present study can be very much beneficial for the stakeholders as well as tourism entrepreneurs for infusing the growth and development in the struggling tourism industry of J&K. The study can also be valuable to the policymakers for drafting a specific policy initiative for ,the tourism industry of J&K.

KEYWORDS: *Destination Attractiveness, Jammu and Kashmir, Tourism, Srinagar*

INTRODUCTION

Jammu & Kashmir state offers a significant prospectus for the various tourism-related economic activities such as adventure tourism, rural tourism, winter tourism, etc. The state is famous across the world for its fine-looking scenic & natural environment. The state is also rich in terms of agriculture and horticulture crops which are famous globally for taste & quality. The territory sector is the major contributor to the state gross domestic product of J&K. The contribution of the territory sector of J&K to the GSDP is around 56.07 per cent in 2017-18 (J&K state digest, 2017-18). Tourism is a dominant segment of the territory sector of J&K. Tourism sector generates around 3000 crores as revenue in the state and provides employment to around 5 lakh people.

The tourism sector has been a thrust area for both state and central government. These schemes mainly focus on the tourism infrastructure development, tourism product development, promotion & marketing, human resource development, skill development, market research and computerization & information technology adoption, etc. During 2016-17, the central government through its "Swadesh Darshan" project approved six circuits for the state of Jammu and Kashmir (refer to table 1). For boosting pilgrimage tourism in the country, the central government launched National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation & Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD). The main thrust area of this scheme is beautification & development of the pilgrimage sites. The state of Jammu & Kashmir offers huge economic opportunities in the pilgrimage tourism. During 2016-17, the central government of India has approved one project "Development at Hazratbal" under PRASHAD scheme for J&K and sanctioned Rs. 42.02 crore for the same, out of which 8.40 crore has been spent. The tourism industry of J&K has been also an important thrust area of Jammu and Kashmir government. The spending of the state government on the development and growth of the tourism industry is given in Table 2. Under Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP), state government has sanctioned Rs 2000 crores for development of tourism in the state. For construction of assets damaged in the devastated floods of 2014, the state government has approved Rs. 100 crores for rebuilding of the damaged infrastructure. The state government is working holistically for sustainable development of tourism industry in the state and has established twenty developmental authorities for speed-up infrastructure development in various tourist destinations, three tourist circuits for developing tourism in the state in an integrated holistic manner, are going to set up fifty tourist's villages, conservation of lake & water bodies etc.

Table 1: Amount Sanctioned and Released under Swadesh Darshan in J&K

S. No	Name of the Circuit	State	Name of the Project	Amount Sectioned (in Crores)	Amount Released (in Crores)
1	Himalayan	J&K	Integrated development of Tourism infrastructure Projects	82.97	37.51
2	Himalayan	J&K	Integrated development of Tourism facilities at Jammu-Rajouri-Shopian-Pulwama	96.38	19.28
3	Himalayan	J&K	Integrated development of Tourism facilities under construction of Assets in lieu of those destroyed in Floods 2014 under Pm development package for J&K	98.7	47.25
4	Himalayan	J&K	Integrated development of Tourism facilities at Manatali-Sudhmahadev-Patnitop	97.82	19.56
5	Himalayan	J&K	Integrated development of Tourism facilities at Anantnag-Kishtwar-Pahalgam-Daksum-Ranjitsagar Dam	96.39	19.28
6	Himalayan	J&K	Integrated development of Tourism facilities at Gulmarg-Baramulla-Kupwar-Leh circuit	96.93	19.38

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India (Indian Tourism Statistics-2017)

J&K government has considered seven "S" important for strategic growth and development of the tourism industry in the state i.e. "S" i.e , **S**wagat (welcome), **S**oochana (information), **S**uvidha (facilitation), **S**uraksha (safety),

Sahyog (Cooperation), **S**amrachana (infrastructure development) and **S**afari (cleanliness). The state with its strategic advantages in terms of virgin areas, diverse destinations, beautiful landscape, pilgrimage destinations, rich ethnicity, handmade crafts, historical places & buildings, quality agriculture & horticulture produce, warmth people etc. attracts tourist across the different states of India as well as outside India.

Table 2: State Government Spending of Tourism Industry of J&K

S. No.	Expenditure		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1	Total expenditure on Tourism sector (capital)	Rs in crore	107.74	117.13	156.04
2	Govt spending on Tourism sector as %age of GSDP		0.11	0.10	0.12
Source: J&K Economic Survey 2017					

During 2016-17, total numbers of tourist visits in India have been observed to be around 1638259237. Out of which domestic travelers stood around 1613551505 and foreign travelers around 24707732 (refer to Table 3). Indian tourism has reported a CAGR of 12.70 per cent during 2001-2016. The domestic segment of Indian tourism industry has grown with a 12.75 per cent CAGR from 2001 to 2016. While as the foreign segment has grown with CAGR of 9.92 per cent during 2001-16. The CAGR growth rates reflect that the tourism industry of India is moving in the right direction, which needs to be strategically strengthened and sustained. The state of India such as Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir etc. provides advantageous scope for creating making India a world's famous tourist destination.

Table 3: Tourists Arrivals in India

Year	Tourist Visits			Annual Growth Rate (In %)	
	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
2001	236469599	5440000	241909599	7.4	-7.8
2002	269598028	5160000	274758028	14	-5.1
2003	309038335	6170000	315208335	14.6	30.1
2004	366267522	8360000	374627522	18.5	24.6
2005	392014270	9950000	401964270	7	19
2006	462321054	11750000	474071054	18	18.1
2007	526564478	13260000	539824478	13.9	12.9
2008	563034107	14380000	577414107	6.9	8.4
2009	668800482	5170000	673970482	18.8	-0.1
2010	740214297	5780000	745994297	11.8	24.6
2011	864532718	19497126	884029844	15.6	8.9
2012	1045047536	18263074	1063310610	20.9	-6.3
2013	1142529465	19951026	1162480491	9.3	9.2
2014	1282801629	22334031	1305135660	12.92	13.12
2015	1431973794	23326163	1455299957	11.6	4.4
2016	1613551505	24707732	1638259237	12.68	5.92
CAGR	**12.75**	**9.92**	**12.7**	**-**	**-**
Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India (Tourism Statistics At A Glance-2017)					

During 2016-17, 9477786 number of tourists visited Jammu & Kashmir state, out of which 9414579 tourists have been domestic and 63207 have been foreign tourists. The tourism industry of J&K reported CAGR of 3.74 per cent during 2001 to 2016 period, with the domestic segment having CAGR of 3.72 per cent and the foreign segment having CAGR of 7.04 per cent during the period (refer to Table 4). Jammu & Kashmir state offers an immense potential for tourism-related economic activities and therefore needs a strategic perspective for leveraging on this strategic industry of the State.

The policymakers and tourism entrepreneur's needs to reassess the linkages and value creation stages of this industry in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The state needs to understand this industry in view of recent developments of the Tourism industry across the world like understanding the tourists perspective related to the destination attractiveness, etc. The present study makes an attempt to understand the destination attractiveness from a tourist's perspective. The study defines the destination attractiveness of a tourist destination through literature review and analyses the priority ranking of the various dimensions related to the destination attractiveness. The present study attempts to understand the tourism industry of Jammu and Kashmir in an inclusive manner and analyze the attractiveness of the tourist destination of the Kashmir region. The study has selected Srinagar district of Kashmir region for this purpose. The paper ahead discusses the literature related to the destination attractiveness, methodology used in the present study followed by the analysis section.

Table 4: Tourists Arrivals in Jammu & Kashmir

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total
2001	5246498	21298	5267796
2002	4570583	7821	4578404
2003	5748846	24330	5773176
2004	6881473	40242	6921715
2005	7239481	44345	7283826
2006	7646274	46087	7692361
2007	7915271	52754	7968025
2008	7638977	54697	7693674
2009	9234862	54475	9289337
2010	9973200	48099	10021299
2011	13071531	71593	13143124
2012	12427122	78802	12505924
2013	13642402	60845	13703247
2014	9438544	86477	9525021
2015	9145016	58568	9203584
2016	9414579	63207	9477786
CAGR	**3.72**	**7.04**	**3.74**

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India (Indian Tourism Statistics-2017)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism industry is a growing industry across the globe, particularly in the regions having a rich natural and scenic beauty. Tourism contributes towards earning foreign exchange, generate employment, increase tax revenues etc. Countries rich in tourism-related trade always targets to improve the competitiveness of their tourist destinations. Destination attractiveness plays a significant role towards increasing tourist inflows to a country. Destination attractiveness is an important motivation for tourists to travel (Chon, 1991). Gunn (1988) advocated that the existence of tourism industry in a country is because of tourism attractions and in absence of tourism attractions there would be no tourism at all. Destination attractiveness aims at satisfying tourist needs (Dimitrov et al., 2017). The destination attractiveness is an apparent capability of a tourist place to provide specific benefits to each tourist (Mayo and Jarvis, 1981). As advocated by Hu & Ritchie (1993) described destination attractiveness as "feelings, beliefs, and opinions that a person has the about the ability of a tourist destination to provide satisfaction in terms of one's specific holiday needs".The tourism attractions are the central pillar of a tourism industry of a nation. Destination attractiveness acts as a pull factor which helps tourists in

selecting one tourist place over others and thus creates a positive demand for the industry (Lee et al., 2009). Lue et al. (1996) stated that destination attractiveness influence decision-making process of tourists and impacts the intentions of travel. Destination attractiveness is a significant motive for tourists to travel a particular destination (Chon, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

Researchers & academicians have defined destination attractiveness through multiple factors depending upon the objectives of their research, which has made destination attractiveness multi-dimensional concept (E. Ma et al., 2017). The significant contribution towards understanding the destination attractiveness was advocated by Gearing et al. (1974). They defined destination attractiveness through seventeen parameters, i.e. Natural Beauty, Infrastructure, Food & Lodging, Climate, History, Archeological Sites, Local Attitudes, Religious Significance, Art & Architecture, Sports Facilities, Nightlife, Shopping, Peace & Quiet, Festival, Local Features, Educational Facilities and Fairs & Exhibits. Another comprehensive understanding of destination attractiveness was proposed by Ritchie & Zins (1978), they explain the destination attractiveness through eight parameters i.e. Natural Beauty & Climate, Cultural & Social Characteristics, Accessibility of the Region, Attitudes towards Tourists, Infrastructure of the Region, Price Levels, Shopping & Commercial Facilities and Sport Recreation, & Educational Facilities. These parameters influence the destination selection decision of tourists in a significant manner.

The literature review highly suggested understanding the destination attractiveness of a tourists place because destination attractiveness is an essential element for improving tourism competitiveness of a place (Buhalis, 2000; Crouch & Richie, 1999; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Vengesayi, 2003). Further, for drafting an effective tourism policy and marketing strategy tourist's perception about a destiny provides a significant understanding & input (Kotler et al., 2005). Therefore, researchers, academicians, and practitioners should understand the significance of this concept in improving the performance of the tourism industry as well as for ensuring strategic growth and development of the industry. The review of the literature on destination attractiveness defines attractiveness parameters of a place in a comprehensive manner. However, the relative ranking of these parameters as per tourist's perspective has remained unexplored. The present study aims at bridging this gap in the literature and attempts to explore & understand the relative ranking of the destination attractiveness parameters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present is an exploratory research paper with two broad objectives, i.e. to identify the parameters for defining the destination attractiveness and priority ranking of the identified parameters based on the tourist's perspective, so as to understand the relative importance of the identified parameters. The study has used eight parameters of tourist's destination given by Ritchie & Zins (1978). The present study is based on convenience sampling and has targeted 88 tourists, both national & international, out of which data from 61 tourists were found to be complete and appropriate for the analysis. The study has studied Srinagar district of Kashmir region of Jammu and Kashmir, India. The district is famous across the world for its ethnic, cultural, scenic and historical places. The data collected from the respondents have been analyzed using HenryGarrett Ranking Technique for the priority ranking of the identified parameters. With the help of Garret ranking technique, the parameters were ranked from high priority to low priority. The formula of the Henry Garret Ranking technique is as below:

$$Percentage\ Position = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

where R_{ij} = Rank given to the ith factor by j^{th} firm

N_j= Number of the factors ranked

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSIONS

The state of Jammu & Kashmir with its rich ethnicity and cultural heritage as well as scenic landscape offers immense potential for the tourism-related trade and services. The Jammu and Kashmir state are spread over an area of 222,236 Sq. Km. and is divided into the three regions i.e. Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The tourism industry grew with CAGR of 3.74 per cent during 2001 to 2016 period. The domestic tourism of the State has grown with CAGR of 3.72 per cent for the period 2001 to 2016. While as foreign tourism of the State has reported CAGR of 7.04 per cent during 2001 to 2016 (refer to Table 4). The three regions of the states are quite distinct from each other with different topography & climate and thus offer advantageous scope for multiple tourism products and services.

The Kashmir region is very much scenic and beautiful tourists destination with a climate very much calm and soothing, especially during summers. The Kashmir valley, also known as "Vale of Kashmir" is surrounded in the southwest by the Pir Panjal Range. On the northeast valley is bounded by the main Himalayas range. The valley is around 135 Km long and is 32 km wide. The valley is drained by the Jhelum River. The Kashmir valley is spread over an area of 15,948 Sq. km. and is divided into 10 districts for administrative purposes, i.e. Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Budgam, Srinagar, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Baramulla and Kupwara. Kashmir Valley has multiple world famous tourist's destination such as Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Doodthpathri, Yousmarg, Mughal Gardens, Dal Lake etc. During 2016, the Kashmir valley received 220490 number of pilgrimage tourists which grew to 260003 in 2017 (up to October ending). Similarly, the valley received 1211230 number of domestic and foreign tourists in 2016 and 1050480 numbers of domestic and foreign tourists in 2017 (up to October ending) (J&K Economic Survey,2017). Srinagar is the main city of the Kashmir valley and is also summer capital of the State. Srinagar city is spread over an area of 2228 Sq. Km and has a population of 1,250,173. Srinagar district is a prominent tourist destination of Kashmir valley, it's also referred to "Venice of the East".

The place is a tourist hub of Kashmir Valley and is famous for its multiple attractions such as Dal Lake, Nigeen Lake, House Boats, Mughal Gardens, Chashma Shahi, Tulip Garden, Botanical Garden, Hari Parbhat Fort etc. Srinagar district has also pilgrimage sites like Hazratbal Shrine, Shankaracharya Temple and Catholic Church. The district acts as a primary destination for both foreign and domestic tourists. The Mughal gardens such as Nishat Garden, Shalimar garden and Harwan remain the prime focus places of visit for all types of tourists.

The potential of Srinagar district in terms of tourism-related economic activities are very much large and significant. The district caters to the needs of every tourist traveling to the Kashmir valley. The present study thus aimed at evaluating and understanding the destination attractiveness of this district in Kashmir region. The survey findings related to the studied sample is given in table 5.

Table 5: Sample Profile of the Studied Sample

S. No	Parameter	Percentage (in %age)
1.	**Gender**	
	Male	65
	Female	35
2.	**Age**	
	Above 18 to 28	10
	29-49	69
	49-60	17
	Above 60	4
3.	**Occupation**	
	Business owner	28
	Govt. Employee	42
	Corporate Employee	20
	Others (Students/Housewives etc.)	10
4.	**Income**	
	Up to 30000	36
	31000 to 50000	52
	51000 to 70000	2
	70000 to 100000	4
	Above 100000	6
5.	**Travel Duration**	
	3 to 6	73
	6 to 10	22
	10 to 14	3
	14 to 20	2
Source: Author's calculation based on the primary data		

The targeted respondents were requested to give their preferences in terms of their importance to the identified destination attractiveness parameters, i.e. Natural Beauty & Climate, Cultural & Social Characteristics, Accessibility of the Region, Attitudes towards Tourists, Infrastructure of the Region, Price Levels, Shopping & Commercial Facilities and Sports Recreation, & Educational Facilities. The data thus collected and analyzed using Henry Garrett ranking technique is given in table 6.

Table 6: Priority Ranking of the Identified Parameters of Destination Attractiveness

S. No.	Parameters	Average Score	Garret Ranking
1	Accessibility of the Region	68	1
2	Natural Beauty & Climate	60	2
3	Infrastructure of the Region	56	3
4	Cultural & Social Characteristics	55	4
5	Shopping & Commercial Facilities	54	5
6	Attitudes towards Tourists	51	6
7	Sport, Recreation, & Educational Facilities	48	7
8	Price Levels	41	8
Source: Authors calculation based on the primary data			

The respondents held accessibility of the region as a most important parameter for travelling to the selected tourist destination, followed by the natural beauty and climate, infrastructure of the region, cultural and social characteristics, shopping & commercial facilities, attitudes towards tourists, sport, recreation & educational facilities and lastly price

levels. The tourist trade-related entrepreneurs need to understand this relative importance ranking of the destination attractiveness parameters. This understanding can be very much in terms of developing tourism related products as well as services. Srinagar district is well connected through road connectivity to all the state roads and national highway. However, the railway connectivity is limited and is available from Srinagar to Banihal & Srinagar to Baramulla only. This limitation needs to be removed and rail connectivity needs to be improved and extended. In terms of air connectivity, Srinagar district is connected to the International airport, however the absence of night flight landing operations and lack of direct international flight landing operations may act as a hindrance for strategic growth of tourism industry in the state. Natural beauty and climate of the Srinagar needs to be preserved in order to make the tourism of the state sustainable over the period of time. The increasing pollution levels and solid waste disposal methods needs to be relooked and a comprehensive policy regarding low pollution levels and solid waste management needs to be drafted and implemented. The infrastructure of the region in terms of hotels, tourist facilitation centers, convenience facilities and restaurants needs an immediate attention as the quality of service delivery greatly impacts the tourist's satisfaction levels. Cultural and social characteristics had a great impact in terms of tourist attraction to a particular destiny. The curiosity among tourist to learn about culture and social aspects of a place needs to be facilitated and policies as well as institutional frameworks needs to be designed and implemented for increasing the development and growth of the tourism in the state. Shopping and commercial facilities in and around the tourist destination influences the tourist experience about the place. Therefore, a strong infrastructure should be built that satisfies the tourists shopping experience. Sport, recreation, & educational facilities also contribute towards the satisfaction levels of the tourists and can become a motivation of visiting places again and again. The respondents held price levels as a last parameter for destination attractiveness. However, this parameter can have a drastic influence on the tourist's perception about a place as consumers are very price sensitive. Therefore, all malpractices related to tourism trade and services should be strongly discouraged and stringent actions should be taken against such traders.

To understand the underlying differences between domestic and foreign tourists, a comparative ranking of the destination attractiveness parameters has been carried out (refer to table 7). The comparison between priority rankings of domestic and foreign tourist reveals that both domestic and foreign tourists have same preferences for first three ranks and differences arise fourth rank onwards. This can be very much beneficial insight for the tourism entrepreneurs and tourism-related traders for developing tourism products specifically for domestic and foreign tourist. Further, this comparison can be very much advantageous for the policymakers for formulating specific schemes separately for domestic and foreign tourism segments.

The study has managerial and policy implications in terms of understanding the significance of the destination attractiveness and for drafting policies and schemes that can contribute towards the strategic growth and development of this industry in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, especially in view of the present geopolitical disturbance prevailing in the state. The study can also be beneficial for developing tourism products and services keeping in view the priority ranking of the respondents. This may also help tourism entrepreneurs in delivering their products and services in an inclusive manner and thus can improve their value delivery system as well as improve tourist satisfaction levels.

Table 7: Comparison of Priority Ranking between Foreign Tourist and Domestic Tourist

S. No	Parameters	Foreign Tourist's Ranking	Domestic Tourist's Ranking
1	Accessibility of the Region	1	1
2	Natural Beauty & Climate	2	2
3	Cultural & Social Characteristics	3	3
4	Shopping & Commercial Facilities	4	6
5	Infrastructure of the Region	5	4
6	Attitudes towards Tourists	6	5
7	Price Levels	7	8
8	Sport, Recreation, & Educational Facilities	8	7

Source: Authors calculation based on the primary data

CONCLUSIONS

The J&K tourism industry is a promising industry of the State and has potential towards strategic growth and development. The industry requires key strategic interventions and a revived comprehensive orientation in terms of understanding the tourist, their requirements, and priorities. The present study sets a base towards understanding the tourism industry of the State in a new strategic perspective and thus favors towards increasing the contribution and growth of this industry in the economic system of J&K. The present study provides an insight towards understanding destination attractiveness of Srinagar district by priority ranking of the destination parameters. It would provide clues for the dynamic and sustainable policy for the tourism industry in J&K state. The study also through its comparative analysis helps in understanding the difference between the domestic and foreign tourism segments and tourist behavior. The study can contribute towards restoring and reviving the institutional understanding and frameworks, which have been degraded over the period of the time due to the geopolitical disadvantages. The study has its limitations in terms of the sample area and small sample size.

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