

## TOURISM IN KASHMIR REGION: A GEOGRAPHIC STUDY

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### Abstract

"With travel being more popular than ever, why should destination managers be concerned?" This was the query posed by Stanley Plog forty years ago while delivering a paper to Southern California. The solution, as Plog himself stated, is "because their location's attractiveness may be spinning away even as they watch." Plog's point was that the tourism business is self-destructive because "the seeds of the destination's almost-inevitable decline are already sown in the midst of its success." As a result, "a number of tourist destinations have experienced a cycle of intense building activity and capital investment, witnessed a tourist boom, hit a heyday, and then began to decline." To minimise eventual deterioration, appropriate planning and administration are required (Tewari, 1994)." The inevitable collapse of practically all tourist locations around the world is a harsh reality. In fact, the more popular a location, the faster its lustre fades, and the more vulnerable a recreational area's ecological, the more it suffers from mismanaged tourism development. When a region begins exploring and utilising its natural or cultural assets and opens its womb to the outside world, few comprehend that this very reason, which attracts others, may suffer and degenerate, leaving them without a means of subsistence. The

stakeholders, who at first represent local hobbyists, evolve throughout time. As more benefits are expected from tourists, the engagement of external components grows, and the resident population becomes marginalised. These wealthy outsiders provide larger hotels, restaurants, service centres, and other tourist necessities. Such people have no regard for the ecology and the environment, thus they exploit the resources as much as possible in order to reap as many benefits as possible in as little time as possible. In order to satisfy their avarice, they chopped the very roots of the economy for the local population, who could have utilised their resources more wisely and symbiotically.

### Paper Identification



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### INTRODUCTION:

The destination region may draw more tourists over time, but eventually it begins to decline due to the inevitable degradation of picturesque resources, and it reaches a point where it is unsustainable for the entire

community to benefit from tourism activities. Local become dissatisfied with the outside stakeholders, as well as with the tourists, who are initially warmly welcomed. Thus, a tourist destination goes through unique and sequential stages of investigation, involvement, development, maturity, and finally decline. The types of tourists who visit the area alter with time. Poets, painters, and adventurers want to visit unspoiled natural locations with little human intervention. As more people learn about the wonderful environment of the destination through poems, paintings, and travelogues, an increasing number of foreigners begin to visit the area. Recognising the economic opportunity, the locals begin to provide basic services such as retail, transportation, lodging, and other amenities. This raises the number of visitors, and with expanded economic opportunities, external stakeholders become involved, initially from adjacent areas and progressively extending their influence to distant places, particularly towns and cities. The wealthy residents of the three cities put their money into the tourism industry. These new and external stakeholders provide essential services such as housing, transportation, lodging, and food by constructing hotels, restaurants, and creating travel agencies, tourist centres, and so on. The visitor type has also changed, with more luxury-seeking tourists visiting the site. The local involvement gradually diminishes. They are pushed into the informal sector, where they work as coolies, small dhabas, roadside vendors, manual workers, ponywallas, hawkers, and so on. As a result, local hosts become resentful to tourists and may resist further tourism development. Conflicts between hosts and visitors worsen. At this stage, even visitors' attitudes towards destination conservation, if they have any, deteriorate. Similarly, the perception of the local inhabitants towards tourism development, tourists, and the environment becomes negative. The visitor demand on the ecosystem grows over time, and gradually the landscape resources degrade, and the

negative environmental impacts reach the point when visitors find the location unappealing and forsake it. The destination region may draw more tourists over time, but eventually it begins to decline due to the inevitable degradation of picturesque resources, and it reaches a point where it is unsustainable for the entire community to benefit from tourism activities. Local locals become dissatisfied with the outside stakeholders, as well as with the tourists, who are initially warmly welcomed. Thus, a tourist destination goes through unique and sequential stages of investigation, involvement, development, maturity, and finally decline. The types of tourists who visit the area alter with time.

### **THE PROBLEM'S STATEMENT AND RELEVANCE**

Because "tourism has always been a gold mine for Kashmir and has the potential to make Jammu and Kashmir the most prosperous state in India" (Kaul and Kachru, 1998), greater attention must be paid to this sector of the economy. To assist exploit the region's full tourism potential, research must be conducted. At the same time, tourism resources must be preserved, conserved, and protected from deterioration and over-exploitation. To achieve such objectives, it is vital to understand the present tourism development trend. Because consuming and exploiting resources eventually leads to their exhaustion/degradation, the same is true for the landscape resources on which tourism growth is based. Butler developed his Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model in 1980 to explain the use of landscape resources for recreation purposes in a cyclic paradigm. This model, which uses arrivals and infrastructure development as attributes, aids in determining the stage of development of a specific tourist destination. This model is used in the current study to determine the region's current stage of development, as knowing the health and condition of a tourist resort or destination, as well as the associated

factors, is critical for a sustainable tourism sector. Furthermore, the type of tourists who visit a particular resort changes as the nature and character of its surroundings change.

As a result, this component is also evaluated in the research. Furthermore, it is vital to understand the attitudes of tourists towards the locations they visit, the conservation of the environment they enjoy, and the local society with whom they engage. Similarly, it is vital to assess the attitudes of local hosts and inhabitants in order to determine how much they are participating in the tourist development process and how satisfied they are with the strangers that visit their land. Furthermore, host-visitor interaction will be highlighted, which is a very healthy sign if it is pleasant. The research also attempts to highlight the fact that not just resort development, but the tourism region as a whole, is required for tourist satisfaction. The travelled landscape that every visitor must pass through while in the region is overlooked in tourism development strategies. Developing this landscape, which is located between two tourism destinations and is a key component of recreation enjoyment, will go a long way towards making the sector more sustainable. As a result, the current study, which addresses a few problems in the Kashmir region's tourism industry, is significant in highlighting the current state of tourism development, which can help in providing directions for further improvement of this sector in order to maintain the balance between economic benefits and environmental protection. Knowing the stage of growth and the types of tourists, it becomes vital to provide recreational possibilities for all potential visitors in order to attract as many tourist numbers as possible without putting additional strain on the smaller number of previously renowned resorts. As a result, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum is established, and an attempt is made to divide the region along this spectrum in order to give recreation opportunities to all

age groups, economic classes, and tourist kinds. Because Jammu and Kashmir is India's only state without a tourist policy (Akmali, 2012), this research will aid in the development of an environmentally friendly tourism policy.

## **EXAMINE THE RELEVANT LITERATURE**

Tourism as a sub-discipline has not yet received the prominence it deserves in the subject of geography. Tourism geography is in a paradoxical situation because geographers' tourism research is widely regarded and appreciated, but tourism geography as a sub-discipline is mostly ignored (Hall & Page, 2006). Even while we know that "the significance of tourism on landscape is obvious" (Mitchell, 1979), it lacks esteem. Based on the nature of this study and the sequence of chapters, the related literature survey has been divided into the following sub-headings:

1. Landscape resource
2. Evolution of tourism
3. Tourism-Environment relationship
4. Host-guest perceptions
5. Tourism sustainability
6. Kashmir specific studies

## **CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE**

This work is built on six interconnected concepts: Butler's Tourism Life Cycle idea, carrying capacity, SWOT Analysis, stakeholder and tourist perceptions and attitudes, and regionalization in terms of the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum concept. The first component follows Butler's 1980 proposal to trace the evolution and development of tourism via many stages. A tourism destination goes through six stages, according to the TALC model. The first step is 'exploration,' in which a location is discovered to have some natural visual beauty that attracts a tiny segment of the population. As the number of tourists grows and becomes more regular, some locals will join the



'involvement' stage and begin to provide facilities largely or perhaps solely for visitors. The 'development' stage shows a well-defined tourist market sector, which has been moulded in part by extensive advertising in tourist-generating locations. As the 'consolidation' stage begins, the rate of increase in visitor numbers slows, but overall visitor numbers continue to rise, and total visitor numbers exceed the number of permanent residents. Peak visitor numbers will have been reached by the time the area enters the stagnation stage. The area will be unable to compete with newer attractions in the decline stage, resulting in a diminishing market, both spatially and numerically. On the other hand, rejuvenation may occur, however it is practically guaranteed that this stage will never be achieved unless the attractions on which tourism is built undergo a total shift.

Carrying capacity is intimately related to the stages of the life cycle. When capacity is surpassed, stagnation ensues. Capacity levels for numerous variables will have been met or exceeded during the TALC stagnation stage. Overall sustainable tourism development and success are dependent not only on visitor attitudes towards the tourism region, but also on locals' and other stakeholders' perceptions of overall tourism development. Tourism planning cannot be successful without the engagement of residents and stakeholders. Residents begin to provide facilities mostly or completely for visitors during the engagement stage of the TALC model, but local involvement and control of development drop dramatically during the development stage. Finally, tourism must be developed in accordance with the environment in which it thrives. In vulnerable ecosystems such as Kashmir Valley, it is critical to conserve the ecology while developing any economic activity, particularly tourism, which survives and supports only on the quality of the environment. As a result, the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum concept can be utilised to revitalise the sick tourism industry by

providing tourists with a variety of recreational alternatives.

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

This research primarily focuses on developing an acceptable model for long-term tourist development in Kashmir Valley. Keeping this in mind, the following goals have been established:

1. To appreciate and analyse the landscape resource endowment of Kashmir.
2. To trace the evolution, growth, pattern and trends of tourism vis-à-vis conflict.
3. To examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to tourism.
4. To investigate the attitudes and perceptions of residents and visitors towards tourism-environment relationship.
5. To develop a model for sustainable tourism.

#### **JAMMU AND KASHMIR: GEOGRAPHY AND SITUATION**

Jammu and Kashmir, India's northernmost state, is located between 32°17'N and 37°6'N latitude and 73°26'E and 80°30'E longitude (Husain, 2006). According to the 2011 census, the state's total area is 2.22 lakh square kilometres, and its total population is 12.55 million. J&K is bordered by Tibet in the east, China and Afghanistan in the north, and Pakistan in the west; the Punjab and Himachal Pradesh states of India form the southern and south-eastern frontiers.

#### **J&K REGIONAL DIVISIONS**

In terms of geographical area, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is one of India's largest. And it is one of the world's most perplexing regions in terms of borders and limits. Three countries, India, Pakistan, and China, claim the entire state or a portion of it, but the reality is that the state is divided unevenly among the three (Map 1). The Maharaja State has a total land area of 222236 square kilometres. India governs an area of 101387 square km. Azad Kashmir, also known as P.O.K. (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) or P.A.K. (Pakistan

Administered Kashmir), has an area of 78114 square kilometres. The Maharaja State has a total land area of 222236 square kilometres. India governs an area of 101387 square km. Pakistan administers Azad Kashmir, also known as P.O.K. (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) or P.A.K. (Pakistan Administered Kashmir), which has an area of 78114 square kilometres. During the 1962 Indo-China conflict, China took 37555 square kilometres of the state's 33 territory known as Aksai Chin. During the construction of the Karakoram Highway, Pakistan donated 5180 square kilometres of land in the Karakoram range to China (Khan, 2005). Thus, India controls around 46% of J&K's territory, whereas Pakistan controls 35% and China controls 19%. Aside from the political uncertainties, Jammu & Kashmir has a wide range of natural and human environments. The valley can be divided into three distinct sections, each with its own geography, history, culture, religion, language, economics, climate, soil, vegetation, and so on. The river divides between Chenab and Jhelum, and Jhelum and Indus, separate the state's three main physiographic units. The Chenab river runs through the southernmost section of the state, Jammu, while the Jhelum basin corresponds to the valley of Kashmir and the Indus furrow runs through the Trans Himalayan area of Ladakh. Today,

#### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF GEOLOGY**

Kashmir is a cold, temperate region densely forested with poplars, willow, chinar, apple, and walnut trees. Climate change, geological uplifts, and anthropogenic activity have all continuously altered the vegetation and ecosystem that we witness today. If we look back over the last two million years, we can see that the valley has experienced subtropical and glacial (cold) temperatures. Indeed, it has been through multiple Ice Ages (Agarwal, 1988). The valley was once a massive lake called Satisar, which later dried up. This lake's remnants include the Wular lake, through which the Jhelum flows, and the Dal lake (Krishnan, 1949).

According to Irfan Habib (2010), a Chinese pilgrim named Xuan Zhaung (about AD 640) was the first to describe that Kashmir Valley was a lake. The rising of the Pir Panjal range on the southwest and the Himalayan foothills on the north-east had created a large lake, or possibly several lakes, in the current Kashmir valley. The Pir Panjals' continued rise elevated even the lake sediments, moving the basin towards the Himalayan edge. In recent geological ages, the basin emptied through the Jhelum, exposing vast amounts of land. Wind transporting glacial silts provided a mantle of silt-like dust (loess) all over the valley in the previous few hundred thousand years. Glacier retreat created a huge number of ponds, which over time transformed into bogs and retained good pollen records of the last 20-30 thousand years of vegetational change (DeTerra and Paterson, 1939).

#### **PHYSICAL SETTING**

Kashmir is located between the Pir Panjal and the major Himalayas. It is a large basin measuring approximately 135 by 40 kilometres in size, with a floor elevation of 1585 metres above sea level. The floor is the Jhelum River's floodplain. The region's most notable feature is the flat-topped terraces known as Karewas. These Karewas are lacustrine clays, sands, and silt deposits (Spate and Learmonth, 1967). Kashmir has been referred to as "the province or country" that consists of "an extensive plain surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains." It is also known as "the valley of the river Behat, or Jelam, which is separated from the Chenab basin on the south by rugged and often snowy ranges, and from the Indus basin on the north by the main axis of the Western Himalaya, which originates in the peaks of Kailash and separates the Sutlej and Chenab basins from the Indus basin." The mountains that surround Kashmir's plain are incredibly high. Those to the north are mostly bald and craggy on their southern faces, whereas those to

the south appear wonderfully wooded from the plain, with forests of pines and deciduous-leaved trees dropping practically to their base. Mountains rise above the level of everlasting snow on both sides of the valley, but those on the north side are noticeably higher than the others. Numerous transverse valleys cut through these mountains, which are highly cultivated in their lower regions and offer spectacular mountain scenery higher up (Thomson, 1852).

### ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is divided into three separate physiographic and administrative regions. Ladakh is the largest of the three, followed by Kashmir and Jammu. The state is further divided into 22 districts: ten in Kashmir, ten in Jammu, and two in Ladakh. Table 2.1 lists the districts' names as well as their population and population density.

District	Population	Density
Anantnag	1070144	375
Baramula	1015503	305
Badgam	735753	537
Bandipore	385099	1117
Ganderbal	297003	1151
Kulgam	422786	925
Kupwara	875564	368
Pulwama	570060	598
Shupiyan	265960	852
Srinagar	1269751	703

#### *Districts of Kashmir region, 2011*

Along with an appreciation of the existing natural and cultural attractions, the study attempted to highlight the economic relevance of the landscape and analyse tourists' thoughts and preferences on the region's landscape setting. This was followed by an assessment of the evolution and development of the recreation industry, as well as an examination of past trends and

the current state of tourism in the region. Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model was employed to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the types of visitors who visit the valley and the options available to them have been thoroughly documented, as has an estimate of the carrying capacity of several resorts within the broader spectrum of 'Kashmirscape'. SWOT analysis was performed to investigate the region's strengths and weaknesses in terms of tourist growth so that opportunities and threats could be assessed. An essential social aspect has also been addressed, including the implications of host-guest contact, the attitudes of various stakeholders, and tourist perceptions of the tourism-environment link, with a focus on the Kashmir region. Finally, an attempt has been made to regionalize the entire region into a 'Recreation Opportunity Spectrum' in order to avoid the bad affects and maximise the positive features of tourism—the very basic goal of tourism planning and management. The 'ROS' provides numerous prospects for both established and emerging markets. The perception and opinion regarding the landscape generated by landscape resource consumers, i.e. visitors, have also been examined using the ROS model.

The major aims and objectives, on which the study rests, were;

1. To appreciate and analyze the landscape resource endowment of Kashmir.
2. To trace the evolution, growth, pattern and trends of tourism vis-à-vis the conflict.
3. To examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to tourism industry of the region.
4. To investigate the attitudes and perceptions of hosts and tourists towards the tourism in Kashmir region.
5. To develop a suitable model for sustainable tourism.

### CONCLUSION:

Based on these goals, the following concluding statements are formed from the study and interpretation of available literature and data gathered through field



research. The conclusions are organised per chapter and presented consecutively. Chapter 3 fulfilled the primary goal of this thesis, which was to recognise and analyse the landscape resource endowment of the Kashmir region. The Kashmir region is endowed with some of the most beautiful landscapes that nature could bestow on a territory of such size, and many of its parts deserve to be designated as (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) AONB in order to preserve and improve their quality. Natural resources are often given to the economic activity that gives the most benefit to the majority of people living nearby.

The natural endowments of the Vale of Kashmir are ideally suited for tourism because it is regarded an inclusive economic activity with relatively less impact on the surroundings. Although the Kashmir valley is not endowed with a wealth of mineral riches or fossil fuels, its environment is unparalleled in the globe. It is very rich in other high-quality treasures that are not found anywhere else on the planet. The Kashmir region provides an abundance and diversity of landscape resources. These include a diverse bio-diversity, flora and fauna, avian diversity, long stretches of dense forest, some of the best agricultural lands, beautiful water bodies (both lakes and rivers), snow-capped mountains, numerous valleys, green and vast meadows, extensive glaciers, and, most importantly, an excellent recreational climate. Tourism in Kashmir is heavily reliant on environmental quality, and any alteration in the natural landscape will have a significant influence on the tourism industry and thus the valley's economy.

The fourth goal was to explore the attitudes and perceptions of hosts and tourists towards tourism in the Kashmir region, for which the effects of tourism on the region's natural surroundings were assessed and the opinions and attitudes of resident communities and visitors were elicited. Since its inception as an economic sector to exploit the natural landscape commercially, tourism has had a severe impact on the

physical environment of the Kashmir region. According to the available research, trees, water, air, and soil, as well as other environmental features, have all been impacted. Tourism in the region was growing rapidly until the 1990s, and with it came a faster rate of environmental degradation. Tourists stopped visiting this region when armed warfare began, but the environment continued to suffer, sometimes at the hands of locals, sometimes at the hands of corrupt officials, and most of the time due to a lack of tourism. It may appear ironic, yet it is true. Since 2005, arrivals have been steady, and the ecosystem is more vulnerable to the negative aspects of this otherwise environmentally good activity. The primary cause is the imposition of tourism revitalization on the decaying infrastructure that has been the collateral consequence of armed conflict. The current magnitude of the repercussions can be seen in the unmindful distribution of litter, degraded water and air quality in and around tourist areas, increased built-up area, and increased vehicular traffic. This is the narrative of all existing resorts, and sadly, the newer forthcoming locations are following in the footsteps of the old places. The conflict has caused inconceivable harm to the tourism sector, ecosystem, and landscape quality, and has, above all, ruined the valley's reputation.

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