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Research Article

AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN THE INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT OF PONYWALAS IN KATRA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism plays an important role in the regional development of the developing countries through the creation of work opportunities. Many countries are interested in the development of tourism industry due to its economic benefits. Due to the rate of growth of Indian economy Indian tourism has progressed. It comprises many sub-industries such as the hospitality industry, transport industry and entertainment. All these sectors are interconnected. These sectors are working together for the survival. Tourism is responsible for creating the awareness of the value of their cultural heritage and environment among the local people. Some countries have no possibility of economic development but a significant level of international tourism should be regarded an essential. It has the potential to not only be the economic driver but has also become an effective tool for employment opportunity and ensuring growth with equity. Jammu and Kashmir also known as a land of full of sacred Shrines of all religions like Amarnath Cave, Vaishno Devi, Baba Buda Shah, etc., that are frequently visited for their architecture and sanctity. Most well known pilgrim center in Jammu is Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. About 7 million pilgrims pay their obeisance in the Shrine every year. This paper highlights the relation between the income and employment of Ponywalas and religious tourism in Katra and Econometric model is used to test the hypothesis. This study is based on primary and secondary data. The income of Ponywalas which were involved in tourism sector in Katra was positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra except the employment of Ponywalas.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has developed at a momentous rate after the Second World War but it has become a big global business in the contemporary period. Tourism has become one of the most important phenomena of man's spatial behavior in the modern times. In 2008, the sector contributed 200 billion US Dollars which is expected to increase to 375.5 US Dollars in 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate.¹ Travel and Tourism generated 105,408,000 jobs directly in 2014. This includes employment by hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services. By 2025, travel and tourism will account for 130,694,000 jobs directly, an increase of 2.0% per annum over the next ten years.²

The World Tourism Organization recorded that in 2005 the world tourist arrivals rose to 808 million. The world tourism 2020 vision forecast that this figure would be raise to 1006.4 million in 2010 and the same will reach to 1561.1 million in 2020.³

According to Singh (1998), "Tourism as a socio-cultural and economic phenomenon is one of the most important forms of

interaction between peoples from different parts of the world."⁴ On the other hand, WTO states that tourism is "The activity of people who travel to places outside their customary surroundings and stay there, for leisure, business or other purpose, for no longer than one year without interruption."⁵

Singh (1978)⁶ studies the economic potential of tourism in Himachal Pradesh with special reference to Shimla. The main objective of his study is to analyze the various economic aspects of tourism with regard to the employment and income generation. The data of his study has been collected through primary as well as secondary sources. The findings of his study are that there is an unexplored area of tourism in Himachal Pradesh. There is enough scope and vast potential for the tourism development due to hilly areas and natural resources which can help to generate employment and income as well as foreign exchange.

Bandhu (1983)⁷ analyzed the income and employment effect of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir economy. The study is based on both primary and secondary data which analyze the growth of pilgrim traffic in the state and its impact on transportation,

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accommodation, shopping, and catering and entertainment services during the pilgrimage. The study recommends a better tourism policy of government and initiatives from private enterprises to attract more tourists. Private agencies and local bodies should help to create the required infrastructure with respect to increasing inflow of pilgrims.

In ancient times, man had an urge to discover or explore the new places and enjoy new experiences. 'Travel' is an old word. The modern expression is 'tourism' which has new connotation. Travel and tourism may be divided into three periods like ancient period, medieval period and modern period. Travel is not similar to tourism. In earliest times, man travelled unconsciously but with the development of civilization conscious travel came into vogue. During ancient times, people started to move from one place to another with the motives of trade and commerce, religious merit and political issues.

Pilgrimage became a social feature during the middle age. Security measures were recorded in the large number of people who began to travel for that period. At the end of this period, large numbers of pilgrims were travelling to the notable shrines in Europe. The development of railways elevated the role of tourism during the 19th century. It increased the opportunities for escape from oppressive urbanization and boosted the growth of tourism.

In India, the Britishers were not able to promote tourism industry but after independence, the Indian government felt its importance energetically. The government of India started promoting tourism since 1948. They set up a committee under the leadership of Sir John Sergent in 1945 and the committee submitted its report in 1946. This committee enhanced the tourism by various ways like the youth movement all over the world, development of cheaper means of communication and transport facilities and it established a number of agencies for the promotion of tourism. At that time, it was thought that it was beneficial for Indians to encourage and develop the tourist industry. A small tourist section was set up in the Ministry of Transport in 1948. A separate department was set up in 1958 which was known as the Department of Tourism.

In India, pilgrim centers are extremely popular for domestic tourism and are visited by the number of tourists to earn virtue. Tourism also provides jobs worldwide at a faster rate than manufacture industry. Government has taken initiative to promote India as a tourist destination internationally and to aid influx of tourists, for example "incredible India" and "Athiti Devo Bhava" campaigns. WTTC (2010) has identified three major roles of the tourism sector with respect to the macro-economic performance of the global economy. They included: imparting vigor to economies, stimulating development, and offering jobs and career prospects to the public. This has also been proved by the global downturn, which has led to the recognition of the tourism industry as a valuable national resource.⁸

The state of J&K represents a world frame tourist region of India and tourism realizes a major engine of growth in the future. Mughal emperor Jahangir after being enchanted with the scenic beauty remarked spontaneously,

*"Aagar firdous baroozay zameen-ast
Hameenasto hameenasto, hameenasto,"*

Translated in English as:

*"If there is a paradise on earth,
It is here, it is here, it is here"*⁹

Jammu and Kashmir State is a hilly, economically backward and militancy torn state of the country carrying all inherent characteristics of an underdeveloped economy. It comprises 22 districts and 82 tehsils. It occupies an apex seat in the beautiful tourist resorts of the world. Tourism sector was declared as industries by the state government in 1995 vide government order No 72/TSM of 1995 dated 26.04.1995. It employs a large number of skilled and unskilled people, promotes national integration and international understanding. This industry employs a large number of people in hotels, travel agencies and cultural activities.

Tourism is not a new activity for Jammu and Kashmir. It is the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir state economy. The J&K registration of Tourists Trade Act 1978 defines "Tourists as a person or group of persons, including pilgrims visiting the state from any part of India or outside India"¹⁰.

Tourist arrival in the backward hilly region of Indian union that is Jammu and Kashmir have increased manifold during the last decades. It has shown it's all round development and state is hopeful to welcome a sizeable number of tourists in the coming years. It is the second largest sector of the state after agriculture. Travelling to the militancy torn state has brought people into contact with each other and provided a cultural exchange between hosts and guests. It has increased the chances for people to develop mutual sympathy and reduce their prejudices. It has brought a number of social and economic benefits like promoting of national integration and international understanding, creation of employment opportunities, removal of regional disparities, opening up new growth centers and upliftment of the downtrodden sections of society.

The Jammu and Kashmir state is divided into three different geographical regions: Jammu, Kashmir valley and Ladakh. All these regions are famous for their own religious identity. The state with the different religions and shrine attracts million of pilgrims every year. In Jammu and Kashmir State, Jammu region has a tremendous scope of religious tourism. There are several religious places in the Jammu city. Vaishno Devi, Sukrala Devi and many other places which serve as the base for pilgrim tourists. Jammu, which is considered as "Paradise of Pilgrims", satisfies the religious urge of visitors. Pilgrim tourists provide an extra boost to the economy of the state.

The economy and the transformation in the society of Jammu largely depend upon tourism which fetches a good percentage of the state income and provides employment to a substantial proportion of the work force. Pilgrimage tourism of Kashmir valley reflects the peaceful co-existence of various religions in the state. In Kashmir, Hindu temples exist along with equally renowned Muslim shrines. A Temple, a Mosque and a Gurdwara are standing side by side near Hari Parbat pilgrim center. Some of the main holy places in Kashmir are: Amarnath, Jamia Masjid, Charar-e-Sharif, Kheer Bhawani.

In Kashmir, main industries are tourism, handloom, Hydel Power Potential besides agriculture. However, terrorism prevailing in 1988 gave a substantial blow particularly to the tourism sector. Ladakh, also known as 'Land of naked peaks' has achieved the recognition of being one of the oldest Buddhist destinations. In Ladakh, mostly pilgrims visit to get an ideal experience of knowing Buddhist religion. In Jammu and Kashmir, most famous religious places which attract millions of tourists every year are the Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir and Vaishno Devi Yatra in Jammu.

Objective of the Study

The present study has been undertaken with the following specific objective

1. To highlights the relation between the income and employment of ponywalas and religious tourism in Katra.

Hypothesis

Keeping in view the objective of the study, the following hypothesis is proposed for the study. The hypothesis has been tested on the basis of primary data collected by an especially constructed schedule for sample survey:-

1. The income and employment of Ponywalas are positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study entitled "An Economic Analysis of Religious Tourism in the Income and Employment of Ponywalas in Katra" is a descriptive type of study. The study is based on primary and secondary data. The secondary data is collected from a number of sources which includes books, articles, papers, journals published from time to time, newsletters, state tourism corporation, municipality of Katra, Shrine Board, other government as well as private agencies like various business associations and various websites related to tourism. Primary data is original data gathered for the specific purpose of solving the research problem. Primary data is gathered through a comprehensive questionnaire. The focus of the study is Jammu region with special reference to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. This is situated in Katra town. The sample size consists of 100 ponywalas. The Random sampling method is used to select the respondents. Econometric model is used to test the hypothesis related to relationship between religious tourism and income-employment of the ponywalas.

$$y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \mu$$

Where

y_1 = income / employment

x_1 = religious tourism

μ = error term

β_0 = intercept term

β_1 = coefficients

Where error term is used for all that variables which are not included in the model but in combine impact the dependent variable that is income-employment.

About 70% of the workforce in Katra depends directly or indirectly on tourism related activities. In Katra, it is the main source of income generation from four basic industries like

hotel, ponywalas, shopkeepers, and restaurant. It strengthens the J&K economy by increasing the standard of living of the people and also increasing the income level. The J&K hospitality industry had undergone a sea change over the last decade and is considered as one of the fastest-growing sectors of the J&K economy.

The most convenient transport is provided by ponywalas to the Shrine from the base camp of Katra. The old person and those who have less time at this disposal tend to prefer pony for going to Shrine. After 2013 Registration of ponies is under the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (SPCA) at Chetak Bhawan, Katra. Dr. Piyush Singla, additional CEO (2015), SMVDSB distributed registration cards to ponyowners. Under registration process SPCA unit collected the blood samples of 4784 equines and police verification of 2204 ponyowners. It is the main requirement to issue registration cards for ponyowners for their ponies and look after various animal welfare activities like controlling Glanders diseases. The ponies suffered from serious disease glanders in Katra base camp. The high number of mules generates massive mule dung at Banganga. Due to large scale mule dung, Katra residents face a grave risk of contaminated water. In February 2015 firstly this disease found in the horses brought from Muzaffarpur, Uttar pradesh contractor.

SMVDSB take measures to destroy the infected animals as per the legal position under 'Prevention of Contagious and Infectious Diseases of Animals' Act 2009. Out of 1704 blood samples collected during September 2015, only 17 cases was found positive and all these cases have been dealt with the rule. After outbreak of Zoonotic disease of glanders this year, Katra notified as "Controlled Area" under the infectious and contagious disease in animal act. SMVDSB is taking necessary measures for controlling this disease with the help of district administration and animal husbandry department, Katra.

There is positive co-relation between the number of pilgrims and use of equines because these equines employed to carry pilgrims and their luggage to and from the Shrine. As a result, solid and liquid wastes generated by pilgrims are disposed into Banganga River. Some part of waste is generated by ponies. The local authorities used these animals in a large number but failed to make arrangements in and around the Shrine for maintenance of these animals and ensuring they are free of diseases. From our survey, it has been found that on an average a pony makes as many as 7 round trips per week. It means 30 trips in a month. The total monthly income generated by all the Ponywalas was estimated to be Rs. 42, 00,000 lakhs. Ponywalas income spent on food, fodder, insurance, medicines needed by ponies. This sector shows a strong multiplier effect on income, expenditure and employment.

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:- The income and employment of ponywalas are positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra.

- a. The income and employment of ponywalas is positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra town.

This hypothesis has been discussed as under:

H_0 : The income and employment of ponywalas is not positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra.

Vs

H_a : The income and employment of ponywalas is positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra.

A Regression model was fitted with income and employment of ponywalas as dependent variables and religious tourism as independent variable and model summarized below has been obtained:

Table Relationship between the income of ponywalas and religious tourism

Regression Statistics						
Multiple R	0.625927					
R Square	0.391785					
Adjusted R Square	0.270142					
Standard Error	1356906					
Observations	7					
ANOVA						
	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>	
Regression	1	5.93E+12	5.93E+12	3.220773	0.132668	
Residual	5	9.21E+12	1.84E+12			
Total	6	1.51E+13				
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>
Intercept	4403281	4567059	0.964139	0.379257	-7336717	16143278
X Variable 1	0.912197	0.508287	1.794651	0.132668	-0.3944	2.21879

The result shows that there is positive relationship between income of the ponywalas and religious tourism and is not statistically significant at 5% significance level, i.e. one unit change in religious tourism leads to 0.912197 units change in income. The value of R-Square is 0.391; it is too low showing that sample data does not fit well with the actual data. Calculated F-stat is greater than tabulated F-stat and is statistically significant. Hence, hypothesis is rejected.

Table Relationship between the employment of ponywalas and religious tourism

Regression Statistics						
Multiple R	0.273736					
R Square	0.074931					
Adjusted R Square	-0.11008					
Standard Error	110.2885					
Observations	7					
ANOVA						
	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>	
Regression	1	4926.283	4926.283	0.405004	0.552505	
Residual	5	60817.72	12163.54			
Total	6	65744				
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>
Intercept	295.258	371.2076	0.795399	0.462453	-658.962	1249.478
X Variable 1	2.63E-05	4.13E-05	0.636399	0.552505	-8E-05	0.000132

There is a positive relationship between religious tourism and employment of the ponywalas but is not statistically significant at 5% significance level. One unit change in Religious Tourism leads to 2.63 units change in employment. The value of R-square is 0.074; it is too low showing that sample data does not fit well with the actual data. Calculated F-stat is less than tabulated F-stat and is statistically significant. Therefore, hypothesis is accepted, i.e. there is no impact of religious tourism on employment.

Hence, it can be concluded from the testing of hypothesis that the income of ponywalas which were involved in tourism sector in Katra was positively related to the growth of religious tourism in Katra except the employment of ponywalas.

This proves that high level of income depends on the growth of religious tourism in Katra. Due to increase in the number of tourists in that place there was increase in the income of

ponywalas. Ponywalas earned more due to open business in the whole week. Ponywalas' employment was not increasing due to introduction of the new track by Shrine Board, battery cars for the pilgrims during yatra and the registration process of ponies under the Shrine Board rules. Shrine Board registers the ponies with the validity of one year after that they have to renew the pony.

Ponywalas are demanding to provide employment in the new track by Shrine Board.

Suggestion

The Shrine Board should ensure proper health care of ponies engaged enroute SMVD and provide proper accommodation facilities for the ponies. Proper registration of ponies and ponywalas should be done because more rush of ponies creates

problems to the tourists on the route. Establishment of well equipped veterinary clinic with veterinary doctors and staff at Katra for the care of the ponies should be done.

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