POTENTIALS AND PROBLEMS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM: A STUDY OF KASHMIR VALLEY

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ABSTRACT
Kashmir valley, in India, is full of natural treasure and satisfies the several types of tourists. The tourists are experiencing fun, exciting events and safe experience in Kashmir valley, but on the other hand, the adventure tourists, in Kashmir valley, are experiencing the physical risks, dangers and losses (injuries, death etc) too. Kashmir valley offers great opportunities to the adventurists to explore the wonderful exotic Himalayan ranges and land capses, in addition, to facing the challenges of fast flowing rivers. Adventure tourism is at the initial stage of development in Kashmir valley and is fastest growing segment of Kashmir tourism industry. Development of adventure tourism could increase the tourist arrivals and the business opportunities in the valley. The exploitation of virginity of adventure tourism potentials in valley is must, hence, the present paper is conceptual in nature; the present study examines the potentials of adventure tourism in Kashmir valley and focuses on the problems in the development of adventure tourism. Furthermore, the study extends to give recommendations and suggestions in order to develop adventure tourism and exploit its resources in Kashmir valley.

Keywords: Adventure; Aero Sports; Golf; Mountaineering; Rafting; Skiing; Virgin Peaks

INTRODUCTION
The adventure means an unusual and exciting or daring experience, which involves the risk or danger. The adventure tourism refers an outdoor travel activity and can be categorised as a leisure travel activity to which the physical risk and danger is a compulsory aspect. Adventure tourism is a thrill-based activity where an adventurist is ready to face high and low level of challenges. The exotic, unusual, wilderness or remote places are the main attractions for the adventure tourism activities where the adventurist explores new areas and expects the unexpected results. The adventure tourism is a unique form of tourism in which tourists are ready to accept the limited infrastructural development or the totally undeveloped destinations where they are getting the authentic experience. In spite of the threats of death and injuries, the adventurists are welcoming and experiencing the adventure activities enthusiastically without negative feelings. “Adventure tourists say they welcome risk and excitement, and they empathize safety, they say they want authenticity, and they want it guaranteed” (Vital Wave Consulting, 2011). The adventurists are the outer world explorers as, they travel exotic and unspoiled regions of the world, and the inner world explorers, as their self-mastery, self-perception and personal challenges reflect it.

The adventure tourism can be divided into two parts as 1) Hard Adventure and 2) Soft Adventure. The Hard Adventure is a travel exercise, which involves higher level of risk elements and physical challenges. It needs higher level of confidence, spirit, expertise, specialised skills to indulge in Hard Adventure activities. This kind of tourism pushes the adventurists from the comfort zone to dangerous areas. The Hard Adventurists are less in number out of total adventurists. Hard adventure includes climbing (mountain, rock and ice) and caving, rafting, mountain biking, aero sports, trekking etc. The Soft Adventure is a type of travel exercise, which refers the comfortable adventure activities having
sometimes no risks. This kind of adventure is very safe form of adventure tourism in which the adventurists have no need to take training or guidance from the experts. Maximum adventurists are indulging in this type of adventure tourism. The Soft adventure includes the cultural art walks, camping, wildlife viewing, fishing, snowshoeing, walking on gradually changing terrain, sunbath, volunteer opportunities, snorkelling, casual bicycle tours, skiing, or simply horseback riding.

The type and nature of adventure depends up on the choice and motivation of the adventurist. The inner force or the motivation of the adventurist determines his/her adventure trip nature. The motivation varies from adventurist to adventurist, as someone explores the new areas, someone indulges in thrill-based adventure activities (rafting, mountain biking, aero sports etc) or someone prefers visiting wildlife, hunting, fishing etc. The Pearce’s Travel Career Ladder is based on Maslow’s work Lessons from the Peak Experience, according to which the motivation of tourist changes after fulfilling the present needs and is going to meet his/her higher expectation where he/she wants to him/her-self above all Maslow's (1976). The lifestyles of tourists have also influenced the adventure tourism packaging. The social life became very tense and complex of people by working longer hours on daily basis, in order to get rid; they are experiencing the adventure packages (Beedie & Hudson, 2003). The number of adventure tourism services providers increased swiftly throughout glob (Millington et al., 2001), due to this growth of services providers, opportunities opened for inexperienced people to indulge in adventure activities (Cater, 2002).

The adventure tourism is fastest growing segments of tourism industry worldwide. The small businesses have dominated this sector, but these businesses are mostly unprofessional; while, as bigger businesses are lesser in this field with proper professional management systems ensuring the safety and curbing the increasing demand (Cluotier, 2003). The lifestyle entrepreneurs have established adventure tourism businesses, or rather by the adventure tourism lovers (Swarbrooke, et al 2003). The adventure tourism is one of the best ways to earn from tourism industry not only for the business owners, but the locals can take the benefits from it as well. At the global level, the demand of venture tourism is increasing swiftly and the various countries have developed best infrastructure for the adventure activities. In India, there is a huge scope of adventure tourism; here are several virgin adventure tourism resources. The development of adventure tourism in India is at initial stage. The beaches, deserts, mountains, hill stations, rivers, forests, wild life etc are the best adventure tourism potentials in India. For the development of adventure tourism in country, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India has taken various steps. The Ministry of Tourism, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and the Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) are working jointly together for bringing the India on adventure tourism map at global level. Moreover, a set of guidelines were set up by the Ministry of Tourism for safety and quality norms on adventure tourism, which covers the water, air and land based adventure tourism activities. Moreover, government has established outdoor and adventure institutes in India, which are offering several adventure sports courses, and the institutes have all modern training equipments of adventure tourism. The institutes are:

- The Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering, Gulmarg
- Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi
- Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling
- Winter Sports Skiing Center, Kulu
- Atal Behari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali
- Dive Goa, Goa
- Temple Pilots Paragliding School, Kamshet
- National Outdoor Leadership School, Uttarakhand
- National Institute of Water Sports, Goa
Besides the above institutes, Government of India is providing the financial assistance to the states in order to create the better infrastructure for the adventure tourism throughout the country. In addition, Ministry of Tourism has formulated policies for the approval of bonafide adventure tour operators in India. The Kashmir, Ladakh, Manali, Auli, Darjeeling, Goa, etc are the best places for the adventure in activities in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no proper definition of adventure tourism, but various scholars have defined it by various angles. It is defined as the adventure recreation in the unusual places and the thrilling experiences by the adventurist (Sung, Morrison and O’Laery 1997) and always these experiences are full of risks (Walle, 1997) says that adventure is search for knowledge rather than risk. The adventure tourism is an outdoor activity, which is a means of income to the adventure tour operators; it needs guidance to indulge in adventure activities and every activity has its relevant equipments to perform, everything is done for the excitement of adventure tourists (Buckley, 2004; Bentley et al., 2000). Adventure tourists are always eager for the thrill and fight; they are mentally prepared for it without any threat (Cater, 2005). This kind of behaviour and perception towards the adventure thrill and risk is analysed by the several researchers (Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989; Jack and Ronan 1998; Slanger and Rudestam 1997; Fluker and Turner 2000). Moreover, it was also studied that adventurists are exploring the hidden and unknown things (Quinn, 1990) and the forests and lakes are the attractions, which lets the adventurist feel there is hidden truth and to discover that truth from the core of object. In addition to this, the level and type of adventure depends upon the motivation of adventurist and facing the dangers, challenges and risks is determined by the expertness, courage and the “optimum stimulation level” (OSL) of the adventurist (Lee and Crompton, 1992). According to Wahlers and Etzel (1985) the individuals having low “Optimum Stimulation Level” OSL are not taking the risk and are involving themselves in adventure activities, but their choice is only to take cultural trips. On the other hand, the individuals having high “Optimum Stimulation Level” OSL are participating in adventure activities like aero sports, mountaineering, rafting etc.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the potentials of adventure tourism in Kashmir valley
2. To study the problems in development of adventure tourism in Kashmir valley.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is a conceptual in nature and the paper is based on secondary data. The data were collected from various journals, papers, magazines, internet, Ministry of Tourism, articles and newspapers; in addition, the researcher, being a resident of Kashmir, is himself aware about the adventure tourism potentials of Kashmir valley.

Tourism Potentials in Kashmir valley

Kashmir valley is the one the most beautiful tourism destination in the world. Mughal emperor Jahangir has rightly described Kashmir valley as the “Paradise on Earth” and in addition, Kashmir valley is also known as the “Switzerland of the East”. Since centuries, Kashmir valley is the dream of tourists due to its glorious history, majestic natural beauty and the strategic location on the towering Himalayas. During the Silk Rout Kashmir was frequently visited by the traders for trade purposes, but since the British rule in India, Kashmir valley is visited by the leisure tourists, mostly now. The valley has potential to satisfy, almost, every kind of tourist. It has marvellous natural and manmade tourist attractions, viz gardens, lakes, hill station, snow capped mountains, rivers, food, costume, language,
handicrafts, religious sites etc. that provides the unforgettable memories and experience to the tourists. The tourism resources of Kashmir valley can be categorised as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Name of Attractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hill station</td>
<td>Aru, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Srinagar, Manasbal, Dodepathri and Yusmarg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountains and Peaks</td>
<td>Kolhoi Peak (5,425m), Mount Haramukh (5,142m), Machoi Peak (5,458m), Amarnath Peak (5,186 metres), Siram Peak (5,236m), Sunset Peak (4,746m), Tatakooti Peak (4,725m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>Gadsar Lake, Dal Lake, Satsar Lake, Gangabal Lake, Krishansar Lake, Manasbal Lake, Nundkol Lake, Sheshnag Lake, Vishansar Lake, Tarsar Lake, and Wular Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>Jhelum (originates from verinag), Sind River (at Nilgrar Sonamarg) Lider river and Lahwal River (through Lolab Valley).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild life Protected areas</td>
<td>Gulmarg wildlife sanctuary, Dachigam National Park, Baltal (Thajwas) Wildlife sanctuary, Overa wildlife sanctuary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Dargah Hazratbal, Chararsharief, Shrine of Pir Dastigar, Zain Shah wali, Baba Reshi, Jamia Masjid Srinagar , Ahmshrief, Shah Hamdans Masque, Pather Masjid, Aali Masjid, Pir Baba Gafoor, Janbaz Wali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu-</td>
<td>Amarnath cave, Shackia Devi, Shanker Acharia, Khir Bhawani, Mantand, Gurdwara Chati Padshahi Srinagar, Gurdwara Parimpillan Uri, Tapayana Sahib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh-</td>
<td>Gurdwara Chati Padshahi Srinagar, Gurdwara Parimpillan Uri, Tapayana Sahib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Hariparbat Fort, Pari Mahal, Badshah Dumat, Pantherthan, Harwan, Burzahama, Parhaspora, Pattan, Naranthal, Ushkura, Manasbal, Zainlank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valleys</td>
<td>Tawi Valley, Chenab Valley, Poonch Valley, Lolab Valley, Sind Valley, Bungus valley, Gurez valley and Betaab valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other attractions</td>
<td>Royal Spring Golf Course, Mughal Gardens (Nishat, Shalimar, Cheshimashahi, Harwan), Gulmarg cable Car, Tulip Garden, Houseboats, shikara etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tourist Arrivals in Kashmir

As far as the tourism of Kashmir valley is concern, the Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg are playing a key role in attracting tourists throughout the globe. These places are like the metro cities of Kashmir valley and in true senses; all the four places are making a commercial circuit of Kashmir valley. Valley always received a fancy of tourists all over globe; the tourism arrivals increased swiftly since last decade in Kashmir and received a record number of tourists in its tourism history in the year 2013. Following are the tourism arrivals of Kashmir valley:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Foreigner</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>358095</td>
<td>18634</td>
<td>376729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>585702</td>
<td>19680</td>
<td>605382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>412879</td>
<td>20002</td>
<td>432888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>417264</td>
<td>24576</td>
<td>441840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>551041</td>
<td>21588</td>
<td>572629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>577348</td>
<td>23904</td>
<td>601252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>710504</td>
<td>25984</td>
<td>736488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1282360</td>
<td>32110</td>
<td>1314470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1274674</td>
<td>37166</td>
<td>1311840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1142865</td>
<td>29143</td>
<td>1172008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Tourism, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir
Adventure tourism in Kashmir valley

The Pir Panjal and the Greater Himalayan Ranges from south and north respectively surrounds the Kashmir valley. This geophysical existence of Kashmir valley makes it most important not only for the leisure activities, but for the other things as well. Out of them, one of the most important is adventure tourism in Kashmir valley, which is among the major draws of adventure lovers in valley. The Kashmir is home of adventure lovers where they can experience array of adventure options. There are various sky touching mountain peaks, trekking routes, fast flowing gushing rivers, snow capped mountains etc, which are providing abundant opportunities to the adventure lovers where they can fight or experience thrill with risk and dangers in valley. Ministry of Tourism, Govt of Jammu and Kashmir has celebrated 2011 as the Year of Adventure Tourism, moreover, there are two adventure sports institutes in the valley for the development and promotion of adventure tourism in valley, one is at Gulmarg and second at Pahalgam. These institutes are providing different adventure sports courses and have all modern equipments to train students. Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Drass, Sonamarg etc are the best-known places in Kashmir valley for the adventure tourism activities. The main adventure activities in Kashmir valley are Kayaking, Golf, Aero Sports, Fishing, Mountaineering, Trekking, Backpacking, River Rafting, Paragliding, Canoe Trips, Camping, Skiing, etc.

Potentials of Adventure Tourism in Kashmir valley

The adventure tourism potentials in Kashmir valley are described and categorised under the following headings:

Land based adventure tourism potentials-

**Trekking:** There are several potential trekking routes in Kashmir with different distances and direction as:

- **Pahalgam** – **Sheshnag** – **Permandal** – **Humpet** – **Kantial valley** – **Boktol Pass** – **Donara** – **Panikhar** (8 days)
- **Gulmarg** – **Khelanmarg** (1 day)
- **Srinagar** – **Aru** – **Lidderwat** (3 days)
- **Srinagar** – **Aru** – **Satlunjan** – **Kolahoi Glacier** (3 days)
- **Srinagar** – **Pahalgam** – **Chandanwari** – **Sheshnag** – **Panchtaeni** – **Amarnath** – **Sheshnag** – **Pahalgam** – **Srinagar** – **Jammu** (9 days)
- **Pahalgam** – **Chandanwari** – **Sheshnag** – **Panchtanri** – **Amarnath** (3 days)
- **Gulmarg** – **Ferozpur Nala** – **Danwas** – **Tejjan** – **Tosamaidan** (5 days)
- **Sonamarg** – **Gangbal** - **Vishansar** – **Kishansar** **Harmukh peak** (5 days)
- **Sonamarg** – **Narang** – **Gurez** (3 days)
- **Aharbal** – **Dodopathri** (2 day)

**Mountaineering:** Kashmir valley has some of the finest towering mountain peaks in the world. There are several virgin mountain peaks in Kashmir, which are more than 6500 meters above the sea level. The main mountain peaks known for the mountaineering in the Kashmir valley are as bellow:

- **Kolhoi Peak** (5,425m),
- **Mount Haramukh** (5,142m),
- **Macho Peak** (5,458m),
- **Amarnath Peak** (5,186 metres),
Skiing: Kashmir valley is known for the best skiing slopes in the Asia. Valley’s snow capped mountains are offering best opportunities to the adventure lovers in entire Himalayan region. Gulmarg and Pahalgam are well known for the alpine skiing, whereas the Gulmarg has the only heli-ski resort in India and first in Asia. In addition to skiing in Kashmir valley, the Snowboarding and Ice Skating is also done in snow bed zones of valley. The snow sports season in Valley is mid December to mid April.

Golfing: The Captain John Hill, a Britisher army officer, started the golfing in 1902 at Gulmarg. Gulmarg Golf Course is the world’s highest golf course having 18 holes. Moreover, Royal Springs Golf Course is the best one at Cheshma-e-Shahi Srinagar. In addition, Pahalgam has also a beautiful Golf course for the soft adventure lovers in Kashmir valley.

Angling/Fishing: The angling and fishing are the remarkable adventure activities in Kashmir valley. Rightly, Kashmir is called paradise for the fishing lovers. The brown and rainbow trout fishes are the most for the fishing in Kashmir. The fishing is done in all alpine lakes including Satsar, Vishansar, Gadsar, Gangabal and Kishansar, moreover, Lidder River, Jhelum River and Chenab River are also well known for the fishing in valley.

Water based Adventure Potentials in Kashmir Valley- The fast flowing gushing rivers and lakes of Kashmir valley are making the adventure life of adventurists more memorable, exciting and experienced. The Chenab, Jhelum, Lidder, Dal lake, Mansbal Lake etc are the potential water bodies in kashmir valley which are used for water skiing, swimming, kayaking, Canoeing, backpacking and boating by the adventurists. The Lidder River in Pahalgam, Kishen Ganga River in Gurez, Jhelum River in Uri and Chenab River are offering tough challenges (Grade IV and VI) to the even expert white water rafters in the valley. The above-mentioned rivers have been graded as per their speed and challenges; the rivers and their grades are as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chenab</td>
<td>II and IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lidder</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kishenganga</td>
<td>II and III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhelum</td>
<td>II and III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aerial Adventure tourism Potentials in Kashmir valley- Though, the Kashmir valley is not ahead in the aero sports in India, but has the great potential of high mountain peaks which could be used for the paragliding, hot air ballooning, hang gliding, Para sailing, Para motors and Para jumping. The mountain peaks of Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Pahalgam and Gurez valley are not fully used for aero adventure; only Gulmarg, Yusmar, Pahalgam and Sonamarg are used for Paragliding, moreover, hot air ballooning is done in Srinagar.

Other potentials- There are other adventure tourism potentials in Kashmir, which are very famous among the soft adventurists in valley. Pony rides at Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg; wildlife visits at Gulmarg wildlife sanctuary, Dachigam National Park and Baltal (Thajwas); moreover, the Asians highest cable car ride at Gulmarg is another unforgettable soft adventure experience in Kashmir valley.

Problems of Adventure Tourism in Kashmir valley

In spite of one of the best adventure tourism destinations, Kashmir valley has several problems as far as it adventure tourism is concern. It has everything to satisfy the adventurists; nevertheless, it is not
ahead in the race of adventure tourism. Following are the main problems involved in the adventure tourism of Kashmir valley:

- Lack of expertise in adventure tourism
- Lack of proper government policies and consideration towards the adventure tourism in Kashmir valley
- Insufficient infrastructure for the adventure in valley
- The Kashmir valley is not promoted as a adventure destination at national and international levels properly
- Safety and security issues also weakening the adventure tourism in Kashmir valley
- Extreme cold in winter season
- Non-availability of desired things demanded by adventurists
- Speciation permissions from the authorities for fishing, mountaineering and trekking
- Non-availability of modern adventure tourism equipments
- Limited up to only one training and teaching institute adventure activities in valley

SUGGESTIONS

In order to solve the above problems, the following suggestions could be fruitful:

- The train and expert professionals should be invited in order to take the charge of adventure tourism in Kashmir valley
- Valley should be market as an adventure tourism destination at national as well as at global level
- The political restrictions should be revealed the mountaineering and trekking
- New modern equipments should replace the outmoded equipments
- Several adventure sports institutes should be opened in valley so that to train and teach the adventure lovers throughout the valley
- Proper infrastructure (campsites, rafting points, ski resorts etc) should be developed for the adventure tourism activities
- It is important ensure the safety and security to the adventurists before and after the tour in valley
- In order to give boost to the adventure tourism, Govt has to formulate appropriate policies

CONCLUSION

Adventure tourism is a recreational activity and Kashmir valley is one of the best destinations for the adventurists and has finest and tremendous potentials of adventure tourism. It is fastest segment of Kashmir tourism industry and the development of this segment very important. The maximum adventure tourism resources are virgin in Kashmir valley; their exploitation could bring economic development and generate employment opportunities in the region. However, there are some socio-political issues, which are weakening its development, moreover, the adventure tourism resources are more than the expertise and infrastructure available for the adventure tourism in Kashmir valley. It is very important to give special consideration towards the promotion of adventure tourism in Kashmir valley.
REFERENCES


