

# The Effects of Flood on Tourism (A Case Study of Jammu & Kashmir 2014)

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that, how much tourist places affected by flood in Jammu & Kashmir, and how it affected tourism in Jammu & Kashmir. This research paper try to investigate that what are measure things affected by flood. By the help of this research paper we would be able to understand how tourism, is most vital part of Jammu & Kashmir will rise again. Because entire economy of Jammu & Kashmir depends upon tourists, who comes every year to spend some time in beautiful valley. Kashmir's loss might turn out to be a gain for local tourism of other states. The state has seen around 95 per cent cancellations in tourist bookings for September and October. People fear a disease outbreak apart from lack of infrastructure and hence were wary of travelling to the valley last season. It also estimated that overall loss to the people connected with the tourism industry in the valley including hoteliers, taxi drivers, houseboat owners, tour operators, could be to the tune of Rs 500 crore during last season. This was the wedding season, lot of honeymooners comes to the Jammu & Kashmir, however, last year, and there is no rush. Unfortunately, tourism is the major industry of Jammu & Kashmir state, and the slowdown in tourist arrival can seriously impact the state's economy. The overall result came after research in Jammu & Kashmir; the tourist wants comfortable living infrastructure, transport, amenities as well as destination attraction as earlier. Central government and state government have to take initiative to rise up Jammu & Kashmir tourism so that economic condition of Jammu & Kashmir rise up and local people once again start their normal living to construct their home, business and other priority things which is destroyed due to flood. Tourists also scared to come and visit due to increasing terrorism activities day by day again in Jammu & Kashmir. Both governments should plan to minimise terrorism activities and promote tourism in Jammu & Kashmir so that once again things change as they are earlier.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, tourism has taken its role as a big project that does not only create income but influences life. Tourism has encouraged the fast development seen in many nations of the world and a couple of issues in regards to the industry. It has been declared viable both domestically and internationally (UNWTO, 1995). It involves so many phases of life in general, that is why it is connected to crisis and natural disasters.

## 1.1 Tourism

Defined as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which involves the, movement of people to countries or places outside their normal environment for personal or business purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure. (WTO)Tourism relies on man-built infrastructure, food, transportation, electricity, water and natural resources. Natural disaster will cause damage to these resources.

Disaster- is a severe commotion to a community's survival and livelihood systems, resulting from people's survey to hazard impacts, involving loss of life and property which devastates their capacity to cope (DFID, 2004).Disasters could also be explained as a condition where an external and unpredictable change of condition/events that will cause damage.

## 1.2 Natural Disaster

Is a sudden, catastrophic event that causes serious commotion of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic and environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope seeing its own level of resources? For instance it destroys the natural surroundings and resources which the industry depends on. Natural disasters come in so many ways and forms. Examples are; earthquake, flood, volcanic, Eruption, Tornado, tsunami, wildfire, drought, hailstorm, heat wave, hurricane, epidemic, famine, lahars, lamina eruption, mud flow, solar flare and other disasters. The first reaction after a natural disaster has occurred is that tourists will avoid that destination. Because they will be scared that the site is dangerous. Another reaction of tourists after a natural disaster has occurred is that tourism will likely decrease drastically. On the other hand, the vice versa happens. When natural disasters takes place interest of that destination will grow, in the sense that researchers, students and scientists who are interested to study the effects of the affected and dangerous area will come to visit the site. For example Pompeii.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Among all the limiting factors of tourism, all seem resolvable except for one; natural disaster. Natural disasters have always been a factor that has been refusing the fast growth of tourism around the world. It is a difficult force that reduces the influence of tourism. (Define by UNWTO). The strongest earthquake ever recorded, measuring 9.5 on the Richter scale, occurred off the Chilean coast in 1960 and led to deadly waves in Hawaii, the Philippines and Japan (BBC news) For a disaster to be entered into the database of the UN's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), at least one of the following criteria must be met: a report of 10 or more people killed a report of 100 people affected a declaration of a state of emergency by the relevant government a request by the national government for international assistance Mostly, it arises due to geologic processes which are change of state in atmospheric conditions as a result of internal and external forces that shape the physical makeup of the planet.

### 2.2 Dr. Peter Patel's (International project Director) review

People of Kashmir are not aware of any support they will get immediately or over period of next 12 months for economic recovery which will enable them to restore their businesses. Those who have become unemployed suddenly are not sure when they will be gainfully employed to support their families. Poverty is setting and there is a big challenge to support these communities through these difficult periods. Post-disaster management plan should consider providing appropriate support to manage mental health of the affected population through the health system by provision of mental health counsellors, emotional support through community networks Mohalla as and trained volunteers from NGOs. In severe cases, access to expert Psychological Services should be available. Local authorities should consider community assurance programmes to the victims who would be worried about future floods. Rapid rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes, support for clean-up and employment generation could be enabling factors for reduction in anxiety and depression. Some experts also identify increase in exacerbations in people suffering from hypertension and cardiovascular diseases as a result of increased in stress post flooding.

## 3. CASE STUDY

Kashmir won't be the destination of choice for many travellers during the last Dussehra holidays and beyond. In the aftermath of the recent floods, the state could lose a major chunk of the tourism business, one of its main sources of revenue, as travel companies and agents cope with enquiries and cancellations for the coming months. Travel companies and agents say the floods will have a negative impact not only in the coming months but also during the peak season between April and

June next year. Apart from tourism, the floods have derailed industries such as textiles, handlooms and handicrafts, which are popular among tourists. Events scheduled in the state in September and the months ahead have been thrown out of gear. In the past few years, there had been an upward trend in the number of domestic tourists visiting Kashmir. According to recent reports, there were 13.6 million domestic visitors in 2013, a 9.8% increase from the previous year. The Paradise Music festival in Sonamarg, which was to be held from September 11 to 15, was cancelled(1) The Twitter feeds of the organisers say they were stuck at Sonamarg for six days without any communications. They finally found a way out and planned to travel to Leh to catch a flight to Delhi. The Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) floods have left apple growers and traders in the Kashmir valley high and dry. J&K is the largest grower of apples in India, covering 242,000 hectares of the country's total area under apple, which is 315,000 hectares. As the calamity has struck at the beginning of the harvest season, it could cripple supplies across India. The valley grows a large variety of apples, harvested from July to mid-February. J&K accounts for 60 per cent of the apple grown in India, followed by Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The harvest season in Himachal Pradesh, another important grower of Apple in India, would be over in the mid of October. The prices in whole sale market are already up by 20-30 per cent, depending on the varieties Normally, prices stabilise when the Kashmiri apple starts arriving in the market. This year, traders are expecting the prices to remain high as the supplies would remain restricted due to crop damage as a fallout of floods in the Kashmir valley.(2)

### 3.1 Government's Approaches

Jammu and Kashmir government is planning to seek from the Centre a slew of concessions including income tax exemption and interest-free loans for tourism sector that has suffered nearly Rs 1700 crore of losses due to the floods. "We are preparing a proposal to be submitted to the Centre for seeking some concessions for tourism industry which has suffered heavy losses due to the floods,"(3). One of the major demands is exempting the hotels and other tourism-related establishments from income-tax for the current financial year, the official said." The exemption shall apply only to those tourism-related establishments which are already registered with the department," he said. The official said hundreds of hotels have suffered losses due to water logging especially in Rajbagh and Dalgate areas. "Hundreds of hotels had one storey of the building under flood water, which translates into damage for furnishings, linen and other equipment. The hoteliers will need money for making their establishments functional again," he said. The official said the department will seek interest-free one-year loans for those hotels, houseboats and guest houses which do not need much money for repairs and renovations. "Those establishments which need higher quantum of funds shall be given soft loans, may be at four per cent rate, for making their units functional again," he added. The official said the department will also approach the

RBI for relaxing the lending guidelines for loans to the tourism sector in the flood-hit state. He said while the overall losses to tourism infrastructure were at Rs 1700 crore, the state-owned facilities like hotels have suffered loss of over Rs 200 crore(4). The Centre has announced authorisation of Rs 100 crore reconstruction of tourism sector but the official said the funds granted will take some time to come. "We will have to submit detailed project reports for utilising the Rs 100 crore announced by the Centre. Given the procedures involved, I think we will get this money somewhere in February next year," he added. Several hotels owned by Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation on the banks of Dal Lake have also suffered heavy losses. The department has released Rs two crore for renovation of these hotels as these are used as accommodation for government employees working in the civil secretariat. On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the Jhelum River in Srinagar was seen flowing at 22.40 feet (6.83 mtr) which was 4.40 feet (1.34 mtr) above the danger mark(5)

#### 4. FIG. AND FACT

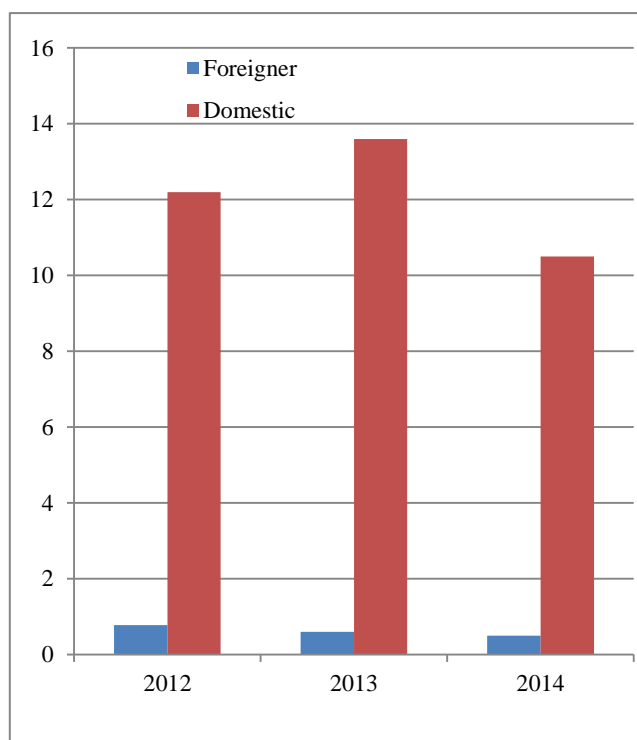


Fig. 1: (Tourists data comparison for j & k)

The state hosted 13.6 million domestic tourists during 2013, which was 9.8 per cent higher than the previous year. Over the same period, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) dropped from 78,802 to 60,845 — down 23 per cent. The Union tourism ministry has decided to allocate an additional Rs 100 crore, apart from the annual allocation of Rs 127 crore, to the department of tourism, Jammu & Kashmir(6). This is meant to help facilitate restoration of damaged infrastructure and re-

establish tourism in the state. Online travel portal Yatra.com has cancelled about 70% of the air and hotel bookings for September end. Leisure travel firm TUI has seen a 75% drop in new bookings for Kashmir compared with the same period last year. "We have 15 houseboats of our own at Dal Lake and at the moment, most of them have been impacted. Some houseboats, which were 50-70 years old, have been submerged and can be recovered only once the water recedes,"(7). Siah expects at least 100 houseboats to be affected. According to recent reports, there were 13.6 million domestic visitors in 2013, a 9.8% increase from the previous year. Around 900,000 domestic tourists visit J&K during the year, apart from around 200,000 foreign tourists and around 450,000 Amarnath Yatris.(8) MICE, domestic & sports tourism, Thomas Cook India pointed out that, "Customers, who booked with us in October -November during the immediate Diwali season, are choosing alternate tours to places such as Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, North East, Shimla, Mussorie." Travel portal Cleartrip, which saw big jump in cancellations to J&K for the long weekend starting October 2, 2014, has also seen demand for other locations rising. J&K is the largest grower of apples in India, covering 242,000 hectares of the country's total area under apple, which is 315,000 hectares. Mohammad Yusuf Shah, a loader from Sopore in Kashmir, said the districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Baramulla and Sopore were badly hit by the floods and that the apple growers were facing huge losses. The exact assessment would be done by government agencies, but 25-30 per cent of crop damage is expected. A Delhi-based apple trader, Kuwar Pal of Dauli Ram Kuwar Pal and Company, said compared to last year, apple prices were quoting higher. The news about the crop loss in Kashmir added to the speculation and pulled up the prices of Himachal apples by 30 per cent, compared to last year. Pal does not expect another jump in price as the price, according to him, is already quite high. There is no doubt that around 2 million people have been affected by this disaster, 2600 villages are affected in Jammu (1000 villages) and Kashmir and 390 villages were completely submerged (9). A great part of Srinagar was transformed into a huge lake. Many parts of Srinagar had over 20 feet of water with between 1 to 2 floors of buildings under water for several days.

#### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Summary, natural forces will permanently be with us and tourism is one of the major sectors of the world economy. Therefore, these two basic forces play different major roles. When thinking of tourism, images that come to mind are vacationers, fun, relaxation, sightseeing, and beautiful surroundings. Natural disasters, on the other hand, bring to mind images of destruction, death, and tragedy. For many, areas disturbed by natural disasters do not conjure up images of ideal vacation destinations. Rather, tourism and the profits derived from it become preys of natural disasters. The present structural design and construction practices in Jammu &

Kashmir do not take into account the effects of floods and the related problems of water inundation, etc which make it further important to include potential flood resistant design practices & sustainable rebuilding measures to be adopted during the reconstruction of fully damaged as well as new structures. The recent floods in Jammu & Kashmir have been an eye-opener to all the stakeholders such as designers, developers, engineers, government and the public where in the need to plan, design and build our infrastructure following not only the earthquake resistant guidelines but also the flood resistant housing guidelines has been greatly reinstated and deliberated and effectively proved owing to the colossal damages, death & destruction. The state government has decided to set up a modern weather forecasting system in Jammu and Kashmir. This will come out with accurate forecasts. It will act as an early warning system which will constantly monitor the weather conditions and water levels of different rivers. The state government is constantly working on the restoration of power distribution in the Kashmir Valley. While fuel supply has been restored in Jammu, the stocks are on their way to the Kashmir Valley. The logic they explained is then tourism is the mainstay of their economy and if tourists return it will help their local economy and help them earn livelihood and rebuild their community with dignity. **So, if we too want to help the Kashmir in its moment of need, all we need to do is, visit Kashmir in huge numbers. It will help pump money in their economy, promote local business, and create opportunities for small businesses like arts and crafts and much more. Let's Plan for Kashmir Trip this summer and be the hand of help!**

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