

Jammu: A Successful Pilgrimage Tourisms Destination

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Abstract

Every tourist destination has some internal strength which attracts tourists from different parts of the globe. These pull factors or tourist attractions satisfy the needs of tourists and their level of satisfaction has direct relationship with the future tourist inflow to this destination. Compared to other divisions of the state Jammu has comparative advantage in pilgrimage tourism whose number is increasing continuously. Pilgrimage tourism has become the main stay of tourism in Jammu and the present web of hotels in Jammu division is because of pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrimage tourism has been successful in Satisfying the taste of tourists, uninterrupted generation of employment and socio – economic development of Jammu division.

Keywords: Pilgrimage tourism, Tourist inflow, Tourist attractions, Economic Development

OBJECTIVE

1. To evaluate and analyse the success of Pilgrimage Tourism in Jammu

METHODOLOGY

In order to identify and evaluate the success of pilgrimage tourism of Jammu division I used secondary data. The secondary data was collected from various authentic sources. A regression model has been used to know the relationship between time and tourist inflow. In addition to this compound annual growth (Anti= (Logm - Logn/N)-1) has been used to know the growth of tourists over a long period of time.

INTRODUCTION

Jammu the 'city of Temples' extends from Lakhanpur to Banihal and Poonch to padder comprises ten Sothern districts of Jammu and Kashmir state (**Bandhu, 1989**). Jammu is known for the pilgrimage tourism which has contributed considerably in the economy of Jammu. It is the main source of livelihood for a vast group of people. The main stay for the present web of Hotels and Restaurants in Jammu division is pilgrimage tourism. Every year a large number of pilgrims visit Jammu and spend a lot of money. The money spent by these pilgrims does not go to a particular sector of economy but through the linkage effects it gets distributed in all sectors of the economy. From the frontline tour operator to government, from Rikshawala to bus driver, from hotel owner to pony walas, every one is the shareholder in the income in the income generated through the expenditure done by the pilgrims.

Jammu & Kashmir State is unique tourist destination and offers the attractions for varied type of tourists as Jammu is known for Pilgrims (Khan and Wani, 2013). Due to the combination of hilly and plain areas the climate, culture and customs vary from one place to another. During summer one experiences pleasant climate at higher mountains and tropical in outer hills. Beauty of hills and plains converge here 'High lands of Switzerland', 'Scotland of the East' and 'Black forests of Germany' are few remarks to distinguished visitors to this land to access its attractions. Jammu is the home of erstwhile royal homes, the most prominent being the Amar Mahal palace museum (Khan, 2007). There are innumerable holiday resorts and excursion spots with their own unique and excellent beauty hypnotise the tourists. Besides all these potentials the main attraction of tourists who visit Jammu division are its Pilgrimage Tourist destinations which are continuously attracting tourists.

Result and Discussion

From the tourism history of Jammu it is quite clear that Jammu has remained an important pilgrimage tourist destination. It seems that the inflow of tourists has increased in a satisfactory manner. No doubt there are also some days of low tourist growth but its period was very low and an immediate recovery has taken place after every epoch of bad business. The question which arises in my mind is that whether the pilgrimage tourism of Jammu division has been successful or unsuccessful in achieving its main objects. The objectives are similar to those which a tourism driven economy choses for it successful growth of sustainable tourism industry. The means of achieving these objectives may vary but it should be based on modern scientific lines. Before preceding forward it necessary to mention that what should be the measuring rods for the successful or unsuccessful development of various parameters of tourism activity. As we know that various statistical tolls are employed to measure the successfulness of tourism in an economy but we will limit ourselves to

- (1) Growth of Tourist inflow,
- (2) Average days of stay of Tourists and

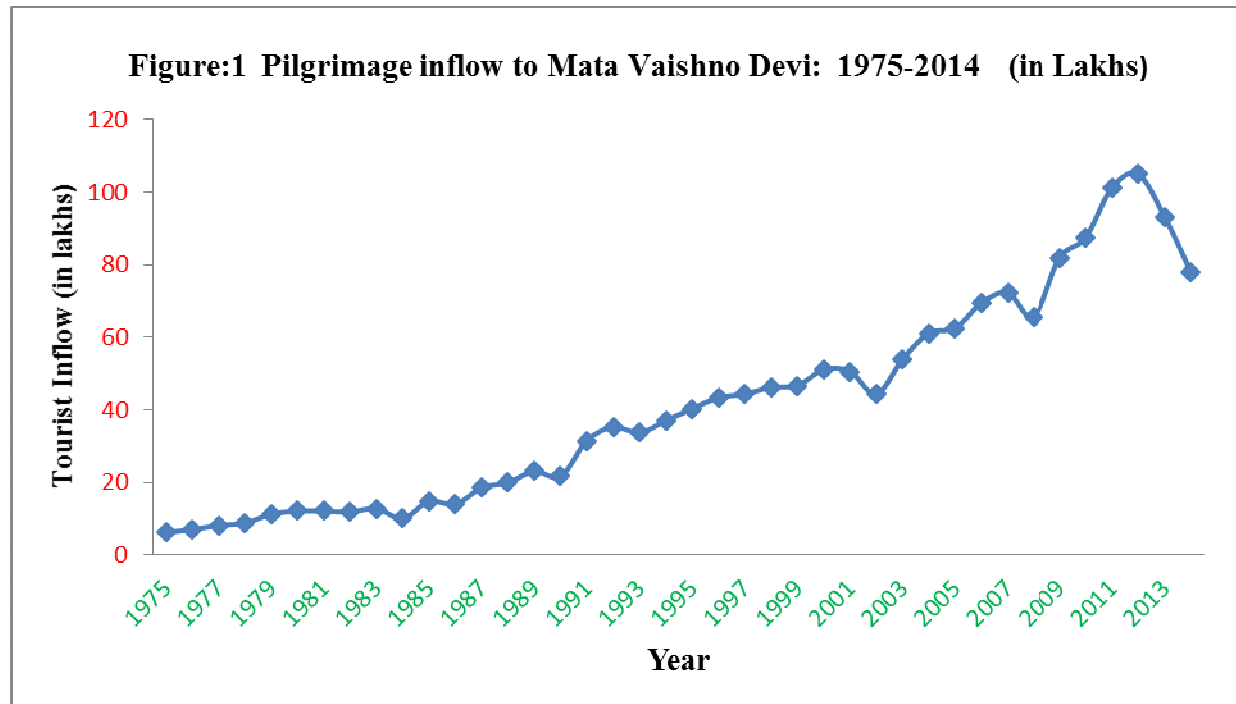
(3) Main pilgrimage Tourist attractions of Jammu.

The land of Jammu is blessed with the holy and sacred places of Hindu religion and Mata Vaishno Devi being one of them is the most popular shrine located in the lap of Tirkuta Hills of Jammu region. Every year lakhs of devotees from every nook and corner of the country (Ashfaq and Parveen, 2014). The pilgrimage tourist inflow of Jammu from 1975 to 2014 is shown in the Table-1 and here we can easily understand how for pilgrimage tourist products of Jammu has been influential in the attraction of tourists from different states of India.

Table-1 Yearly Pilgrimage inflow to Mata Vaishno Devi: 1975-2014 (in Lakhs)

Year	Total Number of Pilgrims annually	% change annually
1975	6.20	
1976	7.03	13.45
1977	8.16	15.93
1978	8.82	8.13
1979	11.25	27.52
1980	12.13	7.87
1981	12.13	0.04
1982	11.89	-2.03
1983	12.83	7.95
1984	10.08	-21.42
1985	14.85	47.25
1986	13.97	-5.94
1987	18.58	33.00
1988	19.93	7.27
1989	23.12	16.03
1990	21.69	-6.18
1991	31.51	45.28
1992	35.27	11.93
1993	33.69	-4.50
1994	37.06	10.01
1995	40.32	8.80
1996	43.36	7.52
1997	44.34	2.28
1998	46.22	4.24
1999	46.68	1.00
2000	51.10	9.45
2001	50.57	-1.03
2002	44.32	-12.35
2003	54.00	21.84
2004	61.10	13.14
2005	62.52	2.33
2006	69.51	11.17
2007	72.22	3.91
2008	65.52	-9.29
2009	81.80	24.85
2010	87.49	6.96
2011	101.16	15.62
2012	104.95	3.75
2013	93.24	-11.17
2014	78.03	-16.31
GAGR	6.54	
CV	68.85	

Source: Directorate of tourism Kashmir



The figures in the table depicts that there has been a remarkable flow of pilgrims to this renowned holy cave right from 1975 from various corners of India in search of spiritual wisdom and peace of mind and soul. In 1975 the number of pilgrims was 6.20 lakh which increased to 14.85 lakh in 1985 with CAGR of 8.26%. From 1986 onwards the flow of Vaishno Devi Pilgrims shows pronounced increase as it is evident that the figure pilgrims reached to 40.32 lakh in 1995, with an average growth rate of 13.52 per cent. This continuous and uninterrupted growth was possible because of so many factors including the establishment of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in 1986 the aim of which is provide better management and governance of the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji and its donations including the appurtenant lands and buildings. The Improvement in the basic infrastructure with large web of hotels, rest houses, guest houses and Yatra Bhavans in Jammu region has helped in the attraction and management of this huge number of devsootees. The CAGR of the pilgrims between 1995 to 2012 was 5.46% and in the year 2012 Vaishno Devi received the highest number (104.95 Lakh) of pilgrims ever visited in it whole history. But during 2013 and 2014 the number of Pilgrims decreased and reached to 78.03 lakh in 2014 with a growth rate of -16.31% compared to previous year.

The figures of pilgrimage tourist traffic in the above table shows that Jammu has been successful in receiving a continuous inflow of tourists. The continuous inflow of pilgrimage tourists indicate that Jammu is more familiar among the people of India and has been successful in satisfying the taste of people. The tourism sector of Jammu division has been able to provide services to the tourists at economic rates which motivated more and more tourists to visit Jammu. The other factor may be strong religious faith of people for paying obeisance to the pilgrimage destination of the Jammu division.

Regression Model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + u_i \dots\dots\dots 1$$

$Y =$ Tourist inf low

$X =$ Time

$u_i =$ error terms

$$\hat{Y}_i = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1 X_i$$

$$\hat{\beta}_1 = \frac{\sum X_i Y_i}{\sum X_i^2} = \frac{290.2}{85} = 3.41$$

$$\hat{\beta}_0 = \bar{Y} - \beta_1 \bar{X} \cong 81.64 - (3.41)(5.5) = 62.89$$

$$\hat{Y}_i = 62.86 + 3.41X$$

$$R^2 = 0.52$$

$$t^* = 8.400$$

The 't' value was found significant at 5% level of significance and it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between the tourist inflow and time. R^2 was found 0.52 which indicates that 1% change in independent variable can change 0.52 % in the dependent variable.

Duration of Stay

Duration of tourist stay plays an important role in how many tourist places can be visited by a tourist, the expenditure pattern of tourist on various services and the price of these services. According to a survey 72.07% tourist response was that their duration of stay was of 3-7 days while the rest 23.42% said that their duration of stay was below 3 days (Santek consultants). But according to Ashfaq and Parveen, 2014, in their research paper 51.20% said that their days of stay was below 3 days, 41.47% stayed for 3-6 days, 6.93% tourists duration of stay was between and only 0.04% stayed for more than 9 days.

A tourist stays in a tourist destination depending up on his budget, purpose of visit, quality and availability of services etc. As the duration of stay of tourist increases the tourist is bound to make the more and more use of different services. More use of different tourist services means more expenditure and more expenditure of tourists will boost income, employment and living standard of the people involved directly or indirectly in tourism industry. The maximum number of tourists in Jammu division stayed for 3 days and this is not a healthy trend for the successful development of tourism industry. The tourism industry should create such type of environment and tourism circuits which will motivate tourists to stay for 7-9 days. It will help provide an opportunity to the local service providers to increase their earnings from the marginal unit of tourist and will change the socio-economic setup of economy of Jammu division.

Main Pilgrimage Attractions of Jammu

(1) Vaishno Devi

Vaishno Devi is nestled in the Trikuta Mountains of shivalik range in the Reasi District of Jammu at an altitude of 5200 ft. It is among the sacred cave mandirs (temples), dedicated to the Goddess of Shakti (the power). The town of Katra is located at the foot of the Trikuta hills is the base camp for Vaishno Devi shrine. The journey to Vaishno Devi takes you through Overwhelming wilderness amidst snow-capped mountains and magnificent sprawling forests. In Hindu mythology, Vaishno Devi is a roop (form) of mother Goddess as the holiest pindis (rocks) (Malra, (2013). According to hindu legend more than 700 years ago, Vaishno Devi was an adherent devotee of lord Vaishno. Bhaironath, a tantric gave Vaishno Devi a chase when she was going towards Trikuta mountains. The goddess felt thirsty at Banganga so shot an arrow in to the earth and water gushed out at the place where banganga exists today. The imprints of her feet marked the spot of Charan Paduka where she rested. She mediated in the cave at Ardhkwari. This cave is known as Garbh Joon (Silas, 2007). Vaishno Devi Temple can be reached after undertaking a trek of nearly 12 km from the base camp of Katra. For the Stay of yatri at the base camp every type of accommodation facility, ranging from Luxury to Budget hotels are available. Besides this star categorized accommodation hotels who offer excellent view are ready to offer best services. Vaishno Devi attracts millions of devotees every year. The number of yatri visiting this famous temple cave has crossed the mark of one crore annually. This is due to the unflinching faith of the devotees who visit the Shrine from various parts of India and abroad, constant hard efforts of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board to improve the basic tourism infrastructure so as to make the visit more comfortable.

(Talwar, 2006) The whole infrastructure of hotels, rest houses, guest houses yatra bhavans in Jammu region have come up because of this holy cave. There has been a tremendous flow of Pilgrimage traffic to this sacred cave from 1950 from all corners of the India. In 1950 the cave temple was visited by 3000 pilgrims, it reached to 330700 in 1970.

(2) Ragunath Temple

Ragunath temple is situated in the heart of the city and is surrounded by a group of other temples. This temple is dedicated to Lord Rama, is outstanding unique and largest temple complex in northern India. The construction of this temple was started by Maharaja Gulab Singh-founder of Dogra Rule in 1851 and finally completed by his son Maharaja Rambir Singh in 1857. The Ragunath temple complex comprises of 17 temples, it houses sacred scriptures and collection of ancient texts and manuscripts. The inner walls of this temple are covered with gold

sheet on three sides. The gate of this temple opens in to Ragunath bazar named after this temple. Every day a large number of devotees pay obeisance. In the main temple idols of Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are placed on a raised platform, while in Prikarma there are idols of Lord Shiva, Indra, Agni, Vayoo, Varun, Yum, Nirakriti, Chandarma, Ananta etc. Besides the main temple there are twenty two other temples which are decorated with the idols of different gods and goddess. Outside the main temple there are two small temples which are decorated with Hunumanji's idol and a photograph of Maharaja Rambir Singh. The marble temple of Mata Durga is exactly behind the main temple. The temple of Ragunath is surrounded by fourteen other temples which are dedicated to various Gods and Goddess of Hindu pantheon such as Lord Ganesh, Lord Shiva, Shri Bharat, Natraj ji, Lord Krishna, Shri Vhama Avatar, Shri Shatrungan, Karam Avtar, goddess Parvati and other temples.

(3) Shri Ranbireswar

The Temple is named after its founder Maharaja Rambir Singh. The temple was constructed on the top of a hillock in the heart of the city, in 1863 A.D. and was completed 1878 A.D. It is the biggest temple of northern India dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is situated on Shalimar road. The temple houses a huge sphatic shivling measuring seven and a half feet in height surrounded by ten two feet high billaur (crystals) lings and gatieies with 1, 25,000 tiny shivalinga brought here from the river Narmada. Main gate of this temple is on the Shalimar road. This temple is surrounded by gardens from all sides. A big festival is celebrated on the eve of Maha Shiv Ratri. Every day especially on Monday a very big crowd of devotees pay obeisance to this temple.

(4) Peer Kho Temple

Peer Kho is a temple of Lord Shiva. During the reign of Raja Brim Dev of Jammu (1454-95) a legendary mendicant of its time namely Joogi Guru Garib Nath belonging to the Guru Gorakh Nath order came to Jammu and resided at Peer Kho. In local language Kho means cave, so the famous mendicant who stayed in cave came to be known as peer-i- kho. And with the passage of time the cave earned its name as peer kho. According to a famous myth Peer Kho was abode of Jamwant a bear hero of Ramayana practised austere penances in the cave. A shivlinga is erected inside the cave. The Devotees throng the cave on Purnamashi, Amavasya and Ekadashi and at the commence of Shivratri. But during the Shivratri festival the cave remains more busy.

(5) Shahdra Sharief

The Shrine of Shahdra Sharief is the most famous Muslim shrine of Jammu region and is about 177kms away from Jammu. The shrine built in 19th century on a beautiful hillock in Thanna area of Rajouri town is visited by thousands of devotees every day. It is an excellent symbol of religious harmony in the country as it is constructed by Hindu king in the memory of a pious Muslim saint. Irrespective of religious and cultural disparity people from various corners of the country visit this holy shrine to pay obeisance to holy saint.

According to a legend, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his army General Gulab Singh to defeat an adversary. During his camping at Thanna Mandi he went to call on a local pious recluse, who lived in a nearby village of Shahdra. When the Gen. approached the saint he was in deep devotion under the shelter of a tree with an apricot twig in his hand. On looking the Gulab Singh the saint smiled and when asked about the reason behind his mysterious smile. The saint said that he smiled on the miracle of the unfailing almighty who has committed to the charge of Gulab Singh's both performance of expeditions and also the management affairs of sovereignty. He also asked Gulab Singh to climb on a nearby mountain hill and cast an eagle glance on the around and whatever countries he could see the eagle of his fortune will someday spread its wings of sway over these places. After a gape of few years the saint's insight came true and Gulab Singh became the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. He built a shrine in tribute of the pious saint who had taken heavenly abode.

Conclusion

Jammu is the land of so many sacred places of Hindu religion and these places are successful in the attraction of tourist from every nook and corner of India. A large sector of the economy is directly or indirectly dependent on this continuous growing pilgrimage tourism. The uninterrupted growth of tourist inflow with vast number of pilgrimage sites is an indication for the successful tourism industry of Jammu. For the future success of pilgrimage tourism the tourism planners and experts should focus on the ways and methods which will increase the duration of stay of tourists. The tourists should be offered packages which will include visit of other adventure and scenic beauty destinations. It will increase the duration of stay, generate new opportunities of income and employment and will accelerate the growth of remote rural areas which host so many adventure and scenic beauty attractions.

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