



**Rural Tourism in Kashmir valley: - Tool for rural infrastructure and rural economy.**

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**Abstract: -**

Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions. The paper aims to analyze the rural tourism prospects through the rural community in the selected areas of Kashmir valley.

**Keywords: -** rural, adventure, culture, eco-tourism, heritage.

**Introduction**

Tourism is one of the rapid growing sectors in the world and over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Present day the travel industry is firmly connected to



advancement and includes developing number of new goals. These elements have moved the travel industry toward a key driver for socio-economic progress. Today, the business volume of the travel industry rises to or even outperforms that of oil trades, food products or automobiles. Tourism has become one of the major players in international commerce, and represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many developing countries. This growth goes hand in hand with a increasing diversification and competition among destinations. In view of its potential contribution to socio-economic development tourism is an important and, in some cases, vital for many countries (UNWTO, 2019). In Manila declaration tourism was regarded as an activity essential to the life of nations because of its effect on social, cultural, educational and economical sectors of national societies and on their international relations (WTO, 1980). This global spread of tourism in industrialized and developed states has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors - from construction to agriculture or telecommunications. The contribution of tourism to economic well-being depends on the quality and the revenues of the tourism offer. UNWTO assists destinations in their sustainable positioning in ever more complex national and international markets. The tourism industry of India is economically important and is growing rapidly. India's travel and tourism sector had attained the 7<sup>th</sup> position globally in terms of this sectors contribution to country's GDP. Moreover, this sector had generated 40.3 million jobs in 2016, which ranks India 2<sup>nd</sup> country in the world for jobs generated by this sector. Travel and tourism sector accounts for 9.3% of the country's total jobs. As per the data given by the World travel and tourism council (WTTC) Travel and tourism sector generated Rs14.1 trillion (USD 208.9 Billion) in 2016, which constitutes 9.6% of India's GDP(WTTC, 2017)

Tourism development and promotion are not only a source of employment, but also tax revenue, cultural benefits, and enhanced infrastructure that will in turn have positive, indirect impacts on other industries (Ko & Steward, 2002; Lankford & Howard, 1994). However, tourism development can also lead to potentially adverse impacts at the local level (tourism congestion, increased prices, etc.). To mitigate these effects, many authors advocate engaging tourism stakeholders in decision-making processes in the early stages of tourism development of a destination (Jamal & Getz, 1995).



Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions.

Rural tourism has been identified as a viable tool for sustainable development across the globe. Rural tourism related activities are widely regarded as key-tools for rural development, especially in developing countries. The development of a strong platform around the concept of rural tourism is definitely useful for a country like India where almost 74 percent of the population resides in its 7 million villages. The state of Jammu and Kashmir comprises of almost 72 percent rural population and its economy is based on agriculture, horticulture, handicraft, handloom, sericulture forests and hydro power projects. Jammu and Kashmir has a great potential for the development of rural tourism because of its several distinguished tourism attractions ranging from beautiful hill stations, scenery, horticultural products, the architectural masterpieces, fairs, festivals, art, crafts, culture, forest, wildlife etc. Jammu and Kashmir is the northern state of India sharing its borders with Pakistan, China and Afghanistan and with the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. Kashmir had been the popular tourist destination since time immemorial. Tourists across the globe have been attracted by the Kashmir valley for its diverse range of tourism products. Kashmir valley had a tremendous potential for various forms of nature-based tourism but the unfortunate part is that tourism in valley have been confined to some of the primary tourism destinations of the valley like Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonmarg. Because of this conventional tourism approach, the region is unable to harness the benefits of tourism. Tourism growth potential can be harnessed as a strategy for Rural Development. The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its 7 million villages. Across the world the trends of



industrialization and development have had an urban centric approach. Alongside, the stresses of urban lifestyles have led to a “counter-urbanization” syndrome. This has led to growing interest in the rural areas. At the same time this trend of urbanization has led to falling income levels, lesser job opportunities in the total areas leading to an urbanization syndrome in the rural areas. Rural Tourism is one of the few activities which can provide a solution to these problems. Besides, there are other factors which are shifting the trend towards rural tourism like increasing levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture and improved accessibility, and environmental consciousness. In the developed countries, this has resulted in a new style of tourism of visiting village settings to experience and live a relaxed and healthy lifestyle.

Rural tourism development can be a viable tool for the socio-economic development of the Kashmir valley, as it possesses a tremendous potential for this form of tourism. In order to execute the rural tourism development, it is mandatory to involve the local community in policy making and development of respective areas. Perception of the intending tourists is also very significant in framing the developmental plans. This study aims at analyzing the community and tourist’s perceptions regarding the rural tourism development in Kashmir valley. The guest and host perception analysis will be of utmost importance in carrying out the developmental operations without conflicts.

## **Review of Literature**

**Rural Tourism and Destination Image: Community Perception in Tourism Planning by May-Chiun Lo, Peter Songan and AbangAzlan Mohamad (2013):** Mentions that Many studies on tourism have demonstrated that tourists and tourism industry players are the major contributors to a destination image in tourism industry. Considering the potential cascading effect that local communities can have on their destinations, previous researches may have underestimated the impact of communities’ power on destination image. The main objective of this paper was said to hypothesize the impact of tourism on the local communities and destination image.



**Poverty Alleviation through Rural Tourism Development in Kashmir by Mir Abdul Hamid, Ahmad Ateeque, Shamim Syed Kausar (2018):** As per this study, Rural tourism is a recent outcome and subsidiary branch of tourism sector. It has been considered as a practical theme for sustainable development throughout the world. It is a type of nature-based tourism that shows the rural life, culture, art and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefitting the rural inhabitants socially and economically. Such form of tourism has created enormous impact on the rural economy and socio-cultural development of the concerned area on one hand and brings a prospective scope for the rural population on the other hand. Rural tourism has become increasingly popular in the developing countries in recent time and is widely considered as an important tool for rural development especially in developing countries. The development and growth of rural tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where about 75 percent of its population resides in 7 million villages. The state of Jammu and Kashmir consists of almost 70 percent rural population and its economy is based on agriculture, horticulture, tourism, handicraft, handloom, forests, sericulture, and hydro power projects. Kashmir Valley which is one among the three meso regions of Jammu and Kashmir state, has vast scope for the development of rural tourism because of its several famous tourism attractions such as beautiful hill stations, scenery, horticultural products, evergreen forests, wildlife, historical and the architectural monuments, culture, art, crafts, fairs, festivals etc. In spite of being the heartland of diversity of culture, tradition and natural resources, rural tourism is still in its budding stage. The present study aims to examine and analyse the important rural areas of Kashmir which have enough tourist potentiality and also attempts to explore various prospects of the growth and development of rural tourism in Kashmir that could play a significant role in sustainable development of rural societies.

**Community tourism and rural development in kashmir (2018) by Suheel Rasool Mir:** Tourism is one of the world's fastest-growing industries, and for many countries, especially those in the developing world, it holds promising economic backing. Not only does tourism create job opportunities and possibilities for economic development, but it can also do so in regions having few other economic resources. For these reasons, many countries, mainly in the developing world, have been proactive to build up tourism industries as part of national development strategies.



Although Kashmir is acknowledged as the heaven on earth because of its abundant charming spots and attractions despite that Jammu and Kashmir is an industrially backward state without a strong industrial stand. Community Based Tourism (CBT), a future prospect, is a sort of sustainable tourism that encourages pro-poor strategies at community level and helps to eliminate poverty in rural areas of Kashmir. CBT initiatives intend to involve local population in the management and supervision of micro tourism projects as a means of alleviating poverty and providing a substitute income source for community members. CBT initiatives also encourage respect for local traditions, culture and natural heritage. Tourism offers many advantages to rural communities. Community Tourism has potential and can be used as a strategy for Rural Development.

**Tourist Word of Mouth and Revisit Intentions to Rural Tourism Destinations: A Case of North Dakota, USA by Woomi Jo Phillips, Kara Wolfe, Nancy Hodur and F. Larry Leistritz (2011):** Destination managers in rural states, like North Dakota, understand the benefits of tourism and, thus, the importance of studying visitors' intentions. This study investigated visitors' perceptions of destination image, value and satisfaction and those variables' relationship with future behaviors, with a specific focus on their intent to return and make recommendations to others. The results showed that destination image directly affects visitors' perception of value and revisit intentions, and it indirectly affects satisfaction and recommendation intentions. The results also demonstrate how tourism practitioners can apply past models to their destination. The overall findings support the concept that a positive image is important to attracting repeat visitors.

**The perceived value of the rural tourism stay and its effect on rural tourist behavior by Ana Isabel Polo Pena a, Dolores Maria Frias Jamilena a & Miguel Angel Rodriguez Molina (2012):** Rural tourism constitutes a valuable tool for the sustainable development of rural areas. This paper explores issues of tourist motivation in rural tourism and develops a specially tailored perceived value scale for the rural tourism sector. Special attention is given to links between tourists' motivations, perceived values, and the service and actions by rural tourism providers leading to the sustainability of rural life, culture, economies and environment. Following a literature review, qualitative and quantitative surveys developed a 27-item scale, exploring both the functional and the affective components of the scale. Seven



research hypotheses were then tested by quantitative survey work. It was proven that the activities undertaken by the rural enterprise leading to greater rural sustainability are reflected in the perceived value scale through higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty of the rural tourists. The results of the study reveal that the rural tourism sector has specific characteristics that tourists greatly value and that other specialist tourist markets cannot offer, as highlighted in the contribution made by rural tourism enterprises to rural sustainability. This knowledge can help tailor product development and destination design to suit specific demands and influence communication and promotional activities.

**Local Community Participation in Homestay Program Development in Malaysia by Abdul Rasid Abdul Razzaq, MohdYusopHadi, Mohamad Zaid Mustafa AmranHamzah, Zainab Khalifah, Nor Haniza Mohamad (2011):** According to author, the tourism industry is the second largest economic contributor in Malaysia, following the manufacturing sector. In 2008, recorded tourist arrivals reached 22.05 million and resulted in RM49.6 billion (USD13.4 billion) in revenue. The government has recognized the tourism industry in Malaysia as an engine for economic, social, political and ecological development, especially in rural areas. The Homestay Program is actively promoted by the Ministry of Tourism as a type of community-based tourism in Malaysia. It is realized by the government as a catalyst for rural community development, particularly from a socio-economic perspective. The benefits of community-based tourism can be further developed through the participation of women, youth and retired people. To realize the potential of the Homestay Program, the Malaysian Rural Tourism Master Plan 2001 was formulated. In the Malaysian Plan (2006-2010), one of the points of focus by the government is on community development; rural tourism is one of the mechanisms. By June 2009, there had been 3,264 participants in 140 Homestays. Recently, the Ministry of Tourism has given the Homestay Program special emphasis. Under the 9th Malaysia Plan, a total of RM40 million was allocated to the ministry for upgrading infrastructure and facilities in participating villages. Developing the capabilities of local communities is an important component in ensuring the tourism development project benefits them; without supporting the communities in their endeavors, the physical development means nothing to them. If local communities are not equipped to actively participate, third parties could easily manipulate them, resulting in



external domination of tourism development. Therefore, this descriptive study explores the motivation of local communities involved in the home stay Program and the readiness among the local communities, as well as the appropriateness of training provided by government agencies aimed towards empowering local communities. Sixty-two respondents from local communities actively involved in operating the Homestay Program participated in this study.

**Rural tourism development, localism and cultural change by E W George, H Mair, Donald G (2009):** While reviewing this book I came across that rural tourism highlights the confluence of two influential yet contradictory features of modern life. One is that rural spaces have been redefined by the forces of economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political change, at the other side world is witnessing transformations in consumption and transportation patterns, therefore redefining travel tastes. The book also sensitizes about the commodification of culture for tourism. The author credits these rapid cultural changes to globalization and advanced technologies because of this phenomenon one can witness the acceleration of cultural change in societies across the globe.

**Rural Tourism A spiritual experience? Richard Sharpley Deborah Jepson (2011):** This study is aiming at analyzing the spiritual connect between the (Post) modern societies and to the places of their ancestral belonging. This study however considers that up to which extent a relationship exists between rural tourism and spiritual experience. The purpose of this paper is to begin to address this gap in the literature. It focuses in particular on rural tourism, an activity long recognised as occurring within and offering experiences antithetical to modern urban environments.

**Ministry of tourism Govt of Jammu and Kashmir (Rural Tourism):** According to MOT Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir, Tourism growth potential can be harnessed as a strategy for Rural Development. The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its 7 million villages. Across the world the trends of industrialization and development have had an urban centric approach. Alongside, the stresses of Urban lifestyles have led to a “counter-urbanization syndrome”. This has led to growing interest in the rural areas. At the same time this trend of urbanization has led to falling income levels, lesser job opportunities in the total areas leading to an urbanization syndrome in the rural areas. Rural





Tourism is one of the few activities which can provide a solution to these problems. Besides, there are other factors which are shifting the trend towards rural tourism like increasing levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture and improved accessibility, and environmental consciousness. In the developed countries, this has resulted in a new style of tourism of visiting village settings to experience and live a relaxed and healthy lifestyle.

**Barriers to Community Participation in Tourism Development: Empirical Evidence from a Rural Destination by Ravinder Dogra and Anil Gupta (2012):** This study initially gives insights regarding development of a tourism sector at a very rapid speed, thus becoming one of the important economic generators globally. Further the current global scenario of rural tourism is discussed. Author emphasizes upon the strong relationship between the host community and the destination which is their living place, where they perform their usual day to day life activities. As per this study vast area of the Jammu and Kashmir region which is having a very rich resource base for rural tourism development had not been studied so far. The research further mentions that in some cases the host community is reluctant to participate in tourism related activities in their respective areas. This study attempted to identify these barriers in community's participation as Operational barriers, Structural barriers and Cultural barriers (Tosun,2000). The study highlights the importance of identifying these barriers and minimizing them.

**Tourists Perception and Satisfaction: Implications for Destination Management by W. K. Athula Gnanapala (2015):** This study highlights the importance of tourism sector as a global economic and leisure activity due to its growing acknowledgement and benefits. Paper suggests that most of the countries are focusing on multiple marketing and promotional strategies to increase the tourist flow and at the same time increase their satisfaction level. As per the study if the destination is identifying and satisfying needs and wants of the tourists, the chances of repetition of their visits are high and at the same time tourists will spread positive word of mouth regarding the destination. However this study specifically aimed at identifying the relationship between the tourists perception and satisfaction, further describes its impact on destination management.



## Objectives

- To identify various motivators among tourists for adopting rural tourism in Kashmir valley.
- To analyze perception of host community towards rural tourism .
- To analyze the various motivational factors among local community to adopt rural tourism business.
- To suggest some measures for enhancing rural tourism development.

## Research Methodology

The study was conducted across the Kashmir valley. Emphasis was be laid upon the places with tremendous rural tourism potential including villages which had been identified by the ministry of tourism Govt of India for rural tourism development.

## Data collection and procedure

The data for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources.

### Primary Data:

The major source for executing the research will be primary data. Field surveys method was employed for data collection. A comprehensive questionnaire was framed for assessing the local community and tourists' perception towards rural tourism development. Respondents from varying background were selected on the basis of some important demographic aspects like age, gender, educational qualification.

### Secondary data

The secondary data utilized in the study was collected from the different Research Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, Articles and other records. The updated information related to the study was gathered using different E-resources. A number of high-quality text books in the area of tourism and particularly those related to rural tourism development were also reviewed.



## Sampling Design

**Sampling Methodology:** For this study data was collected from the rural communities and tourists visiting those targeted rural areas of Kashmir Valley. Convenience sampling technique was employed for collection of data from the respondents. Convenience sampling attempts to obtain a sample of convenient elements.

**Sampling Location:** Samples were selected from the targeted rural communities across Kashmir from the villages identified by the Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India for rural tourism development and also from those targeted rural areas which had a rich resource base but not identified by the government for tapping their rural tourism potential.

Rural Village (study Area)
Athwathoo
Tangmarg
Naranag
Aru valley

*(Table specifying the study area locations)*

## Sampling Frame

	Athwathoo	Tangmarg	Naranag	Aru valley
Male	1562	270	450	204
Female	1318	252	426	205
Total	2880	522	876	409

## Sample Size calculaton of Local Community

The sample size is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) formula with 95% confidence level. The calculation formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$



Where :

n= sample size required

N = number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

***Substitute numbers into formula***

$$n = \frac{4687}{1 + 4687 (0.05)^2}$$

While incorporating the upper mentioned formula sample size is calculated as 400. However, to increase the reliability of data, sample size will be increased to 500.

Number of Villagers selected from Athwato (A) = 200

Number of Villagers selected from Tangmarg (B) = 100

Number of Villagers selected from Naranag (C) = 100

Number of Villagers selected from Aru Valley (D) = 100

Total number of Villagers = A + B + C + D

Hence, total number of villagers selected for the survey will be (200+100+100+100) = 500

### **Sample Size calculaton of Tourists**

Since the tourist population of the targeted study areas is unknown, the initial sample size can be taken as 385 (Glenn D. Israel, 1992). However various previous studies had taken a sample size of 385 in case of unknown population. In order to increase the reliability of the data, sample size is taken as 400.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (.5)(.5)}{(.05)^2} = 385$$

$n_0$  is the sample size,  $Z^2$  is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area  $\alpha$  at the tails ( $1 - \alpha$  equals the desired confidence level, e.g., 95%),  $e$  is the desired level of precision,  $p$  is



the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, and  $q$  is  $1-p$ . The value for  $Z$  is found in statistical tables. which contain the area under the normal curve.

## **Conclusion: -**

Rural tourism can be an effective developmental tool for rural infrastructure and rural economy of Kashmir region as it not only can create employment opportunities, but can also help in socio- economic betterment of rural Kashmir by diversifying the economic activities in the region. A lot of beautiful spots in Kashmir have been left untapped, such areas need to be sustainably developed by applying principles of participatory planning. Participation of local stakeholders will boost up the tourism industry especially rural tourism industry. Capacity building among the locals and infrastructure development for the tourists should go hand in hand. Infrastructure should be provided keeping in consideration the purpose of tourism and anticipated tourist inflow. In a place like Kashmir, problems are not limited to the area, but are spatiotemporal and are complex in nature. Those problems need interlinked and perfectly tailored interventions on a regional basis. Rural tourism will not only promote, but also redefine tourism in Kashmir valley. If adapted, designed and evolved in tune with local cultures and landscapes, rural tourism can prove to be sanctuaries for nature lovers from across the world who seek genuine life experiences among people of varied civilization and historical ethos



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