



RESEARCH ARTICLE

RAILWAY AS A HARBINGER OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

Railway as a mean of transport and communication played an important role in the developmental process of the society whether it is social or economic. It alters the travel habit of people, increase connectivity and accessibility; generate employment, tourism development and so on. Railway as an agency of development played an important role in the development of the tourism. Tourism is a largest growing industry in the world and had important connection with transport. As the State of Jammu and Kashmir is famous for touristic destination. Kashmir is known as paradise on earth as there is lot of tourist spot. The coming of railway made the travel easy, comfortable and affordable. Railway not only helps in increasing tourism in Kashmir, it had also led to the social, economic and cultural development of the society. It not only provide all weather connectivity to the state but it can help the breakdown of the land locked position, promote integration, and increases interaction among the people of diverse background and location and the Railway dawn has touched the marginalized areas and section of the society in J&K and is set to have long term impact. The present paper study the role of railway in the tourism development in Kashmir valley and how it lead to the social, economic and cultural development of the Kashmiri society. The sources of data collection are both primary and secondary.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourist industry is based on the development of the transport network. The issue of provision of efficient transport infrastructure is also closely associated with tourism development. Railways in India have been playing a vital role in tourism development. "Experience the Rhythm of India-with Indian railway" is the slogan of railways to attract tourist<sup>1</sup>. The story begins in Britain when the first passenger railway line opens between Liverpool and Manchester in 1830. With the opening of first passenger railway in the world a new age, *The Railway age*, had dawned<sup>2</sup>. The period from 1890 to 1914 can be called 'The Golden Age of Railway' in Britain<sup>3</sup>. The introduction of railway communications was expected to convey a powerful ideological message that claimed railways would 'improve' India and bring the fruits of progress and modernity to its inhabitants. Introduction of railway in world was considered as symbol and cause of modernization.

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It not only revolutionized the transport world but it has also revolutionized the other sections of the society. The technological revolution in transport has brought about a boost to the tourism industry. A tourist always requires a convent, comfortable, cheap and safe transport facilities and travelling by train is best option for this. Trains are not only efficient and spacious but large number of people travels in a single trip. With the coming of railway, tourism got flip and it will lead to the economic development of the nation. As tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry in term of revenue and earn large sum of foreign exchange without any exporting of tangible material<sup>4</sup>. Though railways were meant to fulfill the economic and military needs of an expanding colonial administration, their role in uplifting India from her putative stupor was considered to be equally if not more significant. This confidence in the instrumentality of railways to transform India was also part of a wider belief which credited technology with an ability to propel social change. Steam locomotion therefore was expected to perform nothing sort of a social miracle for India<sup>5</sup>. Britishers would establish net of railroad over India and the result must be inappreciable (Karl Marx 1853 New York Daily Tribune).

<sup>1</sup> Ranade, P.S.(2009).*Infrastructure Development and its Environmental Impact*. Concept Publishing House, New Delhi.p-152

<sup>2</sup> Boowood, R. (1961). *The story of Railways*. Will and Hepworthltd, Loughborough. London.

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup>Johny. C.D. (2008).*Economic of tourism in Kerela:A study of selected tourist spots*. Calcutt University, Unpublished Thesis.

<sup>5</sup> Mukhopadhyay, A. (2013). *Wheels of change?: Impact of railways on colonial north Indian society, 1855-1920*. University of London

No doubt they built Railway for their own benefit but it lead to the formation of modern India and history of railroad depicted the growth and birth of modern India (Kholosa 1988). Since the introduction of Railway had altered the travel habit of people, enlarged facilities and broken down the barriers of isolation, enlarge education facilities, as it Provide cheap, speedy and safe transport facility, it enable various agriculturalist, businessman, professional and other workers to travel from one place to another for their needs. India had lots of tourist spot, pilgrimage spots which become part of attraction for the tourist. As railway provides cheap, safe and speedy service so people prefer to travel by railway which increases tourism.

**Objective of the study:** The Present study of the region (Kashmir) provides unique opportunity to study the role of railway in tourism development in rural, mountainous and tough terrain and how it contributes to the overall social, economic and cultural development of the Kashmiri society.

### Railway in Jammu and Kashmir

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is like a crown on the map of India and it is also known as the heart of Asia. The state of Jammu and Kashmir an erstwhile princely state is the north most state of India. It shares its border with the states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in the South, People's Republic of China in the North and East and Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the West and North West. The state has divided into three provinces viz Jammu, Kashmir and Ladkah, with 22 districts and having population of 1, 25, 48,926 and the literacy rate is 68.74% (census 2011). As the three regions of the State are differ in their geography, politics, physical features, climate pattern, vegetation, geology, culture and many other aspects .The state is mostly agrarian and 70 percent of population of the state depends upon agriculture for their livelihood and agriculture is considered as the backbone of the state's economy. Connectivity plays an important role in the social, economic, political and cultural development of the region. As the state is surrounded by the mountains expect in the south-West side. A major portion of the state's terrain is hilly and its height from the sea level varies from 3000 feet to 22740 feet. The state has road and air links with the rest of the country through south making it accessible from the South only<sup>6</sup>. As for As Kashmir valley is concerned which is surrounded by the mountains from all sides always covered by the snow expect for certain passes which raise three to four thousand meters above sea level. The surface of the valley is plain and abounds with spring, lakes and healthy resorts<sup>7</sup>. The road and air link is mostly affected due to weather condition and the valley remains disconnected from the rest of the country for months and it will affect the lives of the people. With a view to provide an alternative and reliable connectivity to Jammu and Kashmir, Government of India planned a 345 km long Railway line joining the Kashmir valley with the Indian railway network. The Jammu Kashmir was brought on the railway map of India in 1970s, when the city of Jammu-Tawi was connected with Pathankote. It was dream of the Dogra ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh, to connect Jammu with Kashmir through railway line. It was first brought in 1898 but due to some political reasons it was put on hold for various year. In 1983, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi kicked off the line from Jammu to

Udhampur and after twenty years of time gap, on April 13, 2005 the Jammu-Udhampur line was inaugurated except valley. In 1994 the central government planned the 326 km long railway line joining Kashmir valley with the rest of country. The Jammu and Kashmir Railway comes under Firozpur division officially known as Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar – Baramulla Railway link. It starts from Jammu covering a distance of 326 km to Baramulla on the north-western edge of Kashmir valley and constructed by different railway companies.

As the Jammu-Udhampur- katra- Qazigund- Baramulla line is the biggest project in the construction of mountain railways since independence and most difficult project undertaken on Indian sub-Continent. This whole project is divided into four legs that is Leg "0", leg "1", leg "2" and leg "3. The leg "0" include 53km distance covering Jammu to Udhampur Railway line which has its beginning from 1983 and after a gap of approximately 21 years it get completed in 2005. The work on Qazigund- Baramulla section which come under Leg "3" covering distance of 119 km which has been completed in three phases, the first section from Anantanag to Rajwansher (66 km) was opened to public on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 and second section from Rajwansher to Baramulla (35km) was opened on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and final section from Qazigund to Anantanag (18 km) was opened to public on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The section connected Qazigund to Banihal under leg "2" covering distance of 18km was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2013. The Udhampur to Katra section which come under leg "1" covering distance of 25 km was opened on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narinder Modi<sup>8</sup>. The section from Katra to Banihal under leg "2" is still under construction. In 2002, this project has been declared as project of national importance that it would construct irrespective of cost and it provide all weather and reliable connectivity to the state of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of country and it will lead to change the socio-economic scenario of the respective state.

### Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir

Kashmir is known as Paradise on earth and Famous for tourist destination. A famous Persian poet Sheikh Sadia's quote about Kashmir is, 'if there is any heaven on earth it is here in Kashmir'. Kashmir is famous for its beauty and natural scenery throughout the world. Its high snow clad mountain, scenic spot, beautiful valley, rivers with ice-cold water, attractive lakes and spring and ever green fields, dense forest and beautiful health resort, enhance its grandeur and become source of great attraction for tourist. In addition to that, Pilgrimage to famous religious shrine of the Muslim and Hindu make Kashmir a great tourist destination. As per the data compiled from Economic Survey-2014-15, the number of tourists visited Kashmir Valley during the years 2012, 2013, 2014 was 13.09 lakhs, 11.71 lakhs and 11.68 lakhs respectively. There are various tourist destinations in Kashmir which become part of attraction for the people in the world. There are beautiful historical monuments like Martand temple, Shankaracharya temple, Pari Mahal etc. Various Mughal gardens like Shalimar, Nishat, Acchabal, chashmashahi etc. Hiking and trekking is an attractive excursion for tourists. In Kashmir there are various places for Hiking and Tracking like Affarvat, Amarnath cave etc. Skating is an another

<sup>6</sup> Economic survey (2014-15)vol-1, Directorate of Economics & statistics ,J&K

<sup>7</sup> Raina. A.N. (2002). *Geography of Jammu and Kashmir*. Radha Krishna Anand and Co. Jammu.

<sup>8</sup> Northern railways/Indian railways portal CMS team

attractive thing in Gulmarg. There are various religious places for Pilgrimage for both Hindus and Muslims like Amarnath cave, khirbawani, Mahadev temple, Hazratbal, Baba-Rishi, Shrine of Makdood Shah Shahih and Shah Hamdam etc. There are various Springs and lakes like Wular lake, Harvan, Konsarnang, Sheshnang and Neelnang, verinang, Acchabal etc which become part of attraction for tourists coming from all the world. Last but not the least Houseboat in Kashmir are also part of attraction for tourist.

According to Dr Zivadin Joviac, 'Tourism is a social movement with a view to rest, diversion and satisfaction of cultural trait'<sup>9</sup>. According to the World Tourism Organization 'tourists are people who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purpose not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited'<sup>10</sup>.

Tourism is most important agency for the State of Jammu and Kashmir, as it is considered one of economically backward State of India. Tourism played an important role in economic, social and cultural development of the state. It generates employment, income, foreign exchange, lead to poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. It is regarded as multi-segment industry, therefore provide different types of job like, hotel manager, receptionist, guide, travel agent, photographer and many other jobs which are required to strength the tourism and indirectly lead to the development of the society. Wilson and John (2001) in their study found that tourism generate employment and income to the rural people. Hilal (2014) in their study found that there is an increase in employment due to tourist inflow from 22.101 lakh in 2014 to 34.06 lakh in 2020. R.Dube (1987) in their study confirmed that tourism lead to better income generation. Estimated that the amount of revenue generated by tourism mainly in the form of taxes, foreign exchange, export earning is more that rupees 3000 crore (Expert group report -2011, GOI) and contribute about 15% to 20% State Domestic Product (SDP) (Choudhary 2002). Tourism become leading industry in state in terms of service actually provide to the tourist without actually paying them in cash. Developments in tourism sector directly and indirectly lead to the development of socio-economic aspect of the society. It becomes backbone of the socio-economic development of the State. Tourism also support handicraft sector in the State and provides the tourists with an inside into the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Indian. Tourism not only lead to economic development it also lead to promote cultural and regional development and act as a mean of social education and better understanding among the people of the different region

### Interphase of Railway and Tourism in Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir has a tremendous potential to become a major global tourist destination. Importance of tourism in J&K economy is known for decades now and its role in economic development has been an area of great interest from policy perspective. It is estimated that almost 13 million tourists visited J&K in 2012 which placed J&K on 17th position where as Andhra Pradesh is ranked no.1 in the list of major tourist

destinations of India (Ministry Of Tourism, GOI). Kashmir has Lacked important infrastructures like railways. This inaccessibility has been a major obstacle in the development of the region. There is no efficient way to reach the city like Srinagar from rest of the country. Before the introduction of railway in Kashmir, road and air is the only way to reach Kashmir. The road journey is difficult due to the heavy snowfall and mountainous terrain and air route is also very expensive which is not affordable by everyone. The Proliferation of Railway in Kashmir from Banihal to Baramulla Provide cheap, affordable, time saving service to the Tourist both domestic and foreigner. The railway in Kashmir opens up new frontier for tourism and related development for the entire region. Railway act as a harbinger for growth, attracting the tourist both domestic and foreigner. Travelling by train is various adventurous, times saving and cheap, so tourist prefer railway. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch's pioneering work has shown, railway journey produced novel experience of space and time, self, fellow-travelers and landscape<sup>11</sup>. Breathtaking untouched beauty and variety of magnificent sites across the railway line greet all. Various Historical monuments, religious pilgrimage, refreshing greenery, geographical significance, and architectural uniqueness make the journey memorable for the tourist.

Railway promotes tourism as it provides all-weather and reliable connectivity of State to the rest of the world. It also help in generating jobs associated with tourism which in turn lead to development in tourism sector .Railway in Kashmir lead to explore the various places which remain untouched as it pass through hilly tracks which help in spot identification and exploring of new places which lead to increase the tourism. As railway leads to increase in accessibility and connectivity between and within different region of the State which in turn lead to the increases in tourists. Different people met; intermingled with each other lead to exchange of ideas, culture, tradition, language and it will promote social integration and harmony among the different communities residing in the State. Recently four new trains are flag-off between Baramulla in North Kashmir to Banihal in the Pir panjal range on the other side by the Union Railway Mister Suresh Prabh in order to promote tourism in Kashmir. The Tourist potential will enormously increase due to travelling Facilities provided by the railways, as it will be cheaper and time saving for the tourist. With the increase in tourists it will lead to create employment opportunities both in public and private sector. It lead to increase in Hotel Business, houseboats (shikarawala), travel agents, and guides also get benefit and it will lead to generate revenue in the state which will lead to the socio economic development of the state.

### Conclusion

The Jammu-Udhampur-Srinagar –Baramulla Railway project provide connectivity to the State with the rest of World. More than 70% of the state is yet to bring on railway map. It was very recently that rail service was introduced in Kashmir valley and Ladkah region is yet to be brought in functional railway map of India. It not only provide all weather connectivity to the state but it can help the breakdown of the land locked position, promote integration, and increases interaction among the people of diverse background and location and the Railway

<sup>9</sup> Zivadin, J.Tourism and geography.International journal of Travel and Receration.vol 3,pg 23

<sup>10</sup> Prasad, V.V and Sundari,V.B.T. (2009). Travel and tourism Management.New Delhi.

<sup>11</sup> Schivelbuschs, W.(1986).The Railway Journey: The industry of time and space in 19<sup>th</sup> century. California,

dawn has touched the marginalised areas and section of the society in J&K and is set to have long term impact. Railway and tourism are interrelated with each other. Better transport facility will going to boost tourism. Tourism is big Industry that generates employment, revenue and foreign exchange. With the increase in connectivity and accessibility tourism get boosted. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is considered economically backward, improved transport facilities lead to the development of tourism which in turn leads to open up various opportunities for the people of the valley .Tourism development lead to increase in jobs in various public and private sector. It will going to progress in the Hotel business, travel agents, guides and photographer etc. with the coming of railway in Kashmir tourism get boosted and which in turn lead to the development of whole social economic fabric of the society.

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