



## **‘Understanding Perception And Opinion Of Kashmir Tourism Marketing Post Abrogation Of Article 370’**

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### **Abstract**

Article 370 of the Indian constitution gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, a region located in the northern part of Indian subcontinent. Now a Union Territory with diverse and rich cultural heritage, Kashmir offers something for everyone from adventure to wildlife, leisure to ecotourism cultural tourism to pilgrimage tourism. After Article 370 was repealed on August 09, 2019, Kashmir's tourism industry made significant progress which is confirmed by increase in tourist footfall. According to statistics, the Tourism marketing has played a significant role in the promotion of tourism in Kashmir over the years especially after 05<sup>th</sup> of August, 2019. Foot fall, traffic, money, infrastructure, and employment have all increased. This research study's main goal was to study the perception and opinion on Kashmir Tourism Marketing. A research tool (questionnaire) consisting of a set of 12 questions was used to collect information from the respondents. Response of Questions related to Kashmir Tourism Marketing was put to Chi Square test to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that there is no statistically significant correlation between the type of respondents and their opinions on particular Kashmir tourism marketing criteria. Instead, the opinions of respondents on particular Kashmir tourism marketing criteria and their gender are statistically independent. The suggestion was that Kashmir Social media should be used to promote tourist destinations primarily; hosts should be active in promoting local tourist destinations and be rewarded for doing so; and the tourism marketing plan needs to be updated. Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) has been conferred with the vital role of Kashmir tourism marketing which so far has shown great prospects and opportunities

**Keywords:** Article 370, Ecotourism, Tourism Marketing, Social Media, tourist footfall, JKTDC

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## **Introduction**

A country's infrastructure is developed, its revenue is increased, and a sense of cultural interaction between locals and visitors is sown thanks to tourism. In several locations, tourism generates a sizable number of employments. Due to its extensive supply chain, tourism has the ability to reach and benefit a vast number of individuals/ stakeholders. Promotes Economic Diversification and Creates Jobs for Rural Youth and Minorities and Strengthening Rural Communities. Hence the goal of tourism marketing should be to publicise the company, differentiate it from competitors, draw in consumers, and build brand recognition in addition to exceeding the guest expectations by communicating successfully with the tourists. Since Article 370 was nullified that gave the erstwhile state its special status and the mandate to define its domicile rules, there has been a successful marketing campaign in place to identify the ideal target market followed by a strategy to reach these potential customers which is evident from the ever increasing tourist inflow. Without a doubt, Kashmir Tourism's current marketing is really effective. However, it is now necessary to make changes in order to boost tourism, which was marred with the armed insurgency since 1989. Even though Jammu and Kashmir came to a stop in 2019 when Article 370 was repealed, by the time the Valley was returning to normal, the epidemic presented new challenges. However, when the national-level Winter Sports Khelo India Games were hosted in Gulmarg in January 2021, things took a turn for the good and the tourism industry saw a resurrection, which was strengthened by lot of snowfall and filming in the Valley by various Bollywood and other production companies.

## **Review of Literature**

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) at Ottawa Seminar, has defined tourism marketing as, "a management philosophy which, in the light of tourist demand, makes it possible through research, forecasting and selection of tourism products/services from suppliers, on the line with organization's purpose and tourist satisfaction." Krippendorf defines tourism marketing, "as the systematic and coordinated execution of business policies

by both private and public sector tourism organizations operated at the local, regional, national, or international level to achieve the optimal satisfaction of the needs of identifiable tourist groups, and in doing so to achieve an appropriate return." The Ministry of Tourism government of India organized a series of events in Srinagar under the theme of "Tapping the Potential of Kashmir: Another Day in Paradise" from 11th -13th April 2021. In September, 2021, The J&K Tourism Department held a promotional event at Kolkata. The event was attended by leading and eminent travel industry groups, media and senior officials from the Tourism Department of West Bengal. The Tourism Department of Kashmir launched a Srinagar City Heritage Tour Bus Service in January, 2022 to attract tourists with its exciting historic sites, local handicrafts and cuisine. Singh (1993) laid stress on planning for sustainable tourism development by providing and maintaining high quality tourist facilities, service attractions and activities, resorts, adequate transportation, enough infrastructure and employee training and facilities should be included in resort development. Ongwae et al (2013) concluded that marketing and promotional policy positively influences tourism growth. Molina et al (2010), concluded that favourable destination image plays a pivotal role for managing tourism and destination marketing successfully and promotional means like internet, brochures, tourist offices and guide constitute an active and open way of getting information for tourists. Ministry of Tourism (18 APR 2021 by PIB Delhi) posted that In order to promote the various Tourism potentials of Jammu & Kashmir and to address the various opportunities in Travel, Tourism & Hospitality in the Union Territory Of Jammu & Kashmir the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India & Department of Tourism, Government Of Jammu & Kashmir in association with FICCI (Knowledge Partner), and IGTA organized a unique networking platform 'Tapping the Tourism Potential of Kashmir: Another Day in Paradise' recently at Srinagar.

## **Research Problem**

Kashmir's peaceful beauty shows through in a

variety of ways. But it's most obvious in the smiles and welcoming attitudes of the locals, who greet guests with open arms and joyful hearts. Kashmir is appropriately referred to be "Paradise on Earth" since nature has bestowed it with beauty. Surrounded by majestic Mughal-era gardens, lush green valleys, sparkling lakes, and Himalayan peaks. Home to individuals from many ethnic backgrounds have had a significant impact on Kashmiri culture. The inhabitants of Kashmir are a mixture of diverse ethnicities, each with its own appearance, attire, eating habits, customs, traditions, rituals, etc. The unmatched beauty of Kashmir provides visitors a variety of activities. Still, efforts must be made to include it on the global tourist map. A distinctive highlighted tourism marketing campaign was launched to promote Kashmir's tourism industry (Back to valley, Kashmir Calling, Valley Weekend, #WarmestPlaceOnEarth etc) which led to a notable increase in visitor numbers. The researcher conducted the current study to better understand people's perceptions and opinions about Kashmir tourism marketing after Article 370 abrogation.

### **Significance of the research Study**

The number of visitors visiting Kashmir is at an all-time high after repealing article 370. After Articles 370 and 35(A) were repealed on August 5, 2019, the tourist industry in Jammu and Kashmir saw growth. Due to improved law and order and infrastructural development, the number of visitors visiting the UT has increased. Kashmir's tourist sector has the potential to grow more. On a national and international level, recognition is still required. Actually, a growth in tourism is only predicted if Kashmir's tourist attractions are widely promoted and potential tourists are lured, which can only be done by using a creative, tourist-focused marketing strategy. The stake holders of Kashmir Tourism can benefit tremendously from this study's identification of many factors for effective execution of tourism marketing strategies.

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To study the perception and opinion on Kashmir Tourism Marketing post abrogation of Article-370.
- ii. To provide suggestions for the full exploitation and development and execution of tourism marketing strategies for the promotion of tourism in Kashmir.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Ho1: The opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing post abrogation of article 370 and their Gender are statistically independent

Ho2: Following the repeal of Article 370, there is no correlation between the kind of respondents and their opinions on particular criteria for Kashmir tourism marketing.

### **Research Methodology**

The population of interest for this study is tourists who have visited Kashmir after the abrogation of article 370. Both qualitative and quantitative methodology was applied and data was collected from a sample size of 150 units. For data collection a structured non-disguised questionnaire consisting of a list of questions along with choice of answers was administered and Likert's five points scale where psychometric response was recorded in five points as

- i. Strongly disagree
- ii. Disagree
- iii. Neither agree nor disagree
- iv. Agree
- v. Strongly agree

Moreover, percentage and Chi Square test were used as statistical tools for data analysis and testing of proposed hypotheses

### **Discussion of Results and Findings**

Ho1: The opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent

S- Significant, NS – Not Significant

**Table 1.2 shows that  $\chi^2$  value for the opinion of respondents on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism marketing vis-à-vis their Gender**

Criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing	Df	p value of $\chi^2$	Result
Amarnath Yatra helps to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country	4	0.462	NS
Film tourism in Kashmir has added to the value of Kashmir as a tourist destination	3	0.551	NS
Advertisement on T.V. and in Newspapers is accurate and informative	4	0.657	NS
Social media has transformed the way potential tourists think about Kashmir	4	0.742	NS
Abrogation of article 370 has a positive influence on Kashmir tourism	4	0.282	NS
Tourism Slogans play an important role in promotion	4	0.659	NS
Success stories shared by tourism department help to counter negative perception	4	0.089	NS
Tulip Festival, Laser and light shows on Dal Lake, Kahani Kashmir ki, Winter festival help to promote tourism	4	0.218	NS
Adventure sports like Golfing, Skiing, Trekking, River Rafting, Mountain Biking, Shikara Ride etc have a positive impact	4	0.244	NS
Food, Festivals and Fairs are well promoted	4	0.405	NS
Folk, Music and other festivals help in reimagining the brand	4	0.258	NS

As shown in the above table, since ‘p’ value of Chi Square test for all selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing is greater than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing and their Gender are

statistically independent

**Ho2:** There exists no significant association between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing

S- Significant, NS – Not Significant

**Table 8.2.  $\chi^2$  value for opinion of types of respondents on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing**

Criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing	Df	p value of $\chi^2$	Result
Amarnath Yatra helps to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country	8	0.501	NS
Film tourism in Kashmir has added to the value of Kashmir as a tourist destination	6	0.495	NS
Advertisement on T.V. and in Newspapers is accurate and informative	8	0.288	NS
Social media has transformed the way potential tourists think about Kashmir	8	0.619	NS
Abrogation of article 370 has a positive influence on Kashmir tourism	8	0.004	S
Tourism Slogans play an important role in promotion	8	0.664	NS
Success stories shared by tourism department help to counter negative perception	8	0.321	NS
Tulip Festival, Laser and light shows on Dal Lake, Kahani Kashmir ki, Winter festival help to promote tourism	8	0.116	NS
Adventure sports like Golfing, Skiing, Trekking, River Rafting, Mountain Biking, Shikara Ride etc have a positive impact	8	0.083	NS
Food, Festivals and Fairs are well promoted	8	0.057	NS
Folk, Music and other festivals help in reimagining the brand	8	0.288	NS

According to the aforementioned chart, there is a substantial correlation between the respondents' response types and their perception of the Kashmir Tourism Marketing criteria "Abrogation of Article 370 has a Positive Influence on Kashmir Tourism." And because the p value of the Chi Square test is bigger than the expected level of significance, there is no significant correlation between the kind of respondents and their opinions on the remaining chosen parameters of Kashmir tourism marketing. In addition to this, there is a good percentage of respondents who strongly agreed that ‘Success stories shared by tourism

department help to counter negative perception ‘while only a small percentage of respondents strongly disagreed for the same. Majority of respondents strongly agreed for ‘Film tourism in Kashmir has added to the value of Kashmir as a tourist destination’. Besides, a healthy percentage of respondents strongly agreed for ‘Advertisement on T.V. and in Newspapers is accurate and informative ‘Whereas only small percentage of respondents strongly disagreed for the same criterion. Interestingly, majority of respondents Abrogation of article 370 has a positive influence on Kashmir Tourism Marketing’ while just a small percentage

strongly disagreed for the same. Further, there were many of respondents who strongly agreed that 'events and programmes such as Tulip Festival, Laser and light shows on Dal Lake, Kahani Kashmir ki, winter festival etc help to promote Kashmir Tourism. Similarly, an encouraging percentage of respondents strongly opined that Amarnath Yatra helps to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country while an average percentage had a neutral opinion on this.

### **Limitations and Scope for the Future Research**

The findings of this study may not be generalized because it is based on data that was readily acquired from the respondents. The study is limited to just five popular tourist locations in Kashmir: Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Mughal Gardens, Manasbal, and Aharbal due to time and other considerations. In addition, the study only used 150 sample units as its sample size. By using a big sample size and include additional Kashmiri tourism destinations, further study may be done.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

Barring few incidents security situation after the abrogation of Article 370 in valley has improved thereby boosting tourism. The current tourism season in Jammu and Kashmir is being hailed as the golden era in tourism history of Kashmir. Moreover following the implementation of the Film Policy in Jammu and Kashmir, Bollywood is once again focusing its attention and cameras on its once favorite filming location, Kashmir. Further Government should inculcate more sense of security, understand the needs of the tourists and build infrastructure compatibly, have more activities for youth, conduct food festivals, tap into the power of reviews and feedback, engage social media influencers. All stake holders should adopt tourist friendly approach to meet, manage and exceed their expectations. Also social media can be used for the promotion, blogs, online banners, destination videos, highlight the history and culture, attractive events and developing new spots can be of great advantage.

### **Conclusion**

After the data was analyzed and interpreted it can be said that after article 370 was nullified that gave the erstwhile state its special status and the mandate to define its domicile rules, the tourism sector has witnessed remarkable achievements. The same can be attributed to infrastructure development, improvement in connectivity due to increased domestic and international flights and government's plan to build another terminal at the airport, healthy budget allocation and better law and order. However, now it is a time to revamp such marketing strategy to increase, create a snowball effect and improve repeat business.

The results indicate that that the opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent and no significant association is found between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criteria of Kashmir Tourism Marketing except that Abrogation of article 370 has a positive influence on Kashmir tourism.

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