Rural Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir: Opportunities and Challenges with Special Reference to Kashmir

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Abstract

Rural tourism a recent offshoot of tourism sector has been identified as a viable theme for sustainable development throughout the world. 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. This purpose of this study is to examine the role of government in rural tourism development of Jammu and Kashmir and also attempts to analyze various opportunities and challenges for rural tourism development in the area of study. The outcome of research work will be beneficial to the stakeholders of tourism industry as well as the policy makers in planning effectively the road map for rural tourism development and promotion in Jammu and Kashmir

Key Words: rural tourism, development, challenges, opportunities