

# PROMOTION OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN CONFLICT THROUGH RESTORATION PRACTICES; A STUDY OF DMOS

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## **Abstract**

*DMOs play a pivotal role in grabbing attention of tourists towards the On Ground and in house restoration practices adopted by the stakeholders in the promotion of destinations plunged in the conflict. The study helps to find out the perception of different restoration practices adopted by the governmental DMOs in promoting the conflict destinations in Jammu and Kashmir. In this paper the researcher collected the data from the hotels and destination management organizations of Jammu and Kashmir. The analysis part includes descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation). The purpose of this study is to know about the role of DMOs in promotion of tourist destinations which are in plunged in the conflict situation. After the analysis of data it was found that celebrity endorsement and social media involvement has lead positive role towards promotion and restoration of destinations plunged in the conflict like situations.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict, Tourist Destinations, Restoration Activities and Promotional Strategies*

## **Introduction**

As per the (Grängsjö, 2003) the entities/enterprises which are responsible for the upliftment of tourist destinations in terms of marketing and other activities are called as Destination Management Organisations (DMO's). The destination marketing organizations (DMO's) and the enterprises are involved

in the building and marketing of destination tourist services (Grängsjö 2003). The marketing success of a destination is dependent not only on the called push factors (market demand forces) but also on the pull factors (supply-side factors), that have a major impact on the branding success of a particular destination.

It is evident that the continued development of tourism in a country provides benefits in terms of increased foreign exchange earnings because, tourism is an industry that has experienced notable growth and no doubt portrays even more potential growth for many years to come (Riley, 2002). Stafford (2002) stated that the effects of terrorist attacks might cause political instability, which leads to the decline or disappearance of tourist arrivals in some tourist destinations, e.g in Kashmir valley the tourist influx in 2008 and 2010 declined due to political uncertainty.

As per the (Beirman, 2011) the underlying intention of a successful tourism restoration program is not merely restoring or getting back to where things were before the crisis event but to build back better. This is designed to result in a more marketable destination and business and to improve infrastructure to the point that a similar event in the future may be less destructive Najjar, A. H., and Hamid Rather, A. (2020) Marketing contribution to the restoration of tourism potential manifests mainly in the form of its specialized form, as Tourism Restoration marketing (Kulcsár, 2012). Once a situation is identified as a crisis and the crisis mind-set is in place, the gravity of the situation is likely to assure discipline and dedication from the initiation of crisis management activities until full restoration is achieved (Sonmez et al., 1999). In other words restoration from a disaster or negative issue requires planning (Pike, 2016). For any tourist industry disturbance or turbulence in destinations indicates its tourism movement towards crisis, which ultimately stresses upon the normal conduct for tourists, thus harm a destination's reputation as a safest option, its attractiveness and leave it with degraded position in market.

The process of restoration is created and generated by destination-marketing organizations (DMOs) (Blain et al., 2005) to create a positive image and differentiate their destinations from other tourist destinations (Gnoth et al., 2007). Zeithaml et al. (2009) reported that resolving customer/tourist problems (or recovering service failures) through effective restoration strategies has several multiple effects such as increasing tourist satisfaction and loyalty and generating positive word-of-mouth communication (post-visit behavioural). Once a situation is identified as a crisis and the crisis mind-set is in place, the gravity of the situation is likely to assure discipline and dedication from the initiation of crisis management activities until full

restoration is achieved (Sonmez et al., 1999). It involves the actions taken by the service providers or destination management organizations to fix these failures (Zeithmal et al., 2013).

In order to maintain the touristic flow at a destination, DMOs and promotions play an active involvement of achieving proper touristic flow, Najar, A. H., and Saini, G. K. (2018). All these three aspects depends upon time and confidence, which in turn depends upon the branding by DMOs. There are number of strategies used in development of tourism and different activities are conducted at different destinations.

DMOs and their role plays an impact towards economic sustenance of a destination as it is of prime importance. It has been seen that the celebrity endorsement and homestay help to generate the economy for the tourism destinations where in it is used. In addition to this the time is saved, quality of standards are met which in turn helps to finish other works of promotion, that results towards the economic sustenance of the tourism. The major issues that degraded the tourism of J and K started was safety and security the objective of this research is to determine to what extent the safety and security issues in J and K impact the tourism and what could be the solution to the negative image that has been portrayed about J and K and alternate methods, techniques and programs that could help in recovering the market for tourism.

## **Review of Literature**

### ***Restoration Marketing Practices in Conflict***

The concept of restoration of a destination is an understudy in the tourism and management segment (Beirman, 2003). In discussing the numerous aspects of crises and zonflicts, Pearson and Clair (1998) described their results as a structure being re-established to its usual shape. Crises pressurize to destroy reputations as they provide people with reasons to imagine badly about the organization (Coombs, 2007).

However the destination restoration has much been analyzed in terms of its consequences of destination image rather than putting up the strategic approach (Drabek, 1995) and describing the basic focusing on basic fundamentals of a restoration development like redrafting the social, economic and political scenario (Edmunds, 2011). UN World Tourism Organization (1998) explained the restoration as a standard outlook on improving from a crisis through proper remedial practices. When developing the destination after certain conflict, tourism practices should not be looked in isolation but rather as a source for peace building along with economic development (Edmunds,

2011). According to Carlsen and Liburd (2008), there is very scarce literature available that gives the clue to assess the destination restoration and in most situations very descriptive.

Schannon (2006) has explained such situation as a difference between operational attentiveness and organizational attentiveness where operational attentiveness involve the plans to control the incidents and rapidly attaining the set standard, and organizational attentiveness is linked with creating the crisis approach among those in hand. According to Causevic and Lynch (2013) the political authorities and government officials needs to play an essential part in fostering normalization and implementing an appropriate tourism policy that could efficiently regulate and retain the development of tourism (Novelli et al., 2012). In fact, conflict situations sometimes increase discrepancy among tourists (Causevic & Lynch, 2013) which may also produce painful memories for many people (Novelli et al., 2012) and further increase and recreate new conflicts (Moretti, n.a). where it aims at reversing the negative image of a destination and enhancing the tourist demand (Moreno and Ritchie, 2009). According to Hysted and Keller (2008) the communication planning and development should be incorporated and altered the source of communication all over the crisis situations with the change of the situation. According to Durocher (1994) the destination recover relies upon the efficiency of tourism authorities in developing their facilities as the level of pre-crises, and an efficient marketing that ensures the availability of the destination for the tourist business. Instead of many risks, Najar, A.H., Rather, A.H., Mir, M. A. (2020) many destination authorities and organizations are not well prepared for the disaster events, and mostly rely upon the temporary solutions (Walters & Mair, 2012).

Same happens here with the activities and promotions of DMOs for tourism destinations at country level. By understanding the scenarios of different dimensions of the construct, community involvement, trade practices, role of government and other related bodies (NGO, private players, media) strategies can be formulated that may primarily improve the shortcomings at ground level Rather, R. A., Najar, A. H., and Jaziri, D. (2020) and secondary will enhance the inflow of tourist of diverse origins through promotions, marketing, community involvement, regulatory functions. These strategies main report to the problems that are currently prevailing in the region and with time these strategies may improve the regional conflict to a greater extent.

## Issues Faced by Tourist and Tourism Industry

- Low footfall of foreign tourists.
- Decreasing domestic footfall.
- Conflict arising during peak season.
- National media reporting on Kashmir.
- Lack of interest from central government.
- Natural catastrophe.

Author	Title of Research Paper	Variable/Sub Variables
Gabrielle Walters & Judith Mair (2012)	The Effectiveness of Post-Disaster recovery Marketing Messages - The Case of the 2009 Australian Bushfire	Recovery Marketing Celebrity Endorsement Past Guest testimonials Festivals and events
E. Kate Armstrong a & Brent W. Ritchie (2008)	The heart recovery marketing campaign	Recovery Marketing Crises communication plan Timely dissipation of information Recovery campaign Message consistency
Dr. David Beirman - (2011)	Tourism Risk, Crisis and Recovery Management Guide PATA	Recovery Marketing Incentives for visitation Benefits for visiting now. Value – added arrangements Familiarisation trips
Noel Scott , Eric Laws & Bruce Prideaux (2008)	Tourism Crises and Marketing Recovery Strategies, Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 23:2-4, 1-13,	Recovery Marketing Crises study Political audit Risk analysis Reconfiguring stakeholders network Joint marketing of stakeholders
Francesca Granville, Amisha Mehta, Steven Pike (2016)	Destinations, disasters and public relations: Stakeholder engagement in multi-phase disaster management	Disaster Situation Disaster Assessment Crisis Management Plans DMO Performance Attribute performance Stakeholders Engagement

The above-mentioned issues are caused by multiple factors that are either from the authority or from the community and participating player. Authority mostly has a regulatory role to play there they regulate the operations of the participating player and also make provisions for the development of the overall industry by investing in the tourism industry for promotions, accessibility and other areas (MOT), and subsequently in Jammu and Kashmir is development, promotion apart from this the primary functions are administration of rules regulations and law. Development and Promotion of tourist destinations are the key ingredients the Economics of tourism industry and national GDP. In Jammu & Kashmir the three provinces Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh has distinctive features that attract tourists different interest, Jammu has been specifically attracting polygreen tourist and in 2017 received to 922800 tourist, and 8170880 to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, Ladakh on the other hand attracts tourists interested in culture and heritage and received 230662 tourists. Kashmir is a mixture of pilgrimage and recreational Tourism and has received 12277 64 tourist including foreign and domestic. These figures define the strength of each province and contribution of each in National GDP which is usually not convincing and at times or abnormal, among the three provinces the capacity of Kashmir to attract tourists is much higher than other two provinces, but due to abnormal situations and prevailing conditions this capacity is not reached to a satisfactory level always. Ladakh and Jammu are not much affected as they have feasible conditions for tourism usually, but there is some impact of the conflict found in these two regions. The purpose of the study is to understand the problems faced by tourism industry in conflict situation and to analyze the perception of stakeholders towards these problems and restoration practices adopted by the governmental DMOs.

## **Scope of the Study**

This study is conducted at the J&K, in order to find out the activities followed by the tourism officials for affective tourism footfall and which would in turn lead economic sustenance for the industry. This paper is helpful tool for industry practitioners, researchers and academics as it does not only involve promotional practices but also the economic aspects of industry.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Sampling***

The sampling of this research paper took place in tourism stakeholders in order to find out the usage of these stated practices. The sample size of 200 sample was taken from above organizations in the month April 2019. This sample size was calculated with the help of formula given by Krejcie and Morgan, 1970.

### **Research Instrument**

The structured questionnaire on the basis of different restoration practices was formulated after applying the 5-Point Likert's Scale instrument. While as secondary data was collected from published journals, books and articles. In order to go for the descriptive analysis, the mean, standard deviation was applied.

### **Data Analysis & Results**

A preliminary analysis of the data reveals that the sample is composed of about 200 tourism stakeholders mix of travel agencies and hoteliers from Kashmir region of J&K UT comprising of 100 each. In order to clarify the effect of DMOs on promotional strategies that leads to economic sustenance, the descriptive analysis is applied i.e. mean value and standard deviation which signifies the variance of the data and helps to understand the effect of DMOs on restoration and promotional strategies which in turn helps to gain economic sustenance. The mean value and standard deviation itself clears the above statement, as the mean value and standard deviation for all the items is explained in the table given below;

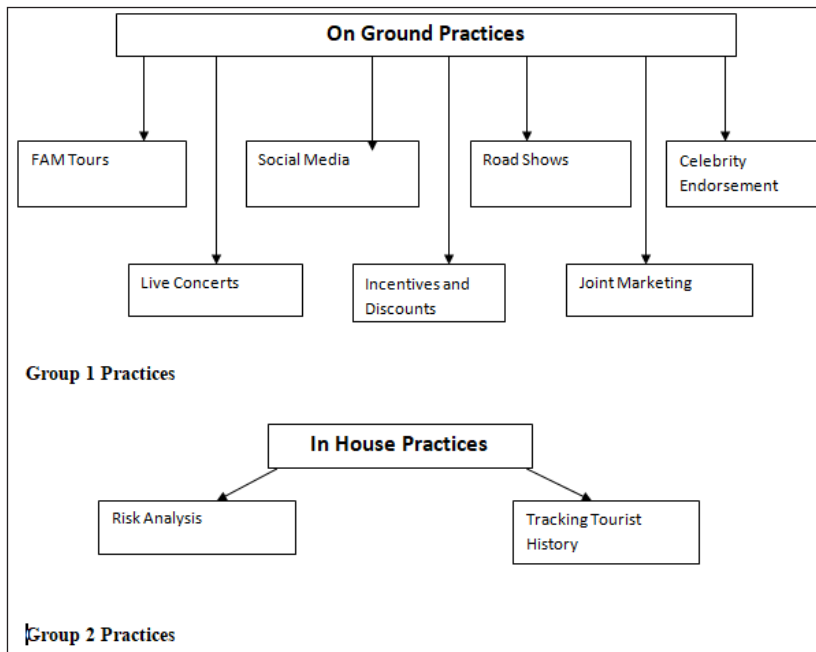
**Table 1.**

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	Tourism in Kashmir has taken many initiatives for restoration of destination like FAM Tours	3.90	1.67
2	Tourism in Kashmir's Video shooting of many destinations in Kashmir and promoting it through social Media networking	4.68	0.91
3	Road shows in different parts of the country	4.25	0.28
4	Celebrity endorsement attracts the tourist to valley	4.69	0.91
5	On table risk analysis based on reports by the DTK before announcing any event	4.53	0.90
6	Organising the Live Concerts helps to attract the tourists.	4.48	0.69
7	Joint Marketing efforts with leading Media Partners in order to attract the tourists to Kashmir Valley	4.15	0.99
8	Incentive and Discounts in air flights and hotel rooms for the tourists	4.72	0.87
9	Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) track tourist history	4.15	0.91

Based on the analysis all the above stated restoration practices have been categorized into two groups i.e., in house and On Ground Practices which posses the accumulated mean and SD value as stated in the Table 2.

**Table 2.**

No.	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
G 1	In house Practices	4.16	0.39
G 2	On Ground Practices	4.77	0.45



## Discussion and Conclusion

The problematic tourism sector of J&K has seen a decline at a premature stage of growth and this decline has been persistent outbreak of conflict in the valley. It has been 30 years since them and in these years the programs and schemes of tourism hasn't been able to retain its normal life cycle of growth. This has caused an imbalance with the availability of resources and its users, which has increased the cost of maintenance, thus has made managing tourism sector a costly job, that option in cause loss rather than generating revenue.

In these years no hardcore restoration Strategies and practices have been incorporated and those strategies that are adjectives having victimized by the lack of quality planning and control. The strategies that are in practice are traditional in nature and does not reach to maximum possible number of audience, as domains used are conventional and does not fit to the latest trends.

Marketing and promotions are very important functions of a successful tourism destination from in case of J and K, the efforts of marketing and promotions have been of substandard quality, but in recent months, this function has improved, i.e is why the social media and celebrity endorsement has helped to improve up to certain level, and the efforts and other methods are adopted to communicate to its targeted audience. J&K state has more share of domestic market, show the promotional activities required address more diverse audience and to enter in the international market it needs to target the audience on the basis of trends, demands and niches and subsequently have to develop these areas.

So far we have reached to the conclusion that tourism of J and K have been affected by some key factors that are; political conflict, role of media in spreading negativity and lack of social involvement of community. All these are directly or indirectly related to tourism of J and K and they collectively create a tourism crisis situation that J& K usually faces. The remedy for the troublesome tourism sector of J and K lies within the management and operational efficiency, where activities are properly prioritized rather than focusing on activities which may not be required or may not result in any production, does activities that are productive socially and economically to tourism sector have to be focused on.

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