

# **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VAISHNO DEVI PILGRIMAGE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY**

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## **Abstract:-**

In recent years, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine has become very popular destination among pilgrims. Pilgrimage Tourism to Vaishno Devi Shrine constitutes an important component of total tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and has contributed effectively to the growth and development of the place. Every year around 7 million pilgrims visit the Shrine which is influencing the socio-economic environment of the region and the present paper is throwing light on the economic impact of the Shrine related tourism. This paper is based on the methodology adopted for estimation of economic impact of the Shrine related tourism on the economy of Katra town by estimating the income and employment generation. In the present paper, the methodology adopted for estimation of income and employment is based on extrapolation of the sample research findings. The figures for universe population with respect to the sample have been taken from the Municipality of Katra, Shrine Board and other Government as well as private agencies like various business associations. The income generated is taken from all the five basic component of industries or sets of people, primarily at Katra, which are directly and more or less totally dependent on the tourism viz. the Hotel Industry, Transport Industry, various commercial establishments including all types of shops operating at Katra, Pithoos and Ponywallas.

**Key Words:**, *Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Shrine Board, Economic Impact, Hotel Industry, Transport Industry, Pithoos and Ponywallas.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Pilgrimage in India is almost as old as Indian civilization. Hindu pilgrimage has retained many common features through time and space, including the practice of traveling to bathe and pray at sacred places and it has some features that link it to folk traditions. Indian culture has emphasized the significance of pilgrimage for spiritual progress. Every Indian has an inner desire to go for

pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime. Many sacred places distributed in various parts of India attract a large number of pilgrims from within and outside the country (Gupta, 2002). The distribution of sacred places throughout India has created an essentially continuous religious space in which the otherwise great regional cultural diversity becomes less significant for the movement of pilgrims over long distances. Modern life and high placed living has drawn people more towards spiritual and pilgrim sojourns. The tourism traffic, both domestic and international, for various purposes like ethnic and socio-cultural understanding or for pleasure, environmental change and religious purpose has significantly increased manifolds during recent times. It is only the pilgrimage or **Tirathatna** or Travel for religious purpose which has caused people to travel for regeneration of spirit and quick cultural exchange. Pilgrimage traffic has a widespread reach in India from the North to the South to centres in Vaishno Devi, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Prayag, Badri-Kedar to Rameshwaram, Tirupati, Sabrimala and from the West to the East viz. Amba Devi & Kamakhya Devi, just to name a few. Modern pilgrimage has blended the ancient ethics with modern ideas and beliefs. It has extended the conventional concept from the limited aspect of an act of devotion and 'harder the journey, better the reward', to a wider concept of desire for a change, relief from dull life and enthusiasm for a common man ( .

This has motivated the authors to undertake the study in the holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi. It is considered to be one of the holiest pilgrimages of our times. Popular the world over as '*Moonh Maaangi Muradein Poori Karne Wali Mata*', which means the Mother who fulfills whatever her children wish for, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji resides in a Holy Cave located in the folds of the three peaked mountain named Trikuta (Pronounced as Trikoot). The Holy Shrine attracts lakhs of devotees owing to the unflinching faith of the people who throng the Shrine from all parts of India and abroad. Katra, a small but vibrant town, situated around 50 kilometers from Jammu, (the winter capital of the State of Jammu & Kashmir),

serves as the base camp for the journey to the Shrine.

Figure No. 1 Guide Map of Vaishno Devi Shrine from Katra (The Base Camp)



Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine is attracting nearly 07 million pilgrims every year with a roughly annual increase of 10-12% pilgrims at a daily average of 18,000 to 19,000 pilgrims every day. The arrivals of tourists are shown in Table 1.

Table No – 1  
Tourists Arrivals in Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine

S. No.	Year	Total Yatra Flow	Local	Non-Locals	Ratio
1	2000	5191915	700240	4491675	13:87
2	2001	5056919	N.A.	N.A.	
3	2002	4432178	N.A.	N.A.	
4	2003	5400296	682277	4718019	13:87
5	2004	6109895	798206	5311689	13:87
6	2005	6251998	797295	5454703	13:87
7	2006	6950573	804648	6145925	12:88

Source: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra & JKTDC

### Economic Impacts of Tourism on Jammu & Kashmir with reference to Mata Vaishno Devi

The economic value of tourism to an economy is often measured by way of estimating its contribution to the national income, employment and tax revenues accruing to an economy. Strictly speaking, in order to estimate the contribution of tourism, one must determine to what extent production, employment and tax revenues generated out of tourism (Mathieson, A. and Wall, G. 1982; Williams, T.A. 1979, Nabi, G. 2000,). However, this is difficult to determine. This

difficulty is due to the paucity of detailed data on marginal productivities, factors or inputs employed in tourism. For each tourism activity and purpose of visit, gross receipts from tourism are computed by equating to the product of the number of tourists multiplied by their average duration of the stay in days and per tourists' daily expenditure (De Kadt, E. 1979, Chattopadhyay, K. 1995).

### Objective of the Study

The objective of this paper is to make an overall assessment of the economic impact of tourism in the region of Mata Vaishno Devi in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It estimates economic impact of the Shrine related tourism on the economy of

Jammu & Kashmir in terms of the estimation of the economic impact of income and employment generation.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the methodology adopted for estimation of income and employment is based on extrapolation of the sample research findings. The figures for universe population with respect to the sample have been taken from the Municipality of Katra, Shrine Board and other Government as well as private agencies like various business associations. The income and employment generated is taken from all the five basic industries or sets of people, primarily at Katra, which are directly and more or less totally dependent on the tourism viz. the Hotel Industry, Transport Industry, various commercial establishments including all types of shops operating at Katra, Pithoos and Ponywallas. The Pithoos (porters), palkiwalas and massagers are basically one category of people who perform more than one of these tasks interchangeably. Estimates of generation of employment and income for each of these sectors are derived from the data and other relevant information collected through the survey, a well structured questionnaire, Personal observations and interactions with the host population during the year 2006 and 2007 and other secondary sources of data such as the municipality of Katra, Shrine Board office, several Government Departments and internet etc.

The problems encountered in the study were numerous. These relate to conceptual difficulties, as well as difficulties of quantification and measurement besides paucity of statistical information. For instance, a study of the pattern of home tourists in the State can be attempted only on the basis of currently available information regarding statistically recorded inflows. However, a part of the domestic traffic in the State, as elsewhere, is not registered, i.e., those who stay with friends or relatives. Owing to this, the quantum of home tourists is larger than indicated by official data. And correspondingly there is an unrecorded tourist spending. Nonetheless, this spending must have some impact on the domestic economy but this is being totally missed. Further, a more important information-gap, in fact, the most vital one, is the absence of data on total tourist expenses (receipts from tourism activity in the State) over time. As a No. of entrepreneurs / locals in the study area were found reluctant to divulge exact sales / income figures for fear of Sales / Income tax authorities. Accordingly, a satisfactory projection of the likely annual change in tourist receipts in the future becomes extremely difficult.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Economic Impacts of Hotel Industry (Income and Employment generation)

The hotel industry has been defined for the present purpose in a broader sense so as to include all types of accommodation- Be it star hotels or lodges or Guest Houses or Dharamshalas. All such accommodations generate employment and income to the people of Katra along with other parts of the state, particularly Jammu and Srinagar districts which are visited by a large number of pilgrims. The present study has included the following six broad categories of accommodation at Katra:

- Shrine Board Accommodation consisting of Rooms & Dormitories.
- Private Hotels
- Lodges
- Dharamshalas
- Guest Houses &
- JKTDC Hotels consisting of rooms & dormitories.

#### Accommodations built & managed by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board:

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra has done a remarkable job, from the point of view of the pilgrims, by getting a variety of accommodation constructed at Katra as well as at Jammu to suit all types of pockets and differential needs of the pilgrims coming for Mata Darshan. The Shrine Board had constructed accommodation units with all modern amenities at the most competitive rates namely Vaishnavi & Saraswati Dham adjacent to the Jammu railway station, and Niharika & Trikuta Bhawan complexes at Katra on the bus stand. The whole land across the Trikuta hills belong to shrine board who in turn constructed a number of units at Adikuwari, S.chat and Bhawan to accommodate pilgrims. The total bed capacity of all the accommodations provided by the Shrine Board is 40,655 and it has generated a total rental income 61.4 millions rupees in 2006-07.

**Table No. 2**  
**Income generated through rentable accommodation**

S. No.	Financial Year	Income earned through rentable accommodation (In Rs.)
1	2004-05	4,81,89,021
2	2005-06	5,90,18,622
3	2006-07	6,13,74,556

Source: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

Simultaneously, Offering & Donations and Income of the Shrine Board directly reflects the economic impact of the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage in the Katra town and in the state (J&K) in particular. In order to analyze the impact, figures of last few years are presented. The Shrine Board is not only involved in

the provision of accommodation facility but also has its own outlets for sale of food items, other eatables, souvenirs/ *Prashad* etc. As per the current figures, Board had around 1833 employees in 2004-05 and the figure rises to 2244 persons employed on different designation based on the technical know how and expertise till June 2007. Simultaneously, around 2000 new direct or indirect jobs have been created every year on an average.

**Private Hotels:** The private hospitality industry of Katra provides deluxe to very ordinary accommodation facilities. The hotels in Katra are generally categorized into three types according to their capacity, In-house facility and the tariff they charge. As per the information obtained from Tourism department, there are following categories of hotels operation in Katra: 'A' Category Hotels; 'B' Category Hotels and 'C' Category Hotels

**Table No. 3**  
**Offerings and Donations**

S.No.	Period	Offerings & Donations (In Rs.)	Total income
			(In Rs.)
1	2000-01	312617540	688242738
2	2001-02	283741635	683276123
3	2002-03	272021631	664035612
4	2003-04	365161296	796946144
5	2004-05	408570192	934330570
6	2005-06	521327055	1148393773
7	2006-07	578550634	1268573899

Source: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board

The A' Category Hotels includes some of the prominent hotels like The Orchid, Devi Grand, Country Inn & Resorts, Hotel New Subash, Hotel Asia Vaishno Devi, Hotel Asia Shripati, Hotel Ambika et al. As per the information received from Tourism department, there are around '12' 'A' category hotels. It is found from the research that the total daily revenue from 'A' category hotels with 100% capacity utilization would be Rs. 12.645 Lakhs (see table 4). It has found that 'A' Category hotels on an average employ 35 persons out of which 7 personnel are in managerial and supervisory job and others are involved in non-administrative activities. Thus, the total employment generation by the 12 'A' category hotels is estimated as  $(35 \times 12) = 420$  persons.

Further, it has found 'B' Category numbers of rooms are less than 'A' category hotels and charge fewer tariffs. As per the information collected from the Tourism department, there are around 70 'B' category hotels in Katra e.g. Hotel New Natraj, Hotel Basera, Hotel Durga, Hotel Malti Palace etc.

The estimation of income and employment is done on the basis of five hotels. The daily potential revenue generation by the sample hotels is presented in the table 5. It is found that average daily tariff revenue per hotel from all non a/c rooms in this category of hotels is Rs. 18740.5 and from all a/c rooms / suites it is Rs. 4661. Thus, the average total daily tariff from the above-mentioned two types of rooms is Rs.23401 per hotel. On the basis of this it is estimated that the total daily potential revenue generation for all the 70 hotels under 'B' category is Rs. 16,38,070 i.e. Rs. 59,78,95,550 per year. Using the research findings regarding hotel capacity utilization at 52.44%, the total yearly revenue from 'B' category hotels in Katra is estimated as Rs. 2,15,04,176.99.

It is found from the research that this category of hotels employs an average of 20 persons per hotel, out of which 4 are administrative and operational officials and 16 are non-administrative and operational employees. With this the total direct employment generation by 70 such hotels is estimated to be 1400 persons.

**Table No 4**  
**Total Estimated Daily Revenue from 'A' category Hotels**

S. No. of the Hotel	Total No. of Rooms	No. of Non-AC Rooms	No. of AC Rooms/ Suites	Tariff from Non ac Rooms		Tariff from A/c Rooms/Suites	
				Avg. Tariff per room per day *(Rs.)	Total Tariff per day (Rs.)	Avg. Tariff per room per day (Rs.)	Total Tariff per day (Rs.)
1	198	N.A.	198	N.A.	N.A.	3500	693000
2	37	31	6	1325	41075	2100	12600

3	48	41	7	1020	41820	2245	15715
4	47	40	7	800	32000	1350	9450
5	55	47	8	900	42300	2000	16000
6	50	42	8	1045	43890	1945	155560
7	70	60	10	1000	60000	1690	16900
8	38	32	6	970	31040	1500	9000
9	33	5	28	1250	35000	1750	8750
10	31	26	5	995	25870	2750	13750
11	38	32	6	1249	39968	2899	17394
12	42	36	6	1000	36000	1250	7500
Total	687	392	295	11554	<b>428963</b>	<b>24979</b>	<b>835619</b>
Average	57.25	35.64	24.58	1050.36	<b>38996.64</b>	<b>2081.58</b>	<b>69634.91</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Table No. 5**  
**Total Daily Revenue Generation Potential of 'B' category Hotels**

S. No. of the Hotel	Total No. of Rooms	No. of Non-AC Rooms	No. of AC Rooms/Suites	Tariff from Non ac Rooms		Tariff from A/c Rooms/Suites	
				Avg. Tariff per room per day (Rs.)	Total Tariff per day (Rs.)	Avg. Tariff per room per day (Rs.)	Total Tariff per day (Rs.)
1	19	19	0	890	16910	-	-
2	20	17	3.	562.5	9562.5	550 (4 bed)	1650
3	37	31	6	900	27900	1100 (3bed)	6600
4	37	31	6	850	26350	1200 (4 bed)	7200
5	24	20	4	649	12980	799	3196
Total	137	118	19	3851.5	<b>93702.5</b>	<b>3.649</b>	<b>18646</b>
Average	27.4	23.6	3..2	770.3	<b>18740.5</b>	<b>912.25</b>	<b>4661.5</b>

Source:

Primary

Data

Consequently 'C' category hotels are opted by maximum number of pilgrims visiting the shrine. Higher demand for such hotels has led to the establishment of 84 'C' category hotels in Katra. Some of these hotels are Hotel Kanchan, Hotel Tara Delux, Hotel Vasu, Hotel Kings, Hotel vivek, Hotel Damini, Hotel Prem, and Hotel Mahindra Palace etc. In 'C' categories of hotels on average there are 20 rooms. It is found from the study that the average daily revenue potential of each 'C' category hotel from non a/c rooms is Rs. 8,220 and for suite a/c rooms is Rs. 1900. Analysis of the

following table shows that the total daily revenue potential with 100 % capacity utilization of the two types of rooms is Rs. 10,120. The total yearly revenue generation from 84 such hotels with 52.44% capacity utilization is Rs. 16.27 crore. As per the research findings, this category of hotels employs as average of 8 persons per hotel which includes 2 persons as administrative officials and operational and 6 persons as non-administrative and operational employees. The total direct employment generation by 84 hotels is estimated to be 672 persons.

**Table No. 6**  
**Total Daily Revenue Generation Potential of 'C' Category Hotels**

S. No. of the Hotel	Total No. of Rooms	No. of Non-AC Rooms	No. of AC Rooms/Suites	Tariff from Non ac Rooms		Tariff from A/c Rooms/Suites	
				Avg. Tariff per room per day (Rs.)	Total Tariff per day (Rs.)	Avg. Tariff per room per day (Rs.)	Total Tariff per day (Rs.)
1	28	24	4	500	12000	850	3400
2	17	17	-	337.5	5737.5	-	-

3	20	20	-	475	9500	-	-
4	20	20	-	385	7700	-	-
5	20	20	-	350	7000	-	-
6	16	14	2	412.5	5775	700	1400
7	15	15	-	200	3000	-	-
8	9	9	-	550	4950	-	-
9	24	24	-	550	13200	-	-
10	30	30	-	600	18000	-	-
11	23	23	-	200	4600	-	-
12	42	42	-	312.5	13125	-	-
13	29	29	-	505	14645	-	-
14	8	8	-	415	3320	-	-
15	19	19	-	400	7600	-	-
16	17	14	3	400	5600	750	2250
17	9	8	1	500	4000	550	550
Total	346	336	10	7092.5	<b>139752.5</b>	<b>2850</b>	<b>7600</b>
Average	20.353	19.765	2.5	417.2059	<b>8220.735</b>	<b>712.5</b>	<b>1900</b>

Source: Hotel & Restaurant Association of Katra

**Lodges:** There are around 58 registered lodges in Katra as per the information gathered from the J&K Tourism Office, Katra and Municipality. The research findings revealed that there are, on an average 20 rooms in one lodge. It has also been found that 75% of the rooms (i.e. 15 rooms) in the lodges have double occupancy where as remaining 25% (i.e. 5 rooms) have single occupancy capacity. The survey shows that the average tariff for double occupancy room is Rs. 150 and for single occupancy room is Rs.110. Therefore, the average daily revenue potential from double occupancy rooms per lodge (for average of 15 rooms) is Rs. 2250 and from single occupancy rooms (for average of 5 rooms) is Rs. 550. Thus, the average total daily potential revenue from the above-mentioned two types of rooms is Rs. 2800 per lodge on an average. The research revealed that where as in lean seasons the lodges remain less than fully occupied, during the peak season these operate at more than 100% capacity utilization as many occupants hire accommodation for less than half day but are charged for full day tariff and thus a single room is rented out to second or even third occupant within 24 hours. This leads to 100% average capacity utilization over the full year as revealed by the research. Thus, the total yearly revenue for 58 lodges at 100 % capacity utilization is estimated to Rs. 3.1084 crore. As per the findings, a lodge, on an average, provides employment to 5.4 persons. This indicates that the estimated employment generation through all lodges in Katra is 313 persons.

**Dharamshalas:** These are much cheaper than various other types of lodging facilities. Pilgrims generally take these Dharamshalas for short stays only, thus one bed is often changes guests over a number of times per day. This compensates the earnings of Dharamshalas during lean season (15

Jan-15 March). Although it is known that these Dharamshalas do not charge any amount for accommodation they provide, yet they make it compulsory for the pilgrims for the pilgrims to purchase the *Prashad* from their shops only, which is usually expensive than the one being sold in the open market. With this strategy, they attract customers and achieve almost 100% of capacity utilization in their dharamshalas. As per the information collected from the NAC, the total bed capacity of all dharamshalas in Katra is 2992. It is found in the research that the average number of rooms in one dharamshala is 15. With this, the total number of dharamshala at Katra is estimated to be 200. The revenue they generate is estimated to be Rs. 100 per day for one bed. Thus, the total daily revenue with the total bed capacity of 2992 beds (@ Rs. 100 as revenue per bed) is estimated to be Rs. 299200. Thus, on basis of 100 % capacity utilization, the total annual revenue received by all dharamshalas in Katra is estimated to be Rs. 10.928 crores.

It is evident from the research that on an average 3.6 persons are employed in a dharamshala to take care of the pilgrims. It is also revealed during the course of research that the total number of dharamshalas in Katra is 200. This indicates that the total employment generation in the area through dharamshalas would be to the tune of 720 persons.

**Guest Houses:** Guest Houses are relatively more economical than the private hotels available in Katra. As per the J&K Tourism office's record, there are 5 registered guest houses that cater to the needs of pilgrims in Katra. The total bed capacity of these 5 registered guest houses is 103 and the average daily revenue per bed is Rs. 200. Thus, the daily revenue generation potential of the available guest houses is estimated to be Rs. 20,600. These guest houses, with a total capacity utilization of

100% generate total annual revenue of Rs. 75.15 lakh in a year.

**Accommodation unit of J&K Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) :** The corporation has made Tourist Reception and Retiring Centres, Tourist Bungalow and Yatri Niwas in Katra that are owned and managed by JKTDC. The Huts and Tourist bungalow of the corporation are also having facilities of dining room with Kitchen / restaurant facility. The total bed capacity of JKTDC at Katra is 815. As the JKTDC accommodation is divided into three categories, Tourist Bungalows (including huts), Tourist Reception Centres and Yatri Niwas, the revenue generated from these is calculated separately due to the dissimilarity in their bed capacity and tariff rates. In the absence of detailed information on the exact number of different types of rooms' vis-à-vis their exact capacity utilization, the average has been taken for determining the effective average tariff for all types of rooms through out the year.

The total bed capacity of Tourist Bungalow is 84 beds, but the revenue varies for different types of rooms. It is observed that on an average there are 2 beds in each room. The tariffs of these 42 rooms in Tourist Bungalow are Rs. 550, Rs. 450, Rs.350 and Rs. 300 per day. Thus, the average daily revenue received per room is around Rs. 412.50. Simultaneously, the potential average revenue generated from all 42 rooms of the Tourist Bungalow is estimated to be Rs. 17,325 per day, i.e. Rs. 63.24 lakhs per year. Thus, the total yearly revenue generation from Tourist Bungalows with the capacity utilization of 52.44% is estimated to be Rs. 33.16 lakhs.

The next category of JKTDC accommodation is Tourist retiring center with total capacity of 156 beds in three types of rooms, i.e. double bedded, four bedded and eight –bedded with tariff rates as Rs.400, Rs. 250 and Rs.350 respectively, i.e. Rs. 200 per bed in double bedded rooms, Rs. 72.50 per bed in four bedded rooms and Rs. 43.80 per bed in eight bedded rooms. It was also observed that the differential facilities in the rooms account for differential tariffs. Hence, the average revenue per bed in various types of rooms is estimated to be  $[(200+72.50 + 43.80)/3] = \text{Rs. } 105.43$  per bed. Thus, the average daily potential revenue received from all these 156 room-beds is estimated to be Rs. 16,447.08, i.e. Rs. 60.03 lakhs per year. There are 125 beds in the dormitories/ common hall. The average tariff of dormitories is Rs. 25 per bed. Thus, the average daily potential revenue received from all the beds of the dormitory is estimated to be  $(125 \times 25) = \text{Rs. } 3125$ . i.e. Rs. 11.406 lakhs per year. Hence, the total potential revenue received from both types of accommodation, i.e. room-beds and dormitory is estimated to be (Rs. 60.03 lakhs +

Rs. 11.406 lakhs) is Rs. 71.436 lakhs per year. Thus the total revenue generated from the Tourist retiring centre with the observed over all capacity utilization of 52.44 % is estimated to be Rs. 37.46 lakhs per year.

The last category of JKTDC accommodation is the Yatri Niwas. The bed capacity here includes 300 beds in independent rooms and dormitory of 150 beds. As per survey, the average revenue per bed in rooms is estimated to be  $[(150+100+43.75)/3]$  Rs. 97.916 and the average revenue per bed in dormitory is estimated to be Rs. 50. Hence the average potential daily revenue from room- beds accommodation is estimated to be  $(300 @ \text{Rs. } 97.916)$  i.e. Rs. 29,375 i.e. Rs. 107.22 lakhs per year. Similarly, the average potential daily revenue received from dormitory & beds in Yatri Niwas is estimated to be  $(150 @ \text{Rs. } 50)$  Rs. 7500 per day or Rs. 27.375 lakhs. Thus, the total potential revenue from both types of accommodation is expected to be Rs. 134.59 lakhs per year.

The research has shown that on an average, 26 persons are employed in any unit of JKTDC. Since it has three units viz. Tourist Bungalow, Tourist retiring centre and yatri niwas and it is estimated that the total employment generation from these units would be 78. The above analysis shows that the hotel industry in Katra generates revenue from all types of accommodations available at Katra, i.e. Shrine Board accommodation, Private Hotels, Lodges, Dharamshalas etc. is estimated to be 88.57 crores.

**Income and Employment generation from Transport sector:** Increased inflow of pilgrims in Katra for the holy *darshan* has raised demand on transport services. Pilgrims coming from various parts of the country and arriving at Jammu recourse to road transport to reach at the base camp, Katra due to non-availability of rail transport between twin cities. i.e, Jammu and Katra. The preferred means of road transportation are buses, mini buses, taxis and sometimes a chartered helicopter from Jammu.

As per the survey, it is estimated that there are 330 buses, 99 minibuses, 152 cards/Vans (taxies) that are rendering transport services to the pilgrims. Increased demand for bus transportation to Katra has facilitated local tour and travel agencies to expand their existing fleet of vehicles. The total yearly revenue of all the mini-buses is estimated to be Rs. 14.85 crores per year. There are three types of buses, taken into consideration viz. luxury buses, semi-luxury buses and ordinary buses. The average annual gross revenue earned is estimated by taking the arithmetic mean of the annual revenue earned by the three types of buses-new as well as old buses. The average annual gross revenue earned by these buses is estimated to Rs. 11.523 lakhs per

year (per bus). As per the research information, averages of 6 buses are operated by the 55 tour/travel/transport agencies/companies. This amount to a total number of 330 buses being operated on this route. The gross revenue from 330 buses operating at Katra is thus estimated to Rs. 38.02, crores per year.

The research results have shown that there are 2.5 persons employed per bus on an average. This indicates that for a total fleet of 581 vehicles (aggregation of different types of vehicles as discussed above), the total employment generation would be 1100 persons per year. Beside this Auto-Rickshaw has also contributed to the generation of wealth and employment.

**Helicopter Service:** In order to boost the yatra inflow vis-à-vis to provide a platform (mean) to old and infirm pilgrims to plan their pilgrimage to the Shrine of Vaishno Devi, Helicopter service was introduced in 2002. Though service for short durations was started over a couple of times earlier also but the same were withdrawn by the operators due to one reason or the other. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board that manages the Shrine and Yatra related affairs roped in Deccan aviation Limited to fly two Bell 407 helicopters on Katra-S.chat and back route. Tariff of Rs. 2000/- was made it perfect to serve the pilgrims who do not trek due to health / time problem. The research shows that DAL over a period of 5 years has made increase in the No. of Pilgrims ferried manifolds. Number of passengers that used the services of DAL over the last 2.5 years is illustrated below along with the income of the company:

**Table No. 7**  
**Income of Deccan Aviation Limited**

Year	Aviation Company	Passengers Travelled	Income (In Rs.)
2005	D.A.L	N.A.	1.10 crores
2006	D.A.L	79966	15.12 crores
2007 (Jan.- June)	D.A.L	42603	6.60 crores

Source: Deccan Aviation Ltd. & SMVDSB

The average monthly income of DAL in the last year 2006 was 1.26 crores where as the Ist 6 months of 2007 have already helped DAL to fetch monthly income of Rs. 1.1 crores and by seeing the trends, it is expected that D.A.Ls monthly income may touch around 1.75 crores by the end of year 2007.

**Economic Impact of Tourism on Pithoos and Ponywallas :**Pithoos render labour services to the

pilgrims by carrying their luggage during the journey to the Shrine and back. The Ponywallas, with the help of ponies cater pilgrims by carrying them along the difficult Trikuta hills to reach *Bhawan* of Mata Vaishno Devi.

**Pithoos:** More than 8000 Pithoos are earning their livelihood due to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine. It is found that average monthly income of a *Pithoo* is Rs. 3863. Considering this, an attempt is made to find out total annual income generation by the Pithoos engaged in this activity at Katra. In order to work out the total annual earnings of the registered Pithoos and Porters in Katra, two methods are applied. In the first method, a calculation is made on the basis of average monthly earning and average working days of a *Pithoo* in a year. As per the information collected from the NAC that controls and register them, there are 6291 registered Pithoos operating in Katra. With average earnings Rs. 3863 per month and the estimated average number of working days of a *Pithoo* of 236.6 days i.e. 7.8867 months.

Thus, the total monthly income generated by the registered Pithoos is estimated to be Rs. 2.4302 crores. The total annual income of all Pithoos with an average estimated 7.8867 months of working and average monthly income of Rs. 2.4302 crores is estimated to be Rs. 19.16 crores.

The second method takes Into Consideration the number of Pilgrims seeking assistance of Pithoos in a year. It is found from the research that the average percentage of tourists requiring assistance from Pithoos and Porters is 16 %. As per the information from Shrine Board, the number of pilgrims visiting the shrine in the year 2006 is 69.5 lakh. This shows that in a year, about 11.12 lakh pilgrims need assistance of the equal number of Pithoos / porters. Thus annual income of Pithoos and porters is calculated by multiplying daily average income of Pithoos and Porters with the number of Pithoos required catering to the needs of the pilgrims in a year. The average daily income is found to be Rs. 128.766 as per the research conducted. Thus by the second method of calculation, the annual income generation of all Pithoos is estimated to be Rs. 14.31 crores (Total revenue generated = Average number of pilgrims x daily average revenue).

**Ponywallas:** Ponywallas provide the most convenient and quick transport to the Shrine from the base camp of Katra. Pilgrims who are old or physically not in a position to climb up / down the hilly track or those who have less time at their disposal tend to prefer pony for going to the Shrine. Secondary data obtained from the Katra NACs office confirms that there are 4747 registered Ponywallas operating from Katra to the Shrine and back.

From our survey it has been found that on an average a Pony makes as many as 7.5 round trips



per week (Katra-Bhawan-Katra) or about 30 trips a month. Our findings also shows that out of the 30 trips made in a month, on an average 22 trips are made carrying pilgrims per month .i.e. 264 trips per year. It was also estimated that average daily income of a Ponywalla is Rs. 264.00 i.e. Rs. 69,854.40 per year. Thus the total annual income generated by al the 4747 Ponywallas was estimated to be Rs. 33.16 crores.

The study shows that as many as 4747 Ponywallas are engaged in ferrying the pilgrims from Katra-Bhawan-Katra terrain that covers 13 Kms one way. Operating Ponies to the Shrine and back to Katra does not only ensure income and employment to so many Ponywallas but also it has tremendous forward and backward linkages that have very high economic impact on the economy of Katra. Considerable income earned by the Ponywallas is spent on food, fodder, insurance, medicines (vaccination) needed by the Ponies and taxes to be paid to NAC before making a shuttle. This indicates a strong and positive multiplier effect on income, expenditure and employment through this sector.

Commercial establishments that have grown considerably with the increase in demand by ever increasing inflow of pilgrims in Katra, contribute a lot to the development of the economy of Katra. These establishments create employment opportunities, absorb surplus labour in the locality, promote household industries, help in generating income, create and expand employment avenues. These establishments operating in and across Katra range from individual service providers to factory owners, shop-keepers, barbers, washer men, tour operators & travel agents, restaurants and eateries (Dhabas)etc.

The study finds that the average annual growth rate of turn over of these establishments is 4.4%. It is also estimated that the average annual growth rate of investment made in these establishments is 3.5%. The research findings highlight the fact that these establishments have generated revenue to the tune of Rs. 226.22 crores in a year from pilgrims and Rs. 57.44 crores from local people. The total revenue earnings were Rs. 283.66 crores. The projection of the total estimated revenue generation of these establishments with an annual turnover growth rate of 4.4% for the years 2006-2010 is shown below in the table 8:

**Table No. 8**  
**Estimated Annual Turnover of Commercial Establishments during 2006-2010**

Year	Annual Turnover (Rs. [In Crores] )
2006	296.14
2007	309.17
2008	322.77
2009	336.97
2010	351.79

Source: Primary Data

**Employment Generation:** It is estimated from the research that total employment generation by various commercial establishments in Katra is 7781 persons. A detailed overview of revenue and employment generated and wages distributed are shown in the table below:

**Table No. 9**  
**Revenue and Employment Generation and Wages Distribution of Commercial Establishments**

S. No.	Nature of Commercial Establish-ment	Revenue From Pilgrims (In Rs.)	Revenue from Locals (In Rs.)	Total Revenue	Employment Generation
1	Paint Shop	0	37191600	37191600	18
2	Jewellery Shop	73752000	99888000	173.640000	24
3	Chemist Shop	37240000	2660000	39900000	140
4	Fruit/Vegetable Shop	4604250	11513250	16117500	225
5	Chaat Shop	7614675	5110465.2	12725140.2	34
6	Dairy & Ice-Cream	20132550	7850250	27982800	27
7	Photographer	68604550	3.8725925	107330475	455
8	Grocery Shop	518920350	47634600	566554950	1735
9	Pan Bhandar	3215275	3094525	6309800	32
10	Gift Shop	130108005	4240485	134348490	580
11	Sweets / Fast Food	36057100	10648350	46705450	250
12	Cassettes Shop	25062500	0	25062500	125
13.	Electrical Goods Shop	429900	3869100	4299000	48
14	Cinema Hall	890200	3900000	4790200	9
15	Cyber café	88200	88200	176400	2

16	Combined Shop	276592625	11887975	288480600	1042
17	Dry Fruits Shop	141870850	13154900	155025750	484
18	Restaurant	52852500	5872500	58725000	390
19	Tea Stall	4103288	7173892	11277180	179
20	Video Game	32280	393720	426000	2
21	Masala Shop	112500000	78750000	191250000	3
22	Doctors Clinic	4942350	10387962	15330312	50
23.	Shoes Shop	1917000	36423000	3834000	60
24	Printing Press	0	378400	378400	8
25	Crockery Shop	1579200	814800	23.94000	28
26	Cloth House	98154180	67484340	165638520	413
27	Dhaba/ Eateries	113464940	58522473	171987413	685
28	Souvenir Shop	525148467	5714535	530863002	205
29	Barber Shop	2342400	1071200	3413600	80
	<b>All Establishments</b>	<b>2262219635</b>	<b>574444447</b>	<b>2836664082</b>	<b>7333</b>

**Source: Primary Data**

The analysis of the research has revealed that with the increased inflow of the pilgrims, the economic activities are growing manifold in Katra and the multifarious activities have led to generate immense opportunities of generation of income and employment for the local people. It is estimated that numerous types of economic activities in Katra would generate and income nearly around Rs. 4750 million per annum and provide employment to as many as 26978 persons. The following table highlights the income and employment generation potential of such economic activities:

**Table No. 10**  
**Income and employment generation potential of all category's of economic activities in Katra**

Category of Industry	Income (In Crores)	Employment (Persons)
Hospitality (all kinds of accommodation facility)	72.1549	4950
Pithoos	16.155	8000
Ponywallas	33.16	4747
Buses, Minibuses and Taxis	66.23.	1100
Auto	3..01	400
Commercial Establishments	283..66	7333
<b>Total</b>	<b>474.3699</b>	<b>26530</b>

Source: Primary Data

As is evident from the above table, the commercial establishment has the maximum amount of revenue generation potential. This sector provides employment to as many as 7333 persons. Maximum number of persons i.e. 8000 persons are employed as Pithoos, which states that tourism in Katra, has provided a large opportunity to the local unskilled people to support the livelihood by rendering their personal labour services to the pilgrims. The hospitality industry has a revenue

generation potential of Rs. 72.15 crores. Moreover, this sector gives employment to 4950 persons. These figures show that employment and income generation on account of Pilgrimage Tourism industry in Katra is very high. It is therefore expected that the rise in the pilgrims' inflow in the future will bring tremendous opportunities for generation of additional income and gainful employment in the local area for which the economic and social status of the local people will be enhanced manifold.

**Development of Infrastructure:** Beside economic activity, Infrastructure has been developed manifold in Katra that accrued monetary benefits to the locals and the region. Entire 15 kms stretch connecting Katra to National Highway NH1A from Domel has been widened to ensure better road network and make the journey more convenient and easy. Hotel Industry has also been flourished with mass tourist movement at the destination that led to the genesis of state of the art accommodation units with al modern amenities viz. The White Orchid, K.C. residency, Devi Grand, Country Inn & suites et al. Air-connectivity to the region (Jammu) has been improved thanks to the operations of almost all the air-carriers like Indian, jet airways, Air-Deccan ( Now Kings fisher), Spice jet etc. Further, Train frequency to the region has also been increased with introduction of a number of new trains and their extension up to Udhampur. All these ventures have directly or indirectly brought economic benefits to the region by way of employment opportunities for the locals as well as the development of the infrastructure in the region. Water supply since long was considered to be the grey area in Katra town but now due to mass development and tourist inflow, the problem is solved after construction of new drilling units at Sriar Dabri (5 Kms from Katra).Following the massive improvement and development in the area, a number of Schools has been opened and upgraded

in the area. Katra, now houses a degree college of education and a technical university that is imparting quality education to the masses. Earlier, there was only one small dispensary / Primary health centre in Katra with little infrastructure. In order to provide medical services to patients and tourists at an affordable price, a multi-specialty Hospital is being constructed at Karkayal area with initial focus on Oncology. Therefore, it is needless to say that the mass tourism in foothills of Trikuta mountain peaks has brought numerous economic benefits and led to all out development in the area under reference i.e. Katra in particular and Jammu region in general (Bryden, J.M. 1973),.

### Negative Economic Impacts of Tourism

There are many hidden costs to tourism, which can have unfavorable economic effects on the host community. The less developed region have the most urgent need for income, employment and general rise of the standard of living by means of tourism, but they are not able to realize these benefits fully,. Among the reasons for this are large-scale transfer of tourism revenues out of the host country and exclusion of local businesses and products.

**Leakage:** The direct income for an area is the amount of tourist expenditure that remains locally after taxes, profits, and wages are paid outside the area and after imports are purchased; these subtracted amounts are called leakage. In most all-inclusive package tours, about 80% of travelers' expenditures go to the airlines, hotels and other international companies (who often have their headquarters in the travelers' home city), and not to local businesses or workers. They are the ones that possess the necessary capital to invest in the construction of tourism infrastructure and facilities. To name a few, the white Orchid Hotel (5 star) with all modern amenities in Katra belongs to The *Uppal Group of Mumbai*. The group has a number of luxury properties at many metros. Simultaneously, Country Inn Resort at Katra belongs to an international chain named *Carlson Group*. Also, *Deccan Aviation Limited and Himalayan Heli Services Limited* providing helicopter service at Katra but belong to Bangalore and Delhi respectively. Local businesses often see their chances to earn income from tourists severely reduced by the creation of "all-inclusive" vacation packages. When tourists remain for their entire stay at the same hotel or resort, which provides everything they need and where they will make all their expenditures, not much opportunity is left for local people to get profit from tourism. A number of hotels in Katra provide Tour packages for Vaishno Devi supplemented with other locations like Country Inn & Resorts, The White Orchid,

Hotel-The Vaishno Devi, Hotel Asia and many others.

### Increase in Prices and Infrastructure cost:

Increasing demand for basic services and goods from tourists will often cause price hikes that negatively affect local residents whose income does not increase proportionately. Being a Tourist place, rates of commodities of daily use are substantially high thus making it difficult for the local population to meet their ends. e.g. Milk at Katra costs 18-20 kgs where as in other towns it costs Rs.12- Rs.16. Similarly, Cheese (*Paneer*) costs Rs. 120 per Kg than the normal rate of Rs. 84 in neighboring cities like Jammu and Udhampur. Same is the fate of vegetables as it is the hotels, restaurants and eateries (dhabas) that mostly are in dire need of these commodities to serve to their clients (pilgrims). This gap between the demand and supply has substantially increased prices thus making it difficult for the host population (Bansal, S.P. 2004). Tourism development and the related rise in real estate demand may dramatically increase building costs and land values. Earlier, the tourism infrastructure was found on and around the Bus stand that is considered to be the hub of all activities but now the diversification of the activities and services has increased the land prices to many folds. Now, a 3440 sq. ft. of the land area would cost more than 10 million (INR) and that is too 3 Kms away from the bus stand. Not only does this make it more difficult for local people, to meet their basic daily needs, it can also result in a dominance by outsiders in land markets and immigration that erodes economic opportunities for the locals, eventually disempowering residents. In Katra itself, close to 65% of the hotels belong to outsiders.

### Economic over dependence of the local community on Tourism:

Diversification in an economy is a sign of healthy economy. However if a region becomes dependent for its economic survival upon one industry, it can put major stress upon this industry as well as the people involved to perform well. In Katra, for instance, 60% of the workforce depends directly or indirectly on tourism. Over-reliance on tourism, especially mass tourism, carries significant risks to tourism-dependent economies (Greenwood, D.J.1972, Getz, D.1986, Lin, T. and Sung, Y. 1984, Loukissas, P.J. 1982). Economic recession and the impacts of natural disasters such as Terrorist strikes, Landslides as well as changing tourism patterns can have a devastating effect on the local tourism sector. Yatra Statistics in the year 2001 and 2002 had a nose dive due to militant's strikes.

## CONCLUSION

The study firmly indicates that there is significant direct contribution of the Shrine related tourism on the economy of Katra as well as Jammu & Kashmir. As such every social event, whatsoever small it may be, generates some income in the economy as well as some employment. For very small events, the employment generation might be in fraction and income generation may be even in single digit of the currency, to think of the least. As the significance and intensity of the event enhances, making it more important, the income generation may go up to billions of the currency units and employment generation may also reach to the extent of hundreds and thousands. When we say that seven millions people visit Vaishno Devi every year then the enormity of transport, hotel and restaurant requirements can be easily imagined. Facilitating and meeting such needs of the tourists or the devotees obviously generates huge employment and income to the people so through Jammu and Katra, it is natural that lot of employment and income is generated in these areas. In the emerging society, although the hereditary occupation system is fading away, the less educated people still tend to go in for their traditional occupations. In case of growing economic activity on account of devotees going for Mata *Darshans*, a specialized employment is being generated in the construction activity, hospitality industry and even facilitating the devotees in terms of providing them the ponies and Pithoo services for going up to the Shrine. This attracts people from far off places in the state of J&K because local Jammu and Katra population is insufficient to meet the specialized employment demands of the emerging tourism industry. The Shrine thus can be called as “**A Journey of Faith**” having enormous socio- economic benefits to host population in particular and the militancy affected J&K state in general.

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