



TRIP TO PAHALGAM: A POPULAR CULTURE OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper will examine the Tourist travels along the world famous Tourist spot in Kashmir, 'Pahalgam'. Pahalgam being represented as the heart of Kashmir Tourism, An eye opener to Kashmir culture, developed in Bollywood as 'movie spot'. Pahalgam means different things to different people for hindus of India it serves as a starting point to the sacred pilgrimage popularly known as Amarnath Yatra. It serves as a great enjoyment place and its restaurants serve as a meeting place for the people in general and a popular dating place for the youth in particular. I will try to show the tourists voyages as a popular culture for the people of India.

KEY WORDS: Pahalgam, Tourism, Popular-culture, Anantnag, K.P. Road, Aishmuqam, Amar Nath.

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Jammu and Kashmir a state in northern India, usually denoted by the acronym J&K, considered as crown of India and paradise on earth, and known for its scenic landscape, beautiful valleys, lakes, snow capped mountains, cool climate, skiing, trekking and fishing opportunities, is located in Himalayan mountains. It shares borders with the states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in the south. In the north east it has an international border with china, a Line of Control separates it from Pakistan-administered territory of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the west and northwest respectively.¹ Jammu and Kashmir consists of three regions: Jammu, the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. Jammu and Kashmir has a wonderful culture which has played an important role in earning accolades for it from across the world. Whether we talk about literature, lifestyle, language, religion, arts, crafts, music, dance, Jammu and Kashmir is an outstanding tourist destination. Indians from the times immemorial are

described as addicted to Kashmir, Kashmir having potential for tourism from both domestic as well as international tourists. Kashmir valley has been a center of attention for different people for different reasons all over the world. there are various places of tourist attraction in the state visited by the Tourists.² The Kashmir Valley has attracted tourists for centuries across the globe.

Trip to Pahalgam in summer is not a new thing. Pahalgam with its attractions and Kashmir as the tourist heaven of Asia, was the choice local Kashmiris from the times past, and the Hindus of the country who used to travel to the popular religious pilgrimage site 'Amar Nath' the another part of Pahalgam tourism what is interesting nowadays that even foreign tourists also come to visit Pahalgam.³

Pahalgam being the cultural icon, without which the story about Amarnath Yatra, Aru village, Betaab Valley, Chandanwari, Baisaran hills is unimaginable. Pahalgam was not often the topic of

academic research and it was considered a sub-disciplined in the culture of Kashmir. Only in the last few years did the tourist aspects of Pahalgam and Popularity of its Restaurants, hotels and picnic spots became the subject of academic interest in the context of cultural heritage.⁴

Pahalgam tourism is interesting as a phenomenon not only in tourism studies but also in cultural studies. It represents the link between popular culture and tourism. The culture of Kashmir and Kashmir Valley had captured the attention of the writers, even foreign tourists who felt such an attraction in Kashmir Valley that they were not able to desist themselves from writing a few lines about Kashmir. Kashmir in general and Pahalgam in particular being the subject of numerous books, movies, songs, TV Shows etc. Popular culture made the beauty of Pahalgam immortal.⁵ The famous Bollywood movies, latest among which is 'Mission Kashmir' 'Jab Tak Hai Jaan' 'Haider' 'Bajrangi Baijaan' serves insights into the beauties of Pahalgam and culture of the valley. Despite the conflicted zone Pahalgam serves as Popular place for the Religious heritages of Hindus who throng to the 'Amarnath' for the completion of their yearly pilgrimage popularly known as Amarnath Yatra.

Anantnag serves as a hub of tourist places of Kashmir. The world famous hill station Pahalgam is 45 kms from the district headquarters of Anantnag located on the banks of river Lidder at an altitude of 7200 ft. from Sea level. People across the world in general and Youth across the country in particular like to visit the place especially in summer. The young couples find it quite interesting to make a trip to Pahalgam which serves as a popular dating place for them. We find the young couples on the hills, which serves as a Trekking entertainment for them. People boating in river Lidder, the Betaab Valley serves as a resting place and source of inspiration for them.⁶ In short the Pahalgam gets filled up to the brim during the summer. Pahalgam a great tourist puller and favourite place for shooting of Bollywood films serves perhaps as a best health resort in entire India. Pahalgam also serves as a base camp for 'Amarnath Yatra' the snow clad mountains, pine forests, vast meadows, pastures and healthy climate, torrential flow of water in river Lidder

enriches awesome beauty of Kashmir. Pahalgam has a golf course at 2400 meters above the sea level. Kalahi and Aru the popular destinations are set between fairly steep hills where a pony hiring also serves as a cultural heritage of Kashmir. Baisaran and Hajan, on the way to Chandanwari is idle spot for picnic. Filmgoers will recognize this spot instantly as it has been the location of several movie scenes. The popular Shiva temple at Mamal is considered to be the oldest existing temple in Kashmir dating back to 5th century. The Amarnath Yatra takes place in the months of Sawan (July to August) Starting from Pahalgam to Chandanwari a car can be hired but from Chandanwari onwards the path is accessible either by foot or by Pony. Amarnath Yatra records over 5 lakh pilgrims annually reaching its highest up to 6.34 lakh and 6.22 lakh in 2011 & 2012 respectively. In 2016 the pilgrimage was worsely affected due to the unrest started on the death of Hizb Commander Burhan wani on 8th of July in the peak season of Amarnath Yatra reducing the number of pilgrims up to 2.9 lakh. The culture of Kashmir and Secularism of the Country is quite visible when we find the Pilgrims riding on pony to Amarnath cave, local Kashmiri's who despite themselves being Muslims serving vegetarian foods in Pandalas to the pilgrims near the Pahalgam base camp, Temple being visited by the Hindus and Aishmuqam shrine visited by every one who travels to pahalgam whether Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs Even Foreign Tourists love to visit this Shrine which also serves as a movie Spot.⁷

The picnic spots of Pahalgam record over ten lakh tourists annually. Pahalgam serves as a choice of every tourist who comes to visit Kashmir. The upbeating spots of Pahalgam serve as a culture for every Indian to visit the Aru village which is last scenic village of the Lidder valley and central point to Kolahi Glacier, Pahalgam Golf course which offers splendid views of Azure skies overhead a lush green turf & snow clad mountains. Baisaran hills enclosed by dense pine forests, Tulian lake at an altitude of 11,000 feet frequented by amid trekkers. Kolahi Glacier at about 18000 feet which is through an arduous trek, Betaab Valley named after the Bollywood movie Betaab serves as memorial of old Bollywood flicks, Chandanwari a place of immense

religious and tourist significance in the outskirts of Pahalgam will be found up to their brim during the summer. Every Indian as well as foreign tourists like to visit this Pahalgam worldly popular tourist place in summer. Aishmuqam Shrine also serves as a source to the Pahalgam tourism. Aishmuqam Shrine historically important Shrine of Zain-u-din is situated on a hilltop and can be reached While you're on your way to pahalgam from Anantnag through K P Road. Around 250 Steps are supposed to be taken to reach this Shrine. So it is Secularism and popular Culture of India to have a Trip to pahalgam.⁸

Foreign tourists like to travel to Pahalgam for fun and opportunity to know a different culture and history and the local inhabitants of the country get inspired by this popular culture for which it serves as history of nation and culture of the People.

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