

# Houseboat- A component of Tourism Industry in Kashmir

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**Abstract**—Houseboat hold a very important place in Tourism in Kashmir. To know how significant component it is in Tourism of Kashmir a brief study had been undertaken. The study exclusively relies on primary data. A sample of tourists was identified to which a questionnaire was administered to know their perception about the importance of houseboats as a tourism product. The study reveals the importance of houseboats as a Tourism product through the perception of tourists toward the houseboat tourism.

**Keywords**— Houseboat, Tourism, Lake.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A boat that serves as a place of residence is called a houseboat. In Tourism terminology it is also called a boatel or a floating hotel. These houseboats are moored in a permanent location. It's permanent location distinguishes it from the floating hotels of the rest of the world where such boats mostly tend to be mobile. Although there is a scope of moving it from one place to another. Its evolution in Kashmir traces back to nearly 140 years when the first houseboat was designed by a British army general. Since the concept was creative and useful, it got an overwhelming response through a massive imitation thereby promoting a huge growth and finally evolving into an industry of today with an approximate strength of 869 houseboats. These house boats add about four thousand rooms to tourist accommodation in Kashmir. Initially it used to be in the form of a Doonga (Mini houseboat) much narrow and short in length than the present day houseboats. The main scope of houseboat industry in Kashmir lies in its being a source of attraction for the tourists. Around the world houseboats have become synonymous with an exotic and carefree lifestyle and therefore are now also synonymous with extravagant luxury. A houseboat stay has always been a fascinating experience for the tourists and thereby turning out to be a unique selling proposition for the tourism industry in Kashmir. Many travel agencies offer first class houseboat accommodation that even surpasses the price of their affluent residential counterparts. There are a lot of threats ahead for the houseboat industry that includes the one of the preservation of the water bodies

especially Dal lake whose size is constantly shrinking and houseboat industry has been attributed to be the main reason for the same. It has been found that these houseboats lack the proper sewage treatment thereby resulting in its pollution and other secondary effects. In consideration to that Honorable High court of J & K state also intervened by coming up with a verdict for removal of houseboats from the lake. Obviously that verdict was environment friendly for the water body but at the same time it would have proved to be detrimental for the tourism industry in general and houseboat industry in particular. Possibly the lake would have also lost its glory that exists because of its adornment with houseboats. Although the verdict was not executed and it was all due to the efforts of the houseboat owners association who justified their position through their series of representations. They safeguarded their position by shifting blames to the Government for their negligence in the commencement of sewage treatment plants and other sewage disposal mechanisms. They appealed the Honorable High court for the revival of their decision by saying that if the shrinkage of Dal lake and Nigeen lake is because of the houseboats then why Wular lake is shrinking even in the absence of the houseboats. According to the chairman houseboat owners association, they have managed to generate evidences for the revival of the court decision. In addition to that houseboat owners association has the grievance with the Government for ignoring the construction of dockyards in the absence of which they are not able to repair and maintain their houseboats. They say that absence of dockyards will result in the sinking of boats. Further they project their grievances by commenting on the extinction of the specific type of wood that is cedar tree used for the construction of the houseboats. As a result of which the further construction of the houseboats has already stopped and thereby making it mandatory to maintain and repair the existing houseboats.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To study the significance of houseboats as a tourism product.

## III. HYPOTHESIS

Houseboat industry is a significant component of Tourism industry in Kashmir.

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## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research objective was selected keeping in view its social, economic and academic importance. The collection of data is based on primary data which was generated through the administration of questionnaire to the tourists. Attractiveness of Houseboat was considered as a dimension. The study is based on the sample drawn from the summer capital of j&K viz Srinagar. The reason being that Houseboats are moored in Dal and Nigeen Lakes which are both in Srinagar. In order to accomplish the laid objectives, a total of 77 questionnaires were administered.

## V. DATA PROCESSING AND TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

The perception of tourists was measured with the help of three statements. Since the statements in the questionnaire were qualitative, they were quantified on a 5 point scale using

Likert-type technique. The respondents were asked to mention the desired numeric against each statement using the following scale:

- 1= Strongly agree
- 2= Agree
- 3=Neither agree nor disagree
- 4=Disagree
- 5=Strongly Disagree

The scores on each statement obtained on the five point continuum were latter categorized and the aggregate responses were subsequently tabulated and recorded on a Master sheet. To facilitate the statistical analysis the data was computer processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 3.1) which gave the following results:

TABLE – I  
BEFORE TAKING A DECISION TO VISIT KASHMIR HOUSEBOAT WAS IN YOUR MIND

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	14	18.2	18.2	18.2
Agree	37	48.1	48.1	66.2
neither agree nor disagree	19	24.7	24.7	90.9
Disagree	4	5.2	5.2	96.1
strongly disagree	3	3.9	3.9	100.0
Total	77	100.0	100.0	

TABLE – II  
WHILE CHOOSING A TOURISM DESTINATION IF YOU WERE TOLD THAT HOUSEBOATS NO MORE EXIST IN KASHMIR, YOU WOULD HAVE RECONSIDERED YOUR DECISION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	2	2.6	2.6	2.6
Agree	37	48.1	48.1	50.6
neither agree nor disagree	21	27.3	27.3	77.9
Disagree	15	19.5	19.5	97.4
strongly disagree	2	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	77	100.0	100.0	

TABLE – III  
STAYING IN A HOUSEBOAT WAS A CURIOSITY

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly agree	11	14.3	14.3	14.3
Agree	25	32.5	32.5	46.8
neither agree nor disagree	34	44.2	44.2	90.9
Disagree	6	7.8	7.8	98.7
strongly disagree	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	77	100.0	100.0	

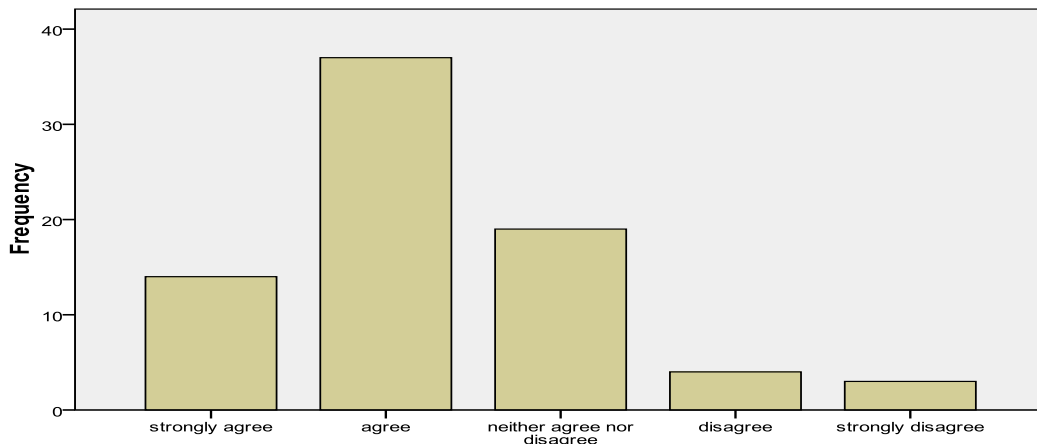


Fig. 1 Before taking, a decision to visit Kashmir Houseboat was in your mind.

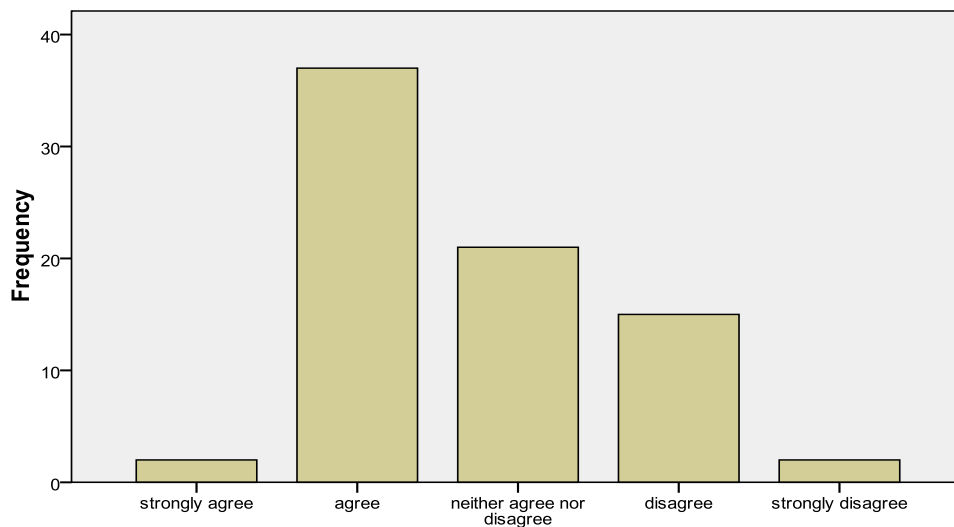


Fig. 2 While choosing a tourism destination if you were told that houseboats no more exist in Kashmir, you would have reconsidered your decision.

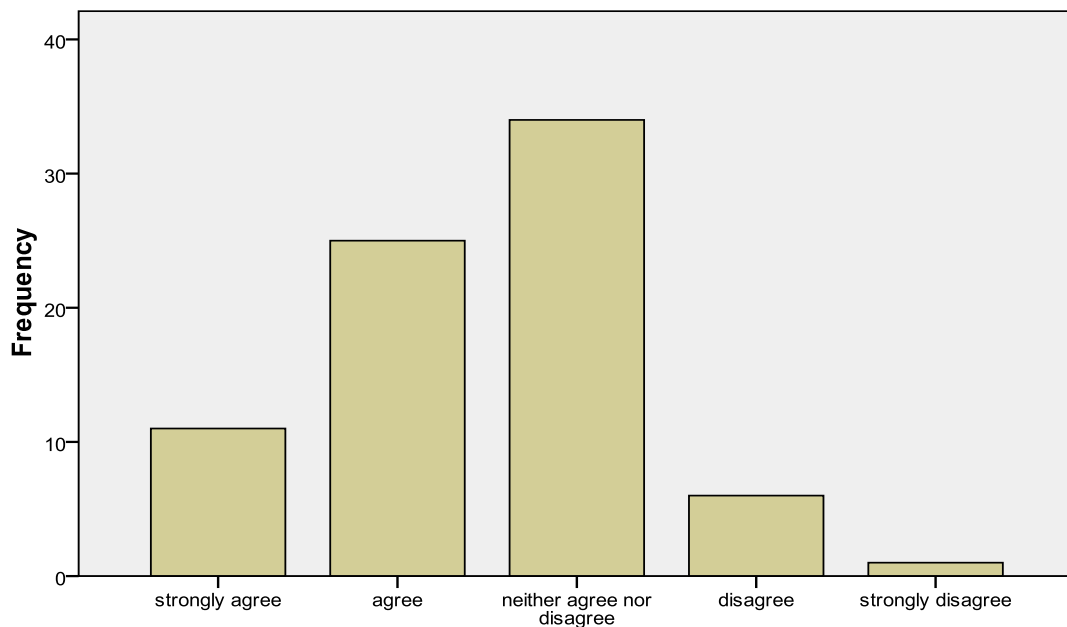


Fig. 3 Staying in a houseboat was a curiosity

TABLE – IV  
TEST STATISTICS

	before taking a decision to visit kashmir houseboat was in your mind	while choosing a tourism destination if you were told that houseboats no more exist in Kashmir, you would have reconsidered your decision	staying in a houseboat was a curiosity
Chi-Square	49.688 <sup>a</sup>	55.662 <sup>a</sup>	48.909 <sup>a</sup>
df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 15.4.

Sixtyfour percent agreed to the statement one, fifty one agreed to statement two while a significant percentage of fortysix agreed to statement three. Only ten percent disagreed to statement one, twenty two percent disagreed to statement two while as only nine percent disagreed to statement three. This makes it crystal clear that houseboat industry is a vital component of tourism in Kashmir. Chi square test reveals the significance thereby the hypothesis set above is proved. It reveals that houseboat industry is a significant component of tourism industry in Kashmir.

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