

# Impact Of Outsourcing On Economic Development Of Jammu And Kashmir

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## Abstract:

Given the opportunities and hazards that outsourcing brings to the framework of Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) socio-political environment, this study examines how outsourcing has helped the State grow economically. A global corporate strategy to reduce running costs and boost efficiency, outsourcing has been a primary engine of economic development in underdeveloped and war-torn countries. Emphasizing the prospects for new jobs, improved skills, and international investment, this paper examines role of outsourcing strategy in J&K from a governance, economic, and transaction cost standpoints. The research shows that the area suffers significant obstacles that hinder its ability to apply outsourcing for sustainable development properly. These cover political unrest, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of knowledge. Based on qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the study explores how outsourcing might be best used in J&K. The results imply that the realization of the outsourcing potential of the region and promotion of long-term economic resilience depends on deliberate policy reforms, infrastructural development, and improved skill-building programs.

**Keywords:** Outsourcing, Economic Development, Jammu and Kashmir, Transaction Cost Economics, Governance, Infrastructure, Job Creation, Skill Development, Political Instability.

## 1 | Introduction

Businesses must modify their procedures to be competitive in the global corporate landscape of today, where market dynamics are continually changing, technology is developing fast, and competition is intense. To survive in this fast-paced market, companies must be agile in response to consumers' often shifting expectations, resource-efficient, and low operational expenses. One of the main methods that has become somewhat popular in addressing these challenges is outsourcing, in which certain corporate operations or services are contracted to outside vendors. Companies can use this approach to focus their resources and efforts on their core capabilities and strengths while concurrently leveraging the specialized knowledge, modern technologies, and cost benefits committed service providers offer. Using resource acquisition from outside their immediate environment, businesses in areas marked by systemic problems—such as a lack of trained workers, outdated infrastructure, or political instability—can lower environmental risks, streamline internal processes, and strengthen their competitive position.

Jammu and Kashmir is an important case for learning about the prospective impacts outsourcing could have on improving economic development because of its sociopolitical and financial setting. The political unrest in the area, inadequate industrial infrastructure, and limited market access, make the business environment quite challenging. Traditionally, these issues have hampered economic development and lessened the area's ability to draw significant regional investment. Although outsourcing has clear economic advantages, the strategies and approaches that might increase development in Jammu and Kashmir are still mostly unresearched and underused. This is the case even if outsourcing is generally connected with financial gains. This study investigates the prospects and difficulties related to outsourcing in Jammu and Kashmir to close the present void. The main objective of this study is to pinpoint policies and ideas that can help the area fulfil its unrealized economic potential and take advantage of outsourcing's benefits.

## 2 | Literature Review:

For companies seeking to cut costs, increase output, and focus on their most valuable areas of competence, outsourcing—contracting out some or all of a company's business operations to third parties—has shown to be an indispensable tool. Thought to have started in the 18th century, when the idea of outsourcing first surfaced, leasing out specific jobs to other parties, Liberalization of international trade, developments in information and communication technology, and globalization all helped outsourcing to flourish significantly in the late 20th century. Particularly in the information technology (IT) and business process outsourcing (BPO) sectors, these elements let operations be exported to nations with lower labor costs, so optimizing cost structures and raising profitability (Kern & Willcocks, 2000; Gable et al., 2008).

There is an abundance of research on outsourcing's strategic and financial effects. Companies in areas including manufacturing and IT services can acquire specialized knowledge, save money, and boost operational efficiency by outsourcing (Kotabe & Mol, 2009; Lacity & Willcocks, 2014). According to Baldwin and Lopez-Gonzalez (2015), outsourcing can help recipient countries' economies by allowing them to transfer knowledge and create jobs. Reports of this incident come from developing nations in Eastern Europe and Asia. Levy (2005) and (Feenstra & Hanson 1996) say one worries about economic disparity. These concerns arise from the fact that outsourcing results in job losses and pay cuts in the countries that absorb the work. (Hitt & Brynjofer, 2000) critics contend that even with immediate savings, companies still run risks in preserving quality control, safeguarding intellectual property, and depending too much on outside vendors.

A company's strategic management team could outsource specific activities to obtain specialist knowledge, lower operating expenses, and boost operational flexibility (Quinn & Hilmer, 1994). Outsourcing non-core activities so that internal resources may be focused on key skills, allows organizations to save money and direct greater attention to strategic goals (Lacity & Willcocks, 2014). Outsourced projects have complicated social and financial effects. Concerns concerning workers' rights and working conditions will always exist regardless of how much economic development and employment creation outsourcing provides to the nations and its recipients. Levy (2005) claims that outsourced workers could have less job security, more difficult working circumstances, and lower wages, aggravating social inequality. Businesses and government agencies have to set fair labor standards and guarantee the sustainability of the outsourcing sector for the future in order to answer these issues (Baldwin & Lopez-Gonzalez, 2015; Gilley & Rasheed, 2000).

Although outsourcing is widely used in many different sectors and businesses, its effects could vary depending on the socioeconomic surroundings of the local area. Outsourcing offers excellent benefits and complex problems in areas like Jammu and Kashmir, marked by sociopolitical problems and economic possibilities.

## 2.1 | Outsourcing in Developing Countries

Two rising countries whose economies have been much improved by outsourcing are India and the Philippines. India has become well-known as a top global outsourcing destination due to its active IT outsourcing industry. Businesses like Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) have significantly contributed to the sector's expansion, influencing the nation's GDP and export revenues. Arora et al. (2001) claim that the Indian information technology (IT) outsourcing sector has created millions of jobs, raised foreign direct investment (FDI), and upgraded infrastructure. Thanks to its focus on innovation and capacity to generate highly qualified new workers, the industry has become a significant engine of India's economic development.

Currently leading globally in business process outsourcing (BPO), the Philippines has also emerged as a key player in the global outsourcing industry. Thanks to public and private sectors working together; this industry has created a lot of money and new employment. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA, 2019) projects that outsourcing has helped the Philippines' GDP to be almost \$26 billion more. The Philippines' favorable time zone, low labor costs, and highly qualified, English-speaking workforce help to primarily explain this success. Companies may minimize overhead costs by outsourcing to the Philippines, where they can locate qualified workers at fair rates.

## 3 | Research Methodology:

In this study, the focus is on understanding the role of outsourcing in the economic development of Jammu and Kashmir. This section elaborates on the qualitative approach employed, the data sources, and the process of data analysis.

This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena and gaining deep insights into the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the outsourcing industry in Jammu and Kashmir. Qualitative research allows for a more nuanced understanding of the context and the intricacies of how outsourcing impacts economic development. The research design includes semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.

For this study, data was collected qualitatively from important outsourcing industry players in Jammu and Kashmir through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Among these participants were business executives, government representatives, outsourcing company personnel, industry association representatives, and researchers. The semi-structured approach guaranteed that all pertinent subjects were addressed and allowed for flexibility in the interview process, enabling us to explore particular areas of interest more. The interviews enabled one to investigate respondents' opinions about economic development and outsourcing in Jammu and Kashmir. An interview checklist was developed to direct these in-depth interviews.

Purposive sampling helped participants to be chosen so that the sample comprised people with pertinent expertise and experience. Their involvement in the outsourcing sector, their experience in the field, and their eagerness to participate in the research were among the criteria for choice. To fit participants' availability, interviews were done in person and, when needed, via video conference. With the participants' permission, each 45 to 60-minute interview was audio-recorded.

Throughout the data collection process, ethical issues took the front stage. The participants were assured of their anonymity, and were given the choice to withdraw at any moment, free from consequences.

This study applied purposive sampling method. It was applied so that researcher could choose cases pertinent to the study's goals (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). A qualitative study does not let one predetermine the sample size. The result depends on the difficulty of the topic and the saturation

threshold at which the respondents cannot find additional information. Different research methods demand different timeframes and strategies to obtain saturation levels..

Stakeholder Group	Rationale for Inclusion	Length of interview (min)	No. of Interviews
Government Officials & Policymakers	Implement outsourcing policies, provide regulatory oversight, and manage public-sector outsourcing contracts.	50	4
Business Leaders & Industry Experts	Make outsourcing decisions, handle cost-benefit analysis, and manage transaction costs.	55	4
Employees in the Outsourcing Sector	Provide insights into employment conditions, skill development, and job security.	60	4
Academics & Researchers	Offer theoretical perspectives on outsourcing's economic implications and validate TCE framework.	60	4
Civil Society & Labor Unions	Address labor rights, outsourcing risks, and legal protection for workers.	60	4

#### 4 | Data Analysis and Interpretation

Apart from English and Urdu, interviews were conducted in Kashmiri, the native language of the Kashmiri people. The recorded interviews were transcribed first and then translated into English to finish the procedure. There was data saturation; hence, only 20 respondents were interviewed. Guest et al. (2020) claim that data saturation can be reached with as few as six-interviews, yet this depends on the population sample size. Following the completion of interview transcription, the qualitative data was handled using the coding techniques Miles et al. (2018) outlined. Coding is one either experimental or interpretative approach to solving problems. It is based more on suggested analysis and interpretation than on mathematics. Richards and Morse (2007) contend that labelling and linking the data is insufficient; all the relevant information also depends on tying the data to a concept and an idea. It passes through a pervasive spectrum. The first section of the procedure is called "open coding." the axial coding phase is the second, Whereas the selective coding phase functions as the third phase. Identifying and grouping the material taken from the transcripts comes first. The second phase involves the creation of sub-categories; the last stage is the grouping of these sub-categories into relevant categories or themes to create a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

#### 5 | Results and Analysis

When thematic analysis was applied to the transcripts, several subcategories were found and combined into eight themes namely, Governance and Policy Framework; Economic Impact of Outsourcing; Transaction Costs; Challenges in Outsourcing; Employee Perspective; Business Perspective; Social and Labour Rights Issues; Future of Outsourcing in J&K. The thorough results of this study, together with the synthesis of the thematic analysis are as follows:

## 5.1 | Governance & Policy Framework

The outsourcing industry in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) is highly influenced by its governance and policy framework. Drawing outsourcing firms to the area has been aided by government incentives, including tax refunds and subsidies. A government official said that

"Tax incentives had been used to draw outsourcing firms, causing a gradual increase in BPO facilities throughout the region"

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have mainly found great motivation in these incentives to start operations in J & K. Still; regulatory challenges remain problematic. A policymaker underlined,

"The legal frameworks governing outsourcing contracts are inadequately developed, resulting in ambiguities regarding enforcement and compliance."

This uncertainty sometimes discourages businesses from making long-term local commitments entirely. One of the significant issues is contract enforcement. A Business Leader said,

"Enhanced monitoring systems are being instituted however, there remains a deficiency of trust in the legal system to resolve disputes effectively,".

This sentiment emphasizes the need for robust government systems to ensure the quick resolution of conflicts and the fulfilment of outsourcing agreements. Furthermore, the governance structure is being aggravated by infrastructure shortcomings, including uneven internet access.

"The government is investing in fiber optic expansion; however, progress has been hampered by logistical challenges," said another government official.

The governance and policy issues highlight the need for more integrated and encouraging surroundings to support the expansion of outsourcing in J&K.

## 5.2 | Economic Impact of Outsourcing

Outsourcing can significantly help J&K experience a financial comeback by generating jobs and raising GDP. A researcher emphasized,

"Outsourcing facilitates economic rejuvenation in conflict zones by generating employment and drawing investments,".

This is particularly important in a region like Jammu and Kashmir, where unemployment rates have long been high. The explosion of outsourcing employment has given many young people a great chance to gain skills and earn a livelihood. Still, outsourcing has specific adverse economic effects. One major issue remains pay differences between outsourced workers and internal employees.

"Outsourced workers receive lower compensation than in-house employees, resulting in a perception of inequality," an employee said.

The pay disparity not only damages employee morale but also perpetuates economic disparities within the region. Furthermore, the temporary character of some outsourcing jobs raises questions about long-term economic viability.

"Most positions are temporary and lack long-term benefits, compromising workforce stability," said a labour union spokesman.

Although outsourcing has extensively promoted economic development in J&K, it is necessary to remove these challenges if it is to have long-lasting consequences.



### 5.3 | Transaction Costs

One functional viewpoint for understanding the challenges of outsourcing in J&K is provided by transaction cost economics (TCE). For businesses operating in the area, coordination costs represent a significant challenge.

"Overseeing outsourced teams is difficult because of unreliable internet and communication infrastructure," a business leader said.

These coordination problems not only increase operational costs but also reduce the effectiveness of outsourcing arrangements. Further aggravating the financial load are enforcement costs, related to contract monitoring and conflict resolution.

"Enhanced monitoring systems are being implemented, but they incur additional expenses that enterprises are hesitant to absorb," a policymaker said.

For outsourcing companies, the total transaction expenses provide significant obstacles limiting their ability to exploit the area's possibilities fully. Reducing hurdles to outsourcing in J&K depends on improved infrastructure, transparent policies, and simplified government systems, helping lower costs.

### 5.4 | Challenges in Outsourcing

In Jammu and Kashmir, outsourcing faces political unrest, poor infrastructure, and skill shortages, among other challenges. Political instability is a significant obstacle for businesses considering local investments.

"Unstable political conditions discourage long-term investments, as companies are apprehensive about possible disruptions," said a company executive.

This ambiguity compromises investor confidence and hinders the growth of the outsourcing company. Infrastructure shortcomings such as inadequate power supply and internet access aggravate these problems even more.

Skill gaps among the local workforce also pose a significant challenge. An employee said,

"Organizations offer limited training, which is insufficient to close the skill gap and fulfill industry standards".

The lack of skilled labors limits the region's ability to land high-value outsourcing initiatives. Strong legal protections for workers help to create a climate of uncertainty and vulnerability.

A labor union spokesman said, "Labor laws must be reinforced for contractual workers to guarantee equitable treatment and job security".

Dealing with these issues requires a whole plan, including regulatory changes, to create a more suitable environment for outsourcing, infrastructure investments, and talent enhancement efforts.

### 5.5 | Employee Perspective

Employees in J&K's outsourcing sector face both opportunities and challenges. For many young people in the area, outsourcing has created employment opportunities.

"An increasing number of young are securing employment in BPO and IT services, which has instilled hope for a more promising future," a BPO employee said.

These jobs provide income and an opportunity to gain the necessary skills. For workers in the outsourcing sector, job security starts to take the front stage.

"The majority of positions are temporary and lack long-term benefits, compromising workforce stability," a labor union official said.

The temporary character of these roles makes it difficult for staff members to plan or invest in their personal and professional development. Moreover, the lack of enough training initiatives limits staff members' ability for professional development. Improving outsourced workers' general welfare and job satisfaction depends on overcoming these challenges.

## 5.6 | Business Perspective

From a business perspective, outsourcing in J&K offers both opportunities and challenges. Outsourcing helps companies to improve effectiveness and cut running costs.

"Outsourcing enables companies to minimize operational expenses, which is a significant benefit in a competitive marketplace," said a business executive. J&K's potential for cost savings makes it an interesting site for outsourcing firms.

## 5.7 | Social & Labor Rights Issues

Social and labor rights are a significant concern in the outsourcing sector of J&K. Workers in the outsourcing sector often face poor working conditions and without enough legal protection.

"Outsourced employees have fewer benefits and precarious job security, which compromises their overall well-being," a labor union representative said.

Lack of job security and perks causes employees to feel unsure and unstable. Furthermore, the aggravating economic disparity is the pay difference between outsourced labor and internal staff.

"Outsourced workers receive lower compensation than in-house employees, resulting in a perception of inequality," one employee said.

There is insufficient legal foundation to protect workers' rights in the outsourcing industry. "Labor laws must be reinforced for contractual workers to guarantee equitable treatment and job stability," a labor union spokesman said.

Establishing a fair and more sustainable outsourcing sector in J&K calls for addressing social and labor rights issues.

## 5.8 | Future of Outsourcing in J&K

As long as important issues are resolved, J&K holds significant potential for outsourcing. The development of the outsourcing industry will rely critically on long-term sustainability.

"J&K can become an outsourcing hub with better policies and infrastructure, similar to the success seen in Bangalore," said a researcher.

Another prominent development driver is digital transformation, which helps companies access worldwide markets and get over geographical limits. Industry expansion is also crucial for the future of outsourcing in J&K. As stated by a government official,

"Industry expansion, supported by government incentives and private investments, will be key to creating a thriving outsourcing ecosystem".

Still, reaching this ambition calls for tackling current issues, including political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and skill shortages. "Stable jobs reduce unemployment-driven unrest, creating a more conducive environment for economic growth," a civil society official said. By concentrating on these areas, J&K may realize its full potential as a center for outsourcing and propel environmentally friendly economic development.

## 6 | Discussion

Outsourcing in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has become a significant economic engine that provides great advantages, including job generation, skill development, and enhancement of local business activity. As this study emphasizes, outsourcing has been a driver of regional development by creating jobs in the BPO and IT industries, therefore reducing unemployment and supporting the GDP increase of the area. Outsourcing corporations have helped create a trained workforce; many businesses have invested in training to guarantee that workers satisfy industry standards worldwide. These programs have improved people's employability and given them transferable skills, extending employment opportunities in many fields. Furthermore, the founding of outsourcing companies has resulted in more business activity, promoting economic development in J&K using auxiliary companies and services such as office space and transportation.

Outsourcing in J&K presents difficulties notwithstanding these favourable results. Political unrest and poor infrastructure are significant obstacles to the industry's expansion. Long-term investments are nevertheless discouraged by the absence of a consistent political environment since security issues and regulatory unpredictability compromise outsourcing activities. Better governance systems are needed to create a safe and stable environment that can draw additional outsourcing companies to the area. Unlocking the potential for outsourcing depends on strong infrastructure, especially in areas like internet access and electricity supply. Building a more suitable environment for companies to function effectively and compete worldwide depends critically on infrastructural investments.

The disparity between the skills needed by outsourcing companies and those offered by local educational institutions is another obstacle to outsourcing in J&K. Although outsourcing has helped dramatically improve specific skills, primarily through corporate-led training initiatives, industry needs still differ from the product of the educational system. Working with industry, academics, and the government will help close this gap. Establishing vocational training courses and creating industry-specific courses can alleviate these skill gaps. Furthermore, the emphasis on transient training courses could not be enough for long-term professional development. Encouraging lifelong learning and upskilling will help match changing industrial needs and guarantee that the workforce stays flexible enough to welcome technological developments.

At last, even if outsourcing offers a chance for economic expansion, the dependency on this industry as the main engine of development could be dangerous. The sensitivity to outside variables could affect the local economy, including changes in outsourcing patterns or worldwide economic crises. Long-term economic stability requires diversification. J&K can build a more stable economy that is less dependent on one business by developing other industries alongside outsourcing, such as tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture. Apart from reducing risks, this diversification guarantees a broader spectrum of job possibilities, guaranteeing sustainable development. Maximizing the advantages of outsourcing and guaranteeing its long-term success in J&K depends on addressing the issues of political instability, infrastructure, skill gaps, and diversity.



## 7 | Conclusion

The outsourcing sector has shown both possibilities and difficulties in Jammu and Kashmir. Positively, government incentives and the building of employment possibilities in BPO and IT services have stimulated economic development and helped the area to flourish. For outsourcing to succeed in the long term, some important problems must be resolved. Outsourcing plans are less effective due to regulatory obstacles, poor legal systems, and mistrust in contract execution. Furthermore, aggravating the difficulties experienced by companies and staff alike are political unrest, inadequate infrastructure, and talent shortages.

The government of J&K must put more coherent and encouraging governance systems into use if it wants to utilize outsourcing fully. Businesses and employees in the outsourcing industry would find a better environment if infrastructure were improved, regulatory systems were streamlined, and social and labor rights concerns were addressed. Moreover, fixing the pay differences, job security issues, and skill shortages would guarantee a steady, qualified workforce and help employees perform well. Should these difficulties be resolved, J&K may establish itself as a competitive center for outsourcing, promoting sustainable economic growth in the area and supporting the region's long-term prosperity.

By concentrating on policy reforms, infrastructure development, and investment in skill development, J&K may turn its outsourcing industry into a significant economic contributor to the region, lowering unemployment and supporting a more fair and sustainable workforce.

## 8 | Implications of the Study

This paper emphasizes the important part policy frameworks and governance play in determining the outsourcing industry in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The results imply that although government incentives have drawn outsourcing companies, regulatory obstacles, and poor legal systems limit the region's growth capacity. Policymakers should concentrate on improving the appeal of J&K as a site for long-term investments using enhanced contract enforcement and regulatory simplification. Besides reducing company risks, a stronger legal and regulatory framework would provide more open and consistent surroundings for outsourcing activities. Therefore, the research suggests that changes in legislation in this area are necessary to provide a more favorable climate for the expansion of outsourcing in the area.

Economically, by generating jobs and supporting nearby businesses, the outsourcing industry has excellent potential to help J&K grow. However, the study also highlights long-term difficulties, including salary gaps, joblessness, and the fleeting character of many outsourcing employees. Dealing with these problems will help to guarantee that the economic advantages of outsourcing result in steady development for the region. The study suggests that governmental interventions targeted at enhancing pay parity, guaranteeing job security, and providing skill development programs for outsourced workers would not only raise employee morale but also help the long-term viability of the outsourcing sector in J&K. This would help to lower economic inequalities and raise the general quality of living of the workforce of the area.

From a commercial standpoint, the research emphasizes in J&K the necessity of better infrastructure and lower transaction costs to enable more effective outsourcing plans. The region's competitiveness in the worldwide outsourcing market is limited by the difficulties connected with political unrest, inadequate infrastructure, and high coordination costs. These results imply that companies in J&K thinking about outsourcing activities would gain from improved infrastructure, especially in terms of internet connectivity and electricity supply, as well as a more stable political situation. Furthermore, companies should support government efforts to lower bureaucratic obstacles and enhance regulatory systems, fostering a more business-friendly climate. These structural changes will help J&K become

more appealing as an outsourcing base and enable sustainable corporate development, determining its long-term success.

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