

IMPACT OF TOURISM PRESSURE AND PERCEPTION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY IN GANGA CHOTI, DISTRICT BAGH, AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to learn how the people who live in Ganga Choti feel about the influence tourism has had on their lives and to analyse those sentiments. During the interviews, people of Sudhan Gali and Bani Minhasan, which are two villages located in Azad Kashmir close to Ganga Choti Bagh, were asked questions in an order that was randomised. This allowed for the questions to be answered in any way that was most convenient for them. For the aim of our research, we conducted interviews with the people who took part in the study as part of the methodology that we utilized to collect data from the field. In order to collect the information that was required, interviews were carried out in both of the areas in question with a total of forty different individuals serving as respondents. These interviews were carried out in each neighbourhood respectively. According to the conclusions of the study, the expansion of tourism has a considerable impact, not just economically but also socially, on the people who make their homes in the communities that were looked at in this study. It makes no difference if the communities are situated in less developed areas or more developed ones; this is always the case. The expansion of tourism in both of these towns has led to an increase in the number of employment opportunities available and has helped to contribute to improvements in the physical infrastructure.

Keywords: Local Community, Perception, Pressure, Tourism, Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sizable business that may provide revenue for both developed and developing countries (Peter M. Burns 2003). The tourism industry is one of the largest contributors to the economy of the Northern Areas (Ahmed 2003). Integrated tourism must encourage sustainable development by laying the groundwork for a long-term productive base that will allow residents and service providers to profit from rising standards of life (Agha 2002). There are many locations where mass tourism is expanding unchecked. It has negative effects that change the city and affect the wellbeing and quality of life of the residents

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(Hernandez-Maskivker 2021). Rahman, 2020 explained sustained tourism development's in Pakistan, it is seldom represented among the tourist destinations throughout the world that gain from sustained tourism development's many benefits. Colin 2005 emphasized on to understand the complex relationship between visitors and the environment in mountain tourist destinations. Several mountain communities have supported ecotourism initiatives to address issues with environmental degradation and underdevelopment (Sanjay 2002).

As more people travel to other destinations for various reasons including recreation, rest, and so on there has been a surge in the curiosity regarding the role that tourism plays in the hurried life of today. After World War II, several newly constituted states in the Third World shifted their attention to growth (McMichael, 1996). The initiative has facilitated the rapid growth of a number of economies as well as cutting-edge technology, so paving the way for the establishment of a number of new industries. The tourist industry is one of many that have benefited from this philosophical shift in development, as it is a substantial component of the economy. In addition, places where people can practice alertness are proliferating and are increasingly becoming the focal point of tourism philosophy. In particular, mass tourism has come under fire for being little more than a strategy used by core industrialized countries to perpetuate their domination over and exploitation of underdeveloped margins of their territories. This interpretation has led to widespread condemnation of the industry (Mow forth and Munt, 1998).

The direct contribution of travel and tourism to Pakistan's gross domestic product in 2015 was USD 328.3 million, or 2.8% of total GDP, according to the World Economic Forum's 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report. The World Travel and Tourism Council said that in 2016, the travel and tourism sector in Pakistan directly generated \$7.6 billion (Rs.79.3 billion) in GDP, or 2.7% of the overall GDP of the nation. According to projections made by the government, tourism will contribute £1 trillion (US\$6.2 billion) to Pakistan's GDP by 2025. In 2013, Pakistan welcomed 565,212 visitors who made \$298 million in purchases during their stay. The next year, 2018, alone, saw more than 6.6 million visitors. On the other side, it is projected that 50 million Pakistanis travel within the country each year, with the majority of them taking short holidays between May and August. The top three sending nations for tourists are the United States, India, and China, followed by the United Kingdom (The World Economic Forum's 2017 Report on Travel and Tourism Competitiveness).

A wide range of interest groups, including local communities, indigenous people, multinational enterprises, national governments, and development organizations, support ecotourism, according to the UN (2002). The need for eco-tourism has grown as a result of environmental degradation, injury to local

populations, and the notion that the presence of wilderness regions does not guarantee the success of eco-tourism efforts. 2002 was designated as the International Year of Ecotourism by the UN. Quebec, Canada hosted the World Eco-tourism Summit from May 19–22, 2002. The summit's key priorities included increasing our understanding of the consequences of ecotourism, improving ecotourism planning, management, marketing, and regulation, and guaranteeing equitable benefit distribution to all stakeholders. The Arctic Eco-tourism Conference was previously held in Hemavan, Sweden from April 25–28, 2002, to discuss arctic eco-tourism in relation to communities, certification, and marketing. Through certification, stricter regulation, and efficient community involvement, responsible travel can be accomplished.

Study Area

Ganga Choti is a section of the Bani Minhasan of the Union Council between Chikar, a historically significant city, particularly of the Dogura and Budsha dynasties, and Chikar, one of Kashmir's most stunning Bagh districts. It is a peak close to the village of Virupani that Pakistan controls, largely in the Bagh district and partially in the Chikar district. It is situated at an elevation of 3,045 metres in the Pir Panjar Mountains (9,990 feet). Its coordinates are 34.075 and 73.7889, or 34°4'30" N and 73°47'20" E in DMS (Degrees Minutes Seconds) (in decimal degrees). The area has two ways in the Ganga Choti. One came from Bagh Sudan Gali Road while the other came from Chikar. At the foot of Ganga Choti, there is a little town called Sudan Gali with a few hotels and stores.



Figure 1 Map of the study area

METHODOLOGY

The planned and executed two-stage random sample method was used to gather the primary information from the houses. The Ganga choti contains two villages (Bani Minahsan and Sudhan Gali). At random, 20 households from each Village 20 from Bani Minahsan and 20 from Sudhan Gali are chosen from each

Village in the first stage. In the research region, a total of 40 households were to be surveyed.

The survey instrument was a questionnaire with a few quick questions on it. It was initially produced and pre-tested in the field, and changes were made as a result of what was seen there. The first set of questions focused on the socioeconomic aspect, including household size, income level, and education level, while the following ones focused on community based tourism.

Descriptive statistics were later used to combine, compute, and analyse the data that had been acquired using the aforementioned techniques and tools. Secondary data was gathered from a variety of sources, including the Internet, books, periodicals, and reports related to the study region.

RESULTS

Resident's view about tourism: Both good and negative effects of tourists are felt by the locals in the area under study. The results demonstrated that locals, tour operators, and those working in the hotel industry all largely believed that tourism and tourists have positive effects. 85.71% of respondents reported favourable impacts, compared to 14.28% who said there were negative effects in the research region.

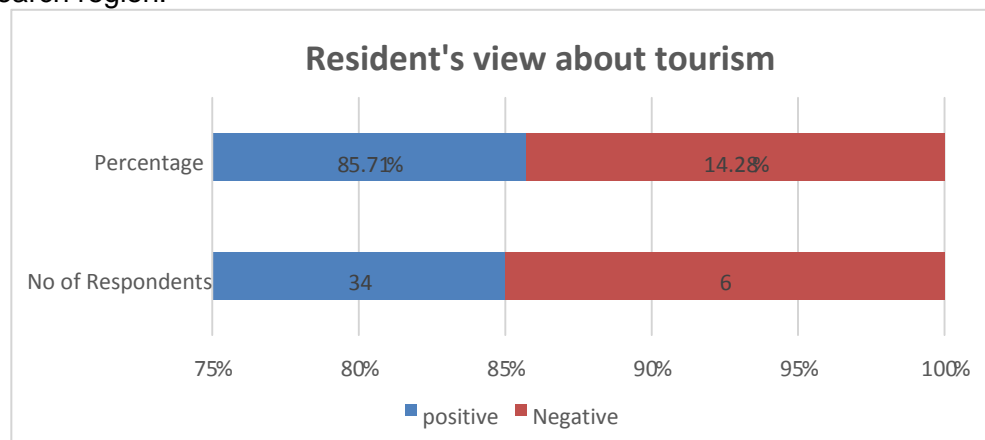


Figure 1 Resident's view about tourism

Arrival of the tourists in different seasons: The arrival of the tourists is greatly influenced by the seasons 82 % of tourists arrive in the summer, 18% in the winter according to the respondents.

Table 1. Arrival of tourists in different seasons

Season	Number	%Age
Summer	33	82.00
Winter	07	18.00

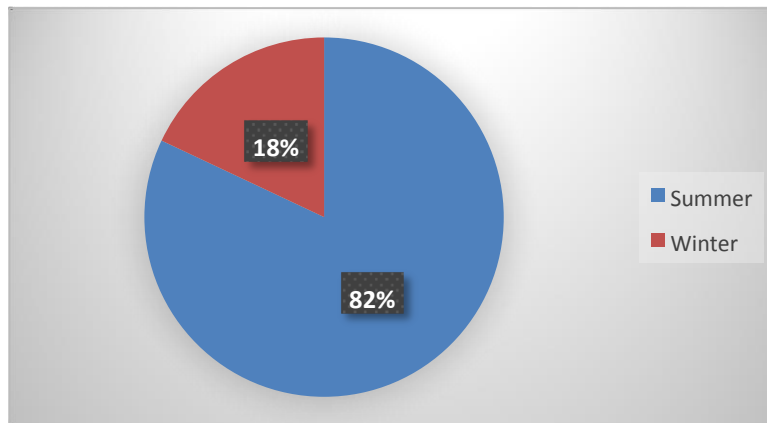


Figure 2 Arrival of tourists in different seasons

Promotion of tourism: Only 15% of the local residents were opposed to promoting tourism in the area, which was supported by roughly 85% of them.

Table 2 Promotion of tourism

Promotion	Number	Percentage
Yes	34	85
No	06	15

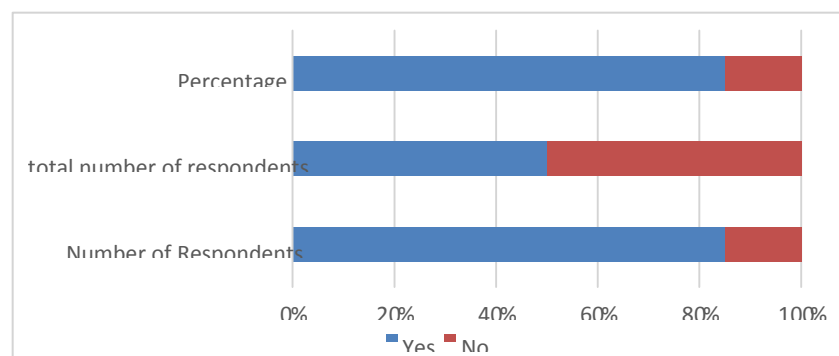


Figure 3 Promotion of tourism

Tourism Pressure on Ganga Choti: Both domestic and foreign tourists visit the area. The overseas tourists are from various nations, including China, England and Bangladesh and many others, while the domestic tourists are from every province and every part of the nation.

Table 3 Tourist Pressure on Area

Season	No of local tourist	No of other tourist	Total
Summer	14000	3270	17270
Winter	3030	700	3730

Source: Azad Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Department

The pressure of tourist is very high in the area. A different number of tourists visit the Ganga Choti Bagh Ajk in various season. Mostly the tourist pressure is very high in the summer season because the weather is very pleasant here as compared to other hot areas of the Bagh Ajk and in winter a small number of tourist visit the Ganga Choti because of very cold climatic condition and most of the residents migrated to other parts of the country where the weather condition is moderate. Despite having enormous potential to promote socioeconomic growth and aid in environmental rehabilitation, tourism also has a variety of detrimental social and environmental effects, some of which are emphasised as follows.

Carrying Capacity

Due to the tourism pressure increase in Ganga Choti Bagh AJ&K basic resources become scarce. High-intensity tourism areas are mostly found in natural settings, but they must deal with the phenomena of soil degradation brought on by rising urbanisation. Additionally, in municipalities with a high tourism intensity rate, the amounts of water taken to provide drinking water, power consumption, and the creation of household and similar trash are, on average, higher in comparison to the population. The management of wastewater is likewise more intricate. At the same time, there are more natural environments and protected places in tourism municipality regions.

Cultural Conflicts

According to the interviewees, tourism affects regional culture and traditions in both positive and negative ways. The tourism in positive sense is promoting their culture to the other parts of the country and abroad. But due the high pressure of the tourist in that specific region the local's interactions with tourists is increasing and the locals are interacting with people from different cultures, the locals are unintentionally adopting the cultures of the visitors which

is a serious threat to their own culture and tradition which should be demotivated.

Deforestation

As we know the Ganga Choti has an approximate elevation of 10000 feet above the sea level, this area is not yet facilitated with Natural Gas, the locals as well as the restaurant owners are cutting the trees causing huge damage to the natural forest degrading the value of the forest. More the tourist more will be the deforestation pressure. The deforestation will ultimately cause the runoff and erosion, the ultimate result results will be high flooding in lower plains.

Development of Infrastructure

Tourism significantly impacts local land use and can result in soil erosion, increased pollution, the loss of natural habitats, and increased pressure on threatened and endangered species. These consequences have the potential to gradually deplete the environmental resources that are essential to tourism. Tourist traffic brings about new construction, such as gardens and parks. In addition, there are roads, water systems, public restrooms, signage, etc. Infrastructure development is crucial for the tourism industry as a result of all of these factors.

Regeneration Disturbance

Due to the pressure of tourism in the Ganga Choti more attention is towards construction of metallic roads which leads to the disturbances to the trees, herbs and shrubs. As disturbances can destroy plants and free up growing space for other species to occupy, they play a significant role in the dynamics of the forest ecosystem. They have a significant impact on the physical environment, which in turn can lead to temporal and spatial variations in stand component and stand structure. This has a significant impact on how forests develop.

DISCUSSION

According to a survey, 85% of the local communities' support promoting tourism in their region, with only 15% of respondents stating that they are unwilling to do so. About 50% of the population lived in joint families, with the remaining 40% in nuclear households and 10% in extended families. Both domestic and foreign tourists visit the area. The national tourists are from every province in the nation, while the foreign tourists are from a variety of nations, including China, England and Bangladesh and among many others. Tourism has the potential to significantly improve socioeconomic development and aid in the restoration of the environment, but it also has a variety of detrimental effects on

society and the environment, some of which are highlighted as carrying capacity, price increases, regeneration disturbance, land degradation, and pollution. It is impossible to receive visitors from other countries. According to Arshad *et al.* (2018), Pakistan lacks the resources necessary to accommodate the visitors who are anticipated to visit the country's natural resources, despite the fact that it has natural resources. They continued by saying that the absence of infrastructure causes a great deal of issues for the local population.

CONCLUSION

The research has indicated that a variety of tourists, including tourists, have the potential to visit the project location. The region's natural resources have excellent potential for fostering tourism and travel. More tourism development, the building of hotels, roads, transit systems, hospitals, and public awareness campaigns by the government and non-profit organizations could increase the number of tourists who come to this region each year. Along with addressing Pakistan's unfair treatment in the west, the government must also guarantee the security of foreign tourists.

The development of ecotourism in the area is therefore urgently needed in order to both strengthen the local economy and promote the preservation of the area's natural riches. To encourage the preservation of the area's natural resources, the government must improve the living conditions of the ordinary people and supply them with necessities. Include the neighbourhood in the development and marketing of the region's tourism.

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