

# The Resident's Perceptions of the Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism in District Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan.

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## ABSTRACT

Socio-cultural tourism is considered a gateway to learning about various cultures and their social norms. However, tourism brings positive and negative changes to the host community. This study is based on primary data in which questionnaires were used as a data collection tool. A random sampling technique was adopted to choose the sample of 180 residents from district Hunza. We explored if tourism has influenced the cultural identity and social aspects through the community lens of Hunza Gilgit-Baltistan. The results of this study present that the respondents perceive that tourism has diverted locals towards a thirst to learn other languages which have suffered the identity of the local language. Moreover, criminal activities and drug abuse have disturbed the social climate in Hunza. On the other hand, tourism is considered remarkably good in providing a platform for cultural identity to lead towards preserving cultural heritage and historical places.

**Keywords:** Tourism; Culture; Social norms; Community; Language; Drug abuse

## INTRODUCTION

Hunza is located in the extreme Northern part of Gilgit-Baltistan at a height of 7999 feet above sea level. Being one of its former districts, Hunza spreads over an area of 38,000 square km. Apart from god-gifted natural beauty, the cultural traditions, and traditional foods in Hunza have their own identity [1]. Many people love the place for its pure, natural, and mouth-watering fruits. The eye-catching beauty and unique traditions of Hunza attract thousands of tourists not only from other parts of the country but every year tourists from all over the world visit the area with enthusiastic interest.

The rapid increase in the influx of tourists over the year shows various positive or negative impacts on the host countries' social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects. The social and cultural aspects with positive as well as negative impacts on the community are noticeable [2]. Tourism provides a precise platform to learn about other domestic or international cultures. The most important impact of tourism is the preservation of culture and heritage, arts and crafts, local events, and historical places. The local community gradually becomes aware of local issues and needs and always attempts to overcome these problems for its improvement. Socio-cultural tourism is also

considered a gateway to learning various other languages, which brings in useful skills for locals. The local community becomes more united and strengthened because they have to face and deal with people from various cultures and different nations. They always work together so as to maintain complete peace and harmony, considering it to be of utmost importance to enhance tourism, within the destinations.

On the other hand, some pessimistic impacts of tourism on the local community also seem to occur, with the first and foremost element being the loss of cultural identity [3]. It is simply a threat to the local community's identity, habits, attitude, and traditions. Moreover, cultural clashes between locals and tourists are also challenging factors for the community. Locals may have to face the uneven behavior of tourists, which results in physical and mental irritation and undue conflicts. It is also noticed that the rate of criminal activities increases when tourism expands. The use of alcohol and drugs also increases in these areas, and harassment issues also increase when the influx of visitors increases. As already described that peace and harmony should be the foremost factor to enhance tourism, nonetheless due to the increased population, there has been a disruption of peace and calmness, to some extent, in the local community.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study, JANGRA and Kaushik shed light on host community attitudes toward tourism impacts. The study found that tourism development has not affected the social and cultural aspects of Nako, Himalaya. This is a survey based on research of 7 percent of residents of Nako [4]. This study reveals that the development of infrastructures is necessary to prevent traffic accidents and safe and secure driving from land sliding in the Himalayas. Additionally, Bello, et al., examined the local residents' perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Manochi, Malawi. This was a survey based study in which questionnaires were used to collect data from 196 households. The study found mixed results. Job opportunities, improved incomes, growth in the economy, and security of the destination place were considered positive impacts. On the other hand, the negative impacts include the adoption of western culture by locals and the migration of outsiders to the area in search of jobs [5].

Boz and Karakas, showed the impact of the tourism industry in Antalya and Canakkale. The method of qualitative research was used for this study. The study found the economic and socio-cultural impacts by using the previous literature and on the other side, the environmental impacts were investigated through face-to-face interviews with the host communities. The results of the study found a positive attitude of host communities towards the impacts of tourism except for environmental impacts. There is a positive relationship between tourism and all other factors including economic, social, and cultural. In contrast, Zaidan, studied on local residents' perception of tourism development in Dubai, UAE focusing on the cultural impacts. This study is based on qualitative data and 428 residents were interviewed to collect data. T-tests, Chi-square tests, and regression models were investigated to analyze the results. The study found positive cultural impacts in Dubai like improved quality of life, conservation of cultural sites, and promotion of culture. On the other hand, the negative impacts include loss of cultural identity, loss of moral values, and respect for local customs and cultural clashes.

In another study, Rout, et al., investigated the socioeconomic impacts of tourism in India. The time-series data has been used in this study from the period 1990 to 2015. The study used a long-run regression model. The results showed that there is a long-run positive relationship between tourism and economic growth in India. Further, the study suggested that government should enhance the tourism industry by making long-term strategic plans to expand the economic growth of India. Moreover, Sayira, investigated a case study of Chilas in Pakistan, on tourism development and women in crisis destinations. Interviews and group discussions were used as a tool to collect data. A total of fifty-eight respondents were interviewed, including locals, tourists, tourism facilitators, mountaineers, and also the people who are concerned with the tourism department. The study found that the people of Chilas are against tourism development because of the nervousness of trailing the *parda* custom and some political reasons. It is also found that the residents of Chilas valley consider the national

government as responsible for the badly-behaved tourists who visited the valley.

Many researchers found a positive response from direct beneficiaries of tourism. As, Singla investigated the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the city of Jaipur, Rajasthan: India. The study used primary data and collected data from 500 residents using questionnaires. Analysis of variance was used in the study to analyze the results. The results found a positive attitude of higher-income respondents toward tourism. Also, the results found a negative impact on civic facilities and the deterioration of cultural resources in the city. Similarly, Canizares, et al., studied local residents' attitudes toward the impact of tourism development in Cape Verde. The study used primary data and questionnaires were used as the tool to collect data from 270 residents of Cape Verde. The results found that the social and cultural impacts are more significant than the economic impacts on Cape Verde Island. The respondents identified that there are more positive impacts than negative ones, so they encourage tourism in their area. Furthermore, it is recommended that for the development of cultural tourism as well as beach tourism, local's participation is needed, and the universities and NGOs should arrange training programs to promote awareness about tourism.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to identify the social and cultural impacts of tourism on the host community in Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan. To conduct the survey for this study, a sample of 180 respondents (residents) is selected by applying a simple random sampling technique from the population. This technique allows an equal chance of selection for each resident. We empirically analyzed the data using SPSS and STATA (statistical software). This study has used Binary Logistic Model (BLM). As our independent variables are unordered and have more than two categories, BLM is the most generally applied model to observe unordered strategic choices [5].

In this study, we have used two separate models to analyze the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the host community in district Hunza. The general form of the binary logistic model is as below:

$$Li = \ln \left( \frac{Pi}{1-Pi} \right) = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_{1i} + \dots + \beta_n X_{ni} + u_i \dots (1)$$

Where:

$L_i$  = Shows the number of probabilities of the dependent variable;  
 $\beta_1$  = Intercept and  $X_{1i}$ ;

$n_i$  = Independent variables with  $i$  number of probabilities;

$\mu$  shows the error term in the model.

In the econometric model for the cultural impact of tourism, the following binary logistic model was used:

$$\ln\left(\frac{C_{i1}}{C_{i2}}\right) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CD + \alpha_2 LS + \alpha_3 RA + \mu t \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Whereas:

CI=Cultural Identity;

CD=Cultural Diversity;

LS=Linguistic Skills;

RA=Revival of Arts;

μt=Error term.

Similarly, the econometric model for the social impacts of tourism is following the binary logistic model:

$$\ln\left(\frac{SC_i}{SC_j}\right) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 RD + \alpha_2 CA + \mu t \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

Whereas:

SC=Social Climate;

RD=Recreational Drugs;

CA=Criminal Activities.

To construct the variables, we performed principal component analysis on all the items of all dependent and independent variables included in the study [6]. The principal component analyses extraction method was applied to individual characteristics of all variables and extracted factor loads, as well as their respective percentages, are used to construct components. We considered all those components exceeding an eigenvalue 1, and after careful observation of the scree plot, the respective factors have been interpreted with a Kaiser Varimax

rotation method of normalization. For the construction of the component for each variable, we multiplied the value factor loads with their respective questions and followed the same procedure for every component. Then first divided the percentage of variance having an eigenvalue greater than 1 by 100 and then multiplied its result by their respective component to developing the indexes for each variable. Mathematically [7].

$$Index = \frac{Component = Factor\ load\ extracted * each\ item\ extracted}{percentage\ of\ variance} * each\ component$$

However, we applied five Likert scale questions, but if the range of index has exceeded 5, this can be because of different weights to each item [8]. In such a case the values on the index can exceed higher than the values on the Likert scale. Finally, the constructed indexes have been used in binary logistic regression analysis. One of the advantages of this procedure is that if the constructed index would be insignificant in regression analysis, we can use any of its component as an independent variable in regression.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of results

The below Table 1 shows the outcomes of the binary logistic regression model for the cultural impacts of tourism. The cultural impacts model is given below.

$$\ln\left(\frac{C_{i1}}{C_{i2}}\right) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CD + \alpha_2 LS + \alpha_3 RA + \mu t$$

**Table 1:** The table shows that the cultural impact model is significant, as the p-value is 0.06, which fulfills the condition of a significant model.

Cultural identity	Coef.	St. error	z-values	Prob
CD_index	0.317701	0.077738	4.086817	0.3943
LS_index	-0.22108	0.01225	-18.0472	0.0007***
RA_index	-0.36969	0.009973	-37.0708	0.9097
Education	0.1768	0.016108	10.9792	0.0267**
Constant	2.218952	0.235673	9.415385	0.0515**
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.2		<b>Number of obs</b>	180
<b>Chi-square</b>	2.63		<b>Prob &gt;chi<sup>2</sup></b>	0.0621

Note: The \*\*\*, \*\*, \*Represents the confidence interval at 1%, 5%, 10% respectively.

The results given in the Table 1 show that the cultural impact model is significant, as the p-value is 0.06, which fulfills the condition of a significant model [9]. The dependent variable is cultural identity while taking Cultural Diversity (CD), Linguistic Skills (LS), and Revival of Arts (RA) under tourism development

as independent variables. Cultural Diversity (CD) and Revival of Arts (RA) both are insignificant to cultural identity. This may be likely associated with tourism being in the region's developing stage, and impacts have not been recognized at its early stages. On the other hand, the estimated coefficient of linguistic skills

is -0.22108 which shows a significant negative relation with a p-value 0.000, and a 1 percent increment in this rate decreases the probability of cultural identity by 22.1 percent.

The below Table 2 shows the result of the social impacts of tourism in Hunza. The social impact model is given as,

$$\ln\left(\frac{SCI}{SCI}\right) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 RD + \alpha_2 CA + \mu t$$

**Table 2:** The social impacts model is significant as the likelihood ratio *Chi-Square* is 5.605 with a p-value of 0.0132 and also pseudo R-square is 0.26.

Social climate	Coef.	St. error	T-stat	Prob
RD index	-0.27788	0.016352	-16.9938	0.0012
CA index	-0.2123	0.003017	-70.3686	0
Education	0.297025	0.0114	26.0546	0
Constant	0.348622	0.021914	15.90866	0.0031
Pseudo R-squared	0.26		Number of obs	180
<i>Chi-square</i>	5.605		Prob >chi <sup>2</sup>	0.0132

According to the results presented in the Table 2, the social impacts model is significant as the likelihood ratio *Chi-Square* is 5.605 with a p-value of 0.0132 and also pseudo R-square is 0.26. The dependent variable is the social impact of tourism development and tacking Drugs Abuse (DA) and Criminal Activities (CA) as independent variables. From the results of binary logistic regression, Recreational Drugs (RD) significantly affect the social climate in Hunza. Here, the coefficient's value is -0.27788 with a p-value of 0.0012, which reveals that Recreational Drugs (RD) are inversely associated with the social climate. If there is a 1 percent increase in Recreational Drugs (RD), the probability of disruption in social climate will increase by 27.7 percent [10]. In short, a recreational drug is adversely affecting the social climate. Moreover, the estimated coefficient of criminal activities is -0.2123 which shows a significant negative relation with a p-value 0.000, a 1 percent increase in criminal activities leads to disrupt the probability of social climate by 21.2 percent.

## CONCLUSION

Since this study is based on a sample survey of 180 respondents, it is specifically designed to determine the social and cultural impacts of tourism through the perceptions and opinions of local people on the host community in district Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan. Millions of tourists visit Hunza Valley for pleasure, site-seeing, and entertainment, which in turn provides various creative influential aspects for the host communities. It is considered to be an established fact worldwide that tourism seems to be like a double-edged sword, providing both negative and positive effects.

The sample survey consisted of males and females, between 21 years and 30 years of age. Their qualifications had almost been diverse including high-school scholars, undergraduates, graduates (in the majority), and even post-graduates, besides

some respondents being illiterate. The respondents were involved in different occupational fields like public and private employees, businessmen, and students and some were even unemployed. The income within the household varied from person to person with a different number of employed individuals in each family.

The aspects of this study pertaining to the social and cultural impacts of tourism in district Hunza present mixed results. According to the opinions of locals, it is determined that 'Linguistic Skills' (LS) and 'Revival of Arts' (RA) affect the cultural identity quite negatively. The results of the study show that an increase in tourism negatively affects the cultural attributes of Hunza valley. The locals of Hunza perceive that tourism have diverted locals towards a thirst to learn other languages. Many local youngsters cannot even speak their native language properly, which shows an alarming sign of cultural diversity. On the other hand, 'tourism' may be considered remarkably good in providing a platform for cultural identity to lead towards preserving cultural heritage and historical places.

Likewise, the impact of tourism on the social aspect has also been considered undesirable by the residents of Hunza. It has been observed from the results that excessive usage of recreational drugs by tourists, led significantly to the social impacts and harmony in Hunza. To attract and entertain tourists, the local people are engaged in providing alcohol and other drugs to them, with excessive amount of money. The foreigners are specially taken into accord for such purposes. Hunza also faces imbalances in behavior of residents' culture and lifestyle, usually causing cultural conflicts between locals and visiting tourists. According to the results of our study, there is a significant relation between criminal activities and social climate in Hunza.

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