

# International Conference on **TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

4th - 6th May 2023

Main Campus, IBA Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

## BOOK OF EXTENDED ABSTRACTS



International Conference  
**TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

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Institute of Business Administration, Main Campus, Karachi, Pakistan

## Conference Program

Time	Activity
<b>Day 1: May 4, 2023</b>	
09:00 am – 10:00 am	Registration
10:00 am – 10:15 am	Opening and Welcome Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Institute of Business Administration, Karachi</li> <li>- Karakoram International University, Gilgit</li> </ul>
10:15 am – 10:45 am	Inaugural Talk by Sirbaz Khan - Mountaineer (Presidential, Pride of Performance Award winner)
10:45 am – 11:00 am	IBA-KIU MoU Signing
<b>11:00 am – 11:15 pm</b>	<b>Tea Break</b>
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	<b>Panel Session: 1</b> Synergizing Tourism and Culture: Opportunities and Challenges  Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aftab Ur Rehman Rana – Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation</li> <li>- Muhammad Umair – University of Punjab</li> <li>- Seema Karim - Grow Well Ventures</li> </ul> Moderator: Maria Hassan Siddiqui - Assistant Professor; Academic Director, AC Centre for Writing
12:15 pm – 01:30 pm	Technical Session 1: Socially and Environmentally Sustainable Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four Presentations, 10 min each</li> <li>- Discussions and Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
12:15 pm – 12:25 pm	Sustainable Tourism for a Changing Climate: Analysis and Recommendations for Resilient and Net-Zero Local Economies by Saeed Ahmad Qaisrani
12:25 pm - 12:35 pm	Military Urbanism and its Impact on Tourism Sustainability by Hassan Zaheer
12:35 pm - 12:45 pm	Governance, Community, and Tourism: An Opportunity for Rural Sindh by Amna Kazmi
12:45 pm - 12:55 pm	A Sociological Analysis of cultural tourism in Karachi: Perspective of Tourists by Maryam Jan
12:55 pm – 01:30 pm	Q&A
<b>01:30 pm – 02:30 pm</b>	<b>Prayer Break &amp; Lunch Break</b>

02:30 pm – 03:30 pm	<p>Panel Session: 2 Sustainable Ecotourism Development</p> <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attaullah Shah – Vice Chancellor, KIU</li> <li>- Azizan Marzuki, University Sains Malaysia (USM), Malaysia</li> <li>- Sirbaz Khan – Mountaineer (Presidential, Pride of Performance Award winner)</li> <li>- Saranjam Baig, Associate Professor of Economics, KIU/ Sultan Qaboos University</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: Rehmat Karim - Associate Professor/Director, KIU Hunza Campus</p>
03:30 pm – 04:45 pm	<p>Technical Session 2: Developing Sustainable Local Tourism Economies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four Presentations, 10 min each</li> <li>- Discussions and Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
03:30 pm - 03:40 pm	Perceptions of Local Community in Development of Local Economy Due to Tourism (Case Study of District Hunza) by Wajhullah Fahim
03:40 pm - 03:50 pm	Forecasting Tourist Arrivals using Big Data by Wali Ullah
03:50 pm - 04:00 pm	Exploring the Role of Community-Based Tourism Initiatives in Promoting Socially Sustainable Tourism in Hunza, Gilgit: A Historical Comparative Analysis by Eshal Arooj
04:00 pm - 04:10 pm	Asilah Culture Festival: A Case Study for Pakistan by Seher Ali Shah
04:10 pm – 04:45 pm	Q&A
<b>4:45 pm - 05:00 pm</b>	<b>Tea Break</b>
05:00 pm – 05:45 pm	<p>Academic Circles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exploring Pakistan's Tourism Landscape of North &amp; South by Sirbaz Khan</li> <li>- Urban Culture &amp; Architecture of Karachi City by Soha</li> <li>- Rural Sindh: Culture, Heritage and Potential Tourism by Zaheer Ali</li> </ul>
05:45 pm – 06:30 pm	Campus Tour and relaxation time
06:30 pm	Departure for dinner
<b>08:00 pm – 09:30 pm</b>	<b>Seaside Gala Dinner &amp; Networking</b>

Day 2: May 5, 2023	
09:15 am – 10:30 am	<p>Technical Session 3: Gender &amp; inclusivity in tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four Presentations, 10 min each</li> <li>- Discussions and Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
09:15 am – 09:25 am	Assessing The Accessibility of Tourist Facilities and Services for People With Disabilities In The Tourist Sites Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan by Umema Amin Siddiqi
09:25 am – 09:35 am	Pakistani Stakeholders' Vision of Tourism Development under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Initiative by Wajid Ali
09:35 am – 09:45 am	Trophy hunting and Community-based Eco-tourism in Chitral by Zakir Ahmad

09:45 am – 09:55 am	Community Participation towards Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development: A Case Study in Hindukush Himalayan Pakistan by Saranjam Baig
09:55 am – 10:30 am	Q&A
<b>10:30 am – 10:45 am</b>	<b>Tea Break</b>
10: 45 am – 11:45 am	Panel Session: 3 Tourism Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peter MARTY - Professor, ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences</li> <li>- Tanveer ul Hassan - Former AIG Tourists Police, GB</li> <li>- Ishaq Ali - Former AIG Tourists Police GB</li> </ul> Moderator: Junaid Alam Memon - Professor and Director, Center for Business & Economics Research
11:45 am - 01: 15 pm	Technical Session 4: Responsible and sustainable tourism practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five Presentations, 10 min each</li> <li>- 40 minutes for discussions and Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
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12:15 pm - 12:25 pm	Sustainable Selves, Culture and Literary Tourism: The Case of Gilgit-Baltistan by Shahzeb Khan
12:25 pm – 12:35 pm	Bridging the Digital Divide in Agritourism: The Impact of ICT on Promoting Sustainable Development in Gilgit- Baltistan, Pakistan by Rakhshanda Ali Syed
12:35 pm – 01:15 pm	Q&A
<b>01:15 pm – 02:30 pm</b>	<b>Jumma Prayer and Lunch Break</b>
02:30 pm – 02:45 pm	Closing Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Institute of Business Administration, Karachi</li> <li>Karakoram International University, Gilgit</li> </ul>
02:45 pm – 03:15 pm	Closing Speech by Chief Guest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heritage and tourism Potential in Sindh and Balochistan by Asma Ibrahim</li> </ul>
03:15 pm – 03:30 pm	Certificate Distribution
<b>03:30 pm – 06:00 pm</b>	<b>Tea Break and free time</b>
<b>06:00 pm – 09:30 pm</b>	<b>Cultural Event: Ghazal Night and Dinner</b>
<b>Day 3: May 6, 2023</b>	
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# **Theme 1: Socially and Environmentally Sustainable Tourism**

# Sustainable Tourism for a Changing Climate: Analysis and Recommendations for Resilient and Net-Zero Local Economies

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## Abstract

The tourism industry is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with local economies facing significant challenges in maintaining sustainability while mitigating carbon emissions. This study aims to analyze the intersection of sustainable tourism and climate change, and provide recommendations for building resilient and net-zero local economies. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. Primary data is collected through structured surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with key stakeholders in the tourism industry, including tourism operators, government officials, local communities, and other relevant actors. Secondary data, such as official reports, statistics, and literature, was also analyzed. The findings of the study revealed that 75% of surveyed tourism operators reported experiencing the impacts of climate change, with increasing instances of extreme weather events, changing patterns of tourist behavior, and declining natural resources. The study identifies key interventions and strategies for building resilient and net-zero local economies, including measures to reduce carbon emissions by 30% through renewable energy adoption, enhance climate resilience through nature-based solutions, and promote sustainable tourism practices through community-based initiatives. Based on the analysis, the study proposes recommendations for policy-makers, tourism operators, and other stakeholders to integrate sustainability and climate resilience into local tourism economies. These recommendations include developing climate action plans, establishing carbon offset programs, promoting eco-tourism initiatives, and fostering partnerships among stakeholders for effective implementation.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism, Climate change, local economies, net-zero, resilience, recommendations



## **Introduction**

Tourism has become a significant global industry, contributing to economic growth, employment generation, and community development. However, the sustainability of tourism is increasingly being challenged by the impacts of climate change, which pose risks to the environment, society, and the economy. As a result, the concept of sustainable tourism has gained traction, aiming to balance economic development with environmental and social concerns (UNWTO, 2015).

Climate change, driven by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes, has resulted in a wide range of impacts on natural and human systems (IPCC, 2014). These impacts include rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise, extreme weather events, and ecosystem degradation, all of which have direct and indirect consequences for tourism destinations (Scott et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the urgent need to mitigate the impacts of climate change has led to the global goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, where the amount of GHGs emitted is balanced by the amount removed from the atmosphere (IPCC, 2018). Local economies, including those dependent on tourism, are increasingly being challenged to transition towards net-zero carbon economies to mitigate climate change and achieve sustainability targets (UNEP, 2020).

The transition to net-zero local economies requires a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism in the context of climate change. This necessitates an analysis of the impacts of climate change on tourism destinations, the effectiveness of existing mitigation and adaptation measures, and the identification of innovative strategies and recommendations for building resilient and net-zero local economies.

## **Methodology**

The proposed research was utilized a mixed-methods approach to analyze and provide recommendations for sustainable tourism in the context of climate change and the transition to net-zero local economies. The methodology included the following steps:

### ***Literature review***

A comprehensive review of relevant literature on sustainable tourism, climate change impacts, and net-zero local economies was conducted to establish the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. This involved a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles, reports, policy documents, and other relevant sources to gather information on key concepts, theories, and best practices related to sustainable tourism and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### ***Data collection***

Primary and secondary data was collected to analyze the impacts of climate change on tourism destinations, the effectiveness of existing mitigation and adaptation measures, and the identification of innovative strategies for building resilient and net-zero local economies. Primary data included interviews, surveys, and field observations, while secondary data included statistical data, reports, and case studies from relevant sources.

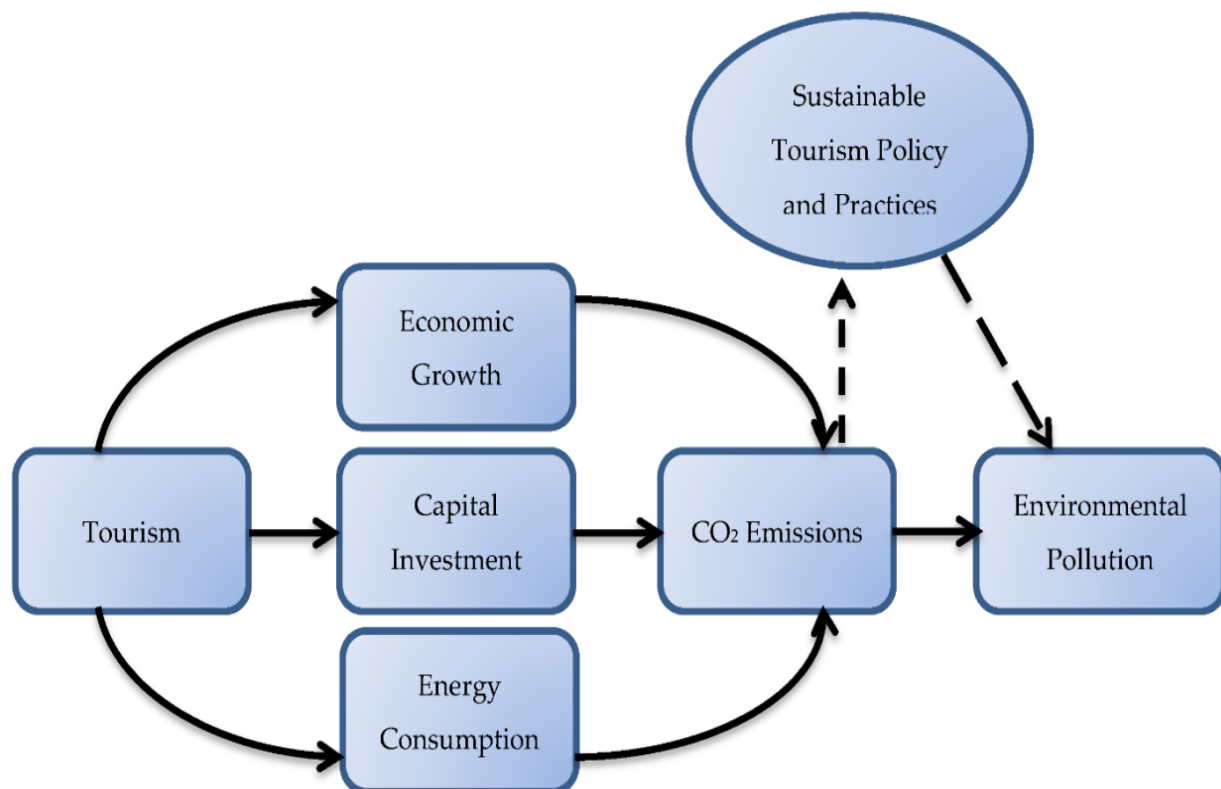
## Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed by using appropriate statistical and qualitative analysis techniques. Quantitative data, such as statistical measures and trends, was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns, trends, and correlations. Qualitative data, such as interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses, was analyzed by using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the data.

## 3. Results and Discussions

The research findings revealed several important insights into the relationship between sustainable tourism, climate change, and net-zero local economies. Quantitative data analysis showed that there is a significant correlation between climate change impacts on tourism destinations and the need for mitigation and adaptation measures. Statistical measures, such as regression analysis, indicated that the severity of climate change impacts, including sea level rise, extreme weather events, and temperature changes, has a direct impact on the sustainability of tourism destinations. The findings also highlighted the importance of local economic factors, such as GDP, employment, and tourism revenue, in shaping the resilience and net-zero potential of local economies.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework



**Table 1:** Climate Change Impacts on Tourism Destinations

Climate Change Impact	Description
Changes in temperature	Rising temperatures affecting the suitability of destinations for outdoor activities and influencing seasonality of tourism
Extreme weather events	Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as hurricanes, storms, floods, and wildfires impacting tourism infrastructure and visitor safety
Sea level rise	Rising sea levels leading to coastal erosion, loss of beachfront, and damage to coastal tourism infrastructure
Disruption of ecosystems	Disruption of natural ecosystems and biodiversity loss affecting wildlife-based tourism
Changes in cultural heritage	Impacts on cultural heritage sites and indigenous communities affecting cultural tourism
Water scarcity	Decreased availability of water resources affecting tourism activities dependent on water
Health and safety concerns	Risks of vector-borne diseases, heat-related illnesses, and other health and safety concerns affecting tourist destinations

### **3.2 Discussions**

The discussions based on the research findings shed light on the challenges and opportunities for achieving sustainable tourism and transitioning to net-zero local economies in the face of climate change. The findings indicated that climate change poses significant challenges to the sustainability of tourism destinations, including impacts on natural resources, infrastructure, and local communities. However, the research also identified several opportunities for promoting sustainable tourism practices and building resilient and net-zero local economies.

It also highlighted the importance of adopting a holistic approach that integrates environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability in tourism destination management. This includes implementing effective mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promoting adaptation measures to minimize the impacts of climate change, and integrating local economic development strategies with sustainability goals. The discussions also emphasized the need for collaborative efforts among stakeholders, including governments, local communities, tourism industry, and academia, to develop and implement innovative strategies for achieving sustainable tourism and net-zero local economies.

The research findings also suggested that policy interventions, regulatory frameworks, and financial incentives can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism practices and facilitating the transition to net-zero local economies. For example, policies that promote renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and responsible waste management can contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of tourism destinations and enhancing their resilience to climate change impacts. Generally, the results and discussions of the research provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of sustainable tourism in the context of climate change and net-zero local economies. The findings underscore the

importance of adopting a comprehensive and collaborative approach to achieve sustainability goals, and provide recommendations for policymakers, destination managers, and other stakeholders to implement effective strategies for building resilient and net-zero local economies in the face of climate change challenges.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the analysis and results presented, the following conclusions were made

- The impacts of climate change on tourism destinations are diverse and multifaceted, ranging from changes in temperature and extreme weather events to sea level rise, disruption of ecosystems, and cultural heritage impacts.
- These climate change impacts pose significant challenges to the sustainability of local tourism economies, with potential negative consequences for tourism-dependent communities, economies, and environments.
- It is crucial to proactively address the challenges of climate change impacts on tourism destinations and take appropriate measures to mitigate and adapt to these impacts.
- Implementing sustainable tourism practices that promote resource conservation, carbon emissions reduction, and adaptation to climate change impacts.
- Strengthening collaboration among local communities, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement climate change resilience and mitigation strategies for tourism destinations.
- Investing in infrastructure and technological solutions that enhance the resilience of tourism destinations to climate change impacts, such as coastal protection measures, green infrastructure, and smart tourism technologies.
- Enhancing public awareness and education about the impacts of climate change on tourism destinations, and fostering responsible and sustainable tourism behaviors among tourists and local communities.
- Conducting further research and monitoring to better understand the impacts of climate change on local tourism economies and evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation measures.

## **Recommendations**

Considering the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proposed:

- Implementing sustainable tourism practices that promote resource conservation, carbon emissions reduction, and adaptation to climate change impacts.
- Strengthening collaboration among local communities, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement climate change resilience and mitigation strategies for tourism destinations.
- Investing in infrastructure and technological solutions that enhance the resilience of tourism destinations to climate change impacts, such as coastal protection measures, green infrastructure, and smart tourism technologies.
- Enhancing public awareness and education about the impacts of climate change on tourism destinations, and fostering responsible and sustainable tourism behaviors among tourists and local communities.

- Conducting further research and monitoring to better understand the impacts of climate change on local tourism economies and evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation measures.

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# Military Urbanism and its Impact on Tourism Sustainability: A Case Study of Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan

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**Keywords:** Military Urbanism; Authoritarianism; Martial Rule; Militarism; Gwadar; Gilgit Baltistan

## Introduction

The confluence of national security and tourism in Pakistan plays out in a very intricate manner. There is an acute imbalance of power and authority between the power elite and the people, especially those residing in tourism-intensive areas, where distinct perceptions of security and policing, developmentalist model and integration in policymaking enables a highly-intrusive, authoritarian securitized environment that is geared toward achieving 'enclaves of stability' in the spatiality of chaos. These 'enclaves of stability' augments the developmental model of neoliberalism with policing as a regime-preservation security practice underpinning it and an authoritarian centralized model of governance excluding and suspicious of people whose very lives and livelihoods are dependent upon the decisions taken by the central authority without their participation, deliberation, and consent. The paper seeks to understand Pakistan's perennial problems with approaches to tourism in Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan by locating these spatialities in the sociological context of the violence, insecurity, and authoritarianism which underpins the structural factors inhibiting a sustainable approach to tourism in these areas.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the state and the structures of its force and authority in these spatialities is foregrounded in a historical context in which primacy was given to securitization of these spatialities and the perception of these areas as pivotal to geostrategic concerns of the post-colony. These concerns resultantly led the state to develop techniques and technologies of control, coercion, suppression, and surveillance and embedded them in the very presence of the state in these areas. However, these authoritarian modes of social control consequently instituted, in actuality, a martial rule than a democratic rule in these spatialities. This martial rule is organized around ideas of religious nationalism bereft of indigenous ethnic sense of *Self*, a neoliberal economic model which is extractive of local resources and assets without benefitting local population, a centralized approach towards governance which espouses a bureaucratic management of spaces than being responsively democratic. These ideas cumulatively shape state's perception of these spaces as something to dominate than govern with detrimental effects for establishing solid foundations for sustainable tourism.



## Methodology

In its methodological approach, the paper seeks to apply a qualitative case study method in studying spatialities of Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan in context of violence, insecurity, and authoritarianism which underpins structural factors that led to the construction of 'enclaves of stability.' The method is pertinent owing to the intricacies involved in studying the dynamics of rule, securitization, and public responsiveness to them, and the context-specificities of both Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan. With respect to studying structures of force and authority in the spatial contexts of Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan, the paper intends to apply the theoretical paradigm of military urbanism as theorized by Professor Stephen Graham. He defines the theory as, "encompassing a complex set of rapidly evolving ideas, doctrines, practices, norms, techniques and popular cultural arenas through which the everyday spaces, sites and infrastructures of cities along with their civilian populations are now rendered as the main targets and threats within a limitless 'battlespace'." <sup>2</sup>

The theory is predicated upon four fundamental ideas: Foucault's boomerang, the political economy of surveillance, militarized appropriations of urban space and infrastructure, and fusion of *feelings*, values and culture with militarized notions. <sup>3</sup> This methodological approach is unique in the context that it hasn't been applied in studying tourism and militarism in spatial contexts outlined above. The paper, in this view, seeks to advance a new understanding on the notions of state authoritarianism and martial rule and their impact on sustainable foundations of tourism in heavily-securitized environments. With this approach, the paper intends to understand how exclusionary nationalism, extractive economic model, and bureaucratic decision-making with less public participation could seriously hamper the prospects of projection of a friendly narrative, cash inflows, and socio-economic development in less-developed areas through tourism.

## Result and Discussion

The twin cases of Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan used in studying the phenomenon of military urbanism and its impact on sustainable foundations for tourism in these spatialities. Geomorphologically, both of these spatialities represent distinct physical features and environments which testify to the diverse approach required in making decisions for enabling an atmosphere of flourishing tourism. However, despite their very distinct geomorphology, both spatialities arguably have a uniform experience with violence, insecurity, and authoritarianism – the core features of military urbanism practiced by the Pakistani state. Situated at the frontiers of the state in polar opposite with each other, both spatialities intensely and perpetually experiences military urbanism as the state exercises its techniques and technologies of control, coercion, suppression, and surveillance.

Contested as a space for regional competition in trade and influence, Gwadar has been a space long appropriated by the Pakistan military as a securitized space where mobility of capital and people is highly regulated and surveilled. While statistics are hard to come by as culture, tourism and archives department of the Balochistan government does not regularly publish numbers on national and foreign tourists, some guesstimates are around 20 to 25 thousand people arriving in Gwadar in peak season, largely comprises of local tourists. <sup>4</sup> These

statistics alone presents a dismal picture of tourism potential in the area which is significantly hampered by the securitized nature of the space. There are efforts by the governmental authorities to expand opportunities for tourism however these are ill-conceived plans comprises more of public rhetoric than substantial policies.<sup>5</sup>

Primarily, the military dominance of the space motivates an exclusion of indigenous people participation in the local commerce alongside the impunity with which military and other security actors operate in Gwadar.<sup>6</sup> The record of human rights in the territory articulates a terrifying prospect as the state actively fights an active insurgency in the province of Balochistan and in Gwadar particularly.<sup>7</sup> Ironically, the state proclaims that the indigenous people should support the exclusionary activities for economic, trade, and tourism promotion and this indigenous support for endeavors which excludes them in decisionmaking and implementation is as a testament for their 'loyalty' to the state thus translating the political economy of defense into the political economy of *feeling*.

In consonance with Gwadar, the appropriation of urban space and dominance of the whole paradigm of policymaking by the military is constitutive of the dynamics in Gilgit Baltistan.<sup>8</sup> The spatiality is infact exist in a legal quagmire as it is not a fully-fledged autonomous state nor a full province. This void-like existence enables a perpetuation of militarism in urban environment without constitutional rights and protections enjoined by its people. This arrangement with regular interval leads to expressions of public dissent over militarization and dearth of civil rights.

While most of the tourism in the region inclined toward mountaineering, this securitized environment does have an impact on tourism especially foreign tourism. Official statistics are again hard to find but according to one estimate there were 1.39 million domestic tourists as opposed to 10892 foreign tourists in 2019.<sup>9</sup> The securitized approach inhibits easy visa approval, willingness of foreign tourists to come at a contentious site, absences of local industries in mountaineering gears, easy accommodation and a liberal environment. Additionally, indigenous population is excluded from any deliberative process to develop and expand opportunities for tourism in the region.<sup>10</sup>

In these heavily militarized environments, the rhetoric of tourism potential and support rings hollow. Contradictorily, authorities tend to focus too much on attracting local tourists while negating the fact that the spending by local tourists is denominated in PKR while foreign (primarily western) tourists would bring foreign-denominated currencies. Their spending contributes more than local spending. In sum, military urbanism breeds perpetual insecurity which consequently leads to ossification of tourism eco-system. The authoritarian mode of social control and coercion reeks to reverse colonialism and underscore an insecure environment for foreign tourists. Augmenting this dynamic is the bureaucratization of tourism policies which tend to negate the crucial role of the indigenous population in developing and facilitating tourism policies with sustainable basis.

## Conclusion

In developing and facilitating sustainable foundations for tourism, the state must undertake significant reforms in reducing the manifestations of militarism and building a bridge between indigenous population and governmental authorities in defining and implementing tourism policies. Core reforms must constitute setting up local tourism boards and dispensation of funds to the most local level of governance. When the state makes indigenous people a stakeholder in their own political economy, indigenous people likely to secure the opportunities for their economic growth by engaging with non-state actors to make peace. Secondly, the state must reconstitute the nature of policing and security. It must shift its focus from regime-centric to people-centric to enable an environment of trust and harmony between people and securitizing actors; a peace that would shape perceptions of these regions as secure and peaceful regions for tourists' explorations.

The next step should be presenting these regions for eco-friendly tourism as opposed to engaging with neoliberal models of high-end developmentalism. Following these steps, the state must coalesce them into one singular narrative regarding Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan as spatialities of peace and stability. This also complements with the newfound direction in *National Security Policy* in which the Pakistani state expressed its intention to shift from a geostrategic paradigm to geoeconomics.

Aside from these grand policy designs, the state should also focus on building critical infrastructure of telecommunication networking, hotels, restaurants, and banks, and provide a basic public security to all. The state should realize that attracting tourism and making it sustainable requires a synergize efforts among all tiers of government and a close cooperation between the indigenous people and the government. In the absence of indigenous participation in tourism activities and a strong presence of militaristic infrastructures and values, there cannot be sustainable basis for tourism in Gwadar and Gilgit Baltistan.

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# Governance, Community, and Tourism: An Opportunity for Rural Sindh

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**Keywords:** Sustainability; Community; Rural; Tourism; Sindh

## Introduction

Sindh, Pakistan's hidden gem, is a province rich in history, culture, and art, yet it remains largely unexplored by tourists. Sindh is the second most densely populated province, with 47.9 million people, 48% of whom reside in rural areas, per the 2017 census. According to the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) 2021, Sindh has an HDI of 0.517. Sindh encounters tremendous disparities concerning district HDI, with Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, and Sujawal featuring at the lowest HDI level. Tharparkar, for instance, is suffering from severe destitution in terms of economic and social growth; however, districts such as Tharparkar and Sujawal can thrive through sustainable tourism, investment in infrastructure, a supportive government structure, and community-based tourism initiatives.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the challenges facing the rural communities in Sindh, which include but are not limited to poverty, little to no access to basic amenities, and a lack of basic infrastructure. It contends that tourism can provide a route to economic development and employment, but only if developed in an inclusive, sustainable, culturally, and traditionally sensitive manner.

Drawing on the field theory of community development and the social exchange theory, this research establishes empirical connections between determinants for sustainable tourism. The objective of this paper is to investigate the prospective and potential of tourism as an instrument for economic development in rural regions of Pakistan's Sindh province, especially Thar, Banbhore, Thatta, and Khairpur. These rural areas can serve as the cornerstone for a community-led sustainable tourism programme since they are not only rich in history, culture, and monuments, but they are also easily accessible due to their proximity to Karachi, Pakistan's largest city. These locations can thrive through sustainable tourism because of their strategic position, community strength, and numerous of tourist attractions.

The study highlights the critical role that government and community participation possess to foster sustainable and equitable tourism development. The paper illustrates a set of suggestions

for policymakers, elected officials, and the tourism sector in Sindh based on secondary qualitative analysis. Some initiatives include improving organizational frameworks to encourage accountability and transparency, engaging local communities in tourism strategies and decision-making, and introducing tourism policies that help generate revenue and social development.

## **Methodology**

To investigate the relationship between government, community, and tourism in rural Sindh, the research design includes a desk research approach as well as a combination of social exchange theory and field theory of community development. The social exchange theory method is utilized to develop an approach that explains the social processes and patterns that underpin the relationship between government, community, and tourism in rural Sindh. While also exploring how both parties can benefit from this exchange (Nusrat Jahan, 2020). This method of data gathering, and analysis allows patterns and themes to emerge from the data rather than being pre-determined by the researcher.

Similarly, the community development strategy is used to acquire an in-depth comprehension of how the government can help local communities by learning about their background and culture and then employing that knowledge to promote tourism (Abbott, 1995). This method entails researching and analyzing current literature on the target audience to get insights into their relationship experiences and perceptions. The previous mentioned concepts demonstrate that community-driven tourism is a viable way to promoting Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) by distributing rewards to all members of the community, simultaneously conserving natural resources.

This is theoretical paper utilizes secondary reviewed literature gathered from existing resources in libraries or on the internet, namely articles in online journals. Search engines such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, MDPI, and JSTOR were used. The primary criteria for selecting a publication consisted of both worldwide and national articles were examined in order to preserve a significant and comprehensive grasp of the issue. The data will be categorized based on the themes discovered, and the outcomes will be summarized using a narrative synthesis. Overall, this research design aims to provide a holistic understanding of the relationship between government, community, and tourism in rural Sindh, and how it can be improved to promote sustainable tourism development and benefit all members of the community.

## **Findings and Discussions**

Rural tourism is described by UNTWO as an alternative to mass tourism in which the visitor's experience is linked to nature-based activities, historical sites, arts, culture, and the rural lifestyle. It is incontestable that rural tourism promotes the development and economic growth of the pertaining area (José María López-Sanz, 2021) and promotes employment, empowerment (Rachel Dodds, 2018), sustainable income, and a better standard of living. The literature supports the hypothesis that sustainable community-led tourism can provide Sindh with the opportunity



to develop socially and economically (Tayyaba Makhdoom, 2021). Sindh has a wealth of historical and cultural landmarks that the government may leverage to advertise tourism; yet, tourism development and policies are given secondary concern in Sindh. (Tayyaba Makhdoom, 2021).

The rural economy of Sindh is underwhelming since agriculture is the primary source of financial support for the majority of the population. The issues of water scarcity, lack of technology, infertile land, and natural disasters have led to a decline in average yield of product in Sindh (Talpur, 2018), pushing the rural areas at a 75% poverty ratio (The Express Tribune, 2022) with an increase in starvation, malnutrition, and diseases.

To address these challenges, the government of Sindh needs to implement policies and programs that promote good governance, including improving inter- department communication, increasing citizen participation, and enhancing accountability mechanisms. With the principle of social exchange and community development, it is claimed that community-led tourism benefits both the government and the population (Zia Ullah, 2021). The study conducted by Zia denotes that civilian empowerment has a positive impact on STD. When locals are given an equal say in the policies regarding local tourism, they inevitably become stakeholders, which further helps sustain inter-organizational and interdependency. The latter is only achievable through collaborations of the stakeholders; government and the locals (Dr. Zia Ullah, 2014).

The importance of inclusiveness is vital for tourism policies to succeed. The focal reason that previous models and policies failed, such as the National Tourism Policy of 1990, was due to absence of stakeholder involvement and poorly defined roles of public and private sectors (Waqas Elahi, 2022). Additionally, this is fundamental to social exchange since both the community and the government acquire from this arrangement. STD not only promotes economic progress in settlements, but it also meets the demands of tourists, improves consumer satisfaction, and safeguards the natural environment. Empirical research conducted by A. Iqbal highlights the positive correlation between the reduction of Multi-Dimensional Poverty (MDP) and Inclusive Development (ID) (A Iqbal, 2020).

Inclusiveness can be accomplished by incorporating sustainable programmes in small communities, which can contribute to alleviating poverty. Development that is not sustainable is an inefficient use of valuable resources and time. A decline in poverty is only feasible sustainably by using collaborative governance and a sense of ownership of the region by the locals. (A Iqbal, 2020).

Furthermore, Sindh is rich in textile craftsmanship, and leisure activities; if the administration capitalizes on such resources, it will be capable in providing financial assistance to the needy. (Sadrudin, 2014). According to relevant findings, rural poverty is noted moderate in places where residents possessed the ability to earn revenue from non-agricultural methods and where these regions connected with urban areas, such as Attock, Jhelum, and Rawalpindi. (Nadeem ul Haque, 2021). As indicated in the case of Hawraman Village in Iran, a sustainable tourism approach based on supporting local craftsmen produces positive socio-cultural effects. (Zahed Ghaderi, 2012).

In the aforementioned case, rural tourism not just assisted in conserving indigenous culture, but it also reduced urban-rural migration as local villagers established tourist-related companies which additionally gave them a different avenue to earn income. Additionally, the handicrafts sector in Ballabhpur (Shomini Biswas) is an essential appeal for tourists. The establishment and growth of cottage enterprises in rural areas may supply the public with employment prospects in their hometown, increasing their earnings and, as a result, boosting their economic circumstances. The government must initiate steps to develop people's technical and occupational abilities to ensure that they offer value to the industry (A Iqbal, 2020). As mentioned by Dewild (Dewilde, 2008) MDP can be countered by new income opportunities that help improve the living life style of the people residing in the area and help in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.

## **Recommendations**

It is paramount to recognize that without the engagement of the community and long-term plans, tourism cannot thrive in rural areas. The study's findings imply that tourism in rural Sindh will aid in poverty reduction by providing communities with additional ways to produce revenue through the tourism sector. The legislature should choose tourism destinations in Sindh, including Badin, Sukkur, GorraKh, Thatta, and Umerkot, and promote them through social media platforms for international exposure. Subsequently, the creation of infrastructure in interior Sindh is critical. Infrastructure development, local government, community assistance, and increased engagement of the private sector have been identified as the main elements to resurrect Sindh's rural tourism. (Suneel Kumar, 2021). The goal of community-led tourism can be discovered by integrating various departments/programs within the organization or between organizations. A unified tourist policy is required throughout Pakistan. Tourism in Pakistan is interconnected with various departments and ministries, such as the ministry of interior, the foreign office, development and planning, commerce and trade, and environmental affairs, which results in the loss of many opportunities for development of tourism at a low cost.

Lastly, if the federal government gives the necessary support in assisting local products in entering the local and foreign market; furthermore, establishing an outlet to enable the villagers to connect with businesses/entrepreneurs in urban areas; can help expand rural businesses and enhance the village's economic conditions. The sectoral strategy can direct the disadvantaged community's sale of goods and services, consequently mitigating the issue of poverty (Purnomo, 2020). With a strategic focus on the abovementioned areas, rural Sindh has the potential to become an emerging tourist destination and a prosperous region, offering unique and authentic experiences to visitors while promoting sustainable economic growth.

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# A Sociological Analysis of Cultural Tourism in Karachi: Perspective of Tourists

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**Keywords:** Karachi; Cultural Tourism; Domestic and International Tourists; Political Instability.

## Introduction

The number of tourists visiting Pakistan fluctuates from year to year (Sultan, 2021). Cultural tourism has emerged as a significant kind of alternative tourism as a result of the industry's expanding expansion (Shaikh et al., 2020). The fusion of South Asian, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and Western elements defines the culture of Karachi. As a result, Karachi's cultural tourism industry has enormous potential to support economic development and enhance citizens' standard of life. However, Karachi faces many challenges in the cultural tourism industry growth. Cultural tourism is defined as *"movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages"* by the United Nations World Tourism Organization. In addition to seeing monuments and other places, cultural tourism also includes experiencing local culture in various locations (Mousavi et al., 2016).

There is a long list of tourist attractions in Karachi for domestic and international tourists. In Museums, Karachi has Pakistan Air Force Museum; Pakistan Maritime Museum, etc. In Monuments, mosques, and memorials, Karachi has Hindu Gymkhana; Mazare-e-Quaid; Monument to Christ the King; New Memon Masjid; Teen Talwar, etc. In Historic and other notable buildings, Karachi has Habib Bank Plaza; Jehangir Kothari Parade; Saint Patrick's Cathedral; Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, etc. In Markets and ports, Karachi has Empress Market; Port Grand; Dolmen Malls, etc. In Beaches, Karachi has Clifton Beach; Hawke's Bay; Paradise Point, etc. In Parks, Karachi has Aram Bagh; Hill Park; Safari Park, etc. In the Islands, Karachi has

Khiprianwala Island; Manora; Shams Pir; etc. In Hotels, Karachi has Marriott Hotel; Avari Towers, etc. Among Karachi's cultural heritage sites, the Government of Pakistan formerly protected some of them, others are declared Protected Heritage by the Government of Sindh, and some are Unprotected Heritage.

The objective of this research is to analyze cultural tourism from the perspective of tourists. The Research questions are: What are the underlying causes of cultural tourism challenges in Karachi? How to surmount the challenges of cultural tourism in Karachi?

## **Methodology**

The current research has used the qualitative exploratory case study approach to analyze cultural tourism in Karachi from the perspective of domestic and international tourists with a conflict theoretical framework. It is important to note that the finding of the primary data is supported by the findings from the secondary sources (previous literature). Researchers fulfill the purpose of this qualitative research approach, i.e. Qualitative research aims to answer questions about the meaning and experience components of people's lives and social situations (Fossey et al., 2016). In this study, the universe of the researchers is Karachi. The study sample consists of 12 domestic and international tourists. Of which 7 were male and 5 were female. 1 was Arabian, 8 were Pakistani and 3 were Canadian. 1 was deputy director, 2 were Teachers and 9 were students. The age of respondents ranges from 10 to 40. The education of respondents ranges Elementary School to Ph.D.

In this study, Purposive sampling is used by the researcher because Purposive sampling is the better matching of the sample to the purposes and objectives of the research, thereby strengthening the rigor of the study and the reliability of the data and conclusions. (Campbell et al., 2020). In-depth interviews were used for data collection in this study. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research approach that entails conducting intensive individual interviews with a limited number of respondents to investigate their viewpoints on a certain issue (Boyce & Neal, 2006). The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a technique for methodically locating, classifying, and providing insight into recurring patterns of meaning (themes) in a body of data (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

## **Results and Discussion**

The study reveals that political instability and poor infrastructure are the underlying causes of cultural tourism challenges in Karachi. Most tourists have visited Karachi more than once. Friends and/or relatives encouraged them to visit Karachi. Some of them like exploring various Pakistani cities. Some of them enjoy marine life, shopping, or amusement parks, therefore they visited Karachi. They had heard of Karachi's cultural events from the media, friends, or family. Almost all of them have friends or family in Karachi. All of them prefer low-cost affordable tourism packages. During cultural tourism in Karachi, most of them do find authentic regional cuisine,

transportation, proper accommodation, and unique opportunities to relax according to Karachi's climate conditions. Most of them agree that Karachi city provides sports and recreational activities, interesting day trip activities and somehow provides nightlife entertainment to the tourists too. Most of them were unsatisfied with the cleanliness of tour locations, and safety and security measures but somehow satisfied with shopping facilities and health care system.

Their tourism experience in Karachi City was good. In Karachi, several of them met Baloch, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pakhtoon, and Urdu speakers. Some of them have attended weddings or Sindhi festivals. Some traveled to zoos, animal farms, Lucky One, Do Darya, and Port Grand. One of them was confronted by a mobile snatcher. All of them noticed cultural differences between Karachi and their hometown. Most of them regarded Karachi's general cultural milieu as a mingling of many civilizations. Most of them had difficulty accessing or navigating Karachi's cultural attractions. Most of them interacted with locals. The difficulties they face include traffic, humidity, robbery, security, hygiene, transit, navigating language obstacles, electricity shortages, and water problems.

In their opinion government is not playing the role to promote tourism in Karachi. They perceive cultural tourism in Karachi is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry but needs to be modified more. Most of them think Karachi is the most potent cultural tourism in Pakistan as compared to other cities. One of them thinks, due to its lack of security and safety, cities like Islamabad are better. They all agree that a given destination's tourist industry depends heavily on its reputation. They all suggest it as a place to go for cultural tourism Because Karachi is a mini Pakistan.

However, some of them will suggest doing so if the political instability is handled. Most of them heard about the political situation and it affect their decision to visit the city in a pessimistic way. But ultimately, it was up to individuals to assess their comfort level with potential risks. Most of them noticed changes in the availability or quality of cultural tourism experiences in Karachi compared to previous visits. Quality has decreased. Prices of everything have increased. There is very little improvement regarding tourism. Law and enforcement conditions have improved in recent years as compared to 10 years ago.

Similar research shows that tourists to Pakistan have drastically decreased since 2000 due to deteriorating security situations. The lack of infrastructure and basic amenities at tourist resorts causes tourists to be dissatisfied, and government policies and tourism management are the biggest issues facing Pakistan's tourism sector. (Nassim et al., 2017) Due to Pakistan's unreliable security and turbulent geopolitical environment, it was difficult for tourists to get visas (Arshad et al., 2017). Although the Ministry of Tourism in Pakistan develops and implements the country's overall tourism development strategy, each region must develop its decentralized tourism policy framework following its unique requirements (Abbas et al., 2015).

The dynamism of culture and the adventure of travel combine to meet the unique needs and concerns of tourists (Shaikh et al., 2020). Cultural tourism deals with people's present way of life



and culture as well as the consumption of historical cultural artifacts (Mousavi et al., 2016). Due to the limitations of human operation, the conventional tourism business is unable to satisfy visitor requirements in terms of management, service, information, and other areas. The modern Internet of Things and integrated platform may support information in a way that considerably encourages the optimization and upgrading of the conventional tourist business (Kong, 2023).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

For the growth of sustainable tourism, coordinated and comprehensive efforts from various stakeholders are required (Khan, 2019). All cultural tourism stakeholders require a firm dedication to the development of sustainable tourism models. During cultural events in Karachi, both high-cost luxurious tourism packages and low-cost affordable tourism packages with authentic regional cuisine, transportation, proper accommodation, a unique opportunity to relax according to Karachi's climate conditions, sports, and recreational activities, interesting day trip activities, and nightlife entertainment should be organized with the help of private sector investment. Furthermore, to surmount the challenges of cultural tourism in Karachi, safety and security measures, cleanliness of tour locations, shopping facilities, and diverse cultural attractions should be increased. Female tourists are too interested in cultural tourism. Although women are crucial to the support of tourism, males still predominate in the field (Sayira et al., 2021).

It is important to increase the role of women in cultural tourism management too. Women's distinctive viewpoints and experiences may increase diversity and inclusiveness in the cultural tourism sector by including women in decision-making roles. Moreover, Karachi can leverage digital marketing through text messaging and mobile advertising to persuade internet users to share tourist material inside and outside of Pakistan to boost tourism growth (Khan et al., 2022). Following the present government's policies and steps to encourage domestic and international tourism, the country forecasts a roughly 30% increase in visitor numbers by 2030 (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). On cultural tourism in Karachi, there are few pertinent, comparable research papers. Research may be done in a variety of areas, including how the local community views and participates in tourism, the requirements, and preferences of tourists, the role of women in cultural tourism management

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## **Theme 2: Developing Sustainable Local Tourism Economies**

# Perceptions of Local Community in Development of Local Economy Due to Tourism (Case Study of District Hunza)

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## **Abstract**

Gilgit Baltistan is located at the extreme north of Pakistan by hosting three mighty mountain ranges Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindukush. It's also the meeting point or originating point of these three mighty mountain ranges. Due to its natural beauty, high mountains, rivers, high waterfall, historical and religious buildings both domestic and international tourists visit Gilgit-Baltistan. District Hunza fall in Karakorum Range and it is the central tourist destination in GB. This exploratory study is about the perceptions and thoughts of the local community regarding tourism and the local economic development of district Hunza. The questionnaire designed for this study consist of two parts, first part contain socio-economic and demographic features, while the second part consist of perceptions and thoughts of respondents on tourism for local economic development. The respondents responded questionnaires by using liker scale while some in binary form (Yes/No). All over local community of the district show positive responses regarding tourism and local economic development. They support tourism and the Government should take necessary steps to promote seasonal and sustainable tourism in the district.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Gilgit-Baltistan, Hunza, Local development, Perspective of locals

## Introduction

To spend time away from the home in order to pursue happiness, relaxation and self-pleasure is known as tourism. Different international organizations have defined tourism. The travelling and exploring across different parts of the world for leisure, business, and other purposes is called tourism (UNWTO, 2023). Tourism is activities which involve travelling and staying of people outside their usual environment for their leisure, business and other activities but not for more than one year (OECD, 2023). Like other sectors of the economy, tourism sector can also contribute to the growth of the economy such as it provides job opportunities, increase revenue generation, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well. Tourism sector already contributing the economic growth of both developed and under countries (Gumus et al., 2007).

Tourism industry in Pakistan has a huge potential to contribute in the economic growth of the country. In Pakistan, there are four types of tourism, religious tourism, historical tourism, adventure tourism, and ecotourism. In the Travel and Tourist Development Index, Pakistan is ranked 83 out of 140 countries (Uppink and Soshkin, 2022). According to the World Bank, in 2022, Pakistan received US \$765 million as tourism's receipts (World Bank, 2022). GB with a population of more than 20 million is famous because of its diversity in culture, ethnicities and languages. Now this area has become the capital of tourism. All four types of tourism can easily find in GB. Historical buildings, worship places such as mosques, Khankah, Imambargah and Buddha Rocks are spots of historical and religious tourism. There are eight mountain peaks having more than 8000 m including K2 world's second highest peak has the full potential of adventure tourism. Fairy Meadows, Deosai National Park, Kharpoch Fort, Kunjerab Pass, Kharmang valley, Manthokha waterfall, Kachura valley, Shangrila, Shigar valley, Phandar valley, Domel valley, Rakaposhi view point and Ata-Abad Lake are famous for ecotourism.

Tourism plays important role in the economic development of GB such as positive effect on employment opportunities, revenue generation, and improving the living standard of the people. Karim et al., 2012, discussed that due to lack of tourism planning and policy in GB, the tourism sector has not been fully used as tool for the promotion and preservation of culture, traditions and environment.

In GB, mass tourism is one of the main issue. In 2017 about 0.7 million people visited GB and in 2017 number of tourists jumped to 1.7 million and in 2018 the number increased up to 1.8 million (Baig & Husain, 2019). Due to the mass inflow of tourists and inefficiency in the management sector, the irregular inflow of traffic becomes a permanent issue, which also creates environmental issues besides this it also affecting the local culture (Rahima, 2018). As the local people know issues and the importance of the region, Government should include them in policy formulation so that the tourism activities can easily promote, preserve the natural and indigenous environment of GB. Peter et al. 2018, studied the local community's perception about the development of the tourism sector. They explained that the local community considers positive impacts of tourism development on their lives. They think due to tourism there are significant effects on their socio-economic, cultural and environmental also.

Tesin and Bozovic, 2021, explained the importance of the local community's perceptions and their satisfaction with the development of tourism sector. According to them, local community participation in the development of this sector is necessary, because it would lead to expanding the business. Many researchers have worked on the perceptions and importance of local community engagement in the development of tourism.

Albu 2020, studied the perceptions of local communities towards the development of tourism for earning perceptive. He used qualitative research methods in his study and found tourism helped in prosperity for the local communities by improving the infrastructure development. Ali, 2020, studied the behavior and perceptions of local people of GB for mountain and adventure tourism. In his study, he collected 342 responses from the residents. His study revealed that the local people agreed on the positive impacts of mountain and adventure tourism. According to this study tourism not only increased the male labor but also enhanced female labors. The local women can sell their handmade products and both domestic and international tourists purchased those products. This study suggested the government of GB should devise such tourism model which ensures not only job and employment opportunities but also deal with environmental degradation.

In GB, tourist influx has increased in last few years, but without considering perceptive of local community we cannot determine impacts of tourism on local community and economy. This study conducts to explore impacts of tourism on development of local economy by examining the perspectives of local residents of Hunza valley towards tourism.

## **Methodology**

Primary data is collected to study the perception of the local community of Hunza valley in local economic development due to tourism. In this study, Survey data is used. Closed-ended questions were asked to collect data. The questionnaire in this research consists of two parts. The first part is about socio-economics and demographic while the second portion contains the perception of the local community towards local economic development due to tourism. The data collected in the second portion was analyzed by using the Likert scale level, 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 2 (disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree). While some questions, responded in Yes/No by the responders. This exploratory study is explained and visualized by using different type of data visualization methods such as frequency distributions, percentages, bar graphs and Pie charts diagram.

## ***Sample Size***

Sampling not only helps in data collection but also helps in the generalization of the result after data analysis (Khan, 2022). For the assessment of unbiased and accurate results, sample size plays a vital role. The sample size of this study is 200 respondents, with 88 males and 112 females.



Table 1: Marital status of Sample (N=200)

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	67	33.5%
Married	133	66.5%

Table 2: Age Distribution of Sample (N=200)

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	50	25.0%
30-40	58	29.0%
40-50	42	21.0%
50+	50	25.0%

Table 3: Profession of Sample (N=200)

Profession	Frequency	Percentage
Government Job	20	10.0%
Private Job	41	20.5%
Own-Business	50	25.0%
House-wife	50	25.0%
Student	39	19.5%

Table 4: Income (Earning) Level of Sample (N=200)

Income level (Earning)	Frequency	Percentage
0-10,000	70	35.0%
10,001-20,000	30	15.0%
20,001-30,000	11	5.5%
30,001-40,000	42	21.0%
40,000+	47	23.5%

## Results and Discussions

Figure 1 shows the frequency distribution and percentages of respondents about their job related to tourism sector. 89 (45%) respondents jobs are directly related to tourism. Most of them are businessmen who ran hotels, restaurants and rest houses. It also includes housewives whose are stitching and selling cultural dresses. The housewives installed small shops and chai khanas, where a large number of visitors enjoy local dishes.

Figure 1 Frequency Distribution and Percentage of jobs related to Tourism Sector.

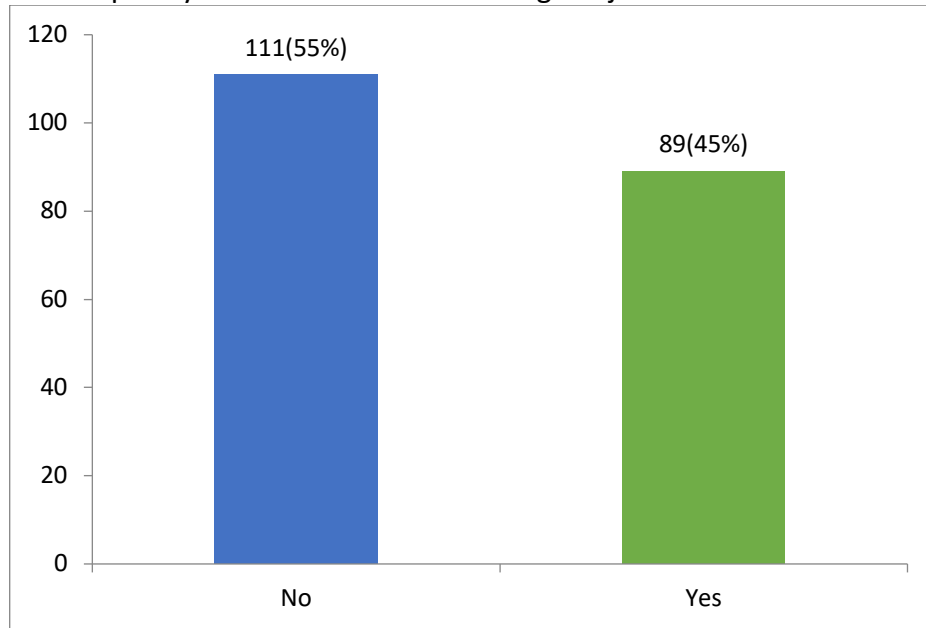


Figure 2 shows that the majority of respondent consider tourism has produced positive impacts on the economic development of the local populations. More than half of the responders (53.5%) strongly agree with this point. Due to tourism many job opportunities such as tourist guides, tourist operators and housewives along with stitching and selling cultural dress, also sell local dishes which enhanced job opportunities for them. During the on-season, rooms in all hotels, restaurants and guest houses are fully occupied due to the influx of tourists which has become the main source of income for many families.

Figure 2: Positive Impacts on Local Economy

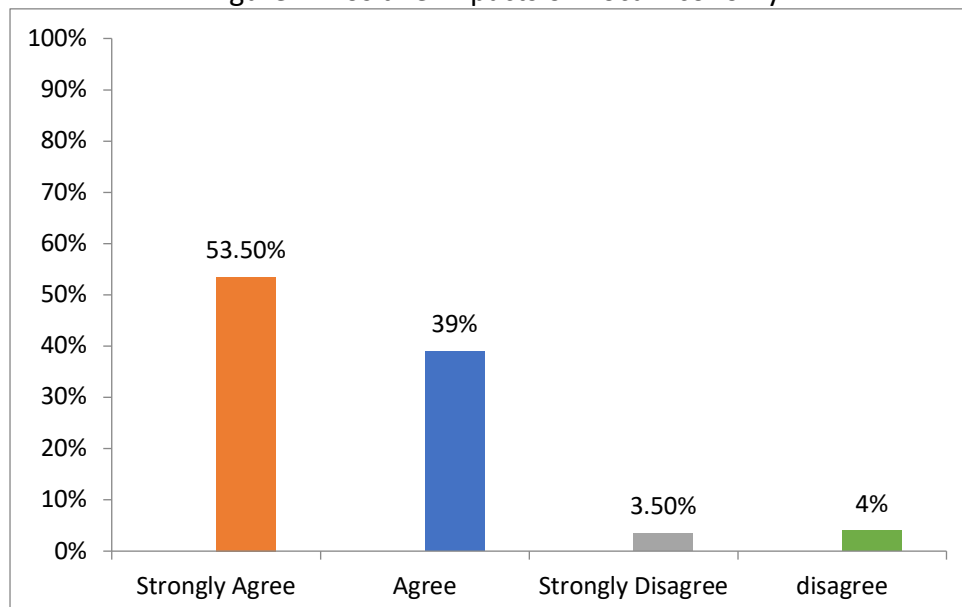
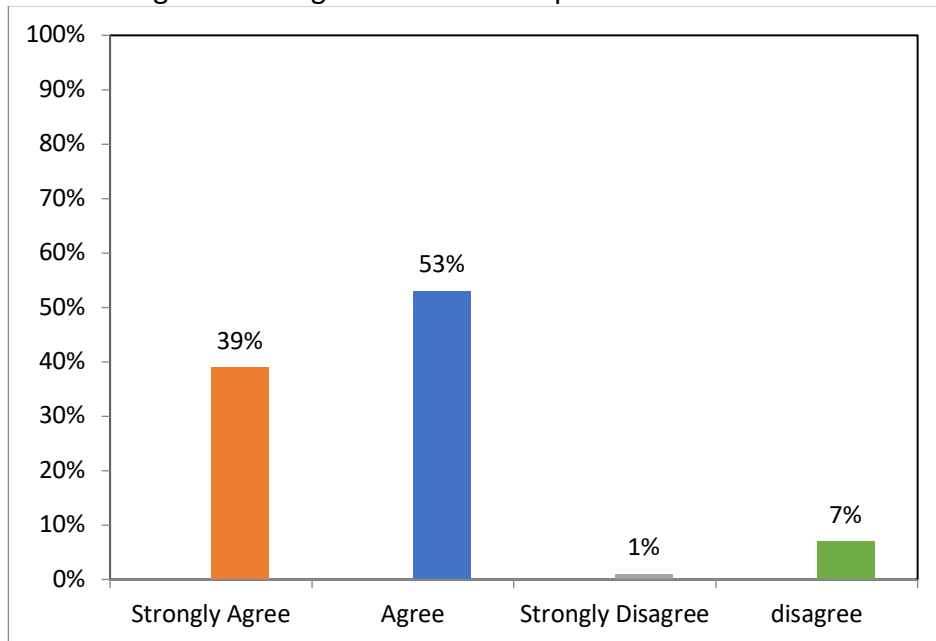
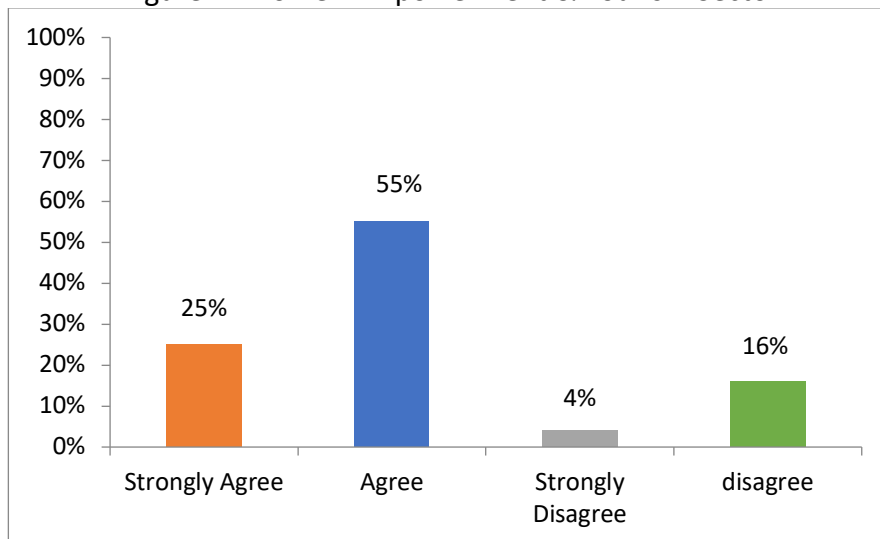


Figure 3: Living Standards of People & Tourism Sector



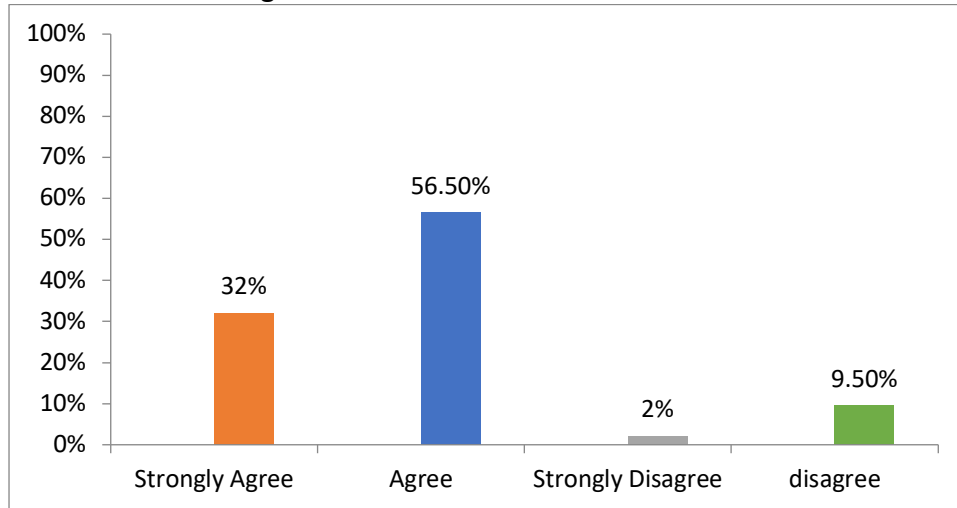
Arif et al, (2009), analyzed perceptions of local residents of districts Shiraz Iran and found people have positive opinions about the tourism impacts. People who are living in districts Shiraz have better living standards as compared to near areas of districts Shiraz where tourism activities are not present. Figure 03 shows the perception of the local community about improvement in their living standards due to tourism. About 53% of the total despondence agreed and 39% strongly agreed that their living standards have improved. Due to the increasing influx of tourist selling of local commodities has increased. And it is also revealed that 45% of the people's jobs are related to tourism which leads to the enhanced living standard of the local population.

Figure 4: Women Empowerment & Tourism Sector



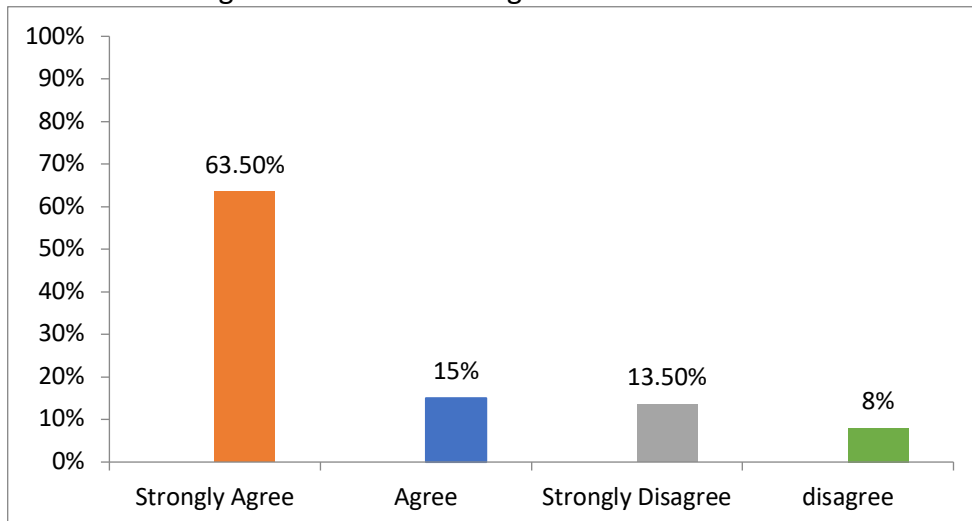
Due to tourism not only male labor participation increases but also enhanced female labor participation. The local women can sell their handmade products and both domestic and international tourists purchased those products (Ali, 2022). This research revealed that majority people agreed tourist activities help women empowerment in district Hunza.

Figure 5: Renovation & Tourism Sector



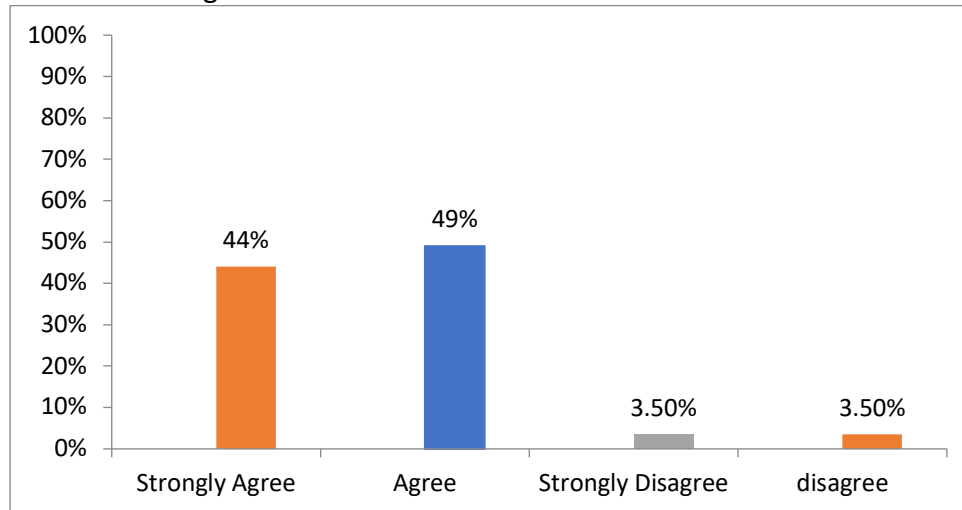
Chandralal (2010), explored attitudes of the Dambulla Sri Lanka’s local residents about tourism development. They consider inflow of tourism produces positive effects on the local residents. Besides increasing job opportunities, a good image of the region, they consider due to tourism infrastructure projects also increase in the region. Without better infrastructure tourism activities cannot increase. Figure 05 identified that more than half of responders think with the influx of tourists in Hunza valley, the renovations and infrastructure activities are improved.

Figure 6: Cultural Heritage and Tourism Sector



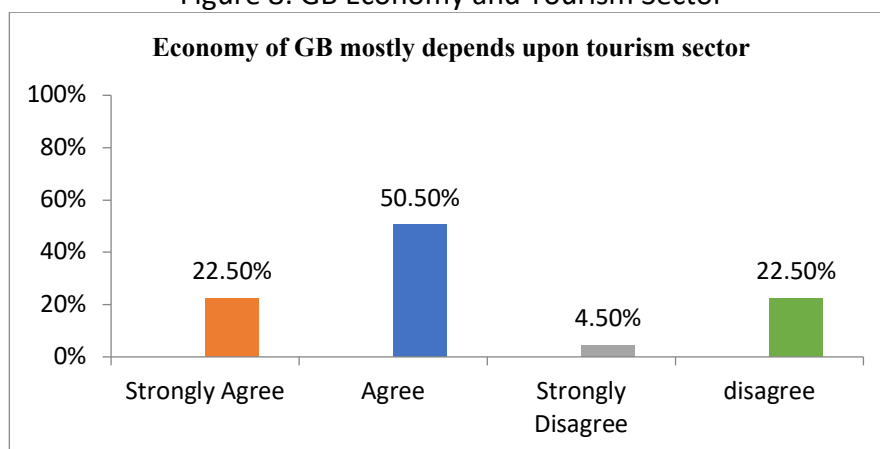
Lin & Flierie, (2017), explored the effects of social interaction between tourists and local residents. Which showed effective social interactions not only maintain peaceful and friendly atmosphere but also aided in the conservation of the local indigenous cultural and social norms and values. A similar result also found in this research, where 63.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 15% agreed that cultural heritages have been persevered due to tourism.

Figure 7: Local Commodities and Tourism Sector



In 2007 Khalil et al. studied the role of the tourism sector on the economic growth of Pakistan and observed it playing important role in income generation for both formal and informal sectors. The study explained due to development in the tourism sector has increased job opportunities, earnings of people, foreign exchange reserves and improved the balance of payment. Figure 07 shows the influx of tourism on demand of local commodities. About 44% of respondents strongly agreed and 49% agreed that there are positive impacts of tourism on the demand of local products. The demand of local products such as handicrafts, dry fruits, and local dishes are increasing day by day in Hunza due to the influx of tourists.

Figure 8: GB Economy and Tourism Sector



Armughan (2022), in Gilgit Baltistan more than 50% of families directly or indirectly depend upon the tourism sector. This shows the majority of the GB economy depends upon this sector. A similar result was also obtained for Hunza in this study. Figure 08 shows about 22.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 50.5% agreed that the economy of the GB is mostly depending upon the tourism sector.

## **Conclusions**

The main aim this research paper was to highlight perceptions and thoughts of the local community of district Hunza towards the tourism sector. This research shows that almost half of the Hunza valley's economy is depend upon the tourism sector. Due to the increasing influx of tourist living standards of the local community has improved as both male and female are participating in the labor force.

For the continuous inflow of tourists, better infrastructure developments are necessary. In the case of GB, Hunza has better infrastructure development such as roads and hotels. One of the main reason for better infrastructure development in Hunza is the involvement of the local community in enhancing tourism activities. As the demand and production of local commodities such as foods, clothes, and dry fruits increased, it helped in the preservation of local and indigenous products. Not only foods and clothes are preserved but also old historical places and buildings are persevering with help of local commodities and international organizations. Allover local community of Hunza valley showed a positive response and impacts of tourism on their individuals life and as well as on the whole society.

## **Recommendations**

Based on this study following are some recommendations

- As the local economy and the majority of families of Hunza depend upon tourism activities, the Government should take necessary steps to promote all-season tourism.
- Armughan in 2022 mentioned that due to seasonal tourism, price hiking of goods become a serious issue, to deal with this problem and promote the government should design an effective demand-supply mechanism for goods.
- As local dishes and traditional clothes are highly demanded by visitors, with the help of local community proper technical schools are needed to construct not only in Hunza but also in other parts of GB. In this way along with the earnings of people, culture can also preserve.
- This study shows that about 45% people have direct tourism-related employment, the government should also consider other sectors such as agriculture and mining to decrease dependency on the tourism sector.

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# Forecasting Tourist Arrivals using Big Data

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Tourism demand forecasting is a crucial aspect of the tourism industry. Recent research has suggested that online data, particularly search engine queries, can provide valuable insights into tourism demand. In this study, we propose a forecasting framework that combines machine learning and internet search indexes to predict tourist arrivals in popular destinations across Pakistan. Our research aims to compare the performance of our forecasting model with search results generated by popular search engines in Pakistan, such as Google. By leveraging machine learning algorithms, we can identify patterns and trends in the search data, which can be used to generate more accurate forecasts. Our study will demonstrate the effectiveness of internet search indexes as a tool for predicting tourism demand in Pakistan. The integration of search data and machine learning techniques will enable us to generate more reliable and accurate forecasts, which can benefit the tourism industry and related stakeholders. Through this research, we hope to provide insights into the potential of big data and machine learning in tourism demand forecasting. Our findings could have significant implications for the tourism industry in Pakistan and beyond, as stakeholders seek to make informed decisions based on accurate and reliable forecasts.

**Key words:** Machine learning, big data, kernel extreme learning machine, forecasting



# Exploring the Role of Community-Based Tourism Initiatives in Promoting Socially Sustainable Tourism in Hunza, Gilgit: A Historical Comparative Analysis.

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Institute of Business Administration

**Keywords:** Community-Based tourism (CBT); Social Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Cultural Erosion; Marginalized People.

## Introduction

Tourism is a significant global industry, with millions of people traveling each year to explore different cultures, experience unique landscapes, and create lasting memories. Pakistan, a country located in South Asia, offers an array of tourist attractions, ranging from picturesque mountain ranges to ancient historical sites. Gilgit, located in the mountainous region of northern Pakistan, is an attractive destination for domestic and international tourists. It recently experienced the highest influx of tourists in 2019, with an estimated 1.39 million domestic and 10,829 international tourist arrivals.

The tourism industry in the Gilgit Baltistan has the potential to make substantial contributions to the region's economy and sustainable development, through involvement of its own community. This assertion is based on the region's unique natural beauty, cultural diversity, high literacy rates and historical significance. In the Gilgit Baltistan region, tourism has been identified as a priority sector for economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction. Tourism development in Gilgit Baltistan can also contribute to the region's sustainable development. Sustainable tourism practices promote the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, minimize the environmental impacts, and support the local communities.

The negative impacts of tourism, such as environmental degradation and cultural erosion, pose a significant threat to the region's sustainable growth. The concept of community-based tourism as a means to achieve sustainable development goals has been widely discussed in previous sustainable tourism research. However, there is a lack of literature on this topic that provides evidence from Pakistan. The adoption of community-based development has been recognized as crucial to sustainable practices, as it offers potential benefits to local communities while mitigating the negative impacts of tourism. Nonetheless, scholars have warned that community-

based tourism alone may not necessarily lead to sustainable practices. This research endeavor aims to investigate the attitudinal, organizational, and behavioral prerequisites that must be met for the achievement of sustainable tourism practices in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives. In particular, the study delves into the past successes and the potential prospects of CBT initiatives undertaken by local authorities in Pakistan, to gain deeper insights into this phenomenon.

### **Research Questions**

1. How can marginalized communities in Hunza be effectively integrated into CBT?
2. What economic gains have Gilgit received through CBT?
3. How does socially sustainable tourism help in capacity building?
4. Has or will the Cultural erosion have dampened through the introduction of CBT?

### **Methodology**

The aim of this research is to explore the capacity of community-based tourism (CBT) in the Hunza area, with particular emphasis on promoting sustainable tourism measures that reduce adverse social and environmental effects. Additionally, the study will make a historical assessment of the development of the tourism industry in light of the increasing number of CBT initiatives. The study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for implementing community-based tourism initiatives that prioritize the local community's needs and interests while promoting social, economic, and environmental sustainability. To achieve this goal, a mixed-methods approach will be employed. To understand diverse perspectives and experiences, individuals from small villages in Hunza who are currently studying at universities will be interviewed as potential respondents.

Additionally, key stakeholders in the tourism industry, such as tour guides and the tourism minister, will also be interviewed to gain insight into their understanding and approach to sustainable tourism practices. Newspaper Archives will be utilized as the second source of data collection. To evaluate the degree to which CBT initiatives have mitigated the negative effects of unsustainable tourism practices, a comparative analysis of historical data will be conducted using the two aforementioned approaches. The analysis of the data will be based on the principles of content analysis to identify themes and patterns related to sustainable tourism practices and cultural erosion in the Hunza region.

### **Results and Findings**

Based on an extensive review of the existing literature, this research paper explores the potential role of community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives in promoting socially sustainable tourism in the Hunza region of Gilgit. The study focuses on the historical evolution of the tourism industry in the region, the challenges faced by local communities, and the potential of CBT initiatives to promote sustainable tourism practices while providing economic opportunities to marginalized

and deprived local communities. The findings of the past archives indicate that the tourism industry in Hunza has been facing challenges due to the negative impacts of unsustainable tourism practices on the cultural and environmental heritage of the region. The local communities have been marginalized, and their economic opportunities have been limited. However, the emergence of CBT initiatives has the potential to promote sustainable tourism practices, preserve the cultural and environmental heritage of the region, and integrate local communities into the tourism industry.

Furthermore, a historical comparative analysis was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of CBT initiatives in mitigating the negative impacts of unsustainable tourism practices. The findings revealed that CBT initiatives have contributed to promoting sustainable tourism practices while providing economic opportunities to local communities. The initiatives have also helped in preserving the cultural and environmental heritage of the region.

Through an extensive analysis of available literature, the investigation has revealed that Hunza can revitalize its original heritage, culture, and sustainable tourism practices by adopting community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives from other countries. Examples such as the Buhoma Village Walk, Kahawa Shamba, Meket Community Tourism Project, and Nambwa Campsite demonstrate the potential for Hunza to become more socially sustainable in tourism.

Hunza itself has initiatives such as Hunza Guides which is a community-based organization that provides visitors with knowledgeable and experienced guides who are from the local community. This initiative has been instrumental in promoting sustainable tourism by providing visitors with authentic experiences and insights into the local culture, history, and traditions of Hunza. By employing local people as guides, this initiative has created employment opportunities and helped to distribute the economic benefits of tourism more equitably within the community. According to the findings of the literature this has helped Hunza regain their culture which was mitigating with the increased number of domestic and foreign tourists.

Secondly, Public transportation in Hunza is an affordable and convenient means of travel for both locals and tourists. It has played a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism by reducing the number of private vehicles on the road, which helps to reduce traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution. Thirdly, Trustable police are an essential element of sustainable tourism, as they help to create a safe and secure environment for both visitors and locals. The police force in Hunza has been instrumental in promoting sustainable tourism by ensuring the safety and security of visitors, preventing crime, and protecting the natural environment.

Lastly, The Hunza Valley identity is a unique and rich cultural heritage that is celebrated and preserved through various initiatives, such as cultural festivals, museums, and handicraft centers. This identity has played a critical role in promoting sustainable tourism by showcasing the local culture, customs, and traditions of the region. Visitors to Hunza can learn about the region's history, traditions, and way of life, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

However, with these CBTs in the progress there still exist major unsustainable environmental hazards such as the Growing Garbage Threat; it is a challenge that many tourists destinations face and Hunza is no exception. The region is experiencing a growing problem of waste management. Improper disposal of waste can damage the natural environment, create health hazards, and negatively impact the overall tourism experience. Weakening Visual Harmony is another challenge that Hunza faces. The region's unique natural beauty and landscape are a major attraction for tourists.

However, unregulated construction and development can spoil the visual harmony of the region, which can negatively impact the overall tourist experience. Ignored Eco-Heritage is another significant challenge facing sustainable tourism in Hunza. The region has a rich cultural and natural heritage that needs to be preserved and promoted to attract sustainable tourism. However, many eco-heritage sites in Hunza are ignored and are in a state of neglect and there has been no work done he shun the effect of this. It should be noted that the findings and conclusions of the paper may be subject to change based on the additional data collected through interviews that are yet to be conducted.

## Conclusion

It is important to note that the results are preliminary and subject to change pending the completion of interviews and subsequent analysis of the collected data. Only after the interviews have been conducted and the results have been finalized can definitive conclusions regarding the role of community-based tourism initiatives in promoting socially sustainable tourism in Hunza be drawn.

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# Asilah Culture Festival: a case study for Pakistan

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**Keywords:** Festival, Asilah, public art, community engagement, tourism

## Introduction

This paper aims to present the Asilah Arts Festival (Morocco) through its history, vision, and program as a platform for cultural exchange and community uplift. In 1978 two Moroccans initiated a cultural festival in the village of Asilah. The goal was to enhance the situation of the community through art and culture. Asilah was in poor shape, in terms of garbage, sewage, collapsing walls. They hoped to awaken the awareness of the population to contribute to a better quality of life. They invited 11 Moroccan artists to paint murals in the town. The first step was to keep the place clean. Slowly infrastructure was improved. Doubts were forgotten as the town people started to earn through the festival –with small trade and renting out rooms to guests.

Walls are whitewashed before the festival so that they can be used as a canvas for the imagination of the artists. The art produced is a mix of fantasy and geometric designs blending in with the urban architecture. The village comes to life when the festival takes place. In addition to the art on the walls, there are concerts, poetry readings, performances, workshops and seminars. Many of these events are free of charge. Behind the scenes, there is a greater ongoing regeneration programme to restore the fabric of the medina and to showcase the town to the world. Over time, the Asilah Festival has come to be seen as a dialogue of cultures, and brings together people with a common goal, that is to enjoy the culture without restrictions.

For conservation and rehabilitation of the old town and for this model of employing culture to improve the behavior and commitment of individuals in the enhancement of their own quality of life, the co-founders were awarded the Aga Khan Prize of Architecture and Urban Planning in 1990. I believe this culture festival model can be adapted to develop a small town in Pakistan as a tourist destination, with emphasis on community engagement and uplift. Pakistan and Morocco share a common traditional and conservative culture and socioeconomic similarity. Therefore, one can argue that it is reasonable to consider a model that is already thriving in Morocco to be adapted and implemented with some success in Pakistan.

## Methodology

An influence study to chart the impact of individuals, ideas and policies upon the making of Asilah as tourist destination. I intend to apply a contextualist approach towards the Asilah festival, that is, to examine the context, the milieu, the background that produced and grew the festival which in turn impacted the growth of the town. The paper will look at how the event affects the local economy, contributes to education, and raises awareness of the town's importance.

## Results and Discussion

14th century Andalusian philosopher Ibn Khaldun puts forward the concept of *Asabiyah* which has been translated as group solidarity or group consciousness. Ibn Khaldun conceptualizes this solidarity as a bond shared by those not related to each other by blood but instead, by long and close contact as members of a group. His concept of *asabiyyah* is layered, complex and the seen as the key factor enabling survival of a community. For Ibn Khaldun, those groups with a strong sense of *asabiyya* are destined to be strong and to rule- at least as long as they are able to maintain their sense of identity and solidarity. For Ibn Khaldun, *asabiyya* is the basis for political power and cultural hegemony, while unrestrained individualism was one source of the downfall of groups. This is because *asabiyya* gives protection and makes possible mutual defence (in the Bedouin setting), and many kinds of social activity.

Applying this concept to the case of Asilah, it appears that the *assabiyyah* factor was important for its uplift and transformation into an attractive tourist destination. Other important factors to be considered are the event patrons, their vision, and funding. Asilah now has a generation of kids who were 8, 9 years old when the festival started, and who are now in their thirties. A generation has been influenced by art as a medium to enjoy life, and to mobilize the resources of imagination and creativity.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

To consider adapting the annual art/culture festival model from Morocco to Pakistan keeping in mind the group cohesion and community engagement.

# **Theme 3: Gender and inclusivity in tourism demand and supply**



# Assessing The Accessibility of Tourist Facilities and Services For People With Disabilities In The Tourist Sites Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

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**Keywords:** Inclusive tourism; accessibility; disability.

## Introduction

It is widely recognized that tourism is an activity which yields multiple positive outcomes on both micro and macro level, ranging from, and not limited to, boosting economic growth (Rasool et al., 2021), creating jobs, contributing to infrastructure development, cognitive development (Lee & Lee, 2021; Lopes et al., 2021; Scott, 2020), and promoting cultural exchanges between visitors and hosts (Shahzalal, 2016). Tourism is a social good that should be available and accessible to all, irrespective of people's physical limitations, disabilities, or age.

Inclusive tourism, by definition, is a set of services and infrastructure that allow people with limited mobility to experience and appreciate their holidays without any barriers to their movement (Darcy, 1998). In Pakistan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province boasts scores of scenic landscapes, snow-capped magnificent mountains, glacial lakes, expansive forests, and iconic wildlife. The province has immense tourist potential that has yet to be fully exploited.

This study aims to assess the accessibility of facilities and services for differently abled and elderly (jointly used as 'disabled' in this study) in the tourist sites of Haripur, Mansehra, and Abbottabad districts of KP province. The objective of this study is to identify the barriers faced by people with disabilities during their travel and tourism, and to explore possible solutions to reduce these barriers. The Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities by (World Health Organization, 2022) states that around 1.3 billion people - approximately 16% of the global population - currently face significant disability. Furthermore, it has been estimated that Pakistan has 8 million older adults, and this statistic is expected to touch 27 million by 2050 (Ahmad et al., 2013).

Moreover, studies have proved a strong association between ageing and disability (Petretto & Pili, 2022; Wahrendorf et al., 2013). It is, therefore, imperative that accessible tourism facilities

and services be made part of any sustainable tourism development policy. While many advanced economies and developing nations are working towards making tourism more inclusive, unfortunately, the policies regarding tourism in Pakistan lack guidelines and regulations on making the industry more inclusive and accessible for the elderly and differently abled.

Tourist attractions in the districts of Haripur, Mansehra, and Abbottabad include Ayubia National Park, Thandiani, Harnoi Lake and Khanpur Dam among many others. These sites are rich in culture and heritage and attract a lot of tourists during the pleasant summer months, especially from April to October. To have inclusive tourism, it is essential for tour operators, hotel managers and eateries to ensure that all incoming tourists have an equal opportunity to enjoy their holidays despite having any disability or immobility.

The main contribution of this research is to highlight the barriers faced by people with disabilities (see Table 1), and to develop strategies that will benefit the demand and supply side of tourism by making it more inclusive and accessible to all. The significance of this study is threefold. First, it is estimated that 6.2% of Pakistanis have some form of disability (United Nations Development Programme, Pakistan, 2020), and as disabled persons are accompanied by family members, such constraints also affect them on their tourism travel.

Secondly, the number of persons with disability is likely to increase owing to an increase in the global population (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) & and HelpAge International, 2012), therefore, it is essential to make arrangements for future tourist inflows. Lastly, this research will provide socio-cultural perspective to the existing literature on tourism in Pakistan.

Table 1: Barriers that restrict the accessibility for people with limited mobility.

Barrier Type	Difficulty Faced	Probable Solutions
Architectural	Physical spaces, e.g., lack of wheelchair access, or lack of low curbside for people with limited mobility.	Wider doors, adaptable toilets with safety rails, ramps, and accessible means of transport.
Attitudinal	Inability to be understood by tour staff, discrimination, or ignorance towards differently abled people.	Training the service providers to be more understandable and kinder.
Communicational	Inadequate signage or lack of interpreters. Also, difficulty in communication with the disabled.	Use of Braille signs. Display of signboards in languages understood by masses.
Instrumental	Tourist sites that fail to consider the limitations of disabled people.	Use of adaptable appliances, equipment, tool and other devices that facilitate the disabled in their recreational activities.

Source: Adapted from (Rebelo et al., 2022)

## **Methodology**

This study used a mixed method approach by employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to answer the following research questions:

- Which constraints do people with disability experience during the different levels of tourism travel chain?
- How does the disability of people affect the choice of tourist location?
- How can tourism travel be made easy and accessible for families accompanying disabled members?

In the districts of Haripur, Mansehra, and Abbottabad, survey questionnaire was floated to the abled and disabled tourists, and in-depth interviews were conducted with different stakeholders in the tourism industry. The survey questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the type and extent of barriers experienced by tourists with disabilities and their families. It also intended to seek information on factors that affect their desired place of tourism travel, and whether the accessibility of a location matters to them. A total of 20 open- and closed-ended questions, including questions on demographics were part of the survey questionnaire.

In-depth interviews were conducted with tour operators, hotel managers, and local government officials who were part of the tourism sector. The interviews were organized to identify the supply side factors of the tourism industry. The interview questions were related to knowing the types of services available for disabled persons and asking the staff about their training to effectively respond to people with disabilities. The interviews also sought to identify strategies that would benefit the suppliers and demanders of tourism travel jointly. A total of 15 questions were asked in the in-depth interviews.

Stratified random sampling method was used to ensure that the sample consisted of 50% of disabled persons. The objective was to have an equal representation of the disabled people in the study. From the stratum of disabled and non-disabled persons, random sampling was conducted to draw 100 respondents from each group. Descriptive analyses were used to analyze the survey data, while recorded interviews were analyzed using content data. Ethical concerns were considered, and all participants were ensured of their anonymity and were informed of the purpose of the study prior to collection of their responses. The participants who gave consent were surveyed and interviewed.

## **Results and Discussion**

To assess the accessibility of tourist facilities and services for differently abled people, a total of 250 surveys were collected, of which 50 were discarded due to incomplete information. Therefore, 200 surveys were representative of this study, of which half were collected from people with disabilities, and the other half from people without disabilities. Moreover, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted.

The results of the survey reveal that out of 200 respondents, 110 (55%) were male and 90 (45%) were female. The age distribution shows that more young people go for tourist travel than older people: 18-24 years (30%), 25-34 years (40%), 35-44 years (20%), and 45 and above (10%). This clearly shows that elderly population is the least to take up traveling to tourist destinations, perhaps due to mobility factors or inaccessibility issues. The results also point out that 50% of the participants were physically disabled, of whom 30% had some form of visual impairment.

It was also found out that of the total disabled persons surveyed, 17% reported to be visiting the tourist sites in these three districts for the first time. This was in stark contrast to the 84% respondents who were without disabilities. This highlights the significant barriers of inaccessibility to the differently abled people who visit these tourist attractions. When asked about accessibility of different services, 41% of the disabled reported lack of adaptable bathrooms, and 18% lamented the absence of wheelchair ramps. 64% of the respondents were not satisfied with the transportation service which lacked wheelchair accessibility on vehicles and complained the absence of much-needed assistance during boarding and disembarking the vehicles. Most of the disabled persons were satisfied with the accessibility of accommodation (83%).

The in-depth interviews with the tour operators, hotel managers, and local government officials yielded profound findings. Since disabled persons were less likely to travel, tour operators were less informed on the needs and requirements of such people, especially while arranging transport for tourist sites. Furthermore, tourism service providers were not familiar with the accessibility standard and guidelines, which created a huge barrier in limiting disabled persons from visiting tourist locations. The findings highlighted that workshops and training programs could be conducted to educate tourism providers about the accessibility standards and guidelines, which would attract more tourists and help boost their sales.

Pakistan's tourism industry is still recovering from the shocks of the pandemic, and tourism has not achieved its pre-pandemic level yet (International Monetary Fund, 2023). The industry's plight was exacerbated by the devastating floods of 2022, which heavily impacted small and medium businesses. Local tourism operators are still struggling to arrange finances to prop up their hotels, motels, and eateries. They lack financial resources to allocate towards an accessible infrastructure, thereby restricting tourism for the disabled. Funding by government and non-governmental organizations can help the small and medium businesses to take off and improve their sales. Not only will this help in generating jobs but will also contribute to the growth of the sector and the economy.

## **Conclusion & Recommendations**

The main purpose of this study was to assess the accessibility of tourism facilities and services for disabled people in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan. This study employed a mixed method approach that targeted tourists with disabilities and without disabilities through

a survey questionnaire and elicited key insights on tourism travel chain from tour operators, hotel managers, and local government officials through in-depth interviews.

The outcomes of this research indicate gaps in accessibility of tourism services for differently abled people in the KP province. The survey questionnaire results reveal that disabled tourists experience lots of challenges in accessing adaptable transport, accommodation, and tourist locations. Furthermore, the in-depth interviews with the suppliers of tourism sector expose lack of awareness and trainings on disability-inclusive tourism and absence of guidelines and accessibility standards for the disabled.

Based on the results, this study recommends the government to devise and implement guidelines and policies that address the disabled visitors. This will pave way for a more inclusive tourism industry that will provide equal opportunities to all tourists. Furthermore, tourism service providers need to be trained and well-versed to be able to cater to the needs of all tourists, and especially the disabled ones. Also, to grow sales, it is essential for tourism travel chain to invest in accessibility improvements, e.g., provisioning of wheelchair ramps, adaptable bathrooms, and braille signage for the visually impaired.

Incorporating the suggested strategies and policies, the tourism industry can not only boost their businesses, but also contribute to the overall social and economic growth. It is important to mention that the findings of this study are based on a limited sample and may not be representative of the disabled population in the entire region. It is recommended that research with a larger sample size be conducted to establish the validity of this study.

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# Pakistani Stakeholders' Vision of Tourism Development under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Initiative

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## Abstract

CPEC may impact tourism industry with improve security situation, socioeconomic and infrastructure connectivity and Chinese investment in Pakistan's tourism industry. However, the intricate and fragmented nature of tourism industry demands a high degree of stakeholders' collaboration and such collaboration is more likely if key stakeholders are fully aware of the opportunity and have plausible plans to reap the opportunity. The study used "enhanced stakeholder salience framework" for the identification and prioritization of stakeholders in tourism industry. Furthermore, the current policy and practice is dominated by state actors with very small room for the private sector. CPEC externalities may positively impact tourism development but may negatively impact tourism because of the way the security set up has been installed, the lack of information available on various aspects of CPEC, low capacity of local investors to understand and adopt emerging global trends in tourism and respond to the market demand.

**Keywords:** CPEC; Tourism development; Stakeholder Collaboration; Stakeholder Salience; Stakeholder analysis.

## Introduction

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has created a unique opportunity for Pakistan to benefit from tourism in at least three distinct ways. Firstly, the CPEC is likely to increase the state of security in the county (Nasir, 2017) and will indirectly benefit the tourism sector by increasing

the confidence of the global tourist community to visit Pakistan and experience its rich culture and scenic beauty. Secondly, the CPEC will expose Pakistan to Chinese outbound tourist market due to increased social, economic, and infrastructural connectivity. The third and perhaps the most important opportunity is the Chinese interest and proactive investment in Pakistani tourism industry (Ahmed, 2016) which if we carefully regulate will benefit local communities and economy.

To an extent our tourism capital may benefit Pakistani people and economy in the wake of CPEC will largely depend on how we recognize and manage the tourism superstructure to our advantage, particularly with reference to the latter two aspects describe above. This seemingly easy-hanging fruit of tourism is, in fact, very difficult to pluck due to the intricate and fragmented nature of tourism industry that demands a high degree of stakeholders' collaboration. Such collaboration is more likely if key stakeholders are fully aware of the opportunity and have plausible plans to get maximum benefit from this opportunity. So far, nothing is known about how different stakeholders perceive the CPEC phenomenon and what their plans for the development of tourism are. Without firm understanding of Pakistani stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes, and other capacities, it is very less likely that any tourism planning effort would be successful to ensure their full engagement and meaningful contribution. This study attempted to bridge this gap by answering the following research questions.

1. How different groups of Pakistani stakeholders perceive different dimensions of tourism likely to be impacted by CPEC?
2. To what extent Pakistani Stakeholders consider themselves prepared to benefit from the tourism potential brought in by the CPEC?
3. What are the policy direction that Pakistani stakeholders suggest as guiding principles for planning and negotiating tourism investment with China?

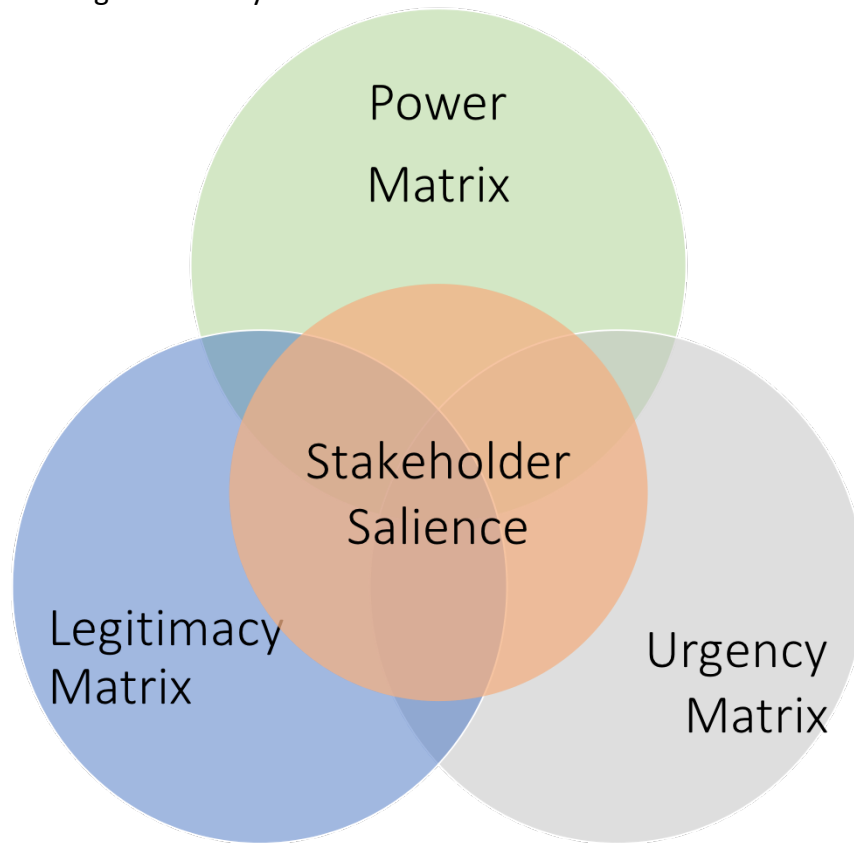
## **Methodology**

This is a primary data-based qualitative case study of stakeholders' vision of Gilgit-Baltistan tourism in the wake of CPEC. The required information came from various primary sources and fieldwork comprising In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with key stakeholders, (including purposively selected in individuals and communities) and Field Observations (FOs). The hybrid version of Mitchell et al. (1997) heuristic, popularly known as 'Stakeholder Salience' was used to identify and categorize different stakeholders based on their salience, i.e., power, legitimacy and urgency (*Figure 1*).

A sample of those stakeholders was interviewed to explore the answers of the above-raised research questions. Based on results of this exercise we analyze the relative importance of different stakeholders for tourism policy making and planning in the study area.



Figure 1: Analytical Framework of 'Stakeholder Saliience'



Source: Authors Conceptualization from Mitchell et al. (1997); Schlager & Ostrom (1992); Winstanley et al. (1995)

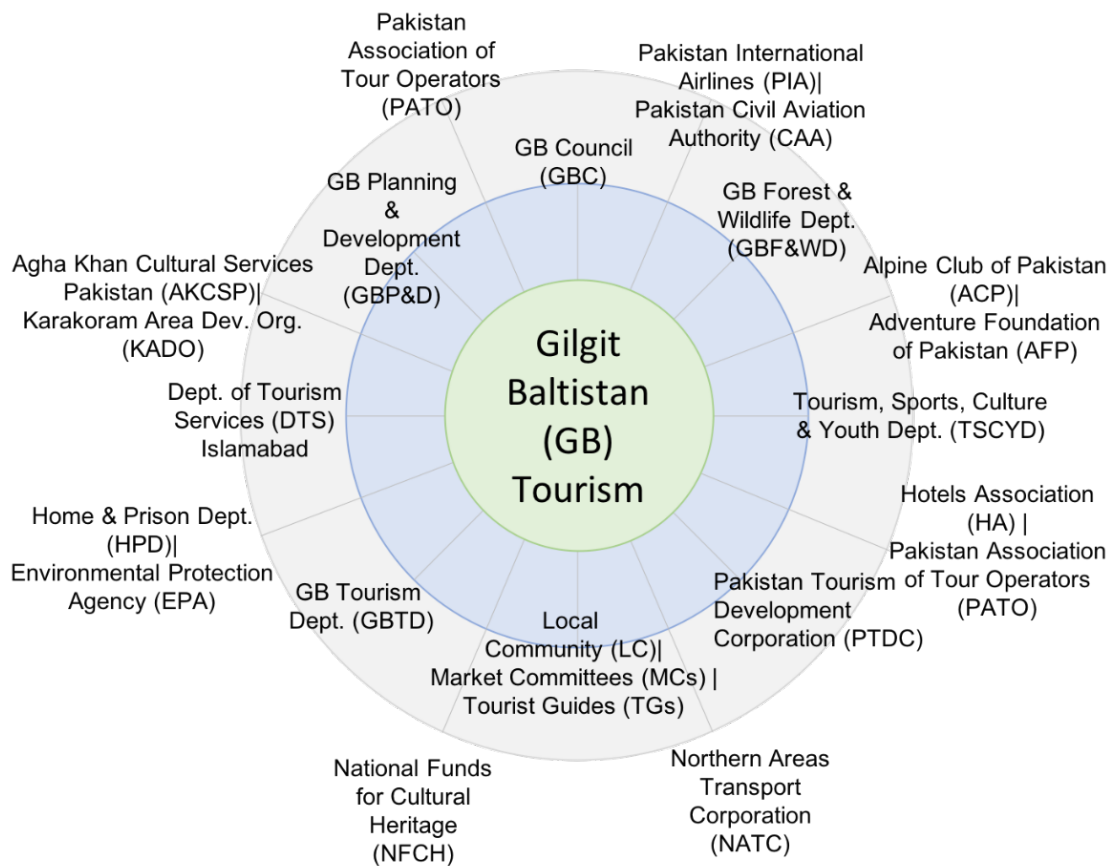
## Results

### ***Stakeholder Identification: Who has a stake?***

Like elsewhere and as expected, the tourism landscape in GB assembles varied stakes and world-views. A snowballing approach was adopted to enlist the stakeholders where each interviewee nominated entities that to them had any kind of stake in the GB tourism. Resultantly, we use stakeholder salience framework to identify the real stakeholders in the GB tourism industry based on the possession of attributes and sub attributes. The clutter diagram given as

Figure 2 gives a fairly good idea of the complexity involved in management of the industry. Based on the above-mentioned methodology, the subsequent sub-section tries to ease-out this clutter and give a more comprehensible mapping of tourism stakeholders in GB.

Figure 2: Stakeholder Clutter- Showing the Complexity of Tourism Landscape in GB



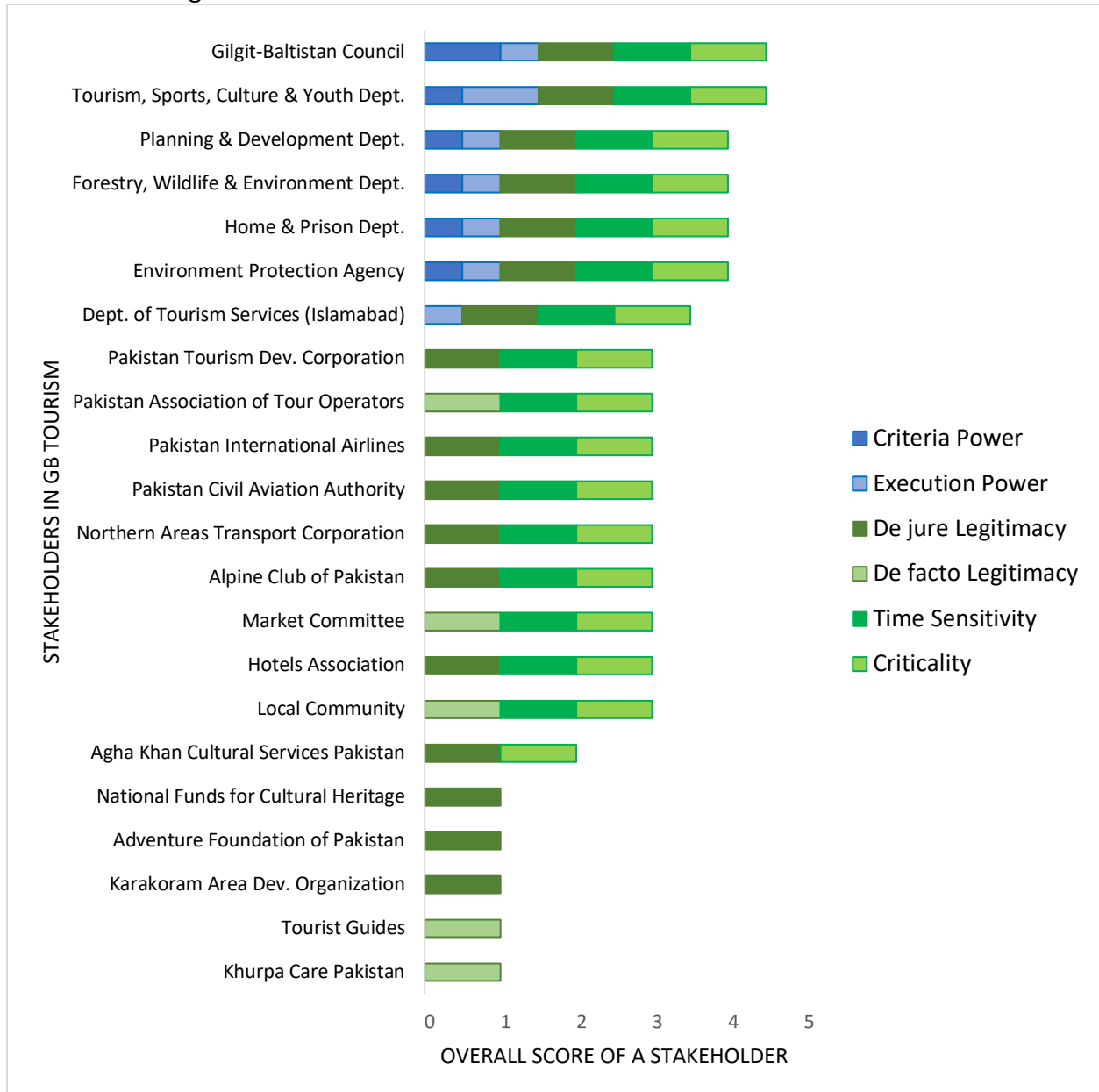
Source: Authors Conceptualization

### Stakeholders Salience: Whose stake currently counts?

The 'enhanced Stakeholder Salience Model helped clarify the relative importance of stakeholders and also helped in their categorization based on differences in their possession of various attributes and sub attributes. Stakeholders in charge of policy and managerial aspect hold comprehensive power, De jure Legitimacy and High Urgency. Despite holding similar set of attributes, they may vary with reference to the potency of each of these attributes which ultimately differentiate one from the other.

Some stakeholders do not have power but may still be legitimate and requiring urgent attention. Some stakeholders may neither have power nor urgency but still can be legitimate in the tourism industry.

Figure 3: Stakeholder Identification and Prioritization in GB Tourism



Source: Author's Conceptualization.

### Stakeholders' perception: How Tourism is perceived under CPEC?

Stakeholders were generally convinced that GB offers various attractive forms of tourism, provides unique exposure to natural beauty and rich culture and heritage, and thereby may give the tourists a reasonable value for their money. They were however concerned that it remains merely as a potential without much on that ground that could boost the local socioeconomic development. In this backdrop various themes emerged out of the in-depth interviews which are organized and presented into the following sections:

## **Discussion: Making Stakeholder Visible in Policy Processes**

Tourism products today are more complex than ever before, and their taxonomy may include dozens of product families and hundreds of product classes (McKercher, 2016). Given the fragmented nature of these tasks and diversity of products, rarely a single actor, public or private, can control and operate the tourism industry, and, successful tourism is almost always a collaborative effort. Successful tourism planners consider consumer and stakeholder relationships as the core of their planning for place brand; and value behaviors more than communications and reality more than image (Hankinson, 2004).

In case of tourism development under CPEC, it appears that many public and private stakeholders are ill-informed about possible and actual developments likely to occur in the tourism industry of GB and elsewhere in the country. They are also unaware of the global trends and traits in contemporary tourism industry. They still see tourism merely as a leisure and adventure activity and thus act in ignorance of new ideas already in currency elsewhere in the world.

The CPEC initiative is also likely to bring multidimensional change in the interests and relationships of stakeholders which require an appropriate policy response to ensure that earlier stakeholders have not lagged, and the project is inclusive. This is very clear from the apprehension of stakeholders who feel that if not protected, Chinese investors and imported labor may get undue benefit out of their natural and cultural endowment. Studies such as Waligo et al. (2013) suggest that this would be difficult without formally managing stakeholder adaptability to newly arriving opportunities, and by making their knowledge, attitudes and other capacities relevant; doing so without engaging existing local stakeholders in tourism planning may deteriorate their livelihoods and create a sense of frustration and isolation and have detrimental implications for the nation-building project.

The 'enhanced stakeholder salience (SS) Model' helped clarify the relative importance of stakeholders and also helped in their categorization based on differences in their possession of various attributes and sub attributes. Stakeholders in charge of policy and managerial aspect hold comprehensive power, De jure Legitimacy and High Urgency. Despite holding similar set of attributes, they may vary with reference to the potency of each of these attributes which ultimately differentiate one from the other.

## **Conclusions and Way Forward**

This research basically tried to identify who is stakeholder, who currently control policy and practice of tourism development and what they perceive on different dimension of tourism development under CPEC. For identification of stakeholder and analysis of their salience Mitchell et al. (1997) heuristic, popularly known as 'Stakeholder Salience' was used. Findings suggest that current policy and practice is dominated by state actors with very small room for non-state entities such as NGOs, local actors, and communities. CPEC externalities may positively impact

tourism development due to infrastructure connectivity but is extremely hampered by the way security set up has been planned.

Furthermore, given the lack of information available on various aspects of CPEC including the negotiations on investment in tourism with Chinese investors, low local capacity to adopt emerging global trends in tourism and respond to the market demand may exclude various small investors and communities from the tourism landscape of GB. It is feared that if nothing is done to enhance the local capacity through training, information dissemination and meaningful participation of the non-state stakeholder, the Chinese investors may take over the industry to the disadvantage of locals.

However, it should be noted that our study has provided a baseline condition of stakeholder salience. Stakeholder analysis needs not to be only general and industry specific. It should be done for each of the major component and sub-component of tourism planning and development as one may expect that stakeholder arrangement would be quite different considering the task in hand. It is also the objective in mind that drives the kind of strategies to handle stakeholders. If the idea is to do people centric development, extraordinary measures to promote local stakeholders would be needed to upscale them from one rung to the next on the ladder of stakeholders' participation.

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# Trophy hunting and Community-based Ecotourism in Chitral

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## Abstract

Trophy hunting is carried out in Chitral for the past 23 years, with the collaboration of local communities living in the protected areas. The revenue generated by trophy hunting is distributed among stakeholders who are the wildlife department and local communities living in or near protected areas with a ratio of 20:80. As this area is protected so this area has a large population of Markhor and other wild birds and animals which makes this place best for ecotourism. Unfortunately, the area is backward and locals have no knowledge of ecotourism which can be another source of revenue generation for the locals along with Trophy Hunting. In this study focus group discussions and unstructured interviews were conducted and the data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The results show that the locals do not have knowledge about ecotourism. The introduction of ecotourism in these areas can not only benefit the locals it will also have a positive impact on the local economy.

**Keywords:** Community-based natural resource management; Community-based Ecotourism; Community-based Trophy hunting; Lack of ecotourism enterprises; Capacity Building of locals; Involvement of private sectors

## Introduction

Trophy hunting tourism provides economic incentives to the locals for conserving the endangered mammals in different African countries, it also supports the empowerment of local communities who are facing economic challenges (Thomsen, J. M., Lendelvo, S., Coe, K., & Rispel, M. (2022). Trophy hunting usually involves a hunter who hunts down the largest animal in the geographic area in lieu of a hefty amount paid to the conservators – an individual, a community, or a public entity (Frisina, 2000). Trophy hunting contributes around US \$ 100 million to the economy of the Republic of South Africa per year. While Namibia's trophy hunting share is around US \$ 25.5 million per year in the economy (H. Ali et al., 2015).

In Chitral Pakistan, community-based trophy hunting of Markhors was started in 1983 by Dr. Mumtaz Malik (Ex-Chief Conservator of Wildlife, Khyber), this program was not community-based, as all the proceedings were going to the governments. After banning this program for 8 years, in 1998 with

federal government approval, trophy hunting again started to conserve and protect endangered animals. The latest trophies of Markhor sold at US \$450950 worth, with the highest bid of \$163850. (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department 2021). This revenue is used for the development of different infrastructure development projects within communities.

Community-based tourism means involving the local communities to be hosting, planning, and managing tourism development in the area. WWF defines Community-based tourism as “where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community.” (Goodwin, H., & Santilli, R. (2009). Community-based tourism depends on local community involvement and their support as local guides, and employee of entrepreneurs. (Blackstock, K. (2005).

Trophy hunting in Chitral is already an emerging industry that is managed by the local communities living in the protected area along with the district wildlife department KPK. These protected areas have huge potential for tourism which includes vast lands green pastures and Markhor Sight views. In this area along with trophy hunting if ecotourism is managed and conducted appropriately can have a profound ecological impact, it will not only stabilize the ecosystem it will also have a positive impact on conservation.

## **Methodology**

This study site is a conservancy named as Toshi-Shasha Conservancy which is an active Markhor trophy hunting game management area. Two trophies hunting against hefty fees are carried out in this conservancy annually (Kakakhel, 2020). The total area of 20000 hectares in the foothills of the Hindukush Mountains. This conservancy was founded in 1979 with an area of 1045 hectares. Later on December 16, 1998, the size was increased to 20000 hectares (Kakakhel, 2020). This conservancy has 12 villages which are the protected areas of this conservancy.

FDG (Focus Group Discussion) was performed in each village as a qualitative method to get a better understanding of the locals about trophy hunting and the introduction of community-based ecotourism in the area. This has two main stages which are used to analyze the qualitative data. Initially, the collected data is managed, and secondly, establishes relationships between the organized data.

Sampling is a technique used in research for selecting research units of the targeted population that will be part of the research study (Sarantakos, 2012). So, in this study, the head of the village conservation committee or its members was targeted for focus group discussion and for unstructured interviews. The sampling method was that in each village 4 people were selected for unstructured interview head of the village and people in the conservancy management who are directly or indirectly involved in the management of the conservancy. For focus group discussions a total number of 10 individual males who are of different ages were given priority. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected through focus group discussions and by interviews.



## Results and Discussions

### *Economic Functions of Trophy hunting*

Trophy hunting in Pakistan is a significant intervention designed to provide economic benefits to the local communities living in or near the Community Based Conservation. Trophy hunting fee is distributed with a ratio of 80:20, 80% goes to the community, and 20% goes to the government account. This 80% is used to improve community services such as clean drinking water infrastructure, construction, and maintenance of school buildings, hiring teachers for community schools, employment opportunities as community guards, labor in community projects, maintenance and Development of water channels, Construction of protection walls, spending on the hydropower stations, building new bridges, etc. Revenue Generated from Markhor Trophy Hunt from 1999 to 2021 in Toshi Shasha Conservancy Chitral has generated revenue of US\$5,756,700, which has been distributed between the community and government with a ratio of 80: 20. The community has used their share in clean drinking supplies.

Figure 1: Revenue in USD from Markhor Trophy Hunting Program in Chitral



Construction and maintenance of water channels, road constructions, construction of bridges, spending on school buildings and academics, and building protection walls and hydropower houses. The direct benefit of the hunting fee includes the creation of employment opportunities such as community Guards and labor in community projects. Below are the sub-themes of how TH hunting had indirectly and directly benefited the communities.

### *Ecotourism*

Ecotourism is addressed or described as a recreational activity or vacationing in a natural setting that is environmentally, economically, ecologically, socially sustainable, and acceptable. Ecotourism has

social or economic benefits. It also plays an essential role in the sustainable use of natural resources. Toshi Shasha conservancy is blessed with beautiful landscapes with beautiful views of snow-covered mountains of the Hindu Kush range. The Markhor conservation has led to an increase in the population of other wildlife animals and birds, and they are not afraid of people. So they have a tremendous opportunity to introduce ecotourism in their respective areas. Unfortunately, no such steps have been taken to introduce ecotourism in these places. While talking about the Toshi Shasha Conservancy, one of the respondents described the picture of their pastures he says;

*"Just at a distance of one and a half hour's walk, we have a pasture known as Dokshall (Name of place), the most beautiful place to visit in summer. It is a lush green plain with small springs on either side of the land. You will see different kinds of flowers and butterflies. If you camp there early in the morning, you will hear different birds singing, it is a piece of heaven in our land".*

Upon asking why you have such beautiful places and why you have not introduced ecotourism in these places, one of the respondents said,

*"We would like that road to be built to these places, and we have to benefit from existing resources. If we can build a road to these places, we would be able to grow Mushechi (The native name of the herb which is the favorite diet of markhor), and Markhor will gather in that place, and it will be a breathtaking view for the tourist. So far, we have not thought about the introduction of ecotourism. We had no idea that we would be able to get such benefits."*

The lack of knowledge about ecotourism and the local wildlife department's lack of interest in introducing ecotourism in the respective areas have kept people from the most significant industry. If ecotourism is taught in these separate areas, it will increase the livelihood of the local people and positively impact the local economy of Chitral. Many scholarly articles insist on introducing ecotourism in regions where the capacity exists. It will positively impact the locals. (Ahmad et al., 2018) says that tourism is a significant contributor to the economy in northern areas. Approximately 50% of the tourist who visits Pakistan from different countries also visits northern regions. Being a part of a country's economic growth, tourism also has the potential to contribute to the living standards of people living in tourist destinations (Alavi & Yasin, 2000). (Wunder, 2000) states that getting tourism benefits and conserving nature without the support of local communities cannot succeed. Ecotourism is a sustainable way of naturally based tourism, mainly focusing on learning about nature.

### ***Lack of Ecotourism Enterprise***

Ecotourism and wildlife conservation are overlapping sectors of an economy. Ecotourism is defined as responsible travel to an area that conserves the natural environment and supports the well-being of the locals. If ecotourism enterprises along with wildlife conservation are realized it will have a positive impact on the well-being of the people. Wild ecotourism and conservation are very instrumental tools for resource system conservation and rural development. Tourism is the third largest industry after the oil and automobile industry. According to the United Nation World Trade

Organization tourism not only increases the demand for goods and services it also creates employment opportunities in the localities.

The study results indicate that there is no concept of ecotourism enterprise in the conservancy as they have huge potential for this industry. When the people were asked what are the reasons of the non-presence of this industry in the region. They were unaware of the concept during my data collection. I have observed they will be able to earn more income from ecotourism than trophy hunting. As the conservancy is a protected area so use of guns is strictly prohibited in the area. It has a positive impact on other wild animals and bird populations. They are not afraid of the people and they can be seen at a distance of meters.

The area has huge potential for the ecotourism industry but the community needs capacity building for the ecotourism industry. The serious need of the area which I have observed is creating awareness among the communities along with designing policies and laws at the local level which should help the local communities and local entrepreneurs to take part in the development of ecotourism in these protected areas. Capacity building and better funding which can be through Conservation funds or from other sources to local institutions can further boost ecotourism by participating in cross-border ecotourism and conservation-related enterprises.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is evident from the research and the literature that until and unless communities are not involved in the program it is not successful because it is designed to integrate both society and ecology, which are part and parcel of conservation and Community-based Tourism. The Toshi Shasha conservancy has huge potential for ecotourism which is evident from the population of different wild birds and animals in the area. Due to the ban on any kind of hunting the population of other wildlife animals and birds has increased and with the ban on cutting off trees and domestication of goats this conservancy's pastures are lush green. The locals living in this protected area are not aware of Community-based tourism as these people are well at managing the community through collaboration which they have been doing for the past 23 years these communities who are living in the protected areas just need a push towards Community-based ecotourism.

## **Recommendations**

1. For Community-based Ecotourism organizing, boosting, and empowering the capacity of the local communities is necessary
2. Private sector should be involved in introducing ecotourism in these areas as the private sector is already working on community development in these areas.
3. Private sector should give training conduct sessions by experts on the possibilities of introducing ecotourism and how to get benefits from it
4. The local communities can invest some of the hunting fees for the construction of roads to the pasture lands.

5. The district government can invest some of the beautification funds for the construction of Markhor sight view in the conservancy for tourists.
6. The wildlife department needs to work on the advertisement of the Markhor sight views through sign boards or distribution of pamphlets among tourist.

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# Community Participation towards Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development: A Case Study in Hindukush Himalayan Pakistan

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**Keywords:** Sustainable Tourism, Community Participation, HKH

## Introduction

Tourism has become an important economic driver for many communities around the world. However, the development of tourism can also have negative impacts on the local community's well-being and the environment. Therefore, understanding the local community's perceptions of tourism impacts and their support for sustainable tourism development is crucial for the tourism industry's sustainable development. In this context, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between local community participation (PLC), perceived tourism impacts, well-being domains, and support for sustainable tourism development (SSTD) in mountain communities of Pakistan.

The study focuses on mountain communities because these areas are characterized by unique natural and cultural assets that attract tourists. At the same time, mountain communities face challenges such as limited economic opportunities, isolation, and vulnerability to environmental and social changes. Thus, tourism can be a double-edged sword for these communities, providing economic benefits, but also potentially threatening their way of life and natural resources. In this context, understanding the local community's perceptions of tourism impacts and their support for sustainable tourism development is particularly important.

The objectives of this study is to examine the relationships between PLC, perceived tourism impacts (economic, sociocultural, and environmental), well-being domains (material and non-material), and support for SSTD. The findings provide valuable insights into the complex relationships between these variables, highlighting the importance of local community participation and perceptions of tourism impacts for well-being and support for sustainable tourism development. The study's results will inform tourism policymakers and practitioners on

the importance of community involvement in tourism development and the need for sustainable tourism practices that balance economic benefits with environmental and social impacts.

## **Methodology**

The study utilized a quantitative research design approach to gather empirical evidence and test relationship among the social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism development, quality of life and local community participation for sustainable tourism development. A survey method was used to collect data from residents in the Hunza valley, with a simple random sampling technique. The sample size is determined based on the total population, 95% confidence level, and a margin of error of  $\pm 5$ . In this way a total 540 respondents were surveyed and data were collected.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, with the first section collecting demographic background information, the second section measuring community participation, the perceived economic, sociocultural, and environmental impacts of tourism, quality of life and the support of local community to sustainable tourism development. The constructs and items used in the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies and have been tested for reliability and validity. The use of a quantitative research design approach and a validated questionnaire allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of data, enabling the identification of patterns and relationships among the variables.

## **Results and Discussions**

This study utilized SmartPLS 4 software to analyze the collected data. Before the analysis, the collected sample was checked for outliers and missing values. Descriptive statistics and normality tests were performed. To assess the relationship among the latent variables of the model, the Structural Equation Model (SEM) is estimated. The data analysis includes factor loadings, average variance extracted, construct reliability and validity of the indicators to validate the scales used for measuring the constructs in the model.

This study reveals that participation of local community (PLC) in various community activities significantly influences perceive tourism impacts in the region. A strong association between higher level of community participation and the economic impacts (perceived) of tourism is found. This result supports the results of some past studies such as Jurowski et al. (1997) and Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) which argued that the local community who are more active in community participation and attachment perceive more economic impacts of tourism. This study further found that the perceived sociocultural impact of tourism development is greatly influences by the local community participation in various community activities.

This analysis indicates that those members of local community who are more actively participating in community' activities tend to have more positive perception of sociocultural

impact. This result supports the results of Jurowski (1997) confirming that the members of local community with higher level of participation in their local community, perceive more positive impacts in term sociocultural development. However, this analysis is contracting with the results obtained by scholars such as Gurosy and Rutherford (2004). However, this study found an insignificant relationship between the participation of the local community and their perceived environmental impacts of tourism, which supports the argument argued by Jurowski et al. (1997).

Based on the results of the SEM model, it is found that the tourism economic impacts have a substantial effect on the satisfaction of the local community with both material and nonmaterial well-being domains. This suggests that the local community who experience positive economic impacts of tourism tend to have higher levels of satisfaction in both domains. This finding is in line with a study by Jeon et al. (2014) which also reported that perceived economic benefits significantly influence residents' quality of life. However, this outcome contradicts the findings of Yu, Cole, and Chancellor (2018) who argued that perceived economic impacts of tourism have no any significant impact on the quality of life of the local residents.

The study also revealed that sociocultural impacts of tourism have a positive and significant effect on satisfaction level of the local community with both material and non-material well-being domains. This means that as residents perceive positive sociocultural impacts of tourism, their satisfaction with tourism development in their locality, the way of life well-being also enhances. The local community of mountain regions specifically perceived tourism as an effective means of encouraging local residents to participate in various cultural activities. Furthermore, they believe that tourism development positively affects their cultural identity. Local residents also valued the cultural exchange between themselves and tourists.

These findings are consistent with the results of other studies such as McGehee and Andereck's (2004) study, which found that tourism is not seen as disruptive to traditional lifestyles of locals, but rather as an important factor in sustaining traditional lifestyles. This study confirmed that there is insignificant relationship between satisfaction with material wellbeing domain and the environmental impacts (perceived) of tourism development. This result can be justified as the local communities place more emphasis on the economic benefits of tourism rather than its environmental (Stylidis & Terzidou, 2014). This study also found that the satisfaction with the material well-being is direct and positively associated with the overall quality of life satisfaction of the local community. This result supports the bottom up spillover theory which suggests that the satisfaction of overall quality of life is greatly influences by the satisfaction with various domain of life. Finally, this study revealed that quality of life satisfaction significantly affects residents' support for sustainable tourism development (SSTD) in mountain communities.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study's findings provide important insights into the relationship between tourism development and residents' quality of life satisfaction and support for sustainable tourism. The results suggest that involving local communities in decision-making processes and implementing

sustainable tourism development approaches are crucial to promoting residents' satisfaction with material and non-material well-being domains, which in turn affects their overall quality of life satisfaction. Furthermore, the study's recommendation to explore the moderating effects of demographic variables on the relationship between tourism impacts and residents' satisfaction and support is particularly relevant. This could help identify subgroups of residents who are more or less affected by tourism development and tailor policies and interventions accordingly. The study's recommendations could inform the development of more sustainable and community-centered tourism policies, benefiting both residents and the tourism industry. Further research in this area could provide a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between tourism development and residents' well-being, leading to more effective and equitable tourism policies and practices.



## **Theme 4: Responsible and sustainable tourism practices**

# Public Policies and Institution for Fair Tourism Development

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## Abstract

Tourism-driven economic growth motivates the government to back public policies. Tourism is a major component of the economies of many nations across the world and has been essential to their development. In order to provide public policy implications for Pakistan, the study's goal was to identify and explore the factors that influence "Public policies and institutions for fair tourism development." The quantitative study was designed to identify the institutional policies for the fair growth of tourism. The data were gathered from 700 Pakistani tourism stakeholders. The Cronbach's-Alpha test was used to determine the validity and reliability. According to the study, the effectiveness of public policies, tourism carrying capacity, community involvement, an interconnected network of diverse tourism support services, destination-specific promotion and growth strategies, the development of human capital, and visitor satisfaction throughout the tourism supply chain all contribute to the quality of appropriate behavior. The research found large footprints of ethical tourist activities near urban locations, whereas remote destinations were discovered to be positively sustaining their environmental capital. The study's recommendations included actions to reduce the harmful effects of fair tourism inflow, restore natural capital, and distribute socioeconomic gains among communities and destinations. Understanding these dynamics can help to improve governance, coordination, and shared objectives for the management and planning of tourist attractions.

**Keywords:** *Fair Tourism Development, Public Policies, Tourism stakeholders, regional tourism, effective strategies*

## **Introduction**

Tourism has been considered one of the great industries. The industry of tourism has been gaining popularity since 1980s, as mentioned by (Cleverdon & Kalisch 2000). The social and economic progress of a country is based on tourism because it provides the opportunities for the employments and helps to present a progressive soft picture of a country. The top 10 countries with the highest percentage of tourists arriving and spending money worldwide are industrialized nations, (Gómez-Vega & Picazo-Tadeo, 2019). While South Asian nations like Pakistan draw far less foreign visitors than developed nations despite having a wealth of historical and religious monuments and charming natural beauty, (Stryzhak 2019).

Pakistan's geological setting and artistic heritage make it one of the most alluring places to visit and a wonderful vacation spot for a variety of travelers. The warm and ethnically diverse society of Pakistan welcomes visitors to discover, celebrate, and take in its many practices, rituals, and celebrations. A. U. Khan et al., Citation2019 believed that a number of adventurers, nature lovers, socio-cultural, and religious travelers are drawn to the country's diverse landscape, which includes deserts, magnificent mountains ranges, high and beautiful peaks, glaciers, long stretches of undeveloped beaches, lakes with underwater the natural world, lushly vegetated valleys, and places associated .

Pakistan has blessed with worth seeing places. Even during the COVID-19, there has been seen an increasing trend in tourist intake, which indicates that travel spots in Pakistan are going to be listed among the most popular countries in the globe. Various Public policies and institutions for fair tourism development have been incorporated to gain a tremendous progress. The funding has shown a positive support in the promotion of the institutions. Even though the income gained is less than other progressing countries in South Asia. On the other hand the available facilities and services are also less in number. There are various areas of the country that is needed to be focused that can be resulted into the better advancement in the public policies and institutions in order to attain better financial gains.

## **Research Objective**

Following is the research objective for the researcher.

- To identify and explore the factors that influence Public policies and institutions for fair tourism development.

## **Research Question**

The research aimed to explore the answer of the following research question.

- What are the factors that influence Public policies and institutions for fair tourism development?

## **Methodology**

Research technique helps a researcher identify solutions to the study's problems by directing them through a structured, methodical, and scientific approach. Research methodologies and research methodology are very different from one another. There are three types of the methods to conduct the research. The current study incorporated quantitative method. The quantitative study was designed to identify the institutional policies for the fair growth of tourism. For this a questionnaire was designed. A questionnaire is a tool that help to find the answer of the research questions. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire contain vital importance in the study. So, the Cronbach's-Alpha test was used to determine the validity and reliability.

A pilot study of the questionnaire was held with the number of 10 participants. Later of questionnaire was distributed among the participants after some changes. The participants of the study were 700 persons. These people belonged to Pakistani tourism stakeholders. Later on SPSS was used to analyze the collected data from the survey based questionnaire. For this purpose purposive sampling was used to collect the data. The total number of participants were 700. These respondents were from Pakistani tourism stakeholders. Data were gathered from 700 of them. The Cronbach's-Alpha test was used to determine the validity and reliability.

## **Results and Discussions**

Tourism is a rapidly expanding sector that has benefited both developed countries and remote rural populations by bringing prosperity, facilitating the exchange of information about societies, social and cultural legacy, and standards of conduct, and fostering international connections. The findings indicate that there is significance of provided resources, available services, community involvement and public policies. Lee (Citation2013); (Eslami et al., Citation2019; Demirović Bajrami et al., Citation2020; & Purnomo et al., Citation2020) support the results.

The results of the questionnaire showed that the effectiveness of public policies, tourism carrying capacity, community involvement, an interconnected network of diverse tourism support services, destination-specific promotion and growth strategies, the development of human capital, and visitor satisfaction throughout the tourism supply chain all contribute to the quality of appropriate behavior. The research found large footprints of ethical tourist activities near urban locations, whereas remote destinations were discovered to be positively sustaining their environmental capital. That showed a vital contribution from the tourist side.

All of the points are indicating that involvement and participation of the community is an essential component in the organizing and constructing of purpose-built facilities and maintaining ongoing fair tourism behavior. The collaboration among policy designers and institution comprehensive policies and wealth redistribution standards should be established through social, financial, and ecological assistance of businesses with the aim to restore the reputation of regional destination organizations and retain regional tourism (Jamal et al., 2013). Regional collaboration towards tourism institutions will provide a true insight in designing

effective strategies for fair tourism. The connection among community involvement and support for fair tourism development, particularly during the planning of infrastructure development and affirmative implementation of regulatory framework, is influenced by the advantages noticed by host citizens.

The above explored factors must be employed by the policy makers and institutions for the promotion in the tourism industry. As a result it will bring positive development in economic progress of the country. The importance of the beautiful scenery of the destination and unique heritage to tourism has also been acknowledged by Nguyen (2013, 2014, 2015), VU et al. (Citation2020), and others. For the immediate future as well as afterwards, all stakeholders must act appropriately in order to ensure the long-term viability of these factors. (Chin et al., Citation2018; Mathew & Sreejesh, Citation2017; T. Q. T. Nguyen et al., Citation2019; Um & Yoon, Citation2021).

Moreover, Pakistani government has demonstrated a favorable approach towards tourism. The leading place in global trade will go to tourism. (Khurshid 2003). Even closed economies like Albania and China were forced to open their doors to tourism due to its critical relevance. This is important for the policy makers and institutions to avail the benefits of improving interest of the tourists. Inclusionary strategies and financial redistribution standards should be established through the financial, social, and environmental support of businesses in order to restore the reputation of local and regional target bodies and retain regional tourism. (Jamal et al., 2013). Strengthening regional groups, companies, and residents is essential for the collaborative management of the tourism assets (Scheyvens 2003).

Currently, Pakistan has to give priority to tourism as it the most deserving area of attention. The services must be up to the satisfaction level of the tourists. Public policies should be designed to enhance the effectiveness of the fair tourism. The study sensitize towards the actions to bring down the harmful effects of fair tourism inflow. Moreover, there is the requirement to preserve the available natural capital, and distribute socioeconomic gains among regional communities and destinations. Policy designers and institutions comprehension regarding these dynamics can help to improve administration, collaboration, and shared objectives for the management and uplifting of fair tourist interests.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study's recommendations included actions to reduce the harmful effects of fair tourism inflow, restore natural capital, and distribute socioeconomic gains among communities and destinations. Understanding these dynamics can help to improve governance, coordination, and shared objectives for the management and planning of tourist attractions. Policy makers and institutions should implement such strategies that promote more facilities for the tourist. The study suggests that, they must be carefully chosen and adequately prepared before implementing it. This strategy for promoting tourism demanded that regional businesses be given chances to grow in their own cultural and environmental contexts. Local Government

agencies projects engage creative and enterprising people of the neighborhood community, and their actions must be in line with plans for sustainable and fair development.

A strategic approach that is focused on sustainable demands the employment of creative, imaginative, and skilled individuals as well as good perceptions for maximizing excellent tourism facilities along with accountable tourism behavior. The research recommends community engagement in the development process, adoption of structural policies, preservation of socio-cultural legacy, and maintenance of natural variability since these actions would strengthen the emotional ties between the residents of the host community and the tourism endeavors.

The investigation also suggests that the policy designers and institutions should establish minimum requirements for ethical tourism and traveling regulations for the administration of destinations and the facilities supply system that supports it. This established criteria would assist in making more straightforward for administrators to promote "accountable behavior" in order to schedule, protect, maintain, uphold, and get the environment and cultural assets.

According to Higging Desbiolles (2008, 359), a humanist approach to capitalism is based on "fair tourism". It represents an important shift from the past. To "fair tourism," both visitors and the hospitality sector should serve societal needs and desires. It serves as an appeal for regional companies to build tourism initiatives in the vicinity.

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# Does International Trade Promote Tourism in Pakistan? An Investigation of the Relationship between Trade and Tourism

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**Keywords:** international trade, tourism, relationship, export, import

## Introduction

Globalisation has caused significant changes in the trade patterns of nations, including Pakistan. Due to their close proximity and affordable transportation, several South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, and Pakistan, have a higher demand for international trade (Kiyong, 2010). Moreover, increased trade eventually broadens their path to economic progress (World Bank, 2010). For instance, trade made up 27.1% of Pakistan's GDP in 2021. Besides these, Pakistan has become a demanding tourist destination because of its historical sites and natural beauty and is seen as one of the factors supporting economic growth. For instance, in 2018, 1,975,982 tourists arrived in Pakistan and spent around 845,000,000.00 US dollars (Tariq et al., 2015).

Since both tourism and trade have a favourable economic impact, Thus, it is crucial to research the empirical connections between trade and tourism. There are lots of studies which show the relation between trade and tourism in Sri Lanka, China, and OECD countries, but we could not find any paper studying how trade policies in Pakistan have impacted the tourism sector (Gallego, Ledesma-Rodríguez, Pérez-Rodríguez, 2011, Shan, Wilson, 2010). Trade and tourism may have a long-term relationship. For instance, opening trade prospects shares knowledge about the country, enhancing the reputation of the tourist site, and thus increasing tourist visits (Gallego et al, 2011).

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to investigate how trade and tourism are related. The following research questions are addressed in the study. What kind of connection exists between foreign trade and tourism in Pakistan? Do a significant number of travellers come from countries with which Pakistan has better trade relations? How has the expansion of Pakistan's tourist sector been impacted by global trade? What policy measures may be taken to strengthen the beneficial



effects of global trade on Pakistani tourism? Section 2 of the paper describes the methodology. Section 4 describes the results and discussion. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are in Section 5.

## Methodology

This study provides an analysis of Pakistan's trade and tourism for the years 1980–2021. Five variables make up the statistics, including one for tourism as a dependent variable (number of visitors arriving) and four independent variables (imports, exports, total trade, GDP, and trade as a share of GDP). Relative prices, real exchange rates, population, and non-economics (common borders, common languages, visa restrictions, distance) are taken as control variables. On the data, an instrument variable model has been used. Due to the simultaneous relationships between the dependent variable, international tourist revenues (% of total exports), and the independent variable, trade (measured as import plus export), there is a need to eliminate the bias and ensure that the coefficients are unbiased and consistent (Gujrati and Porter, 2008).

The data was taken from the website of "The World Bank Indicators." Tourists' arrivals include a number of individuals that travel abroad and visit Pakistan. Total trade is the sum of a country's net imports and exports, whereas imports and exports relate to the goods and services that are carried into or shipped from its ports. Trade as a proportion of GDP is defined as the total of all goods and services exported and imported, expressed as a percentage of the GDP. To examine the combined and overall effects of each variable on tourism, we employed six different models. The hypothesis put forth in this paper is as follows:

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	42
-----+-----				F(1, 40)	=	47.24
Model1	3.7984e+12	1	3.7984e+12	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	3.2164e+12	40	8.0410e+10	R-squared	=	0.5415
-----+-----				Adj R-squared	=	0.5300
Total	7.0148e+12	41	1.7109e+11	Root MSE	=	2.8e+05
-----						
touristarrivals	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
-----+-----						
trade	10358.85	1507.183	6.87	0.000	7312.722	13404.98
_cons	284171.5	73262.49	3.88	0.000	136102.5	432240.5

H1: tourism, as tourist arrivals and international trade have a significant relationship.

Ho: tourism, as tourist arrivals and international trade have no significant relationship.

H2: tourism as tourist arrivals and GDP have a significant relationship.

Ho: tourism as tourist arrival and GDP have no significant relationship

Source		SS		df	MS	Number of obs	=	42
-----+-----						F(1, 40)	=	46.11
Model		3.7564e+12		1	3.7564e+12	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual		3.2584e+12		40	8.1461e+10	R-squared	=	0.5355
-----+-----						Adj R-squared	=	0.5239
Total		7.0148e+12		41	1.7109e+11	Root MSE	=	2.9e+05
-----								
touristarrivals		Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]		
-----+-----								
gdpb		2828.492	416.5277	6.79	0.000	1986.658	3670.326	
const		324626.6	69307.42	4.68	0.000	184551.1	464702.1	

H3: tourism as tourist arrivals and export have a significant relationship.

H0: tourism as tourist arrivals and export have no significant relationship.

Source		SS		df		MS		Number of obs	=	42
-----+-----								F(1, 40)	=	36.64
Model3		3.3537e+12		1		3.3537e+12		Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual		3.6611e+12		40		9.1528e+10		R-squared	=	0.4781
-----+-----								Adj R-squared	=	0.4650
Total		7.0148e+12		41		1.7109e+11		Root MSE	=	3.0e+05
-----										
touristarrivals		Coef.		Std. Err.		t		P> t		[95% Conf. Interval]
-----+-----										
exportsb		28439.99		4698.333		6.05		0.000		18944.31 37935.67
_cons		257969.2		85011.83		3.03		0.004		86153.86 429784.5

H4: tourism as tourist arrivals and import have a significant relationship.

H0: tourism as tourist arrivals and import have no significant relationship.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	42
				F(1, 40)	=	50.84
Model4	3.9260e+12	1	3.9260e+12	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	3.0888e+12	40	7.7221e+10	R-squared	=	0.5597
				Adj R-squared	=	0.5487
Total	7.0148e+12	41	1.7109e+11	Root MSE	=	2.8e+05

touristari~s	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
importb	15782.15	2213.4	7.13	0.000	11308.7	20255.6
_cons	311387.5	68036.39	4.58	0.000	173880.8	448894.2

H5: tourism as tourist arrivals and trade% of GDP have a significant relationship.

H0: tourism as tourist arrivals and trade% of GDP have no significant relationship.

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	42
				F(2, 39)	=	23.15
Model6	3.8075e+12	2	1.9037e+12	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	3.2073e+12	39	8.2239e+10	R-squared	=	0.5428
				Adj R-squared	=	0.5193
Total	7.0148e+12	41	1.7109e+11	Root MSE	=	2.9e+05

touristari~s	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
trade	7318.292	4215.77	1.73	0.054	-11463.04	26099.63
gdpb	846.3392	490.06	1.72	0.082	-4310.525	6003.203
_cons	293975.9	79760.92	3.69	0.001	132644.2	455307.6

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

H6: tourism as tourist arrival and trade (import+export) + gdp+export-import+trade% of gdp have significant relationship.

H0: tourism as tourist arrival and trade(import+export) +gdp+export-import+trade% of gdp have no relationship.

Source		SS		df	MS	Number of obs	=	42
-----+						F(1, 40)	=	6.51
Model5		9.8133e+11		1	9.8133e+11	Prob > F	=	0.0147
Residual		6.0335e+12		40	1.5084e+11	R-squared	=	0.1399
-----+						Adj R-squared	=	0.1184
Total		7.0148e+12		41	1.7109e+11	Root MSE	=	3.9e+05
-----								
touristarivals		Coef.		Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
-----+								
tradeasapercentofgdp		-41571		16298.11	-2.55	0.015	-74510.7	-8631.302
cons		2027635		528604.1	3.84	0.000	959286.4	3095984

The table below shows the results of all regressions tested for model 1 to model 5.

VARIABLES	(1) tourist arivals	(2) tourist arivals	(3) tourist arivals	(4) tourist arivals	(5) tourist arivals	(6) tourist arivals
trade	10,359*** (1,507)					7,318* (4215.77)
GDP		2,828*** (416.5)				846.3* (490.06)
exports			28,440*** (4,698)			
import				15,782*** (2,213)		
trade as a percent of gdp					-41,571** (16,298)	
Constant	284,171*** (73,262)	324,627*** (69,307)	257,969*** (85,012)	311,387*** (68,036)	2.028e+06*** (528,604)	293,976*** (79,761)
Observations	42	42	42	42	42	42
R-squared	0.541	0.535	0.478	0.560	0.140	0.543

## Results and Discussions

We have used six regression models to study the impact of each variable individually and collectively. Table 1 shows the results of the regression model for hypothesis 1. The regression equation is as follows:

$$\text{Tourist arrival} = 284171.5 + 1035.85 \text{ trade}$$

According to model 1's findings, there is a significant positive association between trade—defined as the sum of exports and imports—and tourism, as assessed by the number of visitors. Almost 54% of changes in tourism are influenced by trade, while other elements remain constant. According to regression analysis, trade in a country alters growth and spreads information about tourist destinations, both of which have a positive impact on the expansion of the tourism sector.

The regression equation for table 2 as our second hypothesis is as follows:

$$\text{Tourist arrivals} = 324626.6 + 2828.492 \text{ GDP}$$

According to the regression analysis, there is a significant positive correlation between GDP and tourism. The relationship can be explained by the tourists' rational choices. Due to the availability of a better lifestyle, a stronger economy, and a desirable destination for spending vocations, a rise in GDP makes the country more alluring to tourists (Castro-Nuo, 2013). These results are in line with those from Okafor et al. (2018) and Adeola and Evans (2019b), which demonstrate that the GDP per capita in the country of origin or destination aids in the promotion of tourist flows.

Furthermore, Table 3 displays the results of a regression that used export as the independent variable and tourist arrival as the dependent variable. The export's p value is less than 0.01, indicating a substantial association between the two variables. Also, the modified R-squared is 0.4650, indicating that export values alone account for 46.5% of variations in visitor arrivals while controlling for other variables. This result supports the findings of Adeola et al. (2018) and Chaisumpunsakul and Pholphirul (2018) that trade openness affects tourist arrivals favourably. This shows that nations with strong export engagement attract more visitors than those with low export participation. This is consistent with the idea that a typical tourist site with a bigger pool of international business connections and networks would draw greater flows of foreign visitors than those with fewer connections and networks. Table 4 shows the regression results of hypothesis 4 to check the relation between tourist arrivals and imports. In this model, we have used the following equation.

$$\text{Tourist arrivals} = 311387.5 + 15782.15 \text{ imports}$$

Here, the p value is less than 0.01 and shows a significant relationship between imports and tourism. Almost 55% of changes in tourism are influenced by imports, as explained by the adjusted R-squared value. Also, this result may be justified considering that many of the products that tourists consume are not produced in the tourist destination and are imported. Table 5 is the regression result while testing hypothesis 5, which claims that there is a significant relation between tourism and trade as percentages of GDP. The regression shows that there is a negative relationship with the following equation.

$$\text{Tourist arrival} = 2027635 - 41571 \text{ trade as percentage of GDP}$$

Which means that if trade as a percentage of GDP increases by 1 unit, the number of tourist arrivals will reduce by 41571. This equation truly explains the economy of Pakistan. The explanation of the relationship is that when trade as a percentage of GDP rises in Pakistan, it is mostly because of high imports and negligible export contributions, leading to a trade deficit. This happens because our economy follows a consumption-growth model. Due to low production and high consumption, the economy becomes worse. As rational tourists, they will not prefer to visit any country suffering from

an economic downturn; therefore, tourism inflow falls. Finally, table 6 shows the combined effect of trade as the sum of export plus import and GDP on tourism. The regression equation is as follows. Tourist arrival= 293975.9+ 7318.29 trade+846.34 GDP

The p values are 0.054 and 0.082 for trade, and GDP, respectively. Comparing them with 0.1, we conclude that at the 10 percent significance level, there exists a positive relationship between tourism, trade, and GDP. However, the impact of trade is higher than that of GDP, which shows that trade is an important factor in explaining the tourism trend in Pakistan's economy, which can be explained by the consumption growth model as discussed above.

## Recommendation

Trade and tourism both contribute significantly to Pakistan's economic development. Government initiatives and market-based economic theories, however, have not been able to improve the economy. Therefore, this paper addresses how international trade and tourism are related in the context of Pakistan's economy. The findings in Section 4 indicate a considerable connection between trade and foreign tourism. Increased trade liberalisation boosts the flow of goods and knowledge about tourist locations, the growth of the tourism industry, and the number of foreign visitors. This is consistent with both the theoretical and empirical literature. Consequently, Pakistan should use trade and tourism to its advantage in order to implement policies that would help it achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (Yeo, 2019).

It is necessary to put into practice policies that promote trade openness, such as reduced tariffs, a reduction in export subsidies, and the adoption of an export-led economic model. Unlike the wealthier nations, Pakistan has the freedom to strategically use trade policy to encourage international tourism flows. Compared to high-income countries that are more economically linked, we can benefit from trade liberalisation since we are less economically integrated (Okafor et al., 2023). We must thus seize this opportunity.

In addition to this, it is important to encourage further trade and tourism policy integration. Giving particular investment inducements, such as combining tourist and trade funding, falls under this category. Such a fund offers specialised abilities and other technological abilities to boost intranational trade (Garidzirai, 2022). The government may encourage the growth of the tourist sector by building essential infrastructure, like large airports and quality roads, and by providing tax deductions for businesses in tourism-related industries, i.e., hotels (Manzoor et al., 2019).

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# Shaping Sustainable Tourism in Mountains: A Policy Reflection and wayforward for Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

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## Introduction

Gilgit-Baltistan is a tourism magnet with abundant and rich natural, ecological and cultural resources. It is located at the northern part of Pakistan bordering with China. In recent times, tourism is growing too fast with an obvious impact on ecology and livelihoods of local communities (Ali 2022). The unmatched beauty of Gilgit Baltistan makes tourism inevitable. Where there are visible socio economic benefits of tourism for people, there are obvious challenges in retaining socio economic and ecological health and benefits. Tourism has a significant socio-cultural impact on the host community (Buckley, 2012; Su & Swanson, 2017; He et al. 2018;) and thus, it requires a multitude of considerations while developing tourism capacity and systems.

Tourist destinations in Gilgit Baltistan is witnessing a sharp growth in tourism in in the last five years except for a few months of 2020 COVID 19 pandemic days. Around 68,855 tourists visited Gilgit Baltistan in 2014 and in just five years' time the flow of tourist reached to 1800,000<sup>2</sup>. Growth in mass tourism raises the sustainability concern in particular to fragile mountain ecosystems and its cultural endowments. The uncontrolled and ill-managed tourism causes degradation of potential of the scarce resources of a destination (Torres-Delgado & López Palomeque, 2014; Bithas, 2011). Devising a sustainable policy in turn depends on a greater understanding of the socio, economic and ecological underpinnings, benefits and implications. Except mass tourism, the central focus of all other forms of tourism is to extract invaluable human experience from nature and surrounding with due care to local people prosperity, ecology and biodiversity conservation.



It is imperative to monitor, manage and well plan the tourism development cycles and phases in Gilgit Baltistan with active engagement of multi-stakeholders (local residents, tourists, authorities and the tourism industry people). Assessing potential benefits and costs of tourism in terms of the social, cultural and economic values and opportunity costs are important inputs towards framing sustainable policy and implementation to benefit biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation. There are almost no or very limited studies conducted about the sustainability of tourism in the tourist destinations in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Whereas, there is growing need for socio, economic and ecological assessments to formulate policy based on evidence for sustainable tourism. This paper reviews, integrates and synthesizes key economic, social and ecological elements into a sustainable policy for a fresh and growing tourist destinations in Gilgit-Baltistan. The objective of this paper is to examine the current dynamics of tourism development in selected tourist destinations of Gilgit-Baltistan and to articulate a way forward for sustainable mountain tourism.

## **Methodology**

This paper attempts to present a cumulative essence of change, and inter-linkages of economic and ecological parameters towards a sustainable policy construct contributing to sustainable tourism planning and implementation. This study presents a specific characteristics of destination of mountain tourism but also its present the overall enormity of the challenges and potential of tourism as well as to certain extent Gilgit-Baltistan as a whole. Understanding the concern of local community while devising effective policy is crucial for sustainable tourism development in the destinations. This paper establishes a sustainability narrative based on the qualitative and quantitative information primary data collected from the field. The synthesis of the information is made on selected socio, economic and ecological parameters integrated into a sustainability perspective.

It also provides change effects in economic perspective in particular from supply and demand sides, income, employment, supply chains and overall enterprise potential from tourism industry. Land use change study provides perspective on change in physical and economic values of unplanned use of land. Potential organic assessment looks into farming, culture, food, trade and tourism potential effects and untouched gains. Structured questionnaires and Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs) were used to collect the data from 428 respondents including 235 domestic tourists, 33 international tourists and 19 Daytripper and excursionists, 75 hotels and guest houses, 33 restaurants, 12 vegetables sellers, 11 transport companies and 10 retail shops.

## **Results and Discussions**

### ***Haphazard land use and rapid urbanization***

Participants of the focused group discussions and household survey reveal that local residents have started constructing big building on their uncultivated and cultivated land and these building are used for commercial purposes. Participants blamed tourism development and the inception of mega project China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for such changes but they also questioned about

the sustainability of economic gains of such change. Rapid urbanization and massive unplanned construction of commercial and residential buildings are result of increase in tourism and commercial activities. Effective and sustainable land use planning with the emphasis on legislation, policy making, judicious and healthy use of ecosystem services and local ownership synced with customary laws and traditional knowledge is very important dimension to work on. Town planning with master tourism destination plans are becoming inevitable for Gilgit-Baltistan to make tourism sustainable. Therefore, sustainable land use is now an emergent mountain concern requiring immediate policy and regulatory attention in the tourist destinations in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan.

### ***Pressure on eco-resources and infrastructure***

Participants of the focused group discussions highlighted that increase in tourist flow and investments have put tremendous pressure on social, ecological and economic pressures. Tremendous pressure is on infrastructure and local resources such as land, water, electricity, parking, and communication including internet. Ecological resources including water, biodiversity and ecosystem heaths are degrading. Social norms, value and cultural strains are visible as stated by stakeholders during group discussion. Flow of government investment on infrastructure and protection of ecological resources is less in proportion to the rising demand. Roads, Water and electricity are the very essential public goods in high demand. Waste, pollution and haphazard concrete vertical structures not only gradually depleting the landscape beauty but also leading nowhere in terms of solutions. One the FGD participants at Hunza aged 39 was of the view:

*“Due to tourism development in the region, there is significant increase in the construction of hotels and restaurants in the region which in turn build pressure on the water and increase pollution. However, currently there is no any plan intact that consider these consequences of tourism”*

Through a model or master tourism plans social, economic and ecological challenges can be addressed through a pilot project which can be scaled out after successful completion across Gilgit Baltistan. Master plan can address infrastructure needs, water, electricity, regularity conditions including housing and building requirements (building designs, codes, insulated materials and landscape and environmental needs), and effective solutions for all seasons. Master planning could also address sustainability elements besides guaranteeing enabling conditions for the big investors but with more emphasis on social and ecological sustainability? Otherwise, the more ill planned towns emerge the lesser the tourist flow likely in the future.

### ***Pressure on environment, social and food security***

Damages to environment in particular increase in waste and air pollution related health hazards are imminent. At district level except for Gilgit no permanent waste disposal solution exists except for landfilling which has its own limitations. GB local cars have grown massively and in addition to the local, tourist vehicles flow is creating huge smoke and carbon damaging pristine environment. In focus group discussions, stakeholders identified decrease in quantity and productivity of agriculture and livestock affecting food and nutrition security provisions partly attributing to land and partly to tourism. Specific attributions to the reasons they quoted are:

- Scarcity of water (35%)
- No human force available at home for cultivation (27%)
- Cultivation has no significant economic benefits (18%)
- Household members no more interested (47%)
- Limited land to grow fodder (38%)
- Not enough fodder available in the pastures (15%)

Where there are concern about agriculture, within the existing agriculture waste is substantially high and it requires to convert waste into a product use targeting tourism food supply and value chains. Local food supply chains are quite weak and it can be strengthened both benefiting individual as well as tourists. Agro tourism combining with local culture is the next potential product diversification area to work on.

## Conclusion

This study highlighted that the flow of tourist arrivals parts of Gilgit-Baltistan is exponentially increasing which in turn increases pressure the fragile mountain ecosystems such as water, land use and environmental health. However, the region can only sustain tourism benefits in longer run when it is able to introduce a comprehensive policy with sustainable strategies. Mass tourism has downsides on natural resources like water availability and its quality, land use, solid waste, sewerage etc. and by any standard not appropriate for fragile ecosystem. This study unequivocally reveals that the current tourism development in the sampled destinations seems to be unsustainable and is not harmonized with the sustainable and thus, if significant intervention is not made by the relevant stakeholders then it will not be viable in a longer time period.

Therefore, a comprehensive yet sustainable tourism policy may only assure sustainable mountain tourism and it may ensure resilience, social inclusion and sustainable use of social, ecological and economic resources. A well-designed master destination plans integrated with social, economic and ecological sensitivities along with clear enabling policy framework can ascertain direction. Strategies such as diversification of products, measures on long term socio ecological monitoring, green investments and enabling infrastructure, eco branding and positioning, development of eco-standards, capacities, and multi-stakeholder enabling will help collectively grow and sustain treasure trove.

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# Sustainable Selves, Culture and Literary Tourism: The Case of Gilgit-Baltistan

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## Abstract

The tourism industry in Pakistan often lacks sufficient information about the regions being visited, including their flora, fauna, culture, and history. This is also true for Gilgit-Baltistan, where tourists often overlook the region's rich literary heritage. This paper aims to address this gap by exploring the potential benefits of incorporating GB's literary heritage into touristification efforts. By drawing on existing discourse on tourism theory and literary tourism, the paper proposes eight tangible steps that could be taken to promote literary tourism in GB. Integrating GB's literary heritage into tourism promotion efforts would enable tourists to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the region's ancient lands while preserving its intangible heritage. This would have a positive impact on the consciousness of visiting Pakistanis from other parts of the country, leading to various socio-political advantages for GB. By highlighting the importance of recognizing and promoting GB's literary heritage in tourism, this paper contributes to enhancing the overall tourism experience and cultural preservation efforts in Pakistan.

## Introduction

Once Dr Prabhjor Prammar, a professor of English at Fraser Valley University, Canada, who is originally from Amritsar, was visiting Lahore. I picked her up from Wagha border and was driving her to old Lahore for a quick sightseeing tour on her one-day trip to Lahore, when all of a sudden, during our conversation, I hear her shriek of joy. Astonished, I realized she had expressed her joy on seeing the River Ravi flowing humbly on the right side of the Ring Road. I asked her the reason for her sudden joy on seeing the not so impressive flow of the river. She replied it was the first time she had seen the river and until then she had only read about it in literature. The fascination she had with the river is a common experience of literature lovers. In fact, literature, has also spurred a tourism of a special kind, called literary tourism.

Tourism, in the words of MacCannell, is not just a sum of merely commercial activities but is also an “ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs” (MacCannell 1). Mike Robinson argues that the tourism

industry largely understands culture(s) in two ways: either as an inconsequential, and value-neutral, backdrop' or as a product or commodity 'which can be packaged for the tourist' (Qtd in Carrigan 106). Caneen, however, states a positive aspect of tourism and says that it provides the local communities the means to invent their cultural traditions and imbue them with a meaning that enhanced their sense of identity (Caneen 108).

Yamashita (2003) similarly highlights the symbiotic relationship that exists between culture and tourism. Using Bali's example he stated that culture is an invention that uses attractive elements of the past to construct a useful tradition for the present. He proposed a "narrative of emergence" in which tourism becomes the arena in which negotiations concerning cultural identity take place. On an optimistic note he stated that the indigenous people should consciously use tourism to "define themselves in a positive light and thereby accumulate political power" (Yamashita 150).

### **Defining Literary Tourism**

Literary tourism is defined as "tourism activity motivated by interest in an author, a literary creation or setting, or the literary heritage of a destination" (Smith, Robertson and MacLeod 5). It is understood as a slightly different way by Gentile and Brown (2015), who consider it "a set of activities aiming at the popularisation of literature and other forms of art through intertwining display with discourse in order to link more intimately art with ordinary life" (Gentile and Brown 40). Literary tourism has also been called a "marriage of worlds" (Ghetau and Esanu 345) with obvious reference to literature and tourism, and calls for promotion of aspects and personalities from the literary world (Ghetau and Esanu 345). In the words of Squire, through literary tourism "heritage experiences may be represented and interpreted (Squire 106). Literary tourism is thus a specialized form of tourism which represents a mature and efficient approach toward the sustainable promotion of a destination's cultural heritage (Ghetau and Esanu 345).

Taking into consideration the examples provided by the previous paragraphs along with a more composite approach, literary tourism represents a form of travel which resides under the category of alternative types of tourism, representing an instrument designed for the conservational purposes of a specific category of cultural heritage; in the current case objectives, locations, events related to different aspects of literature. Also, adding to the creation or consolidation of an area's cultural identity and playing a decisive role in its quest for sustainable development. Alternative forms of tourism, like literary tourism, represent the prime instruments responsible with the sustainable development of an area's cultural identity and preservation of its cultural heritage.

Literary tourism's role increases exponentially when it comes to its implementation in a new area because it becomes one of the first steps taken by local authorities in the ongoing process of raising the community's awareness regarding the importance of cultural heritage and their slow economical reorientation (Ghetau and Esanu 349). Literary texts can also "help energize understandings of both its emancipatory and practical dimensions for reducing exploitation and

increasing autonomy for marginalized actors working within various postcolonial tourism contexts (Carrigan 7).

Based on these definitions of literary tourism, we may deduce that literary tourism can spark the interest of a traveler who may plan a whole trip around literary heritage of a destination or plan to go to places of some literary significance after going to a destination. In the context of Pakistan, especially, in GB, literary tourism has not been initiated. On the official website of tourism department of GB, we do not find any information pertaining to GB's literary heritage.

On my visits to various parts of Pakistan's North, I have always felt the need to also know about the visiting place *textually*, however, almost always my hopes were dashed because there wasn't any convenient method to get to know poets and writers of the region. There is a certain exoticism that is attached to reading about a place in literature. Perhaps, as John Keats said, heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter. The process maybe called literary ennoblement i.e. the process of verbally exalting a place. Readers of literature know intimately what I mean here. Literature, which is language in its exalted use, transforms a familiar reality into an unfamiliar one and its employment of figures of speech dignify a presence that is marginalized due to its continual presence, a process called automatization by a well-known literary critic (Schklovsky).

## **Methodology**

In this paper, I engage with the idea of incorporating literary tourism in the travel landscape of Pakistan, GB to be precise, and also try to assess the problems it may potentially resolve pertaining to various political problems that have been highlighted by various intellectuals of GB vis a vis the state of Pakistan. Aziz Ali Dad, for instance, writes: *"The aestheticisation of region has had an anaesthetic effect on the political question of Gilgit-Baltistan, and resulted in political alienation of its populace."* The model that I propose below has the potential to address the problem highlighted by Aziz Ali Dad. While it would enable the otherwise marginalized voice of poets and writers of the region, it will also give them a chance to interact with the educated tourists who can then magnify the demand for greater constitutional and political rights for the people of GB.

## **Results and Discussion**

Promotion of literary tourism in GB would entail the following:

1. Compilation of data of prominent poets, writers and their creative works within GB including folk-literature significant and Balti epic related aspects and areas.
2. Identification of Oral Literature and channels which still can communicate those works i.e. rhapsodes or reciters.

- a. The collective memory of history, culture and literature of Gilgit-Baltistan is in the form of oral accounts. Modern education is essentially a representative of the written word. Therefore, new generations are trained in skills and ideas that do not resonate with their social and cultural settings. With exposure to modern education, the youth of Gilgit-Baltistan employ exogenous metaphors to express their sensibilities. They lack the required cultural literacy and repertoire to imagine their self, history and culture in local metaphors. (Dad)
3. Identification of sites which may have literary significance.
  - a. Chaikhana
  - b. Homes of prominent writers
  - c. Libraries
  - d. Any writing retreats
4. Establishment of human library
5. Development of literary trail
6. Setting up of literary kiosks at various resorts stocked with creative works of GB
7. Organizing a calendar of literary activities/evening with prominent writers of the region with the information easily available to tourists
  - a. Literary Festival focused on literary accomplishments of regional writers
8. Setting up of a website on the pattern of a South African website <https://literarytourism.co.za/>.

“Hello and welcome to the KZN Literary Tourism website. Through this site, we aim to provide an invaluable resource for those interested in the relatively new field of Literary Tourism as well as provide information on the work we are currently doing from our base in Durban, South Africa.”

Home; authors; trails; Reviews; Interviews; Research; Podcasts; About Us; Contact Us

Similarly, in the context, the cultural and promotional power of weblogs and blogging can also not be overemphasized (Pudliner 46). These initiatives cannot be taken in a sustainable manner without the support and active involvement of the local literati and various other members of the civil society. The tourism department may take the lead but it will need support of the local literary organisations. The twin universities of GB, KIU and UoB, need to play a crucial role with their knowledge expertise and human resources. Once, the ideas shared above are put in place, tourist companies, which are always in need of new marketing pitch, can then hop on the wagon and may also advertise various facets of literary tourism through their websites and tourist brochures.



The society of Gilgit-Baltistan is diverse in terms of language, religion and ethnicity. Five major regional languages are spoken, Shina in many local varieties, Khowar, Balti, Burushaski and Wakhi. Besides we find also speakers of Pashtu, Hindko, Gujri, Punjabi and other languages, who have migrated from other areas of Pakistan into the area. The national language of Pakistan, Urdu, serves as the lingua franca and English plays a growing role as the language of education (Sokefeld 10). Almost all these languages have literature in them. Based in the suggestions given above, a very vibrant and multifaceted program of literary tourism may be initiated by bring various stake holders on board.

Landscape, mountains and rivers need to be given a voice. According to Anna-Maria Walter (2022) "The mobilization of the region, use of visual materials from GB for touristic advertisements or development reports, stands in stark contrast to its otherwise precarious constitutional status (230). Literature rooted in the region has the capacity to give voice to the otherwise lulled landscapes. If properly taken up by all these partakers, the project may begin to "[...]visibilize the region, its people, and [even] their political marginalization from the imagination of 'Pakistan' (Dad). The proposal also has the potential to transcend various forces of sect, state, politicians, multinationals and modern institutions who are all vying for attention by superimposing their identity onto 1700-years-old petroglyphs at archeological sites in GB (Dad). Literary tourism will also promote cultural geography and enable visitors to de-code meanings and understand how these meanings are interpreted and communicated through literature (Squire).

## **Conclusion**

While there is generally a feeling of elation surrounding the idea of tourism in Pakistan, globally, and even locally, its detrimental effects have also been highlighted. If one were to cite a few that have been highlighted in the context of Hawaii, one may identify some of the possibilities that exist in our case. Anthony Carrigan (2011) mentions grotesque commercialization, poorly paid servant class of industry workers, transformation of whole sections of the major islands into high-rise cities, contamination and depletion of water sources, intense crowding, increase in crimes against property and violent crime against tourists, and increasing dependency on multinational investments (Carrigan). Similarly, in another important article, Haunani-Kay Trask, subtitled "Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture, laments that the end result of such tourism is that when the tourists leave, they have known nothing of our people and place and thus she ends her piece by saying: If you are thinking of visiting my homeland, please do not (Trask). Julia O'Connell Davidson, for example, advocates a dialogue between tourism theory and local place narratives that does not 'overlook the realities of many people's lived experience' (Qtd in Carrigan 4).

Such an imaginary of the alternative form of tourism will also be helpful in resisting the neocolonial takeover of the tourism industry. Though, it would be too idealistic to imagine any such initiative in the wake of a state and system which has been hijacked by the capitalists, however, it will surely keep the candle of resistance alight and with the help of native intelligentsia there will remain a modicum of revolutionary hope.

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# Bridging The Digital Divide In Agritourism: The Impact Of ICTs on Promoting Sustainable Development In Gilgit- Baltistan, Pakistan

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## Abstract

The Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan's north is well known for its magnificent natural beauty, rich cultural diversity, and cutting-edge agricultural practices. The region's potential for agricultural tourism is still largely untapped because of weak marketing and infrastructure. This study examines the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote agricultural tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The study also outlines various ICT technologies and strategies that could be applied to advertise agricultural tourism and enhance tourist satisfaction. The research methodology includes a review of important literature, expert interviews, analysis of case studies of successful ICT-enabled agritourism operations, and data collection from local and international tourists exploring the area. The results show that through strengthening marketing campaigns, improving information access, and facilitating communication between tourists and local populations, ICT may be very beneficial in developing agricultural tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan. The findings demonstrate that ICT has significantly contributed to promoting agritourism by enabling farmers to reach a wider audience and providing tourists with access to additional experiences and knowledge. However, there are challenges to using ICT in agritourism, including issues with infrastructure, training, and finances. Adoption of ICT, however, has several benefits for boosting agritourism and can aid in the expansion and sustainability of the agricultural sector. In its conclusion, the study offers recommendations for specific ICT programs to advance agricultural tourism in the area.

**Keywords:** Agritourism: Digital Tourism: Gilgit-Baltistan: ICT: Social Media

## Introduction

The mountainous region of Gilgit-Baltistan in northern Pakistan is recognized for its magnificent natural beauty, rich culture, and cutting-edge agricultural practices. <https://gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk/>. Agritourism in particular has a lot of promise for the region to

support sustainable development and boost the local economy. Due to a lack of awareness, infrastructure, and marketing, the area has yet to fully tap into its tourism potential despite its wealth of attractions. <https://visitgilgitbaltistan.gov.pk/>.

A growing trend in tourism is called "agritourism," which involves going to farms, ranches, and vineyards to experience agricultural activities and goods. Farmers who participate in agritourism have the chance to increase their income sources and market their produce. <https://agricoop.nic.in>. Information and computer technology (ICT) have significantly contributed to the growth of agritourism by enabling farmers to market their goods and services and informing visitors about farm activities and events (Mpiti and Harpe, 2015). To maximize the potential of ICT in promoting agricultural tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, some specific interventions will be identified and studied in this study.

In recent years, there has been a lot of research on how ICT can be used to promote agritourism. According to a study by Evans and Ilbery from 1993, ICT use was crucial to the growth of agritourism businesses in the UK because it allowed them to reach potential customers cost-effectively and efficiently. Similarly, a study by Moscardo and Woods (2004) discovered that ICT helps farmers communicate with tourists, giving them pertinent and up-to-date information about the farm experience.

ICT was used in case studies of a 2010 agritourism project in the Philippines to promote it in rural areas. A website and social media platforms were created as part of the project to advertise the participating farms and their goods. The project was successful in bringing more tourists to the farms and providing the participating farmers with additional income (Asian Development Bank, 2012). Similar to this, India's Agri-Tourism Information and Marketing System (AIMS) gave farmers the tools to market their goods and services as well as information to tourists about activities and events on farms. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (2017), the platform also allowed visitors to make online reservations for farm stays and buy agricultural goods.

## **Methodology**

To study the role of ICT in promoting agritourism, a mixed-methods approach was combined with a review of relevant literature, interviews with experts and farm owners, and a survey of tourists visiting the region. The literature review helps identify key themes and issues related to agricultural tourism and ICT. The interviews with experts and farm owners provide insights into the current state of tourism in the region and the potential for ICT interventions. The survey of tourists helps identify their preferences, needs, and expectations regarding agricultural tourism in Gilgit Baltistan.

An analytical approach was used to investigate the contextual and natural settings that influence the possible development of agritourism in rural areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. To provide rich data about the subject under study, a qualitative approach was used. (Mouton, 1996; Saunders, Lewis

& Thornhill, 2009). The study method employed was multi-case studies. Using a non-probability sample, six agritourism-related farms in the surrounding rural communities of GB were chosen from the cases using judgmental sampling methods. 25 participants, including farm proprietors, farm workers, farm visitors, and Department of Agriculture officials, served as the study's units of analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the data. The research used content analysis as a suitable method for analyzing the information obtained from online interviews. To find out what participants do, think, and feel about particular factors affecting agritourism growth, interview questions were created to generate reliable responses from the sample. To conduct a thorough study, interviews were recorded and written down. The data was analyzed using content analysis methods. (Myers, 1997). To code, the data words relevant to the theme were identified. The data was then grouped based on the common themes to convey the commonality of the text.

## **Results And Discussion**

The findings suggest that ICT can play a vital role in promoting agricultural tourism in GB. Tourists are interested in experiencing local agricultural practices, such as farming, animal husbandry, and food processing. However, they face several challenges in accessing information about these practices. The interviews with experts and farm owners highlight the potential of ICT tools and techniques, such as websites, mobile apps, and social media, in addressing these challenges and promoting agricultural tourism.

### ***Challenges in adopting ICT***

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in agritourism faces many difficulties, such as:

- a. **Limited ICT infrastructure:** Agritourism often occurs in rural or remote locations where there may be limited access to steady internet connectivity and other ICT infrastructure. Because they frequently require reliable internet access for online bookings, payments, and communication, this may make it more difficult for ICT tools and technologies to be adopted.
- b. **Farmers' lack of digital skills and literacy:** A lack of farmer's literacy, especially digital skills, is an important hindrance to adopting ICT for promoting agritourism.
- c. **Cost and accessibility:** Using ICT solutions in the agritourism industry may come at a high upfront cost for hardware, software, and training. These expenses might be difficult for small scale agritourism business to cover.
- d. **Fragmented and diverse agritourism industry:** The agritourism industry is diverse and includes a wide range of activities like farm stays, farm tours, and food tastings. It includes both small family farms and large commercial operations. Because of this diversity, it can be

difficult to create standardized ICT solutions that satisfy the specific needs and demands of various agritourism businesses.

- e. **Lack of knowledge and awareness:** Many agritourism business owners might be unaware of the advantages of implementing ICT tools and technologies.
- f. **Data Privacy and Security:** When using ICT tools, agritourism operators may be concerned about the privacy and security of their data, especially when it comes to online reservations, custom data, and payment transactions.
- g. **Seasonality in Agritourism:** Agritourism is seasonal in nature, with peak seasons of activity at specific times of the year. This can make it difficult to justify the investment in ICT solutions that might only be used for a short period of time each year and require extra work and resources to manage during the off-season.
- h. **Regulation and policy issues:** Policies and regulations related to agritourism, such as those governing land use, zoning, health and safety, and food safety, may make it challenging to adopt ICT tools and technology. The farm operators may be reluctant to adopt new technologies because of compliance or regulatory costs.

## Conclusion

Agritourism is significant for the prosperity of a country for several reasons. It can be a second source of income for farmers and rural communities, which can help them diversify their income streams and lessen their reliance on traditional agriculture. By bringing in investment, generating jobs, and promoting regional companies and goods, agritourism can also help boost the local economy in rural areas. Traditional agricultural methods, as well as the customs and heritage of rural communities, can all be preserved and promoted with the help of agritourism. By bringing attention to the value of protecting natural resources and biodiversity, agritourism can also promote sustainable agriculture and environmental preservation. In general, agritourism can support sustainable development, cultural tradition preservation, and the conservation of natural resources.

## Recommendations

This study recommends the following initiatives for initiating and improving ICT in promoting and supporting agricultural tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan:

- Developing a comprehensive website that provides information about local agricultural practices, tourist attractions, accommodation options, and transportation services.
- Creating a mobile app that allows tourists to access information about agricultural practices, connect with local communities, and book tours and activities.
- Utilizing social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to promote agricultural tourism.

ICT has the potential to significantly advance the agritourism industry by increasing operational effectiveness, enhancing customer experiences, and broadening market penetration. It will take work from many stakeholders, including agritourism operators, ICT providers, policymakers, and

industry associations, to address these issues and create an environment that is conducive to the adoption of ICT in the agritourism sector. It might involve activities like fostering the development of digital skills and offering training and support in this area, promoting scalable and cost-effective ICT solutions, and promoting the advantages of ICT adoption.

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