

An Empirical Analysis of Socio-Cultural Impacts of tourism on Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

With the growth of tourism, impacts of tourism development have become more and more visible in society. During recent decades there have been calls from researchers to examine the whole array of impacts and not stop at economic impacts of tourism development. However over the same period of time, relatively little attention has been given to noneconomic effects of the industry including socio-cultural impacts. However, it is now recognized that tourism and its related activities need to be properly planned and managed if they are to make an ongoing contribution to sustainable economic prosperity. The primary objective of the study is to highlight the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the basis of findings and researches available in the form of socio- cultural impacts of tourism at a destination. The article discusses how tourism development can be helpful for social and cultural development at a destination and how negative impacts can be minimized at the destination. For achieving the research objectives data were collected through a questionnaire distributed among local people chosen through non probability technique of sampling. Descriptive statistic analysis was used to measure the socio-cultural impacts of tourism with the help of data measured on a Likert scale. The findings of the analysis proved that tourism development had significant positive and negative socio-cultural on Kashmir.

Keywords: Tourism, socio-culture, impacts, sustainable.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has globally emerged as one of the key dynamic drivers and fundamental instrument among service sectors for the socio-economic development. The rapid expansion of tourism industry during recent decades has positioned it as one of the top performers within world economies. Governments throughout the world increasingly look to tourism expansion in order to create jobs, foreign exchange earnings, export revenues and preservation of various natural and cultural resources. In many cases, government agencies aggressively promote tourism as a panacea for economic underdevelopment. The expansion of this development system leads to interactions between locals and tourists with huge socio-cultural implications. The socio-cultural impact of tourism development refers to changes in the quality of life of residents of tourist destination. Socio-cultural impacts of tourism result in interaction between residents and visitors and hence promote social transformation. The speed, magnitude and direction of socio-cultural impacts must be taken into account when attempting to attribute the cause of socio-cultural impacts.

The social and cultural impacts of tourism are the way in which tourism is contributing to change in value system, individual behavior, family relationship, life style, safety level, moral conduct, religion, language, interpersonal relationship at the destination. These socio-cultural impacts affect on the local people of host communities having direct and indirect association with tourists. The local people tend to observe and learn the life styles of the visitors from affluent societies and try to emulate their way of life. However expansion of tourism, also causes cultural commercialization, increase in crime rate, drug abuse, prostitution etc. In order to plan for more socially, culturally, and environmentally sustainable future development, local-level analyses are needed on the ways in which communities are affected by tourism industry. Notably, local communities increasingly play a relevant role in the assessment of tourism impacts, as much anthropological and sociological work on tourism impacts has revealed. Additionally, it may be argued that sociological and anthropological research within host communities may reveal which community-level variables might complicate the successful creation and management of tourism industries by national governments.

While the results of these data are unique to Kashmir, Jammu & Kashmir, it is believed the results presented here hold relevance to other state-led tourism development initiatives at national level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social impacts of tourism have been described as the changes in the quality of life of residents within tourism destinations that are a consequence of any kind of tourism in that destination [Wall and Mathieson, (2006), p.227]. Tourism has often been associated with the contact between cultures, behaviors, values and traditions. Tourism is considered a framework where hosts and tourists can learn better about from each other, through direct interaction. Also, tourism requires host communities to be more responsive and educated to provide quality services to tourists. In addition, an interaction between locals and tourists generates the emergence of new ideas, values and motivations for social and economic progress (Brown 1998: 237-238; Bersales 2005:239; Nyaupane et al. 2006: 1373). Tourism can revitalize a community's cultural life, as art and traditions are an attraction for foreign visitors (Mason 2003:43). The attitude of local people on tourism crosses four stages viz Euphoria, Apathy, Discomfort and Antagonism as they were defined by Doxley (quoted by Fennel 2007:47-48).

We cannot talk about the socio-cultural impact of tourism without talking about globalization and its effects on local cultures. One result of globalization is consumerism. It is defined as an increase in demand for consumption in an increasing variety of products and services. Consumerism affects tourists, who are a part of the consumer-oriented society, characterized by: modern urban lifestyle, expectations for high-level services and an attitude characterized by the expression: "everything is for sale"(Reisinger 2009:11-13). There are authors (Reisinger) who argue that consumerism destroys culture and generates environmental and social problems: traffic congestion and queues at natural and man-made attractions. An example of this is Venice, which is overwhelmed by tourists, generating an increasing number of environmental and social issues. "Venice is full of tourists."

The invasion of tourists in San Marco Basilica caused damages to the frescoes due to the condensation created by the breath of the visitors. Also, the stone floor was constantly eroded by the river of travelers. Unfortunately, this type of problem is often accepted by tourists as an important part of the personal experience. "(Richards quoted by Reisinger, 2009:20). Studies have shown that the social impacts of tourism are numerous and diverse, and to some extent contradictory, depending upon factors such as the type and number of tourists, and the level of tourism and economic development. Additionally, it is argued that the impacts of tourism are not equal for those residing in the destination. While tourism frequently benefits those directly involved in it, it may cause hardship for the rest of the local community (Cohen, 1984). Globalization is accused of destroying the socio-cultural identity of the local communities and indigenous values, traditions and lifestyle (Macleod 2004:15; Reisinger 2009:21). Cities visited by tourists in developing countries are not authentic, but rather disinfected and McDonaldized (Paramo La Haine 2008).

Diversity gives way to efficiency and local culture to global culture. A small village, which is facing many economic problems, can succeed a change of 180 degrees, by capitalizing on several features: beautiful scenery, tranquility and lack of congestion. Unfortunately, for many communities the change equals with the loss of local traditions and values by replacing them with a false rural culture (Hester, 1990:5). In rural areas, land and coastal areas are purchased by developers / investors, who transform farming and fishing communities in tourist resorts, replacing farms and forests with apartments or shopping centers. Modern hotels, highways and recreation centers have no local charm. All the resources that have attracted tourists in the beginning - the beauty of the landscape, peace and tranquility – are continuously eroded by tourism development and the rapidly increasing pace of life. For this reason, the meaning of local culture might dilute and dissolve (Macleod, 2004:16).

Today, tourists experience fishing on "authentic boats", while fishermen work in supermarkets. This situation causes a fracture between the locals and the socio-cultural environment. Also contributing to the fracture are the growing number of tourists and the new technology and modern life. Also, the need for "authentic" has tarnished to some extent the traditions of certain civilizations. The Keechak dance, interpreted by the Hindu community in Bali on some special occasions, was shortened, and performed out of the religious context, daily for the foreign tourist groups. In theory, tourists may feel cheated by such non - authentic events, but that would require a good knowledge of the cultural traditions of the area visited by foreign tourists (Mason, 2003:46). In the cities and urban concentrations, the response to consumerism is the emergence of a growing number of stores or shopping centers in central areas.

The transformation of spaces into tourist attractions was called by Paramo - La Haine Disney-fication. "Through this process, a general feeling of security was created with an excessive control combined with increased attention. Security cameras are installed, alarm systems are engaged and security services are hired, to ensure that tourists are not bothered

by the negative realities such as poverty, begging, social issues or ecosystem degradation. The less beautiful face of the world has no place in this controlled environment (Paramo, Le Haine, 2008). Liu (2003:468) states that tourism is not the main culprit for the loss of cultural identity and traditions: "The globalization and homogenization of culture, often referred to as Cocacolaisation, Hollywoodisation or McDonaldisation may not be caused only by tourism. The media, by means of modern communication and information technology often play a more important role in shaping the values, opinions, lifestyle and fashion of the world."

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The study on socio-cultural impacts of tourism has been attention of wide interest and various interpretations. The body of literature examining socio-cultural impacts of tourism is growing with numerous recent studies investigating host community perceptions of the impacts of tourism and preferences for future tourism development. The rationale for research of this type is based on concerns for the sustainability of tourism activity that is not supported by local residents. The study attempted to synthesize the results of scientific analysis of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism at two prominent tourist destinations in Kashmir viz Srinagar and Gulmarg. The outcome of research work undertaken will be beneficial to the stakeholders of tourism industry as well as the policy makers in planning effectively the road map for tourism development and promotion. This study shall also play a pivotal role in opening up new windows for the researchers to undertake research on various aspects of impacts of tourism on host population in context with the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of study are

1. To highlight various socio-cultural impacts of tourism on Kashmir.
2. To assess perception of residents regarding various socio-cultural impacts of tourism on their community.
3. To suggest policy recommendations for sustainable tourism development in the region.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between residents of Srinagar and Gulmarg regarding perception of increase in crime rate due to tourism.
2. There is no significant difference between residents of Srinagar and Gulmarg regarding perception of increase in prostitution due to tourism.
3. There is no significant difference between residents of Srinagar and Gulmarg regarding perception of increase in Drug Abuse due to tourism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research was to identify local residents' perceptions of tourism's socio-cultural impacts on Kashmir. For the assessment of these impacts, residents were selected at two tourist destinations of Kashmir region viz Srinagar and Gulmarg through a non-probability sampling technique. A questionnaire was designed exploring respondents perceptions of the wide range of socio-cultural impacts. For measuring the attitudes of the residents towards tourism development, indicated descriptive statistic analysis was used. Except for the section on socio demographics, all questions were based on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = totally agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = totally disagree). A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to local residents in Srinagar (76) and Gulmarg (74). However, based on previous ethnographic research in the region, questionnaires were distributed within various neighborhoods and communities in order to obtain a wide diversity in socio demographic profiles. A special attempt was made to obtain the views of residents with different backgrounds regarding age, length of residence, occupation, place of birth, education, tourism related income, and contact with tourists. Also, additional effort was made to distribute questionnaires at different times of the day and within different strata of the community in order to ensure that questionnaires were distributed to different portions of the population. These methodological steps were employed to both recognise the bias that exists in non-probability sampling within questionnaire distribution and to correct for this to an acceptable degree.

Perception of Residents towards Socio-cultural Impact of Tourism on their community

For the assessment of socio-cultural impact of tourism on the residents, responses at two main tourist destinations viz Srinagar and Gulmarg in Kashmir division of Jammu & Kashmir are collected. Socio Cultural Impact of tourism was calculated through mean values of their responses as given in the table 01 and 02

Table No. 1- Perception of Residents towards Positive Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism

Indicators	Srinagar		Gulmarg		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tourism has Improved quality of life	3.89	1.3	3.69	1.45	3.79	1.38
Tourism has Facilitated meeting visitors (educational experience)	3.74	1.9	3.29	1.24	3.52	1.57
Tourism has brought Positive changes in values and customs	2.57	1.8	2.43	1.9	2.50	1.85
Tourism has Promoted cultural exchange	3.63	1.05	3.69	1.16	3.66	1.11
Improved understanding of different communities	3.69	1.20	3.87	0.50	3.78	0.85
Tourism Preserved cultural identity of host population	2.22	1.32	2.45	1.15	2.34	1.24
Increases demand for historical and cultural exhibits	3.43	1.44	3.39	1.29	3.41	1.37
Greater tolerance of social differences	3.74	1.22	3.97	0.85	3.86	1.04
Satisfaction of psychological needs	3.11	1.56	3.32	1.67	3.22	1.62

Table No. 2: Perception of Residents towards Negative Socio-Cultural Impacts Of Tourism

Indicators	Srinagar		Gulmarg		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Crime rate has increased due to tourism	3.83	0.97	4.22	0.97	4.03	0.97
Prostitution has increased due to tourism	3.86	0.61	4.16	0.87	4.01	0.74
Drugs Abuse has increased due to tourism	3.59	0.86	3.18	0.96	3.39	0.91
Vandalism has increased due to tourism	2.80	1.12	2.76	1.16	2.78	1.14
Smuggling has increased due to tourism	2.84	1.29	2.66	1.13	2.75	1.21
Negative Language and cultural change	3.34	1.89	3.55	1.12	3.45	1.51
Unwanted lifestyle changes	3.88	1.15	4.21	1.10	4.05	1.13
Commercialization of traditions and customs	4.26	1.01	4.02	1.18	4.14	1.10
Displacement of residents for tourism development	4.55	1.19	4.21	1.33	4.38	1.26

FINDINGS

The results in Table No. 1 and 2 show that the standard values for all studied variables are between 0.5 and 2 which do not prove particularly high differences in perceptions of respondents. The mean values (Table 01) indicate a relatively strong and favorable perception of residents towards most of the positive socio-cultural impacts of tourism like improvement in quality of life (3.79), educational values (3.52), cultural exchange (3.66), understanding of different communities (3.78), Demand for historical and cultural exhibitions (3.41), Greater Tolerance of social differences (3.86) and satisfaction of psychological needs (3.22). However, respondents did not agree that tourism has brought positive changes in values and customs (2.50) and preservation of cultural identity (2.34).

The questions in Table no 2 regarding negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism were designed to determine whether specific social problems, as revealed in previous studies, have increased in the destination. These aimed to identify the perceptions of local people towards crime, prostitution, drugs, smuggling and vandalism. However, interestingly enough, the results indicated that increase of crime rate (4.03), prostitution (4.01) and drug abuse (3.39) were perceived as a consequence of tourism and increase in smuggling (2.75) and vandalism (2.78) was not perceived as a consequence of tourism in the area. That is, most of the respondents declared that the increase of vandalism and smuggling have not increased because of tourism in their locality. The findings that impact on language and culture (3.45), unwanted lifestyles (4.05), commercialization of traditions and customs (4.14) and displacement of local residents for tourism development (4.38) appear to be least favorable aspects of tourism impact.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 2 indicates that respondents' perceptions regarding socio-cultural impacts of tourism like crime rate, Prostitution, and drug abuse are different with respect to residents of Srinagar and Gulmarg as given below:

Increase in Crime Rate : Srinagar 3.83 < Gulmarg 4.22
Increase in Prostitution : Srinagar 3.86 > Gulmarg 4.16
Increase in Drug Abuse : Srinagar 3.59 > Gulmarg 3.18

Further results in Table 3 indicate that perceptions regarding variables like Crime Rate ($Z = -2.930$, $\text{sig} = .003$), Prostitution ($Z = -2.104$, $\text{sig} = .035$), and Drug Abuse ($Z = -2.046$, $\text{sig} = .041$) are significantly different for residents of Srinagar and Gulmarg. Therefore, there is a significant difference between perceptions of residents in Srinagar and Gulmarg regarding these three socio-cultural impacts of tourism, and hence all the three null hypotheses proposed earlier are rejected as per the results shown by Mann-Whitney U Statistics given in the table below.

Table No. 03 - Results of Man Whitney U Test: Socio-cultural Impacts Of Tourism						
	Tourist Location	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	
Crime Rate	Srinagar	76	65.92	5010.00	M-W-U	2084.0
	Gulmarg	74	85.34	6315.00	Z	-2.930
	Total	150			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003
Prostitution	Srinagar	76	82.04	6235.00	M-W-U	2315.0
	Gulmarg	74	68.78	5090.00	Z	-2.104
	Total	150			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.035
Drug Abuse	Public	76	82.20	6247.50	M-W-U	2302.5
	Private	74	68.61	5077.50	Z	-2.046
	Total	150			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.041

CONCLUSIONS

Using a recently developed tourism impact scale, this study has made an attempt to identify the resident's perceptions of the impacts of tourism on Kashmir. The results of this study suggest high levels of support and strong perceptions of socio-cultural benefits from tourism. However, it is important not to disregard specific issues that may have detrimental socio-cultural impacts. The most important benefits that residents felt had flowed from tourism were improvement in quality of life, educational values, understanding of different communities, demand for historical and cultural exhibitions, and greater tolerance of social differences and satisfaction of psychological needs. However, residents also perceived some negative socio-cultural impacts from tourism. Most prominent were the increase of crime rate, prostitution, drug abuse, unwanted lifestyles, commercialization of traditions and customs and displacement of local residents for tourism development. The study has also found that there is significant difference between perceptions of residents in Srinagar and Gulmarg regarding some socio-cultural impacts of tourism. Public participation and consultation must be encouraged by tourism developers and planners to minimize socio-cultural impacts and ensure the sustainability of tourism development in the destination. The results of this study also call for standard policy frameworks must be established at the development stages by government to preserve and protect social and cultural values of local people.

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