



ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN THE TOURIST AREA OF GULMARG INDIA

Irfan Nabi

Department of Environment Biology, A.P.S University Rewa India

Address: khwaja giligit batpora sopore district baramulla Kashmir (J&K) India

*Corresponding author email: drirfannabi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the attitudes of residents in Gulmarg meadow, towards tourism development. This paper believes that research conducted on hosts' perceptions of the impacts of tourism is predominantly descriptive and lacking in a consistent approach to measurement. The primary aim is therefore to establish a benchmark study for Gulmarg, enabling future longitudinal and comparative analyses of host attitudes. A monitoring programme was conducted in the area during the year 2013 and 2014. In this approach, respondents were asked to indicate their behaviour and attitude towards the impact of tourism development and it was observed that people's perception towards most of the economic impacts is positive.

KEYWORDS: Economic impacts, tourist activities, monitoring programme, host perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism alters the economic structure of a destination. The economic impact of tourism is the subject of analysis at two ways. One is generally positive about industry prospects while other is negative. Tourists contribute to sales, profits, jobs, tax revenues, and income in an area. The most direct effects occur within the primary tourism sectors -lodging, restaurants, transportation, amusements, and retail trade. Through secondary effects, tourism affects most sectors of the economy. An economic impact analysis of tourism activity normally focuses on changes in sales, income, and employment in a region resulting from tourism activity (Stynes, 1997). The economic impacts are particularly obvious in less developed countries. However, there seems to be a trade-off situation, where the positive impacts outweigh the negative ones (Mason, 2002). In general, the study of economic impacts has tended to have a more positive point of view, focusing on the number of benefits that tourism can bring although these benefits have been accompanied by a number costs (Mathieson and Wall, 1992). Keeping in view the above facts the present study was conducted in Gulmarg meadow.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The resident's attitude survey has been the common method that is used for the assessment of economic impacts of tourism. During the study a monitoring

programme was conducted in the area during the year 2013 and 2014. In this approach, respondents were asked to indicate their behaviour and attitude towards the impact of tourism development. The total no of 600 questionnaires were distributed among the Residents of three villages of Gulmarg. The questionnaires were framed from the questionnaires earlier framed by various researchers for measuring impacts of tourism. These include Lank Ford and Haward, (1994); Milman and Pizam, (1988); Choi and Sirakaya, (2005); Andriottis, (2005); Haralambopoulos and Pizam, (1996). There are seven response alternatives for every attitude statements. These are strongly disagree, moderately disagree, disagree, no response or undecided, agree, moderately agree and strongly agree. The resulting ranging from - 3 to + 3: (- 3, - 2, - 1, 0, + 1, + 2, + 3) to find individual overall attitude of the residents. Respondents were asked to provide answers on each variable which was measured by a seven point Likert Scale ranging from -3 strongly disagree to +3 strongly agree with '0' (zero) no response or undecided. Likert, R C. (1932), Lankford, S. L., & Howard, D. R. (1994).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

For the assessment of economic impact of tourism on the residents, responses were collected at selected destinations in Gulmarg. Impact of tourism is calculated through mean given in the Table 1.

TABLE 1: Economic Impact of Tourism on Residents of Ferozpora, Qazipora and Waripora

S.No	Indicators	Ferozpora		Qazipora		Waripora	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1	Tourism leads to more investment and spending	0.7	2.058	0.86	2.089	0.98	2.107
2	Standard of living is increasing considerably by tourism	1.12	1.88	1.26	1.988	1.18	1.841
3	Tourism creates job opportunities	1.48	1.734	1.34	1.903	1.48	1.741
4	Increase in the income of locals	-0.86	2.124	-0.36	1.97	-0.98	2.078
5	Increase in the prices of goods	-0.33	1.948	-0.79	2.129	-0.84	2.082
	Total	0.422	1.9488	0.462	2.0158	0.364	1.9698

Residents of Ferozpora felt that the tourist cause the higher effect on increase in the investment and spending (M = + 0.70, SD = 2.058), increasing opportunity for jobs (M = + 1.48, SD = 1.734), increase in the standard of living (M = + 1.12, SD = 1.88). On the other side residents of Ferozpora have observed and noted negligible economic impact on the Increase in the prices of goods (M = - 0.33, SD = 1.948) and on the increase in the income of locals (M = - 0.86, SD = 2.124).

Residents of Qazipora felt that the tourist cause the higher effect on increase in the investment and spending (M = + 0.86, SD = 2.089), increasing opportunity for jobs (M = + 1.34, SD = 1.903), increase in the standard of living (M = + 1.26, SD = 1.988). On the other side residents of

Qazipora have observed and noted negligible economic impact on the Increase in the prices of goods (M = - 0.79, SD = 2.129) and on the increase in the income of locals (M = - 0.36, SD = 1.97).

Residents of Waripora felt that the tourist cause the higher effect on increase in the investment and spending (M = + 0.98, SD = 2.107), increasing opportunity for jobs (M = + 1.48, SD = 1.741), increase in the standard of living (M = + 1.18, SD = 1.841). On the other side residents of Waripora have observed and noted negligible economic impact on the Increase in the prices of goods (M = - 0.84, SD = 2.082) and on the increase in the income of locals (M = - 0.98, SD = 2.078).

TABLE 2: Percentage of Respondents

S.No	Average Score	Percentage of Respondents		
		Ferozpora	Qazipora	Waripora
1	+2.00 to +2.99	22	28.27	24.5
2	+1.00 to +1.99	15.9	14.55	19.2
3	+0.00 to +0.99	15.5	15.64	14.5
4	+0.00	2.2	1.5	2.5
5	-0.00 to -0.99	17.1	14.67	12.5
6	-1.00 to -1.99	13.0	12.5	13.4
7	-2.00 to -2.99	14.3	12.865	13.4

Table 2 indicates that very good percentage of respondents have strongly agreed towards the positive economic impacts of tourism in all the three villages. Among them Qazipora 28.27% has the heighest percentage of respondents who strongly agreed followed by waripora

24.5% and Ferozpora 22%. Some people have also strongly disagreed for positive economic impacts which are higher in Ferozpora 14.3% followed by Waripora 13.4% and Qazipora 12.86%.

TABLE 3: Residents Attitude Index Mean

Destination	Index Mean	SD
Ferozpora	+0.422	1.9488
Qazipora	+ 0.462	2.0158
Waripora	+ 0.364	1.9698

+ Indicates positive impact
 - Indicates negative impact
 Higher the values larger the effects

Table 3: highlights that residents attitude index mean for Ferozpora (+ 0.422), Qazipora (+ 0.462), Waripora (+ 0.364). Most of the People from all three villages are engaged in tourism related business. Most of the people from these villages work as low wage workers in Gulmarg meadow.

This was in accordance with other studies (Haralambopoulos and Pizan 1996, Oberholzer *et al.*, 2009; Eraqi 2007, Binns and Nel, 2002) according to them

tourism has great potential for job creation and local development of the area. According to Mohammadi (2010) tourism has not yet created enough economic benefits for local people. But the local resident in this study have agreed that tourism has provided job opportunities and can help to trigger the economy in the region. After discussing the reasons for negative economic impacts of tourism on locals, the residents laid stress on the fact that in Gulmarg the most beneficiaries are those

who are not the residents of this very area. The big hotels and shops are owned by rich, non locals who earn the hefty sums from tourism but local people are only low wage earners, who only do the small labour work as waiters, pony drivers, sledge drivers, small tea stallers etc. Glasson et al 2000 have found that dominance of industry by non local investors can reduce control over local resources and thus the loss of local autonomy is certainly the most negative long term effect of tourism.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed overall positive economic impacts but during the informal conversation with Pony drivers it was revealed that functioning of Gandola rope way has severely produced negative impact on their income. They are no longer in a position to even support their family, they just hardly now earn from hand to mouth. Previously they used to take up tourists from Gulmarg to Khilanmarg and from this drive they used to get good amount from their guests (Rs 600 -1500 per visit). Now tourists prefer to go there by Gandola. J &K Government should give compensation to these pony drivers by either through money so that they can start other source of income or by providing other tourism jobs. By this horse riding can also be avoided in the meadow which in turn will also lead to the prevention of soil erosion and trampling of vegetation.

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