

Socio-Economic Impacts of Tourism on Local Community in Afghanistan (Case Study in Aryoub Zazi District)

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ABSTRACT: Tourism is recognized as the best source of income generation and employment. Afghanistan has excellent tourist destinations that have the potential to generate income. By this reason this study attempted to investigate the economic, cultural, social, and environmental impacts of sustainable tourism industry. Tourism is based on the natural and cultural resources in the study area which make that place unique, with people as the main drivers. Nowadays, tourism industry known a crucial source for income generation and economic growth. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to research and achieve the aim of this study. Primary data were collected through questionnaire and observation, and secondary data were achieved from published resources. Collected data were calculated using SPSS version 24 of descriptive statistics. The results illustrate that tourism industry is great source for economic growth, but environment was affected by tourism activity in the study area. In addition, tourism activities lead to strengthening of social relations.

KEYWORDS: Cultural impacts, Environment impact, Local community, socio-economic impacts, Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is recognized worldwide as a key force for sustainable socio-economic development (Manzoor et al., 2019; Andaish and Assadi, 2025). In many countries, since the last two decades, tourism is the main source of income and employment (Hasan & Siddique, 2016; Manzoor et al., 2019). Studies conducted in developing countries have shown that there is positive relationship between economic growth and tourism development (Meyer & Meyer, 2015). The tourism sector has a large correlation and a variety of potential in supporting productive economic sectors (Pratama & Mandaasari, 2020).

Local communities are important for sustainable development of tourism (Lundberg, 2017). Tourism has a large economic, environmental, and social impacts on local communities in the whole world (Streimikiene et al., 2021). Moreover, Tourism affects the economy, culture and environment of communities in developing countries (Gjerald, 2005; Dadman, 2021). Although tourism is a prime source for economic growth and create more facilities for locals, but it produces many negative externalities such as crowding, increasing crime rate, environmental and natural resources issue and most prominently disturbed the community's norms and culture (Jehan et al., 2023; Andaish and Assadi, 2025).

Afghanistan has a specific name by having natural buttes and assets (Stanikzai et al., 2023). Tourism in this country is an industry that provides employment to many people with its development (Hasan & Siddique, 2016). Afghanistan is a country full of natural beauty with mountains, cultural heritage, ethnic minorities, traditional games and festivals, religious festivals, important historical places, ancient monuments, etc., all of which are very important in attracting tourists (Hashimy and Halim, 2023). Tourism play vital role for Local communities with restaurants, hotels, resorts, transportation, entertainment, local food, local crafts, local entertainment, local ethnic culture, Creating job opportunities in exhibitions and other tourism services (Mirehei et al., 2024; Dadman, 2021). "Afghanistan's income from international tourism has been relatively low in recent years: \$86 million in 2013, \$151 million in 2014, \$84 million in 2015, \$49 million in 2016, and \$2 million in 2017" (Mirehei et al., 2024).

Paktia is a province in Afghanistan that is famous for its natural forests and tourist attractions. However, this natural butte is face various problems and challenges (Hashimy and Halim, 2023). Increasing illegal logging, lack of infrastructure, low level of public awareness among the local people, and environmental pollution problems are some of the challenges that are considered serious threats to the sightseen. In addition, the lack of adequate tourism facilities and policies has an impact on the number of tourists visiting the region (Mirehei et al., 2024). The aim of this article is to assess the economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts of tourism on local communities in the Aryoub Zazai district. The question for this study is to evaluate that is tourism activities important



for socio-economic and culture of Aryoub Zazai local communities or not. For achieving research object and responding research question we have used primary and secondary data in this article. Primary data were collected Through questionnaire and observations, and secondary data were collected from published resources.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

1.1. Data collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire to gain the information related to the economic and social impact of tourism for the selection of respondent random sampling manner was used the respondent selection from the study area in Aryoub Zazi district from the sample of 100 people who were the resident of this district, live near to tourism place, local business man or worker of tourism field from the different area of Aryoub Zazi district.

1.2. Data analysis

Prior to analysis, data was organized by coding, classifying and checked for errors. Descriptive statistics computed using SPSS 24 version.

RESULT

A total of 100 respondents answered the questionnaire. A questionnaire using closed responses question on a five-point Likert scale (1= very much to 5 = very less) was designed and developed. All respondents were knowledgeable about tourism, including tourism industry workers, local business people in the tourist area, and local residents in the tourist area. Respondents were asked about the economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism.

The results of the study in table 1 indicate that local community have varied perception about the impact of tourism. During the field study, respondents showed that they have got benefits from tourism industry (Mean = 2.33 and Median = 2), they expressed optimism about creating tourism broader economic opportunities (Mean = 1.97 and Median = 2) or benefiting local businesses (Mean = 2.26 and Median = 2) and increase income (Mean = 3.07 and Median = 3). In terms of employment, tourism was seen to have a positive impact on reducing unemployment (Mean = 2.95 and Median = 3) and increasing job opportunities (Mean = 2.53 and Median = 2). A notable concern was the increasing in prices, as tourism was reported to have raised the cost of products, services (Mean = 2.67 and Median = 3), and land/housing (Mean = 3.08 and Median = 3), reflecting perception of inflationary effects. Most notably, the community widely acknowledged the role of tourism in enhancing infrastructure. Improvements were seen in transportation and communication systems (Mean = 2.92 and Median = 3), access to communication technologies (Mean = 2.95 and Median = 3), and essential services such as water and electricity (Mean = 2.91 and Median = 3). These findings suggest that while tourism's economic benefits to individuals may be debated, its contribution to infrastructure development is more clearly recognized.

Table 1: The economic impact of tourism from the perspective of respondents

No	Variable	Mean	Median	Mode
1	Benefit from tourism activities	2.33	2.00	1
2	Tourism will create more economic opportunities	1.97	2.00	2
3	Local businesses benefit from tourism	2.26	2.00	2
4	Income increased due to tourism	3.07	3.00	3
5	The development of tourism led to an increase in job opportunities	2.53	2.00	2
6	Social unemployment problems been reduced due to tourism	2.95	3.00	3
7	The development of tourism affected the prices of products and services	2.67	3.00	2
8	Land and housing prices increased due to tourism	3.08	3.00	3



9	Infrastructure	The local transportation and communication system improved due to tourism	2.92	3.00	2
1		The development of tourism affected communication and technology services	2.95	3.00	3
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1		Development of tourism impact on access to water, electricity, and other essential services	2.91	3.00	2
1					

During the field study, respondents were asked about the environmental impacts of tourism. The results of the study, which can be seen in Table 2 below, show that the environment is affected by tourism activities (Mean = 3.02 and Median = 3), impact on environment and water pollution (Mean = 2.97 and Median = 3). Moreover, tourism activities have significantly increased the amount of waste in this area (Mean = 2.41 and Median = 2). On the other hand, local institutions are taking moderate measures (Mean = 3.24 and Median = 3).

Table 2: The environment impact of tourism from the perspective of respondents

No	Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	
1	Environment	The development of tourism has created environmental problems	3.02	3.00	3
2		Increase in density and environmental damage in the area	2.41	2.00	2
3		Land and water pollution increased due to tourism	2.97	3.00	2
4		Any steps been taken by local authorities to protect the environment	3.24	3.00	3

During this field study, respondents were asked about the social impacts of tourism, the results of which are shown in Table 3. The table illustrates the social and cultural consequences of tourism development. In the education and public service domain, respondents noted modest improvements, particularly in public health and education services (Mean = 2.90 and Median = 3), while gains in education and local training (Mean = 2.22 and Median = 2). In terms of cultural impacts, a clear majority agreed that tourism has not damaged local customs and traditions (Mean = 3.48 and Median = 4), Also its role in preserving cultural heritage or enhancing local participation was viewed positively (Means = 2.19–2.50). While security is an important issue, fortunately tourism is not the cause of the increase in crime in the study area (Mean = 3.52 and Median = 4). Regarding community involvement, the majority of respondents feel included in tourism decisions (Mean = 1.81 and Median = 2), about improved social relations (Mean = 2.27 and Median = 2) and training opportunities at the local level (Mean = 3.45 and Median = 4). Finally, the impact on daily life and migration (Mean = 3.35 and Median = 3) and some life changes (Mean = 2.34 and Median = 2).

Table 3: The social impact of tourism from the perspective of respondents

No	Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	
1	Education and skill	Tourism development impact on the level of local education and training	2.22	2.00	2
2		Public services such as health and education improved	2.9	3.00	3
3		Local arts and crafts flourished due to tourism	2.48	2.00	2
4		Development of tourism has preserved cultural heritage	2.46	2.00	2
5	Security Cultural	Local customs and traditions have been damaged	3.48	4.00	4
6		Local people play an important role in the development of tourism	2.19	2.00	2
7		Local people cultural and social exchanges with foreign tourists	2.5	2.00	2
8		Increase in crime in the region	3.52	4.00	5



9	Local Community	Do you participate in tourism activities?	2.32	2.00	2
10		Role of local people in tourism decisions	1.81	2.00	2
11		The development of tourism has improved social relations in society	2.27	2.00	2
12		Received any training programs for tourism at the local level	3.45	4.00	4
13		Life of local people changed	2.34	2.00	2
14	Live and migration	Domestic migration increased	3.35	3.00	3

DISCUSSION

While examining the socio-economic impacts and perception of tourism which is the great source of income generation in Paktia Province, Afghanistan, this study found that certain tourism industry is a great source of income, economic opportunity, job creation and local business can take more benefit from this industry in the study area (Stanikzai et al., 2023; Andaish and Assadi, 2025; Dadman, 2021). Through creating of job opportunity tourism industry can reduce unemployment and increase income (Mirehei et al., 2024). The protection and sustainable use of natural sightseen is essential for the economic development of the region. Nevertheless, there was concern about goods, services, land and housing price increasing (Bibi and Bibi, 2020; Iswanto et al., 2025). Especially, in the season of tourists coming increase price of primary goods and services in the study area. Moreover, through tourism industry infrastructure, transportation and communication systems were promoted in ZaZi Aryoub Districts, Paktia, Afghanistan (Iswanto et al., 2025).

The study emphasized the social and cultural impacts of tourism promotion (Dadman, 2021). Respondents perception shows that education, public services, local training and public health were improved by tourism activity in the study area. In terms of cultural impacts of tourism, majority respondents were agreed that tourism activities have not changed them local customs and traditions. The people of study area are really respectful for them culture by this reason they did not change the culture. Local communities also thought that the tourism industry played an important role in preserving cultural heritage and increasing local participation in the maintenance of tourist sites. The preservation of heritage makes Afghanistan's unique and also has the potential to contribute to the country's social and economic development (Stanikzai et al., 2023; Mirehei et al., 2024; Hashimy and Halim, 2023). Tourist should be guided in a way to protect the natural environment, preserve heritage places, to respect the local norms and culture and they should not involve in any unethical activities (Jehan et al., 2023). Tourists come from different place and they have done different activities there, by this reason sometimes we are witnesses of criminal issues.

On the other hand, security is an important issue, great point is that tourism is not the main cause of increasing the crimes rate in the study area. Moreover, respondent's perceptions show that community involvement in tourism decisions are really important. It is impossible to take any decision without taking local people in consideration (Jehan et al., 2023). The study finding reveal that tourism has positive impact on improving of social relations in society. Local community have faced the tourists and made social relationship. The study result shows that development of tourism industry has significantly improved social relationship in the study area. Despite, tourism industry effect daily life style and migration. Moreover, the result of study reveals that environment was significantly affected by tourism activities through waste in this area (Bibi and Bibi, 2020). Also water pollution was occurring and local institutions were taking moderate measures to avoid these dangers in ZaZi Aryoub Districts, Paktia, Afghanistan.

CONCLUSION

The study, revealed that tourism activities had economic, social and environment effects on local community in Aryoub Zazi district, Paktia, Afghanistan. Study indicated that sustainable tourism industry has potential of opportunity for local-economic growth in the study area. Despite, there was concern about increasing prices of goods, services, land and housing. Also, finding highlighted that tourism industry has not changed them local customs and traditions. They thought that the tourism industry played an important role in preserving cultural heritage and increasing local participation in the maintenance of tourist sites. Based on the results of this study



tourism industry effect daily life style and migration. Moreover, the result of study reveal that environment was significantly affected by tourism activates through waste in Aryoub Zazai district, Paktia, Afghanistan.

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