



POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM: A CASE OF AMRITSAR CITY

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Abstract: *The aim of the paper is to study the perception of Amritsar's population regarding the positive and the negative impacts of tourism and to study how the impacts of tourism affect their life. It is descriptive study and triangulation method was used for collecting the data. The perception of the residents regarding tourism development is divided into positive perception and negative perception. The positive perception includes elevation in the standard of living of the local residents, creation of jobs for youth and women. It has been helpful in the restoration and preserving the heritage of the city. The negative perception of the residents include: uneven development, increase in the prices of the good and commodities, traffic chaos, commodification of culture and environmental issues. The residents of the city believe that tourism has diluted the religious beliefs of the youth. But still the residents favour the positive changes brought with the growth in tourism.*

Keywords: *impacts, negative, positive, residents, tourism*

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of travelling can be traced back to the time when the primitive man set out, earlier the people used to travel for purposes like trade, pilgrimage or in search of some literature or texts. In fact, business was the major reason which motivated people to travel. Later when the trade routes were set open for people, travelling became much easier. During the middle ages religion became the main motivation for people to travel. People started travelling to various shrines all over the world. With time the purpose of travelling changed from trade and business to pleasure and now the tourism has become a global phenomenon. Tourism has grown from the privilege of few to mass movement in order to explore new places, cultures, people etc. Tourism is a temporary movement of people from one place to another place for some recreational activity or leisure purpose. As per United Nations World Tourist Organization (UNWTO), tourism comprise the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. According to Jafari (c.f Modi: 2001) "Tourism is the study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs, and the impact that both he and the industry have on the host's socio-cultural, economic and physical environment." According to Cohen (1984), "tourism involves voluntary, nonrecurring, novelty seeking, temporary travelling or sojourning."

Sociology of tourism for a longer period remained isolated from the main stream sociology. It is probably because the sociologists had prioritized their research in specific fields only but now it has become an important field in the

sociological studies. In the sociology of tourism, guest-host relation occupies the central position and is inevitable because tourism does not exist in vacuum it involves the interaction between the residents and the tourists. Many studies have been conducted in the research field to study how the interaction between the two affects the tourism in any region. But the present study deals with the residents' opinion about the impacts of tourism in their city. Residents are the primary stakeholders in the tourism development of any region. Unlike other stakeholders who get directly benefited from the tourism, they are ones who have no profit involved and hence are the direct source of information regarding the tourism development. They are the keen observers and provide a bigger picture of the affects of tourism development. Hence their perception is central in the studies of tourism development. It is necessary to evaluate their perception regarding the positive and the negative impacts of tourism. If the interaction between the two is cordial and friendly it will be helpful in the growth of tourism and if the relation is not cordial it can turn hosts hostile towards tourists which can hamper the growth of tourism. Further the arrival and the departure of the guests from the host's region leave positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts are the growth in the economy and improvement in the standards of livings of the local businessmen and the negative impacts include dilution in the culture and traditions of the hosts.

1.1 PREVIOUS LITERATURE

Lepp 2007 in his study on the 'Residents' Attitude towards Tourism in Uganda' states that the residents of Uganda believe that the tourism has positive impacts and it brings the good fortune for the village, income and employment for the residents and in fact the participation of community members in tourism programmes helps in community development.

Saygian et al. (2015) in their study on 'Residents Attitude and Perception towards Tourism Development in Safranbolu' states that the perception of residents regarding tourism development is divided into positive and negative. The positive perceptions includes the generation of employment, growth of economy, increase in the production of traditional goods and the improvement in the local culture whereas the negative perception includes the unorganized urban planning, pollution, inequality of income and the traffic congestion.

Simao and Mossa (2013) in their study on 'Residents Perception towards Tourism Development: The Case of Sal Island' shows that the residents of Sal Island have well perceived the positive and the negative impacts of tourism. The positive impacts include the economic growth and the participation of women in tourism activities and the negative perception include excessive dependence on tourism, and the absence of locals' participation in the decision making. Residents believe for the effective tourism development residents participation is must.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE: The present study is descriptive in nature and primary and secondary sources were used to collect the data. The area of the study is Amritsar city of Punjab. Simple random technique was

used to collect the sample of 120 respondents and the first hand information was collected from them with the help of interview schedules and observation method and the data was then processed manually.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The present study will serve the purpose of evaluating the perception of residents regarding the tourism and their perception can prove beneficial in planning the tourism development in Amritsar.

II. The Case of the City:

Punjab is blessed with variety of natural resources and is known by the name i.e. the bread basket of India. But from the very beginning, the state government has adopted a very straggler attitude in the field of tourism development but now it has started investing more in this industry. Amritsar is one of the famous cities of Punjab and it is one of the major tourist attractions in Punjab State. Amritsar, an important city of Punjab, is today a major commercial, cultural and transportation centre and is also the centre of Sikh religion. The city of Amritsar having population 1,132,383 persons in 2011, covering 12 wards (Draft Master Plan, Amritsar 2010-31) is divided into many katras, mohallas, bazaars and galis. Amritsar is the home of the world famous Golden Temple founded by Guru Ramdas. Apart from Golden Temple it is famous for Jallianwala Bagh and Wagah Border and this attracts the maximum number of tourists (Kichloo, 2019). In November, 2017, The Golden Temple was listed under the most visited place of the world by the World Book of Records. Punjab tourism is further promoting the tourism by developing maximum number of tourist destinations in Amritsar. The main commercial activities of Amritsar include Handicrafts, farm produce, service trades and tourism. Now since the government is putting efforts to develop new tourist spots, Amritsar has become a hot spot of tourists. New attractions in Amritsar are Sada Pind, War Memorial and Gobindgarh fort. Amritsar today receives a huge number of tourists on the daily basis. The residents of Amritsar who were interviewed for the study purpose were asked about the impacts of tourism development that Amritsar has received over a period of time. Since no such study has been conducted in Amritsar hence an attempt has been made to provide an insight of the perception of the local residents of Amritsar city regarding the positive and the negative impacts of tourism on the city and the residents of the city.

III. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Whenever tourism hits a region, it does leave its impact on that particular region. The impacts of tourism can be both positive and negative, whether the impact is positive or negative it depends on the observer. If the person is getting benefited because of the tourism he/she will be talking about the positive impacts of tourism, on the other hand, if the person is not getting any benefit then he/she will talk about the negative impacts of tourism. Mason (2003) tourism has positive economic and social impacts which include growth in the economy of the host region and creation of jobs and revival of traditional art and craft and boost to the local artists. It also has socio-economic and environmental impacts which include rise in the prices of goods and services and lands, loss of cultural identity through demonstration effect, increase in crime rates and environmental impacts which include rise in pollution and



garbage in the city. It has been figured out in the previous studies that negative impacts of tourism supersede the positive impacts of tourism. In the present study, respondents were asked about the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the city.

Table 1 Positive Impacts

Positive Impacts	Frequency	Percentage
More leisure alternatives	82	31.91
City Planning	59	22.96
Publicity of traditional cuisine	58	22.57
Generates employment	48	18.68
Quality of public services have improved	10	3.90
Total	257*	100

*Multiple Responses

A glance at the Table1 shows that majority of the respondents, i.e. 31.91 per cent, have said that one of the positive impacts of tourism is that more leisure alternatives have become available for the residents of Amritsar. The government of Punjab has opened many new tourist spots for tourists so that they can stay a little longer and more revenue will be generated this way. Residents have positive attitude towards the new sites, they said that they can take their children to these new sites for recreation during the weekends and also some of these sites depicts the culture of Punjab which is very helpful in teaching the children about the traditions of Punjab. Moreover family members get the opportunity to spend some quality time together. More than one-fifth of the respondents said that the in order to promote tourism, government has developed the infrastructure in Amritsar, parking facilities have been made, flyovers have been made, BRTS buses etc have come up in Amritsar and also the city is much cleaner than before. No doubt the government has done all this to promote tourism but these constructions have helped in the availability of better quality of services for the residents of Amritsar. Residents are happy with the developments made by the government. An almost similar percentage of residents said that the cuisine of Punjab has gained publicity all over the world because of the growth of tourism in Amritsar. Hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and businessmen hire good number of employees and provide them jobs; perhaps the tourism in Amritsar has generated employment for many people. Around 18 per cent of the respondents said that tourism has helped in the generation of employment in the city which is good for the unemployed youth. Few respondents i.e. 3.90 per cent said that with the growth of tourism the quality of services by government have improved, better health facilities, drainage system, more banks and ATMs, better education system and better infrastructure. All this has made the life of local residents much better than before. The growth of tourism has been helpful for the betterment of city in many terms.

Table 2 Negative Impacts

Negative Impacts	Frequency	Percentage
Traffic	112	35.78
Environmental Issues	74	23.64
Promotion of anti-social activities	63	20.13
Loss of local language	44	14.06
Commodification of culture	20	6.39
Total	313*	100.00

*Multiple Responses

Data in the Table 2 shows that more than one-third of the respondents revealed that the major negative impact of tourism in the city is traffic and rush. Though the parking areas have been constructed in the city but still the problem of traffic is there. Tourists have created rush in the city, mostly around the Golden Temple area. During the weekends or during some festival the area is completely packed with people, one hardly gets to find the parking in that area. More than one fifth of the respondents said that because of the growth in tourism the environment of the city has been negatively affected. There is pollution both air and noise everywhere because of the increase in vehicular traffic, garbage lying near the Bus Stand, Railway Station and the surrounding areas which directly indirectly effects the environment of Amritsar. Also, around the Golden Temple the front area is clean but the back side is full of garbage. The sweepers collect the garbage from the front i.e. the heritage lane and throw that in the back which has created trouble for the residents of that area. One-fifth of the respondents said that tourism has led to the growth in the antisocial activities in the city like theft, snatching and increase in the consumption of drugs. Also, 15 per cent of the respondents said that the tourism has led to the demonstration effect which has led to the loss of local language; youth today try to imitate the tourists. They feel shame in speaking Punjabi and proud in speaking English and Hindi and hence the local language of Punjab is losing its essence. Around 6 per cent of the respondents said that commodification of culture is one of the negative effects of tourism in the city. Culture refers to shared ideas and beliefs which are learned and transmitted to generations. Commodification of culture refers that the culture is used as a source of entertainment and is being displayed to earn money. In the present global consumer society, culture is being sold in the tourism market to earn profit. The traditional culture of the Punjab has been put on sale to earn revenue, for example the women statues in the dancing position on the heritage lane. The traditional food has been modified and put on sale for the consumers. In sum, tourism has brought some negative things with itself.

III.I Rise in the Prices of Goods

Mason (2003:35) has said that tourism often leads to inflation which includes the rise in the prices of food, property, land and houses. It has been viewed that when the demand of certain goods increases, the prices of the goods automatically gets increased. Businessmen know that the tourist is at leisure and has the higher purchasing power



and hence will buy the commodity even at the higher prices. In the present study, the respondents were asked whether the growth in tourism has affected the prices of goods and commodities in Amritsar, majority of the respondents i.e., 85 per cent said that prices of the commodities have increased especially in the areas surrounding the tourist sites. Shopkeepers take the advantage of tourist site and charge more. In this connection, Mohammadi et al (2010) in their study on 'Local People Perception towards Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts of Tourism in Kermanshah (Iran)' have observed that the prices of the goods have increased because of the tourism in Kermanshah. There were few respondents; nearly 15 per cent who said that there is no affect of tourism on the prices of the commodities, prices do have risen but that because of the central government policies.

IV. Conclusion

It can be concluded by saying that tourism has both positive and negative impacts. In Amritsar the positive impacts were more leisure alternatives have been opened for the residents, employment has been generated for the youth, better opportunities for the residents, city has been planned in an appropriate manner and the negative impacts include increase in the prices of goods and services, commodification of culture i.e. the selling of culture for profit and the loss of traditional ways etc. But it has been seen in the present study that the positive impacts are more than the negative impacts and people are satisfied with the positive impacts that tourism has created. It can be concluded that nothing comes for free.

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