

Revisiting the Discourse on Poverty Alleviation Through Tourism: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract *Poverty alleviation is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It has become one of the major concerns for most of the developing countries including India. Tourism is considered as one of the most effective and viable tool for poverty alleviation. Therefore, it becomes critical to understand the tourism-poverty link, if tourism is to be used as a mechanism for reducing poverty. This research is intended to identify various factors of poverty alleviation through tourism; and to study the perception of inhabitants of Leh district of Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir regarding poverty alleviation through tourism and finally to suggest the strategies for pro-poor tourism development in the region. Exploratory factor analysis was done to identify various factors and confirmatory factor analysis was performed to cross validate it. Furthermore, one sample t-test was executed to study the perception of inhabitants on the identified factors. The findings of the study reveal that the tourism plays a significant role in reducing poverty and will help the strategy makers to come up with effective strategies that will promote Pro-poor tourism in study area and other similar regions.*

Keywords: *Poverty Alleviation, Tourism, Community Development, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh*

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is one of the global challenges and indicates a condition in which a person fails to maintain a living standard adequate for a comfortable lifestyle. Mere growth of economy cannot bring social justice and balanced development unless it is coupled with poverty alleviation and employment generating opportunities for deprived and marginalized sections of the society. It has become one amongst the foremost issues for many of the developing countries including India and to eradicate it is one of the greatest global challenges. In many countries, tourism is being perceived as an important contributor to economic development and a means for poverty alleviation. It is one of the most effective and viable tool for poverty alleviation, sustainable development, leading employment sector, a key driver of world trade and a primary source of foreign exchange earning in many developing and least developed countries (LDCS). UNWTO is committed to harnessing tourism's potentials to create wealth and distributing its benefits to the most vulnerable members of society.

The Indian Tourism Sector is one of the Largest Service Industry in the country in terms of its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Foreign Earnings, as well as for providing employment to millions. India offers the most diverse global basket of products to the tourism sector. The country's rich history, cultural heritage, diversity of religion, and natural beauty fascinate tourists from across the globe. As a result, the tourism sector has witnessed significant growth in recent years. As per Ministry of Tourism, government of India, annual report 2016-17, the year 2016 witnessed a growth of 10.7 % in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India. FTAs during 2016 were 88.9 lakh (provisional) as compared to the FTAs of 80.3 lakh during 2015. The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism in rupee terms during 2016 were Rs.1,55,650 crore with a growth rate of 15.1% (Ministry of tourism Government of India Annual report 2015-16).

In Jammu and Kashmir tourism plays a key role in the economic development of the State. It has been a mean

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of sustenance to a vast majority of population since many decades. The State has always stayed in limelight at the national and international level due to its diverse cultural & natural heritage along with well-known tourism products corresponding to that of adventure tourism, pilgrimage tourism, heritage tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, MICE (Meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions), etc. These products are distributed all over the three geographic regions of the state, namely: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Ladakh is located between the Karakoram Range in the North and the Himalayas in the South. The tourism sector in Ladakh has largely developed on a 'reactive' basis. Ladakh is the only considerable territory in this land of Buddha, where still the Buddhists dwell in predominantly. Its Buddhists culture, its Lamas and Gompas (monks and the monasteries), have made it favorable with tourists from tourism industry is gaining momentum in this region due to its distinct landscape and unique cultural heritage. Moreover it is a cultural gold mine and rich in various forms of dances. Traditionally 360 variants of dances existed in early times but now a day's only few of them are preserved and are in vogue. Therefore massive influx of tourists has resulted in major changes in the economic and environmental aspects of the region. In most cases, the local community has had to react consistently to accommodate a steadily inflow of tourists. In addition, income distribution, resource utilization and other tangible benefits to the local community are increasingly becoming a matter of concern.

As poverty has been a serious issue in the development process across the world for quite a long period of time and alleviation of poverty has been one of the major challenges faced by Jammu and Kashmir State too. As per the BPL survey (2008) conducted by Directorate of Economics and Statistics, government of Jammu and Kashmir 21.63 percent population of the state falls under below poverty line and in Leh district (129347) 22.07 percent population is poor. (Directorate of Economics and Statistics Planning and Development Department J&K Government Below Poverty Line (BPL) Survey-2008 J&K (Latest data available).

Furthermore, livelihood opportunities for people in mountain areas like Ladakh are generally limited. Tourism, if developed in the right manner, can generate business and employment opportunities for local communities and simultaneously preserve local, natural and cultural heritage. Indeed, tourism can sustain livelihoods if appropriate opportunities are provided to the local communities. But the lack of a pro-poor approach to tourism can increase hardships, especially for the marginalized sections of society. Therefore massive influx of tourists has resulted in major changes in the economic and environmental aspects of the region. In most cases, the local community has had to react consistently to accommodate a steadily increasing inflow of tourists. In addition, income distribution, resource

utilisation and other tangible benefits to the local community are increasingly becoming a matter of concern.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DISCOURSE DEVELOPMENT

Tourism has an advantage over other economic sectors in realizing the goals of poverty reduction for several reasons. Due to the multi-sectoral nature of tourism, there is a higher potential for linkages of tourism enterprises with other local enterprises within destination areas. There has been increasing attention in developing tourism as a means to alleviating poverty. "If tourism is managed with a strong focus on poverty alleviation, it can directly benefit the poorer groups through employment of local people in tourism enterprises, goods and services provided to tourists, or the running of small and community based enterprises, having positive impacts on reducing poverty levels (UNWTO). Tourism brings about jobs, backward linkages with agriculture and other sectors and provides opportunities, especially for young people and women (De Kadt, 1979). There is also a high potential for countries with few other competitive exports to develop tourism products based on the cultural and natural resources that are often in abundant supply in developing countries (Bennet, Roe, & Ashley, 1999). The World development agencies and United Nations agencies have also come to accept that the industry can be seen as a vehicle for alleviating poverty (Mowforth, 2008). The poor can use their natural resources and the local culture as an income-generating comparative advantage. Tourism can be more labour intensive than other industries such as manufacturing (Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007). The improved well-being of the local poor would, in turn, contribute to poverty reduction at the destination (Zhao & Ritchie 2007).

Employment opportunities for the poor are considered key to poverty reduction and an important component of PPT (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010; Snyman & Spenceley, 2012). Tourism also provides non-economic benefits such as capacity building, basic infrastructure development and services, health care and security (Mowforth & Munt, 2003; UNWTO, 2002). These benefits contribute significantly to local communities' wellbeing and also play an important role in poverty alleviation. Tourism can also bring many benefits to the livelihoods of the poor such as access to information, markets, basic infrastructure and income generation (Mitchell & Ashley, 2007). Tourism contributes to poverty alleviation because it can provide indirect benefits for the poor in terms of increased market access for rural areas through the development of basic infrastructure such as roads, clean water supply and communication networks and also helps to promote gender equity (Richardson, 2010). Tourism has become one of the largest economic sectors and

it is also a main driver of socio-economic growth through export revenue, job creation, enterprise establishment as well as infrastructure development (UNWTO, 2014). By contributing to infrastructure improvements, such as roads and transport, water supply, communication, and to improvements in education, health and security tourism contributes indirectly to local community livelihoods (Guha, 2007; Muhanna, 2007). As a result, tourism is not only a catalyst of socio-economic development through infrastructure development, export revenues, job creation and the development of enterprises, but can also be an effective tool in the fight against poverty (UNWTO, 2013).

In order to examine the contribution of tourism to poverty reduction, we need to understand tourism's capacity to create backward and forward linkages throughout the local economy, as well as the involvement of local residents in tourism value chains (Scott, 2008). According to UNWTO (2006), there are many economic activities involved in the tourism supply chain: the production and sale of handicrafts; local souvenir products or other materials; recreational activities; transport; and the construction or maintenance of tourism facilities. These enable local populations to gain economic benefits from tourism. Tourism industry can provide employment for the most vulnerable members of the labour force, such as women, unskilled workers, and poor rural citizens (Roe et al., 2004). Tourism can promote agriculture development and agriculture-tourism linkages which may enable local farmers to earn more income (Linda et al., 1995; Shah et al., 2000). Education can help the poor escape the poverty trap. Scheyvens (2011) claimed that capacity building of the poor would help alleviate poverty.

RESEARCH GAP

Tourism industry has emerged as one of the important and fastest growing service industry contributing to the economy of India and particularly to Jammu and Kashmir economy. Jammu and Kashmir is one of the important tourist destinations for tourists of all kinds. Substantial research has been conducted on tourism, poverty, and Pro-Poor tourism development throughout the world; Most of which, however, is separate in terms of aims and objectives. However several researchers have studied tourism sector in the state from different perspectives, very few have attempted to understand how it contributes to poverty alleviation, as local community are key stakeholder and play an important role in successful tourism development. Therefore it was important to analyze the perception of local community of Ladakh regarding poverty alleviation through tourism. It could help in suggesting viable strategies to use tourism as an anti-poverty approach. In order to fill this gap the present study has been undertaken to study the perception of local community of the region regarding the issue.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Taking Leh district of Ladakh region as a study area, this research investigates the interrelationships between tourism and poverty alleviation into the perception of local poor inhabitant, in doing so, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the various factors of poverty alleviation through tourism using EFA.
2. To carryout Confirmatory factor analysis on explored factors.
3. To study the perception of inhabitants regarding poverty alleviation through tourism.
4. To suggest viable strategies for pro-poor tourism development in the region.

METHODOLOGY

The target population for the study was the local poor community of leh district of ladakh. The method of choosing sample was simple random sampling method. The proposed sample size (384) for the study has been estimated on the basis of Krejcie Morgan sample size table.

DATA COLLECTION

Both Primary and Secondary sources have been used for data collection. Primary data has been collected through a self-structured questionnaire which was subjected to pretesting. For that purpose content rating validity index was used, researcher approached 20 raters/experts; and found inappropriateness in few items, which were removed. The modified pretested layout of questionnaire was administered on the respondents for pilot study. Furthermore, for final data collection, the questionnaires were administered among 385 respondents by simple random sampling method, out of which 348 (*Missing values, outliers, and unengaged responses were deleted*) were available for final analysis. Normality of data was checked by skewness & kurtosis measures. It resulted between -1.70 and +0.65 respectively. Furthermore, Secondary data was collected from various reliable sources such as, research papers published in journals, conference proceedings, edited books, doctoral thesis, reports and publications and many other sources.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability of the data was checked by way of Cronbach alpha, the value ($\alpha=0.794$) which indicates that the scale has internal consistency. Content validity was checked through content rating validity index, Construct Reliability was established through (CR), and Average Variance Explained (AVE). This study fulfill the criteria ensuring convergent validity are $CR>0.7$, $CR>AVE$ and $AVE>0.5$.

DATA-ANALYSIS

Before conducting the factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity tests are confirmed as these two tests are the prerequisites and indicate the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO value is .778, greater than the threshold of .7; and the significance value of Bartlett's test of sphericity was .000, results are exhibited in (table 1), and hence the data is considered to be appropriate for Factor Analysis.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.778
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2417.137
	Df	91
	Sig.	.000

Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA) was carried out through SPSS in order to identify the various factors that influence Poverty alleviation through tourism, result is shown in the (table 2).

Table 2: Factor Analysis

Constructs	No. of Items (14)	Item (Label) Code	Rotated Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance ex- tracted %
Poverty Alleviation Through Tourism					
(Factor 1) Employment Generation	4	Q2.1	.762	4.354	31.103
		Q2.2	.752		
		Q2.3	.820		
		Q2.4	.869		
(Factor 2) Infrastructure Development	4	Q2.5	.696	2.412	17.277
		Q2.6	.778		
		Q2.7	.883		
		Q2.8	.833		
(Factor 3) Direct Sale Of Goods And Services	3	Q2.9	.753	1.657	11.836
		Q2.10	.903		
		Q2.11	.885		
(Factor 4) Entrepreneurship	3	Q2.13	.691	1.464	10.458
		Q2.14	.879		
		Q2.15	.910		
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (Cumulative % of Variance)					70.624

Factor analysis was adopted to identify various factors of poverty alleviation through tourism. (Table 2) summaries the result of the factor analysis, using principal component analysis, 15 items were extracted by four factors. Only the factors having latent roots or eigen value greater than 1 were considered significant' all factors having eigen value less than 1 were considered insignificant and were discarded. All the four factors together accounted 70.62% of the total variance whereas factor1 (Employment generation) contributed maximum (31.103%) to the total variance.

Factor 1: Employment of the poor in tourism enterprises: The factor measure initiatives taken to promote employment in tourism to poor communities; job opportunity in areas

where traditional economic activities are losing strength, Women employment in tourism associated job. Proportion of unskilled or low-skilled youth in tourism associated job etc. Inhabitant who scores high on this factor is the "high proportion of low-skilled youth in tourism associated job" with highest loading (.748).

Factor 2: Infrastructure development stimulated by tourism benefiting the poor: This factor assess Standard of living of the poor community improved because of tourism infrastructure development, benefit of infrastructure associated with tourism development to the poor, poor communities access to public services due to tourism development in the region. Access to public services due to tourism got highest score with loading (.883).

Factor 3: Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor: This includes access to poor community to sell local handicrafts and souvenir directly to the tourists, supply chain linkages with poor communities at local level, engagement of poor in informal trading. Engagement in informal trading like street vender scores high loading (.903).

Factor 4: Establishment and running of micro, small and medium sized tourism enterprises by the poor: This factor measures the perception on availability of funding for the poor to establish small tourism businesses, level of self-employment among the poor community, opportunity for poor to establish small and micro enterprises etc. In this factor opportunity got high scores loading (.910).

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in the statistical software, Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 21.0). CFA was performed for latent construct in the model to assess and validate the measurement model. In the data set, latent constructs was 'Poverty Alleviation through Tourism'. The appropriateness of confirmatory factor analysis has been reflected through the goodness of fit indices and badness of fit indices.

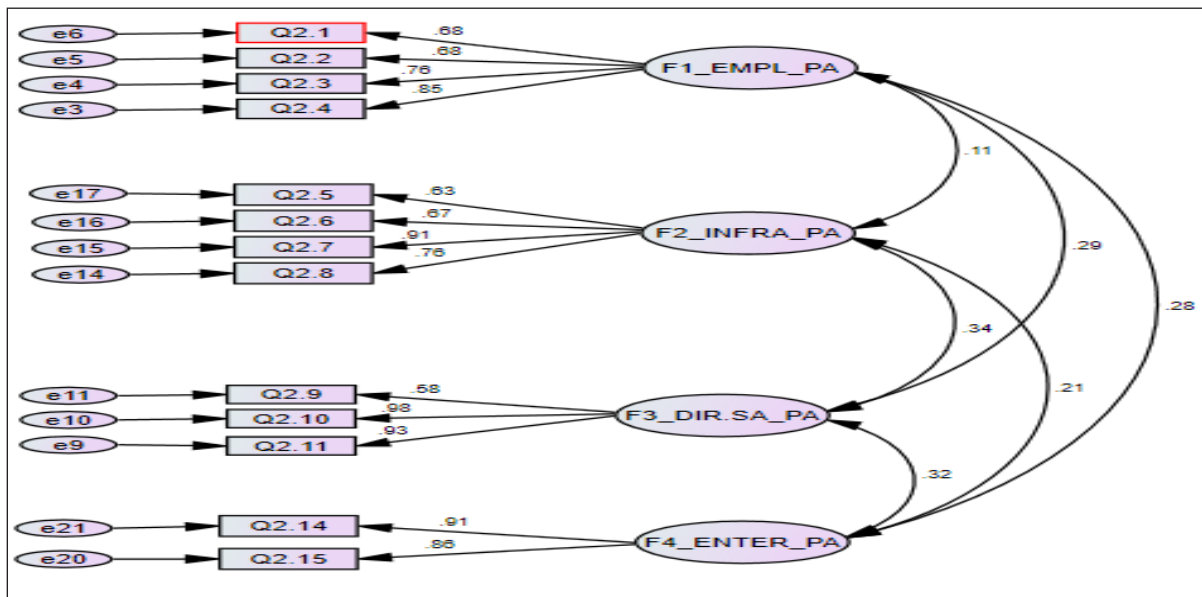


Fig. 1: Confirmatory Analysis of Poverty Alleviation through Tourism

The result of the CFA indicated that all factors are significantly related to the latent variable i.e., Poverty Alleviation through tourism. Items namely (Q2.13) was dropped due to high correlated random error term with other and modification indices for the residual matrix. The results from the CFA revealed a better model fit when these items were removed, thus revealing their significant contribution in elucidating Poverty Alleviation model.

Based on the threshold criteria for model fitness, the Poverty Alleviation through tourism model comprising of four dimensions is found to be robust fit. As revealed in the (table 4), the chi-square value was significant (1.102). Goodness-of-fit measures obtained is (CFI-0.997, GFI-0.972 & AGFI-0.957) as against the recommended value of

≥ 0.90 . On other hand badness-of-fit measure indices which include RMSEA-0.017, RMR-0.020 is desirable. All indices reached their respective common acceptance level; hence, the confirmatory factor analysis showed a robust model fit. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesized CFA model fits the sample data very well.

PERCEPTION OF INHABITANTS

One sample t-test was performed to compare sample means to a specific value i.e. 3 (neutral) on Likert scale. It was executed to evaluate the perception of inhabitants regarding poverty alleviation through tourism on four explored factors. The statistics for the test are as follows (Table 3).

Table 3: One Sample t-test

	Test Value=3					
Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
PA_F1	348	4.1861	.58071	38.101	347	.000
PA_F2	348	3.9670	.64278	28.063	347	.000
PA_F3	348	3.8985	.76459	21.921	347	.000
PA_F4	348	3.9195	.75363	22.762	347	.000
Total_PA	348	3.9928	.46027	40.236	347	.000

The analysis of the responses gathered on the four factor of poverty alleviation through tourism from inhabitant of Leh district is presented. Majority of the respondents agreed that factor-1 i.e., employment of poor in tourism enterprises contribute more in poverty alleviation (Mean=4.108), than infrastructure development stimulated by tourism benefiting the poor (Mean=3.96 followed by running of micro, small and medium sized tourism enterprises by the poor (Mean=3.89) and Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor (Mean=3.937).

The one sample t-test statistics are 38.101, 28.063, 21.921 and 22.762 respectively on the four factors of poverty alleviation through tourism viz. employment generation, infrastructure development, direct sales of goods and services by the poor to the tourist and entrepreneurship. Moreover, the total t-value is 40.236 with p-value = 0.000. It indicates that the perception of inhabitants is significant on each factor of the construct. The positive t score implies that the sample proportion is greater than hypothesized mean.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The factor employment of the poor in tourism enterprises revealed to be the most contributing factor in alleviating the poverty. The result is also supported by some previous studies conducted by (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010; Snyman & Spenceley, 2012) which stated that employment opportunities for the poor are considered key to poverty reduction and an important component of pro-poor tourism. It is also because of linkages of tourism with other sector of economy like transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture and many others; therefore tourism has the potential to employ the large proportion of people. Therefore, the initiatives should to be taken to promote employment in poor communities; job opportunity in areas where traditional economic activities are losing strength, empowering women in tourism associated job.

Likewise the second factor i.e. infrastructure development stimulated by tourism also benefits the poor. This factor assess that the standard of living of the poor community is

improved because of tourism infrastructure development, benefit of infrastructure associated with tourism development and poor communities access to public services. While, the lack of infrastructure limits the economic activity and becomes an obstacle in the emergence of new market, therefore it plays a vital role in the development and poverty alleviation. Brown & Hall (1997) opines tourism can help to change the perception of rural areas from an image of remoteness to an image of mental contemplation, aesthetic appreciation and physical. Similarly the populations at areas which are disadvantaged by insufficient infrastructure have a greater risk of poverty.

The mean of entrepreneurship is slightly lower than infrastructure development but marginally high than direct sale of goods and services, as in tourism the customer comes to the product, which provides considerable opportunities for small, medium and micro-enterprises establishment. There are numerous opportunities in the district to establish small and micro business, and those who are running these natures of business are getting benefit, therefore it positively effects poverty alleviation. Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor has slightly lower mean score as compare to other factors which indicate that there is lack of mechanism which provide platform to poor to sell their goods and services directly to the tourist without any intermediate. Therefore, concludes that it is important to focus on creation of mechanism which enables the poor to sell their goods and services directly to the tourist.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research will thus add to the knowledge and understanding of the potential contribution of tourism as tool for poverty alleviation in Ladakh region. It will also provide a deeper insight of perception of local community of Ladakh and generate greater awareness among government, academicians and the public in Jammu and Kashmir regarding the importance and potential of tourism towards poverty alleviation and how tourism can be used as anti-poverty approach.

SUGGESTIONS

As the result of this study revealed that, factor namely direct sale of goods and services score lower mean followed by entrepreneurship as compare to other factors, therefore it is suggested that business opportunities for the poor should be expanded by addressing the barriers they face, and maximizing a wide range of employment, self-employment and informal sector opportunities. Furthermore, usually the poor have no access to finance, it becomes a major problem for the poor in accessing the tourism industry through the establishment of small enterprises, and therefore the micro credit scheme ought to be easily accessible for the poor. Moreover, Poverty alleviation should be addressed in tourism agenda in order to build a more supportive policy and planning framework. The government is more focusing on the generation of foreign exchange earnings and promoting tourism rather than to address poverty. The state government should incorporate tourism into poverty reduction strategy where the poor are empowered through capacity building and opportunity creation. There is also a need to promote participation of the poor and lend them an influential voice in development and decision-making; giving the poor a legal stake in investments so that they can take part as stakeholders rather than passive recipients.

In conclusion, the success of Pro-poor tourism or poverty reduction strategy is dependent upon visionary leadership by government and critically they must recognize the potential of tourism as mean of poverty alleviation.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Efforts have been made to make the study representative of the population and results oriented by choosing an optimal sample size but still following limitations are felt:

1. Due to constraints of time and resources, the study could not be extended to the inhabitants of whole Jammu and Kashmir State.
2. Some of the dimensions of poverty alleviation factors could not be studied as the size of the questionnaire were to be kept reasonable and acceptable to the respondents.
3. This study is limited to only the inhabitants of leh district of ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir state; the travel trade companies and governmental organizations operating in the state are also key stakeholders, travel trade companies play their role in product development, marketing and operations and Governmental organizations play their role in policy planning, regulation and coordination respectively; future researcher can contribute to study these stakeholder regarding the concern.

4. The sample size in this study is small and specific to only one district. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to the wider community population.

Furthermore, Poverty is multidimensional and tourism is a system, it is impossible to use a single study conducted by a person to examine a wide range of issues, and to fully understand the complexity of poverty and tourism's contribution to poverty alleviation.

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