



Exploring the Nexus between Tourism and Agriculture in the Hindu-Kush Himalayan Region – A Case of Murree, Pakistan

Adnan Ahmad Dogar¹, Muhammad Bilal Gulfraz², Humna Ijaz³

^{1,2}Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Kohsar University Murree, Pakistan

³Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad
Campus, Pakistan

Abstract

Tourism can have both positive and negative impact on agriculture in the mountainous regions. The study was conducted in three rural mountain communities of Punjab Pakistan. Distance to main tourist site of Murree was the primary parameter while selecting the study sites with the assumption that distance from the main tourist area plays a significant role in the diversion of rural labor force into tourism industry. A qualitative research approach was adopted where in-depth interviews were conducted along with focus group discussions of the respondents. Data from thirty-two in depth interviews of residents and key stake holders along with seven focus group discussion (FGDs) were analysed through thematic analysis. The study revealed that in the initial phase agriculture was an important constituent of attracting tourists to apple orchards of the valley. Increased influx of the tourists provided better job opportunities in the tourism industry that diverted labor force from agriculture to tourism sector and conversion of agricultural lands into hotels and restaurants. Increased wildlife as an indirect impact of tourism further deteriorated the agriculture sector. Recent trends in tourism with increased focus on agri-tourism is bringing new investments in the agriculture sector where a revival of agriculture is witnessed in the area. This renewed interest in agri-tourism is not only profit driven but a sense of responsible tourism is an important constituent of this dimension of relationship between tourism and agriculture.

Keywords: Tourism and agriculture, responsible tourism, Tourism and wildlife