

Promotion Strategies to Alleviate Poverty through Tourism Development in Sindh

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Abstract

Tourism industry serves as a ray of hope for many developing countries. It is not only boosting the economy of many countries, but also contributing in changing the standards of living of poor. This research paper aimed to suggest the strategies to reduce poverty in Sindh through tourism development. This critical and sensitive issue, yet a challenging task analyze the different aspects of tourism industry and its role in boosting economy of individuals through strategic plan. Books, journals, reports and studies, treaties, researches, related to tourism, produced nationally and internationally were thoroughly studied to understand the background of tourism before developing an effective strategic plan. The study has helped to identify the important issues of poverty on the basis of which, a unique plan is developed. Suggestions are also made at the end. The rights and responsibilities of government and civil society have also been highlighted in this research paper. This research paper is fruitful for Government of Pakistan, Civil Societies and all the National and International donors, to understand the importance of tourism in Sindh. Governments other than of Pakistan can also find this research useful to invest in developing projects for upgrading the qualities of institutions and to evaluate its efficacy. Print and Electronic Media can use the study to portray positive image of Tourism in Sindh. Thus, the overall work was challenging, invigorating and creatively rejuvenating. Hope my hard working, dedication and research skills will be appreciated.

Keywords: Poverty Alleviation, Tourism Development, Sindh

People in poverty go through each day with the will to survive, but without the support and possibilities to move up the ladder of opportunity. Imagine where their efforts could take them if that ladder were in place. Our common responsibility is to help put it there. (Juan Somavia, ILO Director- General)

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Background

Tourism- the word itself creates a positive aura around us. It serves as a medium of intercultural exchange. One of the oldest conceptual definitions of tourism was given by two pioneers of tourism researchers, Hunziker and Krapf (1942), who defined tourism as

‘being a sum of relations and phenomena resulting from travel and stay of non residents, in so far a stay does not lead to permanent residence and is not connected with any permanent or temporary earning activity’.

A clearer definition can be found at the British Tourism Society, which in 1979 adopted a definition based upon the work of Burkart and Medlik (1974):

Tourism is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live or work, and their activities during the stay at these destinations.

Many a times the question arises, is tourism really matters? I guess, yes. In today’s world, life is full of tensions and worries. Tour to any good location may serve as a mediator to forget tensions. Tourism also matters as in a world of confusing connections and disconnections between human beings, our lives with others matter. Tourism is also a medium of survival for many poor people. At the same time, it provides leisure and helps to enjoy beauty of the best tourist spots in the world.

Importance of Tourism

No one can deny this fact that tourism industry is flourishing round the world and expected to prosper more in the coming years. Tourism contributes to foreign exchange earnings, revenue generation through taxes, and provides employment, both directly and indirectly. Tourism generally stimulates infrastructure development and contributes to the regional development. The table given below shows the number of tourist activities of the top ten countries in the world (as of 2007).

Total Tourist Activity		
Country	Departures (domestic and international trips) (millions)	Domestic departures as a percentage of total (%)
USA	1059	94
China	649	99
India	324	99

UK	183	73
Brazil	179	98
Germany	170	48
Indonesia	109	98
Canada	102	79
France	96	77
Japan	96	81

International tourism represents approximately 7% of worldwide export of goods and services. Tourism is the only export sector where the customer travels to the product and not the other way round.

Tourism often plays a major part in economy of poor countries. In 2001, International tourism receipts accruing to developing countries amounted to US 142,306 million. In some countries, it plays a major part in their sustainable development strategy, According to World Tourism Organization, World Development Report 2003 of World Bank, International tourism receipts in millions are as under

Status of Countries	1990	2001	Change %
Lower income countries	10,970	16,709	52.3
Lower middle income countries	22,403	71,418	218.8

Tourism is one of the few industries in which many developing countries actually have a comparative advantage over developed countries in terms of cultural heritage, natural wildlife, climate etc.

Tourism in Asia is growing faster than other regions. According to the survey of the World Bank, the arrival of the tourists in 1995 was 74 million, which rose up to 157 millions in 2006. The attractiveness for tourism of some remote rural areas- which is particularly important, since three quarters of people are living in extreme poverty in rural areas of the world. It is the fact that tourism is a labor intensive industry, which can provide jobs for men/women.

Poverty in Pakistan

Economy serves as the backbone of any country. Poverty is one of the major causes, which has also affected the economy of our country. Poverty is prevalent in Pakistan, predominantly in rural areas. The poor people of Pakistan have been suffering due to many problems. Although we have many natural resources, but the condition of poor people is not yet improved. Even basic necessities are not accessible to many individuals in Pakistan. According to the Asian Development Bank 2010

and UNESCO 2010, the development indicators of Pakistan, which can give us an idea of poverty in Pakistan, are given below:

Pakistan Development Indicator	
Non-MDG	
Population in millions	164.97 (2009)
Annual population growth rate (%)	1.7 (2007–2009)
Adult literacy rate (%)	54.2 (2006)
Percent of population in urban areas	36.2 (2008)
MDG	
Percent of population living on less than \$1.25 a day	22.6 (2005)
Percent of population living below the national poverty line	22.3 (2005)
Under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	89 (2008)
Percent of population using an improved drinking water source	90 (2006)

MDG = Millennium Development Goal.

Sources: ADB. 2010. *Basic Statistics 2010*. Manila.

UNESCO. 2010. Institute for Statistics Data Centre.

Preceding table shows that the population percentage living below the poverty line in 2005 was 22.3. However, according to the World Bank Organization latest report, the poverty rate of Pakistan in 2009 was 17%, which is a bit low, but still not satisfactory.

According to the statement of Dr Christine, writer of Working Group on Tourism and Development Basel, Switzerland,

‘Today, an estimated 1.3 billion people worldwide are living in extreme poverty. 80 percent of them live in just 13 countries (India, China, Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Brazil, Peru, the Philippines and Mexico). 10 of these countries have a significant tourism sector (over 2% of the GDP or 5% of exports), which has seen considerable growth over recent years’.

We may have heard many news regarding problems and issue of poverty, but I believe that these are not problems, but the challenges. We can

transform these challenges into opportunities, which can bring positive outcomes.

Poverty in Sindh

Briefly, the history of Sindh is rich with cultures, traditions and civilization. Sindh was one of the earliest regions in the Indian subcontinent to be influenced by Islam, that's why Sindh is popularly known as the Gateway of Islam. The Muslim Sufis has played a crucial role in converting millions of people to Islam in Sindh. Not only this, but Sindh has the world's oldest civilizations, the Indus Valley civilization. Moen-jo-Daro and Harappa and the famous archeological sights are the part of Sindh. Today, different cultural and ethnic groups reside in Sindh and contributing to the prosperity of Pakistan.

According to the official data of Government of Sindh, the total population of Sindh is around 30, 439,893. 51.25% people lives in Rural areas, while the others in Urban. Unfortunately, Poverty has hit the province of Sindh during the last few decades, particularly the rural population. A large majority of people live on the margins and below the poverty line. According to World Bank Organization, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Badin and Thatta are the districts, where most of the poor families of Sindh exist.

According to the Chief Minister of Sindh, the factors of poverty in Sindh specifically includes low agricultural productivity and low investment in a range of rural economy sectors including agriculture, livestock, fisheries, land administration, etc

According to the report of The Nation newspaper, rural Sindh has about 50 percent of the province's population and about 30 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. The slow growth in the rural sector has led to widespread rural poverty and large and widening income gap with urban areas. The large rural-urban divide is a serious concern not only for the welfare of the rural population, but for economic and social stability and social measures.

Tourism can play a significant role in this regard. People have an assumption that to eliminate poverty, one must have to get a good employment, but in a boarder context, education, skills, positive thinking and many other factors may help in providing opportunities to the people of Sindh.

Role of Tourism in Eliminating Poverty in Sindh (Strategic Plan)

Pakistan is full of beauty. The attraction ranges from the ruin of civilization such as Mohenjo-daro, Harappa and Taxila, to the Himalayan hill stations; from beautiful tombs and forts to beautiful lakes and so on.

If we specifically talk about Sindh, then it is a province, which is full of tourist spots and historical monuments. Historically and culturally, Sindh is very famous round the globe. It is a place, where the real beauty lies. The only need of time is to explore its beauty to the world.

In 2009, The World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report ranks Pakistan as one of the top 25% tourist destinations for its World Heritage sites. Ranging from mangroves in the South, to the 5,000-year-old cities of the Indus Valley Civilization — Mohenjo-daro and Harappa.

Tourism is highly dependent upon natural capital (e.g. wildlife, scenery) and culture. All these components are available in our beautiful Sindh by the grace of Allah. These are assets that some of the poor have, even if they have no financial resources. But if these places are utilized by the human resource of Sindh, they can generate a good income, which will eventually help in reducing the level of poverty.

Pro Poor Tourism

According to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, tourism should be viewed as a strategy to alleviate poverty. To reduce poverty through tourism, the researcher believes that the concept of Pro Poor Tourism should be adopted.

Frameworks for pro-poor tourism have been emerging over the past decade. In the late 1990s, a Department for Economic Development document (DFID, 1999) remarked on the dearth of attention to this topic in tourism discourse at the time of its publication. The Pro-poor Tourism Partnership (PPT) is a cooperative research initiative of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), responsible for much of the groundbreaking work in establishing research in pro-poor tourism (Ashley, Roe, & Goodwin, 2001). This concept has received increased attention of many third world countries and their success rates were high. United Nations World Tourism Organization endorsed the concept of Pro Poor Tourism, which was successfully adopted by Africa and Kenya. Pakistan has never used this strategy.

Pro Poor Tourism focuses on how tourism affects the livelihoods of the poor and how positive impacts can be enhanced through sets of interventions or strategies. Pro- poor tourism should not be regarded as a specific type of tourism, but rather as an overall approach to poverty reduction through tourism.

Types of PPT strategies

Increase economic benefits	Enhance non-financial livelihood impacts	Enhance participation and partnership
1. Boost local employment, wages 2. Boost local enterprise opportunities 3. Create collective income sources – fees, revenue shares	1. Capacity building, training 2. Mitigate environmental impacts 3. Address competing use of natural resources 4. Improve social, cultural impacts 5. Increase local access to infrastructure and services	1. Create more supportive policy/planning framework 2. Increase participation of the poor in decision-making 3. Build pro-poor partnerships with private sector 4. Increase flows of information, communication

Strategies for pro poor tourism can be divided into those that generated three different types of local benefit: economic benefits, other livelihood benefits (such as physical, social or cultural improvements), and less tangible benefits of participation and involvement.

Strategies for Sindh

In this research, the researcher has adapted the pro poor tourism strategies with some variations and believes that poverty in Sindh can be reduced, if this model is implemented by Government of Pakistan for the economic prosperity of Sindh.

Strategies focused on economic benefits of Sindh

- (i) The first way is simply through the Expansion of employment and local wages in tourism enterprises. This can occur in small as well as large enterprises and in rural and urban areas via commitments to local jobs for our Sindhi brothers and sisters. A challenge can be actually identifying the poor, but policies that encourage the employment of local people are more likely to open up opportunities for poor in Sindh. The advantage of addressing poverty through existing tourism enterprises in Sindh is that it enables the poor to benefit from the entrepreneurial skills and can potentially reach quite large numbers of people.

Many issues need to be addressed in order to secure potential advantages for the poor through tourism employment, such as

- having proper contracts or good pay scale,
- providing part time work for women of Sindh and to the men as well, who wants to do other work as well beside work in promoting tourism industry,
- enabling poor people of Sindh to attend to other commitments,
- looking at seasonality issues and the need to provide more year round opportunities in Sindh and the choice of location of new developments- making it accessible to poor communities who could supply a pool of labor

- (ii) *Expansion of business opportunities for the poor*: these may be businesses/entrepreneurs that sell inputs such as food, fuel, or building materials to tourism operations. Our Sindhi brothers and sisters can sell raw materials to them or offer products directly to tourists, such as guiding, crafts, hand made items etc. Ministry of Tourism, Government of Sindh can provide them with marketing and technical support;

Strategies to enhance other livelihood benefits of the Sindhi brothers and sisters generally focuses on

- (i) Capacity building, training and empowerment, improved social and cultural impacts of tourism, improve access to services and infrastructure: health care, security, water supplies, transport. These are must to be provided to the Sindhi brothers and sisters. If their social conditions will be improved, they can contribute a lot in the tourism industry with a trust in Government.

Strategies focused on policy, process, and participation are crucial. It focuses on:

- (i) More supportive policy and planning framework that enables participation by the poor people of Sindh.
- (ii) Increased participation by the poor of Sindh in decision-making is crucial. Involving the poor in local planning initiatives and amplifying their voice counts a lot. If we involve them in taking decisions or at least take practical steps on their valuable suggestions, a trust and bond among the government and the people can be created which will be a positive sign for government to promote tourism. At the same time, it will be a

positive sign for the poor people to create more opportunities of earning.

- (iii) A pro-poor partnership with the private sector is also important. At the minimum: increased flow of information and communication: meetings, report backs, sharing news and plans. This is not participation, but lays the basis for further dialogue to create links between the poor and private operators.

Detailed Strategies

We must first understand the nature of poverty in Rural and Urban areas of Sindh. For this, Ministry of Culture, Government of Sindh must need to involve local communities from an early stage. Later, poverty can be reduced through tourism industry

- Through the supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by Sindhi brothers and sisters. This can happen at various points in the tourism supply chain, including the choice of products featured by tour operators as well as goods and services provided to hotels, motels or huts, such as food, handicrafts, building services at the construction stage, and so on can be provided by Sindhi brothers and sisters. The advantage in the supply-chain approach is that this can make use of existing skills in poor communities of Sindh. The two main issues to address are how to encourage and help enterprises to identify new sources of supply in Sindh and working with poor communities of Sindh to enable them to provide an assurance of quality and reliability. A practical approach is to take small steps, making a few carefully selected linkages by Ministry of Culture, Government of Pakistan.
- The next way is through direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor community of Sindh. This is about the informal economy, and includes stalls of food and handicrafts, some forms of transports such as traditional camel, donkey or horse carts, rickshaws and informal accommodation such as huts. The informal sector is hugely important in many developing countries and this can also be one of the most direct ways of getting visitor spending into the hands of the poor communities of Sindh. Note that the role of the government is to have a check and balance in providing equal opportunities to all the poorer. Issues here include giving some reassurance to visitors as potential purchasers and quality control.

- There is a process of supporting the establishment of tourism enterprises by the poor. These may be micro, small and medium sized enterprises or community based enterprises. This is about helping poor communities of different districts of Sindh to develop something for the longer term, and about placing partial power and control in their hands. The challenges may include access to capital, acquisition of skills, confidence and motivation, property rights and securing access to tourism markets, for which Ministry of Culture, Government of Sindh may provide their expertise.
- Media promotion in this regard may play a vital role. Here I would like to mention that beside expensive media, we can use free internet communities and groups to approach people round the world within no time. Why not to make youth ambassadors to promote tourism! These people can grab others attention to promote tourism. Keeping that aside, Ministry of Culture, Government of Sindh must develop a dedicated website of tourist spots for the general public. Raising consumer awareness and providing visitors with better information to direct their purchasing; creative realistic and viable product development and marketing can be done easily through internet.
- Social workers can be engaged in supporting social programmes in their neighboring communities. They can generate funds and donations. These generate resources of worth that can be directed to those poor people in Sindh, especially to those who are either handicapped or very old by age.
- Poor communities can benefit from investment in infrastructure stimulated by Ministry of Culture; this is about the provision of roads, electricity supplies, clean water and sanitations, schools and hospitals, which are the missing elements in most of the rural areas of Sindh.
- Education must be provided to the children and youth of the poor communities of Sindh. It will be the first step to prepare future generation to enter tourism field either as a tourist or as a resource person in the coming years.

Such strategies can often begin by reducing negative impacts, but more can be done to then address these issues positively, in consultation with the poor. Opportunities to increase local access to services and infrastructure often arise when these are being developed for the needs of tourists, but with some consultation and adaptation could also serve the needs of residents of different districts of Sindh. Strategies for capacity-

building may be directly linked to creating boosting cash income, but may also be of more long-term indirect value, such as building management capacity of local institutions in Sindh.

Strategies to create these benefits need to tackle many obstacles to economic participation including lack of skills, low understanding of tourism, poor product quality and limited market access. It will be the duty of Ministry of culture and tourism to provide the workers with skills and knowledge, as education can help to achieve targets easily.

Significance

Poverty reduction through the above mentioned plan is significant for Government of Sindh. The strategies will expand opportunities for the poor of Sindh. Impacts would require a shift across the tourism sector in Sindh, and will vary with location and the relative size of tourism; nevertheless, if opportunities for the poor could be opened up in all the places where tourism is significant in major districts of Sindh, they would affect millions of poor people and will bring prosperity in their lives.

Pro poor tourism strategies have the potential to be implemented in a variety of types of tourism in Sindh whether they are large scale or small scale, urban or rural. Those involved in tourism – policy makers, planners, businesses, consultants- should incorporate poor concerns at all levels; those involved in the wider field of poverty reduction or rural development should explore the comparative potential of tourism where they are working.

Government, the private sector, NGO's, community organizations, and the poor of Sindh, all have critical and very different roles to play in Pro Poor Tourism. The private sector can be directly involved in pro poor partnerships with a limited role of product and marketing development to ensure commercial realism. There is much that only government can do, so a leading role is of Government of Sindh, Ministry of Culture.

Suggestions

These suggestions may help reduce poverty through tourism development beside the above mentioned detailed strategic plan:

- To reduce poverty, employment to tourist guide, musicians, cooks, boat rider, camel rider, earthenware maker etc, must be provided, besides giving jobs to the women such as handicraft maker, etc. This will surely improve the conditions of Sindhis. There must be melas, display of handicrafts, etc., so that the tourists can come and invest in it.

- Unless the youth of Sindh are skilled, it will not be possible for them to be engaged in the professions of tourism. Therefore, technical and vocational schools are the need of time. We have only PITHM (Pakistan Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management) with two or more others, which are accessible to the urban area of Sindh. More of such institutes must be established. Beside that, technical and vocational courses in tourism must be initiated free of cost for the people of rural areas of Sindh.
- The demand of 5 stars hotels increase eventually whenever the tourists come to Sindh. Keeping that idea aside, government can allot area, where the poor people can build some inexpensive temporary huts for the tourists. These temporary huts can be utilized by the tourists to spend a day or two against payment. Remember, tourist loves to explore cultures and wants to be close to the reality. They will surely love this temporary mini cultural city. This will not only boost the income of our poor brothers and sisters, but the hospitable nature will create a positive image of Sindh round the world.
- Shopping is a popular activity of tourist, especially for souvenirs to being home for friends and relatives. In Sindh, spots must be identified where the sisters, mothers and wives of our brothers of Sindh can sell their hand made products, food items, handicrafts, etc. This technique will serve as an additional income source.
- The chapter related to the best spots of tourism in Sindh must be integrated in the curriculum of Sindhi, Urdu and English, as a grass root education may contribute a lot in molding young generations. They will surely aficionado youth to promote tourism in Sindh.
- One can find great mangrove forests and the swamps of the Indus Delta in Sindh. These places can be used to provide employment to the fishers, boat riders and tourist guides.
- Textiles and carpets are still Sindh's most important industries. Most famous items from Sindh are its handicrafts, particularly textiles, pottery and lacquered woodwork. Quilts with patchwork, Ajrak and block-printed cloth are best items to buy in Sindh. Hala town is the center for Pakistan's woodworking industry. Mithi, a town in Thar is famous for handicrafts, carpets and hand made clothes. All these and other goods of all the districts of Sindh can be sold to the tourist, which can increase the economy of individuals. Ministry of Culture, Government of

Sindh must set-up either temporary, but permanent shops are more preferable for the tourists, to access hand made items.

- The cultural mela can attract thousands of domestic and international people to visit Sindh. The best time to visit Sindh is the winter months. Therefore, mela must be organized at district levels, which must be monitored by the Ministry of Culture, Government of Sindh. Famous saint's shrines must be decorated and there must be an announcement of different activities for the tourists over there. It will also create employment for many Sindhi brothers and sisters.
- There are few beautiful lakes in Sindh. Involving the people of those areas may help to reduce the poverty of the poor people by opening few resorts for the tourists; providing sailing boats to the sailors and fishermen, utilities to prepare food items by the women. There must be some competitions of sailing as well to attract tourists.
- Badin, Matli, Dadu, Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Jacobabad, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Sukkur, Tando Ghulam Ali, Kandhkot, Tando Mohammad Khan, Thatta, Khairpur and Umerkot are few of the best places in Sindh, where tourist spots can be identified. At the same time, a link between these places must be developed so that they can promote tourism internally and exchange their ideas on one platform.
- We can also promote internal tourism throughout the year in many ways. Rather our country people travel abroad during summer holidays, they can enjoy natural beauty within our country. Example: there are many different types of fruits, grown in Sindh by our hard working farmers like mangoes. Mirpur Khas is popularly called 'City of Mangoes'. We can have mango festivals each year. Same must be arranged for other districts for their famous grown items. These small steps will also create employment for the poor farmers. Women can also make savvy juices and desserts out of fruits to earn living.
- There are many beautiful deserts in Sindh as as Tharparker near Mirpur Khas. If Dubai is earning in millions due to Safari Desert, we can also arrange all the facilities for the tourist's to come to Sindh for enjoying their holidays here. Poor people can provide them services in return of money such as food, driving, mini shopping stalls set-up, folk music, etc.
- Developing partnerships between public and private sector bodies, with a common aim of poverty alleviation and adopting an integrated approach with other sectors such as air travel

industry, etc may provide mutual benefits to Government of Sindh.

- Historical sites must be renovated on regular basis.
- The work of the NGO's is clearly crucial and in many places is also increasingly influential, especially when it comes to the organisation of tourism. Active NGO's of Sindh must be involved in planning and in promoting tourism.
- International reports increasingly stress the opportunities that tourism holds for women. Involvement of our Sindhi sisters in tourism industry is must. According to the ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, reducing poverty through tourism also raises some valuable points. Apart from low literacy and poor job skills, the gender norms affect the women from working in the tourism sector. This must be overcome through education.
- Soft loans must be provided to the poor people of Sindh, especially to women, who can start small business etc.

Thus, the days are near when Sindh will surely eliminate much poverty through tourism development. The only need of time is to develop and implement such strategies, which can play its part in eliminating poverty. Hope the above mentioned strategies will serve as a tool of eliminating poverty through tourism development.

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