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Impact of Tourism in Districts of Malakand Division (Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner, Shangla, Malakand), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: Interviews Narrative of Local People

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Abstract: Tourism is a multifaceted industry that is more common in the developed world. Pakistan is located in South Asia, where the tourism industry needs a significant attention. The current study was conducted in 2021 to capture the impact of tourism in Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla districts. The study is based on a mixed study method; quantitative data were collected by questionnaire with a sample size of 400 respondents from tourist spots in Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Shangla and Buner districts of Malakand Division. For the qualitative analysis, a total of 40 interviews with local people were conducted. Convenience sampling was used. The results highlighted the positive effects of tourism in the Malakand Division, which consist of boosting businesses, promoting education, raising awareness, promoting society, creating employment opportunities and promoting a healthy image of the country. Adequate attention is still lacking to develop the tourism industry for economic benefit and to further project Pakistan's healthy image internationally.

Key Words: Tourism, Malakand Division, Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner, Shangla, Gandhara, Development

Introduction

Tourism is a multifaceted industry, visible across many countries, projects the message of peace, adds to the learning experience, results in lucrative profit, elevates the socio-economic status and sustains a healthy human life (Alam & Anwar, 2022; Rahman *et al.*, 2018; Almeida *et al.*, 2014). At the global level, world tourism contributes to major economies in Western Europe like in the U.S.A, Canada, UK, France, Switzerland and Germany. In Asia, Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Pakistan, India and Nepal are considerably relying on income generated by the tourism industry (Lozano *et al.*, 2018; WTTC, 2018; Assaf *et al.*, 2015; Rasul & Manandhar, 2009; Sinclair, 1998; Richter, 1985).

In South Asia, Pakistan stands among tourist countries. In Pakistan, the province of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is a hot spot for tourism, consisting of eye-catching tourist spots in districts Malakand, Swat, Chitral and certain spots at Buner and Shangla. Malakand Division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is known for its tourism calibre. Malakand possesses tremendous potential for tourism by having rich cultural, historical and archaeological spots for local and international tourists. The scenic spots of Malakand, Swat, Dir and Chitral are expressively known among tourists (Khan & Alam, 2021; Ali *et al.*, 2020; Baloch & Rahman, 2015; Spain, 1995).

In terms of tourism, the motherland of Pakistan is rich in mountains, rivers, grasslands, snow-covered mountains, lush green fields, beautiful lakes and serene scenic spots speaking of its glorious past and history, adding value to adventure tourism, cultural

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tourism, historical tourism, sports tourism, eco-tourism and archaeological tourism. In the previous decade, about two Million international tourists from different countries visited different tourist spots in Pakistan. However, the income generated from tourism is still very low as compared to the tourism statistics of developed countries. Moreover, the tourism industry further squeezed up in the era of militancy, and huge losses emerged in the tourism industry after 9/11 at the global level ([Ali et al., 2020](#); [Manzoor et al., 2019](#); [PTDC, 2019](#); [Arshad, 2010](#); [Rasul & Manandhar, 2009](#)).

In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, there is huge potential for tourism in Northern areas having Hunza, Gilgit, Malakand, Chitral and Swat. Kaghan, Naran, Abbottabad, and the beautiful Kalash valleys in Chitral are naturally gifted with waterfalls, freshwater springs, frozen lakes, ice-covered peaks and lush green valleys. Malakand is known for its historical past. Swat is full of historical and archaeological monuments of the Gandhara civilization. District Dir is still preserving the historical remains of its history. Buner is known for religious tourism. Chitral is standing proud for lapping the thousands of years old Kalash tribes ([Spain, 1995](#)). District Shangla is known for its beautiful rushing springs and greenish tourist spots ([Ullah et al., 2019](#); [Fakhar, 2010](#)).

The purpose of the current study aimed to record the impact of tourism in districts of Malakand Division and to highlight different problems and issues emerging as possible factors for retarding the growth potential of tourism in Malakand Division. Earlier studies reported tourism in Swat. However, no published data reported the tourism status of all districts of Malakand Division and the impact of tourists on the growth and downfall caused by passive attention to certain factors. Data were lacking on the current topic to record recommendations for promoting tourism in the light of local people in all districts of Malakand Division.

Tourism

Tourism is an emerging economic industry. It is multifaceted, mostly projects a recreational trip, expands learning-vision, provides an

opportunity for new explorations and gifts time for staying closer to nature. However expansive as well. It brings economic benefits to national and international economies. Globally, it is a sign of leisure, reflecting peace across the countries and bringing familiarity with different cultures and ways of living ([Alam & Anwar, 2022](#); [Alharthi & Hanif, 2020](#); [Huh, 2002](#)).

Tourism in International Perspective

The term "tourism" has several facets, and different authors have used different descriptions of it. Generally, "It is the sum of all movements of persons/people by leaving their original stay station and stay away at other spots for at least 24 hours up to one year for various purposes, which are usually not carried out in staying at own residence or station". International tourism is becoming increasingly essential in many countries throughout the world. According to the WTO (World Tourism Organization) & World Travel Tourism Council ([WTTC, 2017](#)), international travellers spent \$1.3 billion every day, totalling \$462 billion in 2001 ([Manzoor et al., 2019](#); [WTTC, 2018](#); [WTO, 2005](#); [WTO, 2001](#)). In 2016, travel and tourism generated 292 million jobs and US\$7.6 trillion (10.2% of global GDP). By 2027, the tourist sector might provide more than 380 million jobs, with a growth rate of 05-06% in South Asia, according to WTTC projections ([Geoffrey et al., 2021](#); [Telfer, 2019](#); [WTTC, 2018](#); [WTTC, 2017](#); [WTO, 2005](#); [WTO, 2001](#)).

In the modern era, technological innovation has brought distant destinations closer to home. People may now travel around the globe in the shortest amount of time. Tourism has emerged as a business during the previous five decades. According to 2017 and 2018 estimates ([WTTC, 2018](#), [WTTC, 2017](#)), travellers spend 1.3 dollars per day on average in a single year, which clearly indicates the people's tendency and enthusiasm for tourism. The modern globe is no longer made up of far dispersed countries. Rapid access and transportation amenities have transformed the standing of states as a result of globalization. Almost everywhere in the globe, fast and efficient transportation

options are accessible. Tourists may readily use this and travel anywhere in the world. Tourism benefits both developing and developed economies ([Alam & Anwar, 2022](#); [Alharthi & Hanif, 2020](#); [Telfer, 2019](#); [Rahman et al., 2018](#); [Almeida et al., 2014](#); [Rasul & Manandhar, 2009](#)).

Tourism in South Asia

South Asia is endowed with a diverse range of physical characteristics, including ranges of mountains, evergreen forests, rushing streams, seas, frozen lakes, beautiful grasslands, rivers, ice-capped mountain heads, deserts, rushing-gushing springs, and gorgeous coastal locations. The appropriate climate contributes to South Asia's attractiveness and adaptability for all types of tourists. Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan are included in South Asian nations. They are all developing countries. Tourism may help poor economies here ([Alharthi, & Hanif, 2020](#); [Chauhan, 2008](#); [Richter, 1985](#)).

According to statistics, in the South Asian area, the tourism sector contributed 8.9 per cent of GDP (\$281.6 billion) in 2017, with a 7.2 per cent increase expected in 2018. It will be 9.0 per cent of GDP (\$301.8 billion) with an auxiliary income of 6.2 per cent by 2028, totalling 9.4 per cent of GDP (\$579.6 billion). Tourism contributed 7.5 per cent of jobs to the employment sector in 2017 (49,931,500 jobs), with a 3.0 per cent rise expected in 2018, for a total contribution of 7.6 per cent of the job market (51,436,500 jobs). The percentage of tourism in the job market is predicted to reach 7.8 per cent by 2028. (63,006,000 jobs) ([Hwang & Lee, 2019](#); [WTTC, 2018](#)).

Third-world countries began to encourage tourism all throughout the globalization period in order to uplift their socioeconomic status, elevate their economies, promote peace, develop human resources, and decrease poverty. Tourism helps to "increase job possibilities and wages, which can have a significant economic impact on the local community. In terms of employment, the local community might increase their salaries and socio-economic status, leading to an enhanced standard of

living. Brought about significant local community development and aids in poverty reduction ([Manzoor et al., 2019](#)).

Tourism in Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In terms of tourism, Pakistan occupies a significant place in South Asia. It is rich in archaeological, cultural, and historical resources. The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is well recognized for attracting visitors. Tourists have long been drawn to the beauty of Swat, Chitral, Abbottabad, Kaghan, Naran, Malam Jabba, and Bahrain. The tourist destinations in northern Pakistan, such as Gilgit Baltistan, Malakand, the lovely Gopaiz Valley, and Hunza, are well known. Chitral continues to draw foreign sniper hunters. The Pamir, Hindukush, and Karakoram mountains are popular destinations for hikers and climbers. From mid-April to mid-October, the Kalash valleys of Chitral are crowded with tourists for Kalash special events. Sports tourism is well-known in Chitral. Polo is a decades-old, prevalent native sport in Chitral ([Spain, 1995](#)). Buddhist monuments, stupas, and monasteries abound throughout Swat. In Swat, the Gandharan culture is well-preserved. It has drawn a lot of tourists that are interested in archaeology. Swat's Malam Jabba is widely renowned for its skydivers ([Fakhar, 2010](#)). The historical structures of Malakand are well-known. The ice-covered mountain peaks and frozen lakes in Kaghan Naran are incredibly beautiful ([Ali et al., 2020](#); [Ullah et al., 2019](#); [Arshad, 2010](#)).

Pakistan's international tourist industry has seen remarkable development. 808,000 tourists have arrived from all the tourist-producing regions. This number represents an increase of 24.4% from the preceding two years. The research states that 1.75 million people visited Pakistan in 2017. The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation ([PTDC, 2019](#)) reported that 30 per cent of visitors were domestic (nationals), and over 90 per cent of visitors chose to travel by road; just 8.5 per cent and 1.8 per cent of visitors, respectively, used trains and flew. According to the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), 6.9% of Pakistan's GDP was generated by tourism in 2017, which brought in 19.4 billion US dollars. By 2030, the WTTC

projects that sum to reach \$36.1 billion. In 2016, tourism made up 6.0 per cent of the economy ([WTTC, 2018](#); [Rahman et al., 2018](#)).

Objectives

Following are the objectives of the current study.

- To record the impact of tourism in view of local people in districts of Malakand Division.
- To evaluate the impact of tourists in view of local people and to put forward recommendations for promoting tourism in districts of Malakand Division.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions of the current study.

- Is tourism affecting the tourist areas in districts of Malakand Division?
- What possible recommendations can promote further tourism in districts of the Malakand Division?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study is to record the impact of tourists/ tourism in districts of Malakand Division in the light of local people's perceptions regarding tourism. This will uncover various problems and issues brought forward by tourism besides its lucrative benefits to local people and to the tourists' spots as well. Addressing the mentioned issues/ problems will help to sustain the tourism status across the province in general and the country in particular.

Study Area

The current study is conducted in districts Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla, located in the Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Malakand Division lies in the North of KPK province. The area of Malakand Division is spread over 32007 square K.ms, with a population of 8.67 Million ([District Census Report- Malakand, 2017](#)). At present, Malakand Division consists of 09 districts (<http://cmd.kp.gov.pk/>).

Methodology

A mixed method study was used in the current study, i.e. both qualitative and quantitative study methods were applied. However, the study focused on the qualitative method ([Creswell, 2013](#)).

Thematic Analysis

Interviewees' data were collected from local people on the designed datasheet. The data were thematically analyzed. Quantitative questions were close-ended, while qualitative questions were open-ended. Qualitative data were obtained via interviews. All information was saved in Microsoft Excel sheets. [Creswell's \(2013\)](#) analysis method was followed for the qualitative analysis of interview data. Quantitative data was hand-coded and placed in Tables for data presentation purposes.

Line by Line Data Coding

For qualitative data, thematic codes were assigned to main points in interviews and recorded on designed data sheets/questionnaires.

Decoding of Data

Step-by-step analysis was made in statistical software. All codes were expanded, and data was transcribed from data sheets. A narrative form of data was produced. All codes were carefully decoded.

Report Writing

After decoding all interview data, a proper shape was assigned to the data for publishing purposes. The fine-tuned version of the study was prepared to share the findings of the current study with an audience at the national and international level, particularly with those who are interested in tourism-related studies.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethical Approval Committee of Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar.

Results

As part of the study, to record the current

status of tourism in Malakand Division, the impact of tourism/ tourists in districts of Malakand Division was explored. Local people were recruited from districts Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla. The study was conducted in 2021. For recording the status of tourism in Malakand Division, a total of 400 tourists were recruited for the study at tourists' spots (Table-01). Apart from quantitative data (N=400), qualitative data was obtained from 40 local people included in the study.

The selected (N=40) number of local people were interviewed on a separate data sheet to know the impact of tourism/ tourists in tourist spots of Malakand Division. Local people were included in the study who were available at tourist spots and agreed to participate in the study. Interviews of local people were conducted on a designed schedule in each district. Data on the impact of tourism on tourists' spots were collected and tabulated in Table-02.

Table 1. Tourists visiting Malakand Division

Which District of Malakand Division do you visit?				
S. No	Area of visit	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rounded-off percentages
i	Malakand	21	5.25	05.00 %
ii	Swat	180	45.00	45.00 %
iii	Dir (Upper/Lower)	51	12.75	13.00 %
iv	Chitral (Upper/Lower)	75	18.75	19.00 %
v	Buner	24	06.00	06.00 %
vi	Shangla	49	12.25	12.00 %
Total (N/ %)		400	100.00	100.00 %

Among 400 tourists visiting Malakand Division, the highest numbers of tourists (45.00%) were recorded in Swat. Low frequency of tourism was noted in Malakand (05.00%) and Buner (06.00%) (Table-01).

Data in Table 02 shows the number of local people (N=40) recruited in the study to record the impact of tourism/ tourists in tourist areas of the Malakand Division.

During interviews with local people (N=40), short demographic data of local people was carefully noted on the designed datasheet. Demographic information included gender, occupation, age and tourism area/ location. Local people recruited for interviews hailing from Malakand (n1=06), Swat (n2=12), Dir (n3=05), Chitral (n4=11), Buner (n5=03) and district Shangla (n5=03). Their ages and occupations were tabulated in Table 02.

Table 2. Summary of Interviews

Interview Data from locals (N=40)									
Districts									
S. No	District Name	No. of locals	Male	Age	Occupation	Female	Age	Occupation	Total N=40
01	Malakand	n1=06	02	29	Govt. Job	04	44	Business	06
				42	Business		29	NGO	
							24	Student	
02	Swat	n2=12	08	28	Govt. Job	04	26	Student	12
				39	Business		38	Private. Job	
				23	Lawyer		24	Lawyer	
				18	Student		41	Journalist	

Interview Data from locals (N=40)									
				43	Business				
				25	Private job				
				34	Journalist				
				45	NGO				
03	Dir (Upper/Lower)	n3=05	02	53	Private. Job	03	55	Housewife	
				49	Business		46	Housewife	05
							28	Student	
							29	NGO	
04	Chitral (Upper/Lower)	n4=11	05	29	Student		35	NGO	
				28	Private. Job	06	17	Student	11
				45	Private. Job		35	Housewife	
				37	Private. Job		19	Student	
				31	Govt Job		23	Business	
05	Buner	n5=03	02	39	Private. Job	01	31	Govt. Job	03
				40	Private. Job				
06	Shangla	n6=03	01	42	Business	02	36	Govt. Job	03
							24	Student	
Total			20			20			40

Interviews with local people in district Malakand were conducted. There were 02 male and 04 female interviewees. Their views were recorded regarding the impact of tourism/ tourists in district Malakand (Table-03). Local people mentioned various problems/ issues caused by tourism in

district Malakand. Those are listed below in Table 03. Change in dress code in youth was an important issue mentioned by locals of district Malakand. Overfishing and overhunting were another impact on tourism in district Malakand (as mentioned by locals during their interviews).

Table 3. Interviews Data Table from local people of Malakand

Responses from local people about the impact of tourists/tourism in Malakand				
S. No	District	No of Locals	Male	Female
1	Malakand	n1=06	02	04
<u>Sum-up Responses of locals about tourists:</u>				
Causing Pollution.				
Social grooming of locals (i.e. use of internet and cell phone is getting common among locals of the area).				
Short-term Job opportunities are created (i.e. transport, hotels, guides, shops, handicrafts-related jobs).				
Developing a healthy image of the area and country as well.				
Frequent visits causing road damage.				
Business centres of the area are flourishing (i.e. hoteling).				
Chopping forest.				
Overfishing.				
Overhunting.				
Prices hike for locals.				
Cultural & behavioural change is visible in local youth.				
Locals' rigid mindset is getting flexible by having contact with tourists.				
Cultivated land is converting into hotels, shops and business centres.				

Local people surfaced a number of issues resulting in tourism in district Swat. They

Mentioned the chopping of forests, overfishing, overhunting and behavioural

change in youth as particularly mentionable effects of tourism in district Swat. Locals were of the opinion that the same might be

checked to cease the declination of tourism in Swat (Table-04).

Table 4. Interviews Data Table from local people of Swat

Responses from local people about the impact of tourists/tourism in Swat				
S. No	District	No of Locals	Male	Female
1	Swat	n2=12	08	04
<u>Sum-up Responses of locals about tourists:</u>				
Causing Pollution.				
Short-term Job opportunities are created for locals (i.e. transport, hotels, guides, shops, handicrafts-related jobs).				
Developing a healthy image of the area and country as well.				
Frequent visits causing road damage.				
Business centres of the area are flourishing (i.e. hoteling).				
Sometimes marriages occur between tourist families and locals.				
Chopping forest.				
Overfishing.				

Interviews with local people in district Dir were conducted (n3=05). There were male and female interviewees participated in the study. Their views regarding the impact of tourism/ tourists in district Dir (Table-03) revealed a number of problems/ issues caused by tourism at district Dir, which are listed below in Table-05.

Pollution, chopping of forests, cultural

change, price hike, overfishing and damaging of roads were notable effects of tourists in district Dir. However, the creation of job opportunities, social grooming, change in rigid min-set of local people and flourishing of hoteling were the healthy effects of tourism in district Dir (as mentioned by local people in their interviews).

Table 5. Interviews Data Table from local people of Dir

Responses from local people about the impact of tourists/tourism in Dir				
S. No	District	No of Locals	Male	Female
1	Dir (U/L)	n2=05	02	03
2	<u>Sum-up Responses of locals about tourists:</u>			
Causing Pollution.				
Cultural effect (i.e. local dressing is changing).				
Social grooming of locals (i.e. use of internet and cell phone is getting common among area local people).				
Short-term Job opportunities are created for locals (i.e. transport, hotels, guides, shops, handicrafts-related jobs).				
Frequent visits causing road damage.				
Business centres of the area are flourishing (i.e. hoteling).				
Chopping forest.				
Overfishing.				
Prices hike for locals.				
Cultural & behavioural change is visible in youth.				
Local's rigid mindset is getting flexible by having contact with tourists.				
Cultivated land is converting into hotels, shops and business centres.				

During interviews with local people (n4=11) at Chitral, the local people revealed a

number of issues resulting in tourism in district Chitral. The local people of the area

mentioned damage to access roads, pollution and price hike caused by tourism in Chitral. Their interviews surfaced behavioural change in youth by observing different dressing codes as an impact of tourism in Chitral. Interviews data recorded that sometimes marriages are held between

tourists and local people who were sometimes found un-successful marriages. Likely, they were in favour of tourism. They mentioned that tourism had flourished local businesses, elevating education status and resulting in jobs trend for local people at Chitral (Table-06).

Table 6. Interviews Data Table from local people of Chitral

Responses from local people about the impact of tourists/tourism in Chitral				
S. No	District	No of Locals	Male	Female
1	Chitral (U/L)	n3=11	05	06
2	<u>Sum-up Responses of locals about tourists:</u> Causing Pollution. Cultural effect (i.e. local dressing is changing). Short-term Job opportunities for locals (i.e. transport, hotels, guides, shops, handicrafts). Developing a healthy image of the area and country as well. Frequent visits causing road damage. Business centres of the area are flourishing (i.e. hoteling). Contact between locals with tourists is developing. Sometimes marriages occur between tourist families and locals. Overhunting (i.e. Markhour) Prices hike for locals. Cultural & behavioural change is visible in youth (male/female). Cultivated land is converting into hotels, shops and business centres. Education trend is flourishing. NGO jobs are getting frequent in local subjects.			

Interviews of local people in district Buner (n5=03) surfaced pollution, price hike, and cultural change in the form of dress code in youth were the negative effects of tourism in Buner. However, their interviews

recorded that social grooming, flourishing of business and change in the rigid mindset of people were the positive effects of tourism in Buner (Table-07).

Table 7. Interviews Data Table from local people of Buner

Responses from local people about the impact of tourists/tourism in Buner				
S. No	District	No of Locals	Male	Female
1	Buner	n4=03	02	01
2	<u>Sum-up Responses of locals about tourists:</u> Causing Pollution. Social grooming of locals (i.e. use of internet and cell phone is getting common among them). Developing a healthy image of the area and country as well. Business centres of the area are flourishing (i.e. hoteling). Prices hike for locals. Cultural & behavioural change is visible in youth. Local's rigid mindset is getting flexible by having contact with tourists.			

Interviews were conducted with local people in district Shangla (n6=03) to record the impact of tourism/ tourists there.

During interviews, local people mentioned a number of issues resulting in tourism in district Shangla. They mentioned pollution,

chopping of the forest, price hike and change of dress code in youth and conversion of cultivated land into business centres were the negative aspects of tourism in district Shangla. Moreover, the creation of job opportunities, flourishing of

local businesses near tourist spots, socialgrooming and projection of the healthy image of the area were the positive impacts of tourism in Shangla district (Table-08).

Table 8. Interviews Data Table from local people of Shangla

Responses from local people about the impact of tourists/tourism in Shangla				
S. No	District	No of Locals	Male	Female
1	Shangla	n5=03	01	02
2	<u>Sum-up Responses of locals about tourists:</u> Causing Pollution. Cultural effect (i.e. local dressing is changing). Social grooming of locals (i.e. use of internet and cell phone is getting common among them). Short-term Job opportunities for locals (i.e. transport, hotels, guides, shops, handicrafts). Developing a healthy image of the area and country as well. Frequent visits causing road damage. Business centres of the area are flourishing (i.e. hoteling). Chopping forest. Prices hike for locals. Cultural & behavioural change is visible in youth. Cultivated land is converting into hotels, shops and business centres.			

Discussion

A total of 40 Interviews were recorded from local people in districts of Malakand (Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla) on the designed datasheet. Their views and perceptions were noted regarding tourists and their effect on tourists' spots. The locals' views were diverse in each district. However it was common in all districts that local people mentioned increase in pollution due to tourism (Table-03, n=06/ Table-04, n=12/ Table-05, n=05/ Table-06, n=11/ Table-07, n=03/ Table-08, n=03).

On the other side they mentioned that tourism is bringing job opportunities for them (Table-03, n=06/ Table-04, n=12/ Table-05, n=05/ Table-06, n=11/ Table-07, n=03/ Table-08, n=03). Although those jobs were sometimes seasonal and short termed, but still beneficial for them (their views). However, local people from district Buner (n=03) did not mention job opportunities created in Buner due to tourism. It may be due to the low educational background of the local people in Buner. On the other hand,

local people of each district mentioned the conversion of cultivated land into hotels, shops, markets and restaurants as a negative impact on tourism in district Buner.

Moreover, they mentioned that tourism is bringing more awareness in their areas, which was sometimes affecting the dressing code of the local people, especially in youth (local people mentioned in district Malakand (n=06/Table-03), Dir (n=05/Table-05) and in Chitral (n=11/Table-06).

While local people in Buner and Shangla just mentioned the behavioural change in youth caused by exposure to tourism, there is no mention of a change in the dressing code of youth (n=03/Table-07, n=03/Table-08). Similarly, due to tourists' movement, the use of social media and cell phones use was getting more common among the locals, as mentioned by local people in districts Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla (Table-05, 06, 07, 08).

Local people mentioned overfishing, hunting and deforestation caused by tourists, they said. Local people in Swat (n=12, Table-04) and Dir (n=05, Table-05) pointed out that

overfishing and deforestation are sometimes caused by tourists. Local people informed of overfishing in Swat may be checked. Overhunting in Chitral is a considerable aspect of tourism, which needs the attention of concerned departments (they mentioned). They especially mentioned the hunting of Markhor, which is an endangered mammal specie across Pakistan (Table-06, n=11). Deforestation may be checked in Shangla and Swat (local people mentioned in their interviews).

However, tourism was bringing educational awareness in their areas (mentioned by locals in all districts (Table-03, n=06/ Table-04, n=12/ Table-05, n=05/ Table-06, n=11/ Table-07, n=03/ Table-08, n=03). The social status of the locals was also uplifting by contact and interaction with tourists, as mentioned by local people in Malakand, Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla. In district Swat, a similar response was not recorded in interviews with local people. They mentioned tourism is helping in promoting the healthy image of the province as well as of the country (local people are mentioned in all districts).

In certain districts, like Swat (Table-04, n=12) and Chitral (Table-06, n=11), sometimes marriages were held between tourists and local people, which do not always guarantee a secure future relationship. However, these cases were very rare (mentioned by local people of Swat and Chitral).

Roads are damaged, especially access roads to tourist spots, due to abundant movement of tourist vehicles in certain districts, i.e. in Chitral towards Kalash valleys. The price hike was noted for locals near the tourists' spots (local people mentioned). This was burdening the low-paid locals of the area. The local people said high prices could be seen in Swat (Table-04, n=12), where a considerable number of tourists go, which readily leads to a price hike for locals. However, short-term job opportunities sometimes compensate a certain number of local people, but not all the local inhabitants live near the tourist spots.

Certain female tourists took an interest in buying the local and traditional items in tourists' spots, which was economically

edging the local people living near tourists' spots. It was easily seen in Kalash valleys in Chitral. If this very aspect of locals is encouraged, it can flourish a local cottage industry which can bring a considerable profit for local people of the tourist areas (local people views in Chitral, Table-06, n=11). Cottage industry development can reflect more cultural promotion and cultural projection in the other remote parts of the province/country (local people's views in Chitral).

Youth in tourist spots were adopting the new norms and social standards, which was always not encouraging for a cultural way of life (mentioned by local people in Dir, Table-05, n=05). Sometimes it can lead to losing the exact cultural identity of the local people. Youth in Kalash valleys were noted in modern Jeans and shirts, which were not reflecting the cultural identity of the local people in Kalash valleys.

On the other side, tourism was projecting cultural, archaeological and sports tourism far away from tourist spots to the distant parts of the country, which was a healthy aspect of tourism (views of local people in all districts of Malakand). Religious tourism was present in certain parts of Swat, Buner and Dir districts. This resulted in softening of the rigid mindset of the local people living near tourist spots. Religious Tourism present in Dir and Buner was bringing social uplifting in the locals' rigid mindset through tourists-locals interaction. This was an interesting aspect of tourism (local people informed).

Beside some negative impacts, tourism was still favoured by all locals in all tourist areas (Table-03, n=06/ Table-04, n=12/ Table-05, n=05/ Table-06, n=11/ Table-07, n=03/ Table-08, n=03).

However, the mentioned aspects of tourism can be easily checked by the concerned department. The attention of the concerned authorities can bring healing strip to the locals, who will, in turn, strengthen tourism in the mentioned districts.

Conclusion

Malakand Division possesses considerable potential for tourism. It can contribute enough chunk of income to the national

economy. However, the tourism sector is still passing through developing stages in Pakistan. This sector needs development on professional grounds ([Manzoor et al., 2019](#)). Western societies have properly managed their tourism sector. In Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is bearing a bulky status for tourism ([Ali et al., 2020](#); [Ullah et al., 2019](#); [Arshad et al., 2018](#)). Malakand Division is located in KP province, located in Northern Pakistan (DCR-Malakand, 1998). Interviews from local people in districts Malakand, Swat, Dir, Chitral, Buner and Shangla were recorded to explore the impact of tourism in these districts. According to published data, in 2017, 1.75 million visitors travelled to Pakistan ([WTTC, 2018](#); [Rehaman et al., 2018](#)). This reflects the existence of considerable tourism potential in Pakistan. However, this economic industry is facing problems across the whole of South Asia ([Rasul & Manandhar, 2009](#)).

Various issues and problems were reported in internationally published literature ([Telfer, 2019](#)). Across Pakistan, multi-steps were raised to strengthen this industry. However, Pakistan is a developing country. Still, there are gaps in the up-lift tourism industry ([Geoffrey Deladem et al., 2021](#); [Assaf et al., 2015](#); [Arshad, 2010](#)). The role of foreign aid granting partners is not the least. Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Japan, the USA, Australia and Korea contributed to strengthening this sector ([Oh, 2005](#)). Private organizations and NGOs also played their possible role in restoring the tourism sector in Pakistan.

A number of problems and issues were recorded in the current study while recording the impact of tourists in the districts of the Malakand Division. Each district has a rich potential for tourism based on cultural, historical, archaeological, sports, adventurous, domestic and eco-tourism ([Ali et al., 2020](#); [Ullah et al., 2019](#); [Arshad, 2010](#)). The current study surfaced that tourism is causing overhunting over fishing in district Malakand. In district Swat, tourism is causing overfishing, pollution and forest chopping. In the district, Dir tourism is causing overfishing, overhunting and forest chopping. In district Chitral, interviews of local people revealed over hunting of national/ endangered mammal (Markhor). In districts, Dir, Chitral,

Buner and Shangla, interviews with local people mentioned the damage to access roads due to excessive tourism. The price hike and conversion of agricultural land to business centres were other impacts of tourism. Change in local dress code was recorded in youths in district Malakand, Dir, Swat, Buner and Shangla. Holding marriages between tourists and local people surfaced in districts of Swat and Chitral, where those marriages were sometimes not stable in future ([Alam & Anwar, 2022](#)).

The current study surfaced these issues brought forward by tourism. This needs proper attention to stop the downward growth of tourism in Pakistan. Moreover, interviews with 40 local people also recorded a positive impact of tourism in the districts of the Malakand Division. The well-managed tourism industry can support enough national economy ([Manzoor et al., 2019](#)). The gaps mentioned here, once filled, can help the policymakers to further strengthen tourism across the country. This will definitely bring an economic up-lift, the elevation of socioeconomic status, the creation of more jobs and human ease ([Alam & Anwar, 2022](#); [Alharthi & Hanif, 2020](#); [Telfer, 2019](#); [Rahman et al., 2018](#); [Almeida et al., 2014](#); [Rasul & Manandhar, 2009](#)). Above all, a flourished tourism sector reflects peace ([Buhalis Isobel et al., 2006](#)) across a country and portrays a healthy image of the country across the globe. In this connection attention of the policymakers is invited.

Recommendations

- The Govt. may pay possible attention to the tourism sector by allocating the desirable funds.
- Tourism Department may be strengthened to keep a check on mentioned problems and issues.
- Prices hike may be strictly checked in tourist spots.
- A special task team may be launched for a quick response to tourism-related issues.
- Sanitation and pollution issues in tourist spots may be regularly watched.

- Overhunting and overfishing may be kept under vigilance in Swat, Dir and Malakand.
- Markhor hunting may be checked lawfully.
- Law enforcement can check the illegal hunting.
- Laws related to pollution causing may be introduced.
- Tourists' guidance centres may include awareness information for tourists to observe the proper dress code in certain parts of the Malakand Division.

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