



RESEARCH PAPER

Ecotourism and its Socio-Economic Impact on Hunza Valley in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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Hunza Valley of Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan has been emerged as an attractive tourism destination. Though, the tourism has boosted up the socio-economic developments in this region but, at the same time, it has also caused a slew of social, economic, cultural, environmental, and ecological issues for both, the locals and visitors. The objectives of this research are to highlight and analyze the socio-economic and environmental merits and demerits of tourism in Hunza Valley. This research also recommends ecotourism to overcome different socio-economic and environmental problems emerged as a bi-product of the growing tourism in Hunza Valley. The governmental and non-governmental organizations must come forward to play their responsible role in this regard. The methodology of this research is a mixture of quantitative as well as qualitative methods. Both, primary and secondary sources have been utilized in this research. The data has been collected, analyzed, and narrated in a scientific way.

Introduction

Ecotourism, being an emerging trend, is having capability of creating new opportunities in underdeveloped countries. It can contribute to economic, environmental, and social development of a region. However, the major issues are; how ecotourism can be consumed to generate revenue? How government is planning and managing policies to bring this factor in use for a developmental cause? And how far these managements and planning are implemented? Therefore, in this research, an attempt has been made to answer these key-questions. For the purpose of analytical simplicity and clarity, this is a case study of ecotourism and its socio-economic impact in Hunza Valley of Pakistan. It highlights, both, positive and negative developments which occurred due to ecotourism in the context of economy, climate, culture, infrastructure, management, law and order and security-matters and other problems which are acting as the bottle-necks in the way of implementation of ecotourism in this region. The issues faced by locals and visitors in their socio-economic activities and the role of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are also under consideration in this research.

Literature Review

Traveling and the tourism industry are among the world's quickest developing ventures and are the major origin of unfamiliar trade profit for some non-industrial nations. There is a plethora of literature on this phenomenon. Megan Epler Wood tells that receipts from the worldwide travel industry developed by a normal yearly pace of 09% during 1988-1997. Its quantity increased to more than 664 million tourists' appearance in 1999 which was about 10% of the total populace. Hence, the expanding financial significance of the travel industry has caught the consideration of different nations (Wood, 2002).

The World Economic Forum Report (2017) indicates that "tourism is one of the most largely emerging and most rapidly expanding industries in the world". This sector contributes for about 10% of the World's Gross Domestic Production (GDP), 7% of global trade and about 10% jobs in the world. (Crotti & Misrahi, 2017).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the term ecotourism has three major components; natural, sustainable and educational likewise tourism may affect by these components equally. If it will have a positive impact it will become a part of development but if it will have a negative impact it will become a part of causes of underdevelopment and destruction. (UNWTO, 2002).

Diamantis Dimitrios is of the view that ecotourism is not really relevant if the debate focuses on the principles rather than the problems of ecotourism. Furthermore, he focuses on the three common concepts of ecotourism which are ecological, educational and sustainable (including economic and social criteria). The three dimensions of ecotourism provide a study of ecotourism's concepts accompanied by an examination of its natural-based sustainability and educational components, however, discussing mere crucial components is not enough to highlight huge contributions of ecotourism in the promotion of local communities their social wellbeing and cultural outlook (Dimitrios, 2017).

Ly Do Quynh Anh conducted a PhD level research about the environmental issues and ecotourism in Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere, Vietnam. The study has given a generalized ecological impact of mass tourism on ecotourism which emerged as the most practicing concept in Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere, Vietnam, whereas, both positive and negative environmental effects of ecotourism were found in that area (Ly & Anh, 2011). The author tells that ecotourism is being practiced since last 20 years in Vietnam benefiting its local communities by uplifting its people social-well-being.

Kamran and Moreno have analyzed the effects of sustainable tourism on local communities, the reaction of people living in the major touristy areas and their contribution towards the promotion of sustainable tourism, negative and positive effects of tourism on the economic development and the major indicators of sustainable tourism which can play a vital role as an opportunity or threat in the tourism development in Pakistan (Kamran & Moreno, 2019).

Methodology

Methodology of this research is a mixture of both the quantitative and qualitative methods and Quantitative tools to access and execute. The available and accessible data was collected, organized, analyzed, and narrated in a systematic way. Both, primary and secondary sources have been utilized in this research. The primary sources were collected from Gilgit-Baltistan Council (GBC), Directorate of Culture and Tourism Gilgit-Baltistan (DCTGB), Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Hunza Campus of Karakorum International University (KIU) of Gilgit, Karakorum Area Development Organization (KADO), Agha Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) and other institutes that are working for the promotion of ecotourism and socio-economic development in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Secondary sources include books, research articles and papers, reports, and theses etc.

Tourism and Ecotourism

Tourism, according to Britannica, means to travel, adventure and stay away of one's daily routine environment for having fun, recreation, relaxation, pleasure, and adventure etc., (Walton, 2022). It is also defined as to travel and stay away of one's home in pursuit of leisure, business or any other purpose for less than one year (What is tourism?, 2002).

Ecotourism is a kind of responsible tourism which is friendly for the environment and beneficial for the locals living within that environment. It is more crucial than simply traveling around the world and sights-seeing. It is to ensure that the tourist's visits leave a positive foot print on the local people. This incorporates consumption as well as utilization of goods from residents and their natural resources. In addition, ecotourism is a most moral way of travel and tourism. It equally benefits the tourists as well as the local people along with preservation of the natural environment. In other words, ecotourism defines sustainability of tourism and preservation of nature in an organized way to maintain an exquisite suitability between necessities for tourism and eco-system on one side and community mobilization on other side (Wallace & Pierce, 1996).

Importance of Ecotourism around the World

Globally, tourism has been emerged as a profitable industry for the last few decades. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), in the year of 2021, about 693 million international tourists spent an amount of about 462 billion US dollars, which means spending an average amount of 1.3 billion US dollars per a day (Haya, 2002). For the under developed countries like Pakistan, having naturally beautiful and amazing environments, the ecotourism offers a good opportunity for earning foreign exchange. One of the major objectives of ecotourism is promoting

sustainable tourism, involving an inclusive evolution of the local people and to provide a progressive awareness of habitual and cultural traits of the local masses leading to international, inter-regional as well as inter-cultural awareness for sustainable advancement. In order to make tourism productive and environmentally friendly, this concept is being practiced by a lot of tourism practicing countries around the globe including Austria, Nepal, Costa Rica, Australia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Malaysia, India, Korea (Dimitrios, 2017). Ecotourism is a low-impact and a small-scale model of tourism that aims to maintain the natural world by assuring that biodiversity, ecosystems, and local communities are preserved. It's a gratifying and informative event that expands our cultural consciousness and knowledge of nature. Ecotourism locations are typically fragile, undeveloped, and well-preserved. Though, the history of tourism is much ancient but, the modern ecotourism has been formally emerged during 1970s, but it didn't take off until the late 1980s. By now, ecotourism is becoming more popular every year as a result of a growing trend among individuals to prioritize greener alternatives (Wallace & Pierce, 1996). Keeping in view its importance and significance, the United Nations Organization (UNO) is celebrating the 27th September as the "World Tourism Day" each year (World Tourism Day, 2022).

Traveling and the tourism industry are among the world's quickest developing ventures and are the major origin of unfamiliar trade profit for some non-industrial nations. The World Travel Industry Association (WTO) reports that receipts from worldwide the travel industry developed by a normal yearly pace of 9% during 1988- 1997. The quantity of worldwide traveler appearances arrived at additional than 664 million out of 1999 (well over 10% of the total populace), and worldwide appearances are required to arrive at 1 billion by 2010. The expanding financial significance of the travel industry has caught the consideration of most nations. (Wood, 2002)

The term ecotourism has three major components; natural, sustainable and educational. Likewise, tourism may be affected by these three components equally. If it has a positive impact, then, it may become a part of development, but, if it has a negative impact, then, it may become a part of causes of underdevelopment and destruction (UNWTO, 2002).

According to the World Economic Forum Report (2017), "tourism is one of the most largely emerging and most rapidly expanding industries in the world". This sector contributes for about 10% of the World's Gross Domestic Production (GDP), 7% of global trade and about 10% jobs in the world (Crotti & Misrahi, 2017).

Ecotourism in Pakistan

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCNNR) (2003) reported that ecotourism in Pakistan is heavily based upon the outstanding landscape and dramatic mountainous sceneries of its northern areas, which have unique cultural and archaeological heritage. The area has a very good capability for international and domestic tourism. Tourism possibilities are diversified here ranging from mountaineering, trekking, natural tourism, sports tourism and trophy hunting. Pakistan's northern areas of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) have the world's highest mountains, deserts, waters fall, glaciers, barren lands and thick forests. (Israr, Shafi, Khan, Baig, Khan, & Hayyat, 2009). Hence, tourism activities

are known as among the major well-spring for economic upswing in Pakistan. In the tourism sector, Pakistan offers glamour in the developing world. It is known as the best apparatus for the generation of revenue as well as employment opportunities. Apart of its beautiful flora and fauna, the ancient and cultural heritage of Pakistan is also a source of attraction for national as well as international tourists. It has many tourism-points including Taxila and Takhtbhai (centers of Gandhara Civilization) and Harappa and Mohenjodaro (centers of Indus Civilization), Swat, Kallam, Mallam Jabbah, Shangla, Balakot, Ayubia, Murree, Chitral, Narran and Khagan Valleys, and GB. (Khalil, Kakar, & Waliullah, 2007).

Ecotourism in GB

GB attracts tourists from all around the globe due to its refined charming beauty. The unique culture and traditions of the area is also becoming one of the reasons for attracting the tourists. It has an agro-based society and its economy is mainly dependent on marketing fruits and vegetables. Due to its scenic geographical setting and developments in means of communication, tourism is becoming a new and dominant reason of financial gain at the dawn of globalization that is, nowadays, considered as the backbone of GB's economy.

Worldwide Fund for Nature in Pakistan (WWF-P) is known to be the pioneer to introduce ecotourism in GB with an aim to make tourism sustainable, responsible and environmentally friendly. For the last thirteen years, along with local communities and other private sector's stakeholders, WWF-P is known to be working for the promotion of ecotourism and socio-economic development throughout the region of GB. It has formulated the Tourism Development Board of Northern Areas. The board started some initiatives for training of ecotourism guides and porters. Furthermore, it also introduced development and advertisement of ecotourism to facilitate the sport-hunting in the area. (Israr , Shafi, Khan , Baig , Khan , & Hayyat, 2009).

Ecotourism in Hunza Valley of GB in Pakistan

Hunza is a valley in GB of Pakistan which is spread over an area of almost one hundred miles in length from east to west and two hundred miles in width from north to south (Hunzavi , July 2002). According to Geographic Coordinate System (GCS), the coordination of Hunza Valley lies between 36.316942°N-74.649900°E. Geographically, it is further divided into Upper Hunza, Central Hunza and Lower Hunza respectively. The total area of Hunza Valley is about 11,695 square kilometers and its population is 46,500 (Ejaz, 2017). The Upper Hunza is called as Gojal where the population is *Wakhi*-speaker. The Central Hunza is called as Brushal where the people are *Burushaski*-speakers and the Lower Hunza is called as Shinaki where the population is *Shina*-speaker. There are different ethnic tribes living in each region of Hunza Valley. It is famous for the rare-species of animals like Marco polo-sheep, Himalayan ibex, oriel or blue-sheep, snow leopard, brown bear, Tibetan wild ass Markhor, Musk deer, Wolf Chukor, Eagles, Vulture, and Falcons etc., (Al-Jalalay, Nazeer, & Qutub, 1995).

In Upper and Central Hunza, several trekkers and mountaineers climb the mountains, including Ultar-I, Ultar-II, and Lady Finger. Several runners and mountaineers explore the Upper Hunza Mountains, along with Passu Top. Trekking and mountaineering usually go in boom during the months of April to September.

Central Hunza is considered as a spectacular location in the world where somebody can see from one spot four beautiful snow-covered mountainous ranges including Ultar, Lady Finger, Diran, and Rakaposhi (Al-Jalaly, Nazeer, & Qutub, 1995).

Hunza Valley is well known for its rich culture and hospitality. Men and women wear *Shalwar and Qameez* as their traditional dress. Women also wear an embroidery (*Farsin*) pillbox caps with a shawl over it. Men wear Hunza wool cap and, in winters, they wear hand *Chooghah (Shuqa)*, an elegant embroidered woolen cloak with long lengthen sleeves. Agricultural products like apples, pears, peaches, cherries apricots are the major food product of Hunza Valley. They can be used as freshly ripen fruits or it can be used as a dry fruits. Their kernel is used in many ways. Mainly, it is used to extract oil which is further used in different local dishes like *Giyalin, Malida, Burushapik, Diram Fitti and Fitti*. (Ly & Anh, 2011)

According to Pakistan Education Statistic Report 2016-17, the literacy rate in Hunza Valley is 99.5%, which makes Hunza as the highest literacy zone in all over Pakistan. Government and private institutions are working to provide education in the region. For the health facilities, government hospitals along with Aga Khan Health Services are functional. The people of Hunza are much different from rest of Pakistan in term of their ethnicity, language, dresses, food, and traditions etc. Across the globe, they are famous for their scenic environment, healthy food, and long life span. Usually, their average life span is about one hundred years (Ly & Anh, 2011).

Although, Hunza Valley has all four seasons like Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter each year but it has very little agricultural activities which are not enough for the sustainability of the daily livelihood of the growing population of the Hunza Valley. Hence, its economy is based on the available tourism. The valley is linked to Gilgit by regular plying public wagons and jeeps. The Northern Areas Transport Company (NATCO), Silk Route and Masherbrum buses ply from Karachi, Rawalpindi to Sost which is located near the Chinese border in the extreme north. Local Suzuki vans also take the KKH. Many local people use their own convince for transportation (Ly & Anh, 2011).

Hunza Valley is one of GB's most famous tourists' points. It has high mountainous ranges, and is renowned for its historical and cultural heritage and generous local hospitality. As a whole, it's beautiful and breath-taking landscapes; its geographical, cultural and historical backdrops, and its rare-found able flora and fauna are the best reasons for the attraction of tourists not only from Pakistan but also at international level. On the other hand, tourism is one of the main sources of income for the local people and stakeholders of this region. Hence, tourism has a significant socio-economic importance in these areas (Israr, Shafi, Khan, Baig, Khan, & Hayyat, 2009). Majority of the population in Hunza Valley rely on the income generated from hotels and guest-houses and increased number of vendors; selling dry fruits, gemstones, artifacts and handicrafts. Some people are involved as tourist's guides and advisors. It provides to tourists not only local goods but also a good understanding about local culture and society. These trained guides have important historical knowledge of the area, which further provide opportunities for more tourists' attractions (Abbas, et al., 2015).

Due to its scenic environment and enriched historical and cultural heritage, there is a huge influx of local and international tourists in Hunza Valley of GB in

Pakistan, which is creating hurdles for the tourist points and areas. In this regard, a proper way of conducting tourism activities are much needed and ecotourism may be one of the best solutions to these problems. It may save the area from its destruction economically and also can benefit the people in different ways such as: Hunza Valley is developing socio-economically as the region is renowned throughout the world for its enriched culture and history. The natives may be engaged in different employments and earning opportunities. A tourism model (like Ecotourism model) can provide people with different socio-economic developmental opportunities; also, this can help in promoting a region and teaching voyagers about safe and sustainable tourism. Since 1980s, Hunza Valley is a famous tourists' spot in the region; from a narrow-isolated road to the construction of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), the natives went through a lot of socio-economic changes and developments.

The people are facing the positive and negative aspects of development due to increased tourism in Hunza. On positive side, the area is developing socio-economically and people are getting employment opportunities, social standards are improving, and every person is benefited directly or indirectly. On the other side, it also raised a number of issues for local people and their habitats. For example, deforestation for construction of roads, hotels, guest-houses, and other picnic-spots, spread of chronic diseases, loss of local biodiversity and culture, climate change, environmental pollution (land, air and water pollution), traffic issues etc., are some of the bi-products in Hunza Valley. To overcome these issues, introduction of measures required under ecotourism is much needed in Hunza Valley in order to grow towards safe, productive and environmentally friendly tourism activities in this region.

Role of Government and Non-Governmental Organizations for Ecotourism Promotion in Hunza Valley

In order to avoid negative impact of tourism in Hunza Valley, ecotourism has been introduced for environmental sustainability and cultural preservation. In this regard, the government is making efforts and has already introduced a lot of initiatives in the region (Haya, 2002). For example to maintain law and order situation in the area and to encounter any accidental issues, the Karakorum Task Force and Rescue-1122 have been launched throughout the KKH. Local communities are also sensitive towards the environmental sustainability of their region. In this regard, local community volunteers have also been deployed. The government of GB has initiated network of nineteen protected areas and twenty-six community-managed-conservation-areas (CMCA) covering almost 28 percent from the total area to protect and organize rarely-found wild-species of the area. Tourist Facilitation and Information Centers (TFIC) have also been arranged in order to guide and assist the tourists (Shafa , 2017). Likewise, some co-curricular activities are also encouraged for the promotion of ecotourism like the Tour de Khunjerab (cycling race from Gilgit to Khunjerab), 'Cleanness Campaign' at local level. The most recent imitative adopted by the government and local bodies is ban on plastic bags all over the Hunza Valley. The Local Government in its partnership with Nestlé Pakistan has also initiated a project for the recycling of plastic wastes in Hunza Valley. Apart from that the KKH, CPEC, and Ancient Silk Route (ASR) are also playing a vital role in tourism development and ecotourism promotion of the region (Al-Jalaly , Nazeer, & Qutub, 1995).

Role of KKH and CPEC in Ecotourism in Hunza Valley

After the renovation of KKH, the once landlocked culture and economy of Hunza Valley have now been accessible to rest of the world. People's living standards have been improved, especially, in the fields of education, health, and trade etc. It has a positive impact on socio-economic growth of Hunza Valley. CPEC is passing through the heart of Hunza Valley which links the growing Chinese economy with rest of the world through Arabian Sea. It is a mega project which has much positive impact on socio-economic conditions of the whole region (Ahtsham, Haider, Ali, Ali, & Ming, 2017). It adds fiscal and operational prosperity to the whole country. Recent influx of domestic and foreign visitors to Hunza Valley is a result of the KKH's enhancement and development. CPEC's key economic and social advantages include the generation of jobs, initiate cross-cultural relationships with other nations, improvements in the agriculture sector and eliminating poverty from Pakistan generally and its Hunza Valley particularly as the project's actual benefits are to help the common people in Pakistan (Karim, Faqeer, Salman, Shah, Qureshi, & Nilofer, 2020).

Ecotourism as an International Approach for Tourism Development in Hunza Valley

A recent media report revealed that a group of fifty-six members of Buddhist monks from Korea visited sacred sites and held religious rituals in Hunza Valley. They paid tribute to a Buddhist Fortress of 7th century in Hunza Valley. They also visited Gilgit to see the historical Silk Route. Members of the delegation explored the ancient Silk Route in Hunza & Nagar districts along with the KKH. This shows that these areas are opening opportunities for international tourism, which may result in promotion of tourism and ecotourism (Anwar, 2019).

A well planned, peaceful, developed and marketed ecotourism has always a potential of making an important contribution to the socio-economic welfare of a region. It attracts the international community for mutual economic benefits and cultural co-existence. On the other hand, an unplanned and unsustainable tourism leaves behind a trail of destruction and environmental degradation. It destroys the biodiversity and landscape when no respect is shown either to the fragility of the ecosystem or to the principle of equity and sustainability (Shah, 2019).

Conclusion

Ecotourism and Hunza Valley of Pakistan are emerging side by side in the context of global village. Being a landlocked northern area of Pakistan, Hunza Valley remained unknown and underdeveloped. Though, it was located in the way of Old Silk Route, but still it could not emerge a center of tourism at local and international level. In recent past, the ecotourism has been developed as a global phenomenon and Hunza Valley also got its impact. Its scenic beauty and enriched historical and cultural heritage attract tourists not only locally but also across the globe.

There is a combination of positive and negative impact of tourism in Hunza Valley. On the positive side, the natives are earning a huge income from different tourism activities and employment opportunities at their door. Majority of the household are benefited from tourism and hotel industries in the shape of

government employment, tourists' guides and selling home-made products. It has caused improvement in their economic conditions, infrastructure, living-standards, and change in their outlook and cultural practices. The governmental and non-governmental organizations are paying attention to uplift the economic, educational, and health etc., facilities in the region. The locals are encouraged, guided and helped to develop and promote their local handicrafts and other local products. In this regard, they are made educated, trained, and skilled. As a result, the local handicrafts, artifacts, food and jewelry are becoming a main source of socio-economic development of the natives.

On the negative side, tourism also creates some environmental, social, and cultural problems in Hunza Valley. For example, earlier, the Hunza Valley was a peaceful area having a healthy environment and less population. Its socio-cultural life was preserved and not exposed to rest of the world. But, the growing influx of tourists has changed the things in the region adversely. Deforestation, environmental pollution, climatic changes, and increase in population are immediate results.

Similarly, different tourists coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds are interacting with the natives leaving an in-depth impact upon them, especially, upon the young natives, who are taking less care of their centuries' old native culture and adopting culture of alien-tourists coming in the region. It has also enhanced their daily needs and, having limited resources, they tend to unfair means in order to fulfill their needs of freshly-borrowed life-style. They have become money oriented. They pay less attention to their native land and consider it as less productive in term of economy. On the other hand, the outsiders are interested in their land either from tourism or business points of view. As a result, for their short-term financial benefits, the locals are selling their native lands to the outsiders at a very low cost without considering its long-term adverse socio-cultural impacts upon them and their future generations. Hence, it is a much alarming situation in Hunza Valley.

Recently, tourism has become a bread-earning source for the people of Hunza Valley. The governmental and non-governmental organizations are trying their level best to improve conditions for tourism and shift it into ecotourism. But, due to lack of resources, it still not up to the standard. Lack of enough budget allocation for tourism is one of the main reasons. Specially, after the passage of 18th Amendment in the 1973-Constitution of Pakistan, the Federal Ministry for Tourism has been dissolved and the tourism has become a provincial subject rather than central one. As a result, the tourism department of GB is functioning with the revenue generated by it on its own. It gets any additional funds or subsidy neither from provincial government of GB nor from federal government of Pakistan. Hence, its own generated revenue is not enough for its further growth and development.

Lack of planning and strategies in the context of tourism is another challenge in Hunza Valley. Heavy deforestation and constructions without any check and balance is becoming a threatening issue in Hunza Valley. It is resulting in environmental pollution, climatic changes, and global warming. It also causes Glacier Land Outburst Floods (GLOFs) which results in heavy floods and soil erosions. In this process, the local people of Hunza Valley have lost their personal lands, property, belongings, and even their precious lives.

The KKH and the CPEC are the two major means of communication which make the landlocked Hunza Valley accessible for the tourists. But, unfortunately, these two routes are mostly blocked due to heavy floods and land sliding in the region. As a result, the tourists are trapped sometimes even at the cost of their lives. Therefore, next time, they avoid coming and advising other tourists too not to go there. At the same time, the ratio of street crimes, thefts, and robberies etc., has been increased which also adversely affected the flow of tourists in Hunza Valley.

As a whole, the newly socio-economically developed Hunza Valley lacks its scenic beauty and traditional norms and cultural values. For example, places in Hunza Valley where, once, there were green fields and gardens, which were full of freshly grown potatoes, wheat, apricots, apples and grapes are now urbanized and only huge cemented buildings can be seen there. Earlier, the people of Hunza Valley were taking organic food. They were drinking pure water of natural fountains and took their self-grown healthy agricultural and organic products. They were surrounded by dense forests where they were breathing in pollution free and a human-friendly environment. Therefore, they were famous for their long span of life. Normally, on average, they led a life of at least one hundred years. But, now, their environment has become polluted, a healthy organic food is scared and they are forced to consume inorganic and synthetic food products. As a result, they are often suffering from different diseases like; typhoid, diarrhea, heart problems, psychological issues and blood pressure etc. Young generation is also involved in different unethical activities. Drug addiction is a prominent issue.

Recommendations

To overcome the aforementioned problems emerged as bi-products of tourism in Hunza Valley, the ecotourism is need of the hour. It must be a shared responsibility of both, the locals and tourists to promote ecotourism in the region. In this regard, they must be educated and trained formally. The governmental and non-governmental organizations must come forward and play their role on emergency basis. Especially, the provincial government of GB and federal government of Pakistan may play a key role by developing strategies for promotion of ecotourism in Hunza Valley. They may portray a soft image of the area and may attract the local and international donor agencies for promotion of ecotourism in the region. In this regard, China may be the best option under the CPEC's project. There must be a strong system of check and balance on the developmental projects regarding tourism activities, so then, the ecosystem and socio-cultural heritage of the region may be preserved. The governmental and non-governmental organizations must organize socio-cultural events and make them as a combined venture of both, the locals and tourists, for a positive mutual cultural exchange between them. The law and order situation should be strengthened in the region in order to avoid any negative social, cultural and environmental changes. They must be provided with opportunity for mutual get together frequently to learn more and more about each other. The locals must be involved as equal partners of the tourists rather than mere providing services or selling minor products the formers (tourists). In this way, slowly and steadily, the locals may become the real stakeholders of ecotourism in the region. At that point, the locals and the tourists may become equal business partners for their mutual gains in the context of ecotourism.

In a nutshell, this is how the region can flourish in a positive, safe and sustainable way. If this model or any model of this kind is not initiated in Hunza Valley, soon after few years, this area will become an example of destruction of nature for the whole world. Instead of remembering Hunza Valley as a brand of scenic beauty and socio-cultural heritage, the people will remember this region as an example of destroyed and unsustainable place.

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