

Community Attitude towards the Impact of Tourism on Local Economy: A Case Study of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract: Importance of tourism as an instrument of economic growth and development is well established; however, in a hospitality industry local people play a great role in its promotion. Support of the host community is essential to sustain and ensure long term success in tourism industry. At this backdrop it is indispensable to study the perception and attitude of host community towards tourism. The study focuses on the community attitude towards tourism with respect to perceived impact of tourism on local economy. It attempts to find both the positive and negative impact of tourism as perceived by the local people of the study area and propose appropriate measures to ensure development of tourism in the study area.

Key terms: Community Attitude, Tourism, Local Economy.

1. Introduction

Tourism Industry is the largest and fastest-growing industry in the world. This industry is particularly regarded as a form of travel for pleasure, recreation, pilgrimage and business purposes. It is a wide-ranging industry directly connected with the transport industry, hotel industry, hospitality industry, entertainment industry, and many more.

The importance of tourism as a tool for the generation of employment and growth of the economy, particularly in rural and backward areas, has been well recognized. And it is one of the largest foreign exchange-earners (India Tourism Statistics, 2020). It has a great contribution globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings.

Tourism has emerged as one of the biggest and fastest growing sector of numerous economies of the world (UNWTO). The world Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) research reveals that the tourism sector accounted for 10.4% of global GDP. In 2019, the Travel and Tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth, outpacing the global economic growth of 2.5% for the nine consecutive years. Before the pandemic over the past five years, one in four new jobs were created by the sector across the world, making Travel & Tourism the best partner for the government to generate employment. However, WTTC's latest annual research shows that the Travel and Tourism sector suffered a loss of almost US \$ 4.5 trillion to reach the US \$ 4.7 trillion in 2020, by taking the contribution to GDP dropping by 49.1% compared to 2019; relative to a 3.7 % GDP decline of the global economy in 2020.

In the late 2000's recessions between the second half of 2008 and the end of 2009 due to strong economic slowdown and 2009 in consequences of an outbreak of H1N1 influenza virus tourism declined. But, slowly recovered until the Covid-19 pandemic put an abrupt end to the growth. However, now again tourism sector is recovering from its downfall.

The research also calculated that tourism generated 16.91 lakh crore and 9.2% of India's GDP in 2018 and supported 42.673 million jobs, 8.1 of its total employment. The Travel and Tourism competitiveness Report 2019 ranked India 34th out of 140 countries overall.

Today, tourism can be perceived as a contributor to development and global integration. It is an instrument to promote peace and building image, mixing people and culture, development of international relation, infrastructure development, and upliftman of the society.

Despite such great potential, the state contributes only a 3.71% share of its tourist inflow in the North Eastern Region. At the national level, the share of tourists' footfall in the state is insignificant (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India).

The host community is an important part of tourism, and their support is necessary for its development. The hospitality of host community should be friendly and local hosts can play a key role in tourists' satisfaction in this regard.

The host community is identified as a major stakeholder of tourism development (WTO). The host community's support is essential to ensure the long-term success of tourism.

For a tourism-based economy to sustain and develop, the host communities must have a positive attitude and be willing partners in the process. Studies suggest that it is impossible to sustain tourism in a destination where there is no support from residents. A supportive host community will ensure higher tourism growth and hence more economic development.

The paper aims to investigate and explore how the residents of Tawang perceive the impact of tourism in their place and the study also attempts to determine their level of support and involvement for future development of tourism.

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Research Gap

Community attitudes towards tourism with respect to impact of tourism on local economy have been studied exclusively by many researchers over several years at the global level including India. But, in Arunachal Pradesh, very few studies have been conducted on the theme particularly in Tawang District. Thus, as mentioned above, this study is a kind of investigation to examine

community attitudes towards the impact of tourism on local economy and their involvement and support for future tourism development.

Arunachal Pradesh is a potential tourist destination; however, studies suggest that Tawang district is the most popular tourist destination of the state at present. Even though Tawang has huge potential for tourism development it has not been able to attract as many tourists as it could have. Some studies undertaken on this front suggested that there has been an increase in the number of tourists visiting the district; however, such a rise may not be significant.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative to understand community attitudes towards tourism? How supportive are they for the development of tourism? Finding answers to the questions will help in framing a solid tourism model for the study area and it will help in framing sound measures for boosting community-based tourism.

Therefore, to boost the tourism industry in Tawang it is imperative to study it through a paradigm that has not been undertaken in the state before. The host community is an important component of tourism and plays a vital role in tourism development and without a supportive host environment it is very difficult to sustain and have a successful and long term tourism development in any place.

1.2 Importance of the Study

Tourism is the largest service industry, it gives a significant contribution to the GDP, it provides widespread employment opportunities, etc. It is proven to be crucial for global economic development. (World Tourism Organization, 2018; World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018).

Tawang is bestowed with numerous tourism resources and tourism being a hospitality industry, it plays a very important role how local community welcomes and host tourists. The purpose of the research is to study and understand the communities attitude towards tourism with respect to impact of tourism on local economy.

The scale of support for tourism development depends on their level of satisfaction and benefits received from this industry. Communities are important stakeholders, and their attitude and perception should be taken into consideration in tourism planning because in many places where tourism harms communities, they do not cooperate with the tourism industry and that creates problems for tourism development in the region. From this point of view, it is very important to assess the community's attitude towards tourism so that the inflow of tourists will increase in Tawang by taking appropriate measures

The study will also help to understand what are the problems that are evolving out of tourism and how to minimize the negative impact and maximize the positive impact so that it will help to boost tourism in the study area.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Every research inquiry must start with an objective to make it a worthwhile research subject matter hence, the present research inquiry has been taken with the following objective.

1. To perform attitude analysis of host community towards tourism in the study area by studying the Impact of tourism on the local economy

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design: The study is descriptive in nature because the characteristic of the local community and their attitude is described.

2.2 Research Period: The reference period of the field survey is from mid 2020 to mid 2021

2.3 Sources of Data: The study used both primary and secondary data. While for current study, most of the part depends on primary data for analysis, interpretation and findings.

Primary Data: For primary data, field survey was conducted and data was collected from the people residing in Tawang town which includes Locals, Entrepreneurs and Experts through questionnaires and interviews relating to impact of tourism on local economy.

Secondary Data: For secondary data, information was collected from relevant sources like the Tourism Department of Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh, Published and Unpublished Research Works, Journals, Books, Social Media and Websites, etc.

2.4 Tools: Attitude Scale- Five Point Likert Scale was used as a major source of data collection to collect the information from the local community of Tawang District, Arunachal Pradesh. **2.5 Sampling Technique:** Stratified sampling and Convenience sampling techniques were used for the study.

2.6 Universe: 9970, People residing in Tawang constituency-2, Region- West, Above 18 years of age have taken as the study area.

2.7 Sample size: 340 (Out of the total of 384 questionnaires, 192 questionnaire sets were distributed to the female respondents, and another 192 sets were distributed to the male respondents. But 44 sets of questionnaires were found invalid. Therefore, 340 questionnaires were used for data analysis and interpretation).

Estimation of an optimum sample size is most crucial for any research study. The required sample size for this study is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) with 95percent confidence level. The formula for calculating sample size by Taro Yamane is given below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the required sample size, N is the population size, and e is the allowable error (percent). By substituting the numbers in the above formula, we will get:

$$n = \frac{9970}{1 + 9970(.05)^2} = 384$$

2.8 Study Area: The requirement of the study demands the study of community attitude towards tourism in Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh; therefore, the political boundary of the district of the state was considered for the study purpose.

2.9 Reliability Statistics: To test the reliability of the questionnaire SPSS was used and Cronbach's Alpha was calculate. The reliability of 9 questionnaire relating to community attitude towards tourism with reference to perceived impact of tourism on local economy for 340 respondents were tested and analysis has been done by using SPSS software and the Cronbach's Alpha value shows .995 which means that the questionnaires are highly reliable.

9.10 Tools used for data analysis and interpretation: The data has been analysed and interpreted by using statistical tools such as Mean, Percentage, and presented through tables by using Microsoft Excel.

3. Profile of the study area

Arunachal Pradesh is one of the 28th states of India and is the northeastern-most state of the country. Arunachal borders the state with Assam, and Nagaland to the south and shares international borders with Bhutan in the west, Myanmar in the east and is separated from China in the north by the McMahon Line. Tawang is one of the district of the state.

Tawang: An Overview

Tawang is one of the districts of Arunachal Pradesh. It is situated in the Westernmost part of Arunachal Pradesh and is one of the most beautiful destinations for tourists. This hilly destination is surrounded by mountains, glacial lakes, waterfall, and many beautiful sceneries situated at 10,000 feet above sea level with a population of 49,977 as per the 2011 census and as per the projection, the population of Tawang District in 2021 is 61832 estimated, it is the eight least populous district in the country (out of 707). Located at a height of about 3,048m and area of this district is approximately 2,172 sq. km bounded by Tibet (China) to the north, Bhutan to the south-west, and Sela ranges separated from West Kameng district in the east. It is also famous as the birthplace of the 5th Dalai Lama. The name Tawang is derived from two words from the local dialect Ta and Wang Ta means horse and Wang means chosen. The local interpretation is that in the 17th century, a Tibetan monk called Mera Lama found a strong and beautiful horse wandering in the valley and suddenly the horse disappeared and while searching for the horse he found a place which was very beautiful and soothing later he built a magnificent Buddhist monastery at the location and town developed around this monastery was later called as Tawang.

Table 3.1 Total Tourists arrival report (Domestic and Foreign Tourist) of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh from 2012 to 2021

SI No.	Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total	Percentage Change (Increase/Decrease)	Remarks
01	2012 (Jan to Dec)	12392	271	12663	-	
02	2013(Jan to Dec)	12914	235	13249	4.63%	
03	2014(Jan to Dec)	13668	265	13933	5.16%	
04	2015(Jan to Dec)	21875	305	22180	59.19	
05	2016(Jan to Dec)	24423	279	24702	11.37%	
06	2017(Jan to Dec)	43059	235	43294	75.23%	
07	2018(Jan to Dec)	50367	245	50612	16.90%	
08	2019(Jan to Dec)	55823	421	56244	11.13%	
09	2020(Jan to Dec)	5639	45	5684	-89.89%	From 19 th March 2020 to Sept 2021 issue of ILP suspended due COVID-19 Pandemic
10	2021(Jan to Oct)	13213	04	13217	132.53%	From May 2021 to September 2021 issue of ILP suspended due to COVID-19 Pandemic (2 nd Wave)

Source- Tourism office Tawang

Table 3.1 compares the total tourists including domestic and foreign tourists arrival of 10 years from January 2012 to Oct 2021 of Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. In general, tourism arrival rose slightly every year but the biggest shift was from 2016 to 2017 where tourists arrival increased from 24702 to 43293 i.e increase in 75.23%.

Looking first of all from 2012 to 2013 total tourists including domestic and foreign tourists arrival increased by 4.63% from 12663 to 13249 and from 2013 to 2014 there has been an increased in tourists arrival percentage by 5.16% i.e from 13249 to 13933. The significant change was seen in 2014 to 2015 where tourists arrival increased from 13933 to 22180 which is by 59.19% followed by 2015 to 2016 by 11.37%. From 2016 to 2017 tourist arrival rose highest from 24702 to 43294 by 75.23%. and from 2017 to 2018 the number of tourists arrival percentage increased by 16.90% from 43294 to 50612 followed by 2018 to 2019 by 11.13% from 50612 to 56244.

Therefore, by looking at the number of tourists arrival in the past few years it was quite clear that from 2019 to 2020 the tourists arrival rate was going to increase in good amount of number as usual but the pandemic (COVID-19) hit everything and the tourism being the most effected industry among all the number of tourists arrival rate fall down from 56244 to 5684 by 89.89%. From 19th March 2020 to Sept 2021 issue of ILP suspended due to COVID-19 Pandemic and soon after the situation was getting back to normal the tourists arrival rate also increased but again from May 2021 to September 2021 issue of ILP suspended due to COVID-19 Pandemic (2nd Wave). But now again the tourists are allowed to visit so number is increasing as well therefore, from in the year 2020 to Oct 2022 the number of tourists arrival increased from 5684 to 13217 by 132.53%.

From the above data and discussion it can be concluded that the growth rate of tourists arrival in the study area apart from (Covid-19) pandemic period is quite good and there is a great scope for further tourism development in the study area. Therefore, a proper policy planning is needed to increase tourists attraction in the study area.

4. Data analysis and interpretation

Table 4.1 Impact of Tourism on the Local Economy

(5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2-Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree)

Sl. No.	Statements	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Average Score
1	Tourism has benefited the local economy	132	176	30	2	0	340	4.29
2	Tourism increased the job opportunities for locals	96	178	40	18	8	340	3.99
3	Money spent by tourists remains in the local community	56	172	78	28	6	340	3.72
4	Many local businesses benefited from tourism	96	184	52	4	4	340	4.07
5	Income generated from tourism is seasonal	98	204	30	4	4	340	4.14
6	Tourism raises the cost of living	28	180	78	44	10	340	3.51
7	Increase in-migration of people to seek a tourism-related job	22	140	106	68	4	340	3.32
8	Shift from agriculture activities to tourism activities	30	112	78	110	10	340	3.12
9	Tourism creates more jobs for outsiders	16	84	116	118	6	340	2.96
Total Average score								3.68

Source: Field study.

Table 4.1 shows the impact of tourism on the local economy. The calculated average score shows that out of a total of 9 determinants 6 indicators have an average rounded up score of 4 (between 3.50 and 4.50 points on the Likert scale).

The factor 'Tourism has benefited local economy' scored highest with an average score of 4.29. People of the study area agree that tourism has benefited the local economy by providing the means of earning through different tourism activities. Some previous studies also revealed that the effectiveness of tourism to generate direct and indirect employment avenues in the Tawang District is satisfactory and economic status from the viewpoint of revenue generation is also satisfactory.

Residents agree with the statement 'many local businesses benefited from the arrival of tourists' in the study area with an average score of 4.12. In the recent few years, there has been a huge shift to tourism activities by the local community in terms of the hospitality industry, Transportation, and Entertainment Industries by opening up Hotels, Home-stays, Restaurants, Tour Operators, engagement in the production of local crafts, Cuisine and showcase of Indigenous Culture, Traditions and Festivals which directly help in income generation for locals.

With second highest average score of 4.14 residents agree that 'income generated from tourism is seasonal'. The most probable reason for this could be due to extreme winter and bad road connectivity during snowfall and rainy season. Hence, it a very serious concern since people cannot rely completely on tourism for their livelihood which will discourage locals to engage in the tourism business. So, there is a urgent need to come up with some solid measure to cope up with this problem and tourism department should also look into the matter.

Residents agree with the statement 'many local businesses benefited from tourism' in the study area with an average score of 4.07. In the recent few years, there has been a huge shift in tourism activities by local community in terms of the Hospitality Industry, Entertainment Industry and Transport Industry by opening up of Tour Operators, Hotels, Home-Stays, engagement in the production of Local Crafts, Cuisine, Traditions and Festivals which directly help in income generations for locals.

With an average score of 3.99 residents agree that 'tourism has increased the job opportunities for locals' and with an average score of 3.72 residents also agree that 'money spent by tourists remains in the local communities. With the inflow of tourists, residents agree that locals have benefited from it but at the same time residents also agree that it 'raises the cost of living by increasing the general price of goods and services with an average score of 3.51. Hence, with no doubt, there has been an increase in the job opportunities for locals, since tourism has opened up new gates for locals. But the real concern is regarding the well-recognized problem of seasonal income of tourism industry and many studies has been conducted in this front to investigate its reason in different parts and almost all the studies show climate and institutional reasons and besides that, there are economic factors such as income and exchange rate in general. Mainly the study area, there is an extreme winter and rough road connectivity which is the main cause for the off-peak season of tourism. Therefore, various price strategies are required to consider by looking at the price sensitivity at the peak and off peak season and by taking other necessary actions such as improvement of road connectivity to attract more tourists even in off seasons.

Residents are neutral with the indicator 'increase in migration of people to seek tourism-related job' with an average score of 3.32 and residents are also neutral with an average score of 3.12 'tourism leads to decline in agricultural activities and increase

in tourism-related activities and with a least average score of 2.96 residents are neutral with the statement 'tourism creates more jobs for outsiders than for locals. Basically, in the study area, most of the locals are engaged in tourism-related activities that are why their perception is neutral towards it.

FINDINGS

The study was conducted with nine questions relating to the perceived impact of tourism on the local economy by using five points Likert scale and the result shows that with an average score of 4.29 tourism has benefited the local economy which means that the local community has a positive attitude towards this attribute since tourism has boosted the local economy of the area from a different aspect of tourism-related activities.

The result of the study shows that with second highest average score of 4.14 income generated from tourism is seasonal. Hence, it is a very serious concern since people cannot rely completely on tourism for their livelihood which will discourage locals to engage in the tourism business. So there is an urgent need to come up with some solid measure to cope up with this problem and tourism department should also look into the matter.

It also shows that with an average score of 4.07 residents of the study area also agree that many local businesses have been benefited from tourists and tourism-related activities. Given the result, it shows that there is a scope for growth of the local business which will eventually encourage unemployed youths of the area to engage in entrepreneurship and tourism-related activities.

The attribute tourism increases the job opportunities for locals scored 3.99 which means that tourism has opened more scope for locals in different areas of the tourism sector by increasing the job opportunities. For example- Tourism has created jobs in the field of the transport industry, hotel industry, entertainment industry, and much more.

With an average score of 3.72 residents agree that money spent by tourists remains in the local community itself. Therefore, to ensure all money spent by tourists remains in the local community, maximum participation of local community of the study area need to be encourage in tourism-related activities so that all the money spent by tourists remains in the local community.

The study shows that with an average score of 3.51 residents also agree that tourism raises the cost of living due to an increase in the general price of goods and services. Hence, this attribute shows that tourism is causing a price hike for the general public so it is very important to boost tourism-related activity in such a way that there will be no general price hike for locals.

Residents are neutral that Tourism is causing an increase in migration of people to seek tourism-related activities with an average score of 3.32. We can conclude that in the study area there is no full participation of locals in tourism-related activities since many outsiders engage in the tourism business. so, there is a need for more and more locals to take up tourism-related activities so that all the opportunities can be grabbed by the locals which eventually will allow reducing the unemployment rate in the study area. Furthermore, there will be no opportunity left for outsiders and there will be no migration of people to seek a tourism-related job in the study area.

The summary of the study shows that with an average score of 3.12 residents are neutral that tourism leads to a decline in agricultural activities and an increase in tourism activities. This means that there is a shift of activities from agriculture to tourism but the amount of increase is not significant.

Locals are neutral with the statement tourism leads to migration of people to seek a tourism-related job with an average score (3.32). The attribute tourism creates more jobs for outsiders than for the local people has scored least among all attributes with an average score of 2.96. This shows that there are more opportunities for local people but the attribute discussed earlier shows that even though there are more scope for local people in tourism-related activities but still they don't grab the opportunity as much as they should and as a result outsiders migrate to seek the job.

Hence, based on the finding of the research it shows that the perceived impact of tourism has more benefits than its costs and there is a great scope of tourism development in the study area and the people are willing to support tourism for further development.

Conclusion

Based on investigation and research on the topic 'Community attitude towards impact of tourism on local economy: A case study of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh'. It can be concluded that Tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Tawang as well as in the whole world and the tourism has both positive and negative impact but the community perceived that the impact of tourism has more positive than negative impacts.

The study revealed that the importance of tourism as an instrument of economic growth and employment generation has been well recognized. The impact of tourism has both pros and cons. On one hand, it plays a very important role in the development of the local economy by increasing the job opportunities for locals, by benefiting the local business and it is leading the community towards better living standards.

On the other hand, residents shows concern that income generation from tourism is Seasonal and it also raises the cost of living for locals by increasing the general price of goods and services. Therefore, there is an urgent need for collective participation from different parties and initiatives need to be taken to solve these problems in long run for development of sustainable and eco-tourism.

Therefore, the result of the research is encouraging towards tourism and there is a great scope of tourism development in Tawang and people are also cooperative and are willing to support tourism to be an integral part of local economic development. Hence, there is a need to take effective measures to ensure sustainable tourism development and create awareness among different stakeholders of tourism about its importance so that maximum benefits can be drawn out of it and minimize its risks.

The finding of the study shows that the overall perceived impact of tourism is positive and its emphasis is that local community participation is significant for the rapid growth of tourism. Community involvement can be facilitated by involving

locals in policy formation and the decision-making process. Such effective participation will help the local residents to match their expectations and a tourism-related project which will be favourably accepted by the community.

SUGGESTIONS:

The importance of support and participation from the local residents in the development of tourism has been well recognized. To survive tourism for the long run in any community there is a need for cooperation from local residents. Therefore, it can be possible by the development of community-based tourism which will help to gain support, cooperation and participation from the local community.

First of all, there should be proper policy planning for community-based tourism development. To boost community-based tourism it is important to promote quality tourism in such a way that village tourism needs to be promoted which shall boost the local economy and tourists will also get an opportunity to experience the culture and tradition of village life which shall promote integration among locals and tourists. Therefore, every village must have infrastructure development and proper road connectivity. The villages must be mobilized into an open home-stay. It can be possible by propagating awareness about the importance of tourism in the development of the local economy among the local residents.

Hospitality is an important part of tourism and to bloom in this industry host community need to be well educated about the basic functioning of the hospitality industry. Trained local personnel should be engaged as tourists guide. Professionalism needs to be maintained by travel agencies and other people who are engaged in tourism-related activities and it can be generated and achieved by providing various skill development programs

To ensure money spent by tourist's remains in the local community itself, there is a need for local people to participate in tourism-related activities so that all the opportunities are taken by the locals and there is no room left for outsiders. In this way, we can ensure money spent by tourists remains in the local community. Therefore, encouragement should be given to unemployed youths to engage in tourism-related activities

The local residents should come up with different business ideas so that they can attract more tourists and increase their earnings.

Tourism should promote in such a way that it does not hamper the living standard of local people by increasing the general price of goods and services. Hence, there is a need for a policy approach to deal with it.

Due to lack of awareness, people do not understand the importance of tourism as a tool of economic development. Therefore, it is advisable to cater awareness and provide training to the people especially to an unemployed youths so that they can grab the opportunities.

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