

**ECOTOURISM AS A SUSTAINABLE  
LIVELIHOOD OPTION IN MOUNTAIN  
COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF HUNZA  
VALLEY**



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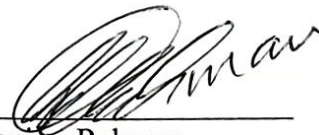


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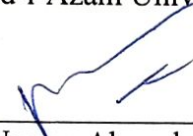
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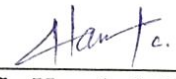
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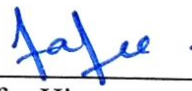
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## Author's Declaration

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## *Dedication*

This Thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents and siblings who have encouraged and supported me throughout my education.

Thanks for everything.

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## ABSTRACT

The environmental concern of tourism requires immediate policy attention in Gilgit-Baltistan where the current mass tourism is creating immense pressure on the vitally important mountain resources. The increasing mass tourism in the region has created many ecological and other issues including pollution, crowd, resource exploitation and over construction etc. Ecotourism has become very common especially in conservation and expansion concerns. It is basically a concept of tourism that not only provides economic benefits to the visiting areas or the host communities but also protects the culture and the environment of the host region. This study is an attempt to highlight the ecotourism potential of Hunza Valley. Qualitative research approach is used to conduct this study. In-depth interviews are conducted with tourism department government of Gilgit-Baltistan, academia, hospitality sector and visitors in Hunza valley and the collected data are analyzed using thematic approach. This study reveals that Hunza valley has tremendous ecotourism potential and it can contribute significantly to the livelihoods of local community if it is managed properly. Ecotourism not only ensure environmental protection of tourism but it can also contribute to the livelihoods of local community by engaging them in various tourism activities. As this study explored that some conservation models in form of trophy hunting etc are being practices in few villages in Hunza valley which needs to be strengthen and replicated to the regions. Thus, ecotourism is the only way to ensure sustainable tourism in the region. This study highly recommends that the policy makers are needed to devise policies in such a way that the social and ecological concerns should be addressed while including local community in policy formulation.

**Keywords:** Tourism management, Ecotourism potential, Ecotourism development, Hunza Valley

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSD the Commission on Sustainable Development

DFID the British Department for International Development

GB the Gilgit- Baltistan

GDP the Gross Domestic Product

IDS the Institute for Development Studies

IUCN the International Union for Conservation of Nature

KPK the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

MDGs the Millennium Development Goals

MoCC the Ministry of Climate Change

NGOs the Non- Governmental Organizations

PTDC the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation

PTI the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf

SDGs the Sustainable Development Goals

SL the Sustainable Livelihood

TDCP the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab

TIES the International Ecotourism Society

TTCI the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index

UNDP the United Nations Development Program

UNEP the United Nations Environment Programme

USA the United States of America

WDI the World Development Indicators

WEF the World Economic Forum

WTO the World Tourism Organization

WTP the average Willingness to Pay

WTTC the World Travel and Tourism Council

# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 Introduction

Ecotourism is generally a new term, it comprises of two words 'eco' and 'tourism' which means that ecotourism actually explains the relationship between nature and the living beings. This term is defined for the first time in the mid-1980s by a Mexican environmentalist Hector Ceballos Lascurain, as "Environmentally liable visit to comparatively undamaged natural regions, with the aim of enjoying and appreciating nature (along with any associated cultural features - both past as well as present), which encourages preservation, has small visitor influence, permits positive and vigorous socio-economic participation of the local people" (Lascurain, 1996). In the same way the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 1990 gave the definition of ecotourism as "Travel to natural regions in a responsible manner that protects the environment and ensures the well-being of locals."

Ecotourism has been developing at a high speed over the last few decades. It has the ability to put positive impacts on the environment and on society as a whole. By the United Nations the year 2002 is titled as the International Year of Ecotourism, and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) instructed the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to undertake actions for the year. Its aim is to assess the instructions learned on the implementation of ecotourism, and to recognize and encourage different ecotourism types that result in protecting threatened ecosystems, allocation of the profits from the activities with the local populations and to give respect to the culture of the local people. Ecotourism is having a vital position within the huge tourism sector due to its ability of being a significant

instrument for sustainable development. It generates billions of dollars as yearly sales. It can be considered the actual business market tendencies. Simultaneously, it often works in a different way as compare to the other sectors of the travel industry, due to the fact that ecotourism has sustainable development effects as the protection of natural places, instructing the travelers about sustainability and providing benefits to the local community as a whole (Wood, 2002).

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that is both ethical and responsible, as well as providing opportunities for healthy recreational activities and adventure. It investigates a natural area's ecological, cultural, historical, and archaeological resources while protecting its integrity and boosting local economic development potential. Further, to different people, ecotourism means different things. Others define ecotourism as tourism that is environmentally sustainable, low impact, culturally sensitive, learning oriented, and community centered. In other words, ecotourism is small-scale, environmentally friendly, educational, and beneficial to the communities in which it takes place. It is frequently compared to mass tourism (Shah, 2017).

This segment of tourism industry has achieved the position of an active device for sustainable development of a region that is why developing countries nowadays have approved it and involving it in their economic development and preservation or maintenance policies. It is an alternative form of tourism that includes visiting natural places with the purpose of learning or to do environment friendly exercises. For making a meaningful relationship between tourist actions and the environment suitable, policies, cautious planning and their thoughtful implementation is required. Villages or regions where ecotourism is planned and implemented carefully while involving the local people has the ability to deliver benefits as well as reducing burden from other less sustainable doings that uses cultural and natural resources (Kiper, 2013).

The sector of ecotourism contributes in the communal improvement through provision of a highly sustainable substitute for income generation to the local people. Its main objective is preservation of resources, biotic variety in particular and retain sustainable usage of resources that can get natural experience to tourists, protect the biological condition and adding to economic advantage. Conversely, the success of ecotourism objectives is determined by its economic validity and natural sustainability. It helps in including local population for the protection of the environment and biodiversity of the zone that biodiversity consequently gives the economic inducements to the local people (Kiper, 2013).

It can be considered as the sole subset of the travel industry and it focusses primarily on the maintenance and the improvement of natural systems by means of tourism. It has different meanings for different people. To some people it is a matter of visiting places with the main focus on nature, culture and adventure. Ecotourism is an important industry of the national economy in several countries, not only a side project to support environmental protection. Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nepal, Kenya, and Madagascar, for instance and domains, for example, Antarctica, ecotourism shows a noteworthy share of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and economic action.

International travel has become more and more significant in several countries all over the world (Lea, 2006). In 2020, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to global GDP was estimated to be over 4.7 trillion US dollars. The entire contribution of travel and tourism to the gross domestic product (GDP) in various nations globally declined sharply as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. Overall, the travel and tourism industry in the United States contributed the most to global GDP of any country, with a total contribution of 1.1 trillion dollars in 2020. China came in second position, with a donation of \$667 billion US dollars. In 2019, these two countries had the biggest direct contribution to GDP (Lock, 2021). Through expansion of tourism sector and relaxing

rigid visa policies for international travelers, the government can earn profits as well as improve household earnings. For instance, there are many nations whose economy has been influenced positively by this sector (Ringer, 2002).

In the period of globalization, the third world countries-initiated tourism to develop their economy, encourage peace, improve their human resources and decrease the level of poverty (Richards & Hall, 2002). Tourism supports to “increase revenues and job opportunities, this can be of greater economic importance for local people” (Durberry, 2004). The local population could increase their incomes and socio-economic circumstances through employment, which could result in a better living standard. Tourism assists in poverty reduction and encourages the development of the local community (Oh, 2005).

All United Nations Member States embraced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, in 2015 as a broad source of inspiration for ending poverty, protected the earth and assure that all persons escalate prosperity and accord by 2030. The 17 SDGs are inter-linked with each other that is, they observe that activity in one area will effect outcomes in others, and that expansion must alter societal, monetary and biological sustainability.

Tourism sector also plays a substantial role in the attainment of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It is specifically stated in three of the 17 SDGs under the name SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 14 (Life below Water), where SDG 8 ensures to promote sustained, inclusive, economic growth and full employment. The tourism industry contributes in this goal as it adds up to 10% of the worldwide GDP and 7% of the global exports and by providing jobs to millions of people across the globe. On the other hand, tourism companies are in charge to deliver fair and decent work conditions for all and must guarantee that benefits are held locally and re-put resources into the native value



chain. SDG 12 explains that the tour operators can help to improve goal 12, since they are in a place to affect the behavior of consumers and adding to sustainability by making it a condition for booking. They can direct sustainable consumption by effecting client choices and the reaction of service suppliers towards this goal with the help of their buying and supply chain supervision and SDG 14 focusses on the conservation and sustainable usage of the seas, oceans, and the marine resources for the realization of ecological development (Tourism and The Sustainable Development Goals- Journey to 2030, 2017).

The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan lead to the dissolution of the Federal Tourism Ministry and tourism matters were shifted to the provinces. The tourism sector did not work very well at the provincial level. The Government of Punjab created the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP), a public limited firm for the tourism concerning matters of the province in 1987 but it failed to work well due to the shortage of professionalism and monetary resources. Later on, both the governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Sindh also formed tourism development corporations which started working on different tourism projects at the provincial level in their respective areas, but they also failed to work for the same reason as in case of TDCP and like all the other government tourism administrations of Pakistan. Overall, no serious struggle has been made by any province to make a Provincial Tourism Policy so far except the current government of KPK. The first Provincial Tourism Policy of KPK is declared in March 2015 and it is organized by taking consultation from significant public and private stakeholders. The KPK government has decided to give precedence to this sector and converted it into the main device for economic growth by making the region a favorite tourism spot for both domestic and foreign travelers (Rana, 2015).

In Pakistan, the existing literature on tourism organization and administration shows that tourism sector was given importance at policy level in 1972. The current government is trying to play a vital role in bringing tourism to the country and tourism was endorsed publically after The Pakistan Tahreek Insaf (PTI) came into power. According to their manifesto “The PTI intends to turn around Pakistan's tourist industry in order to improve the country's international image and boost its direct contribution to GDP. Given its unique culture, heritage, and natural resources, tourism in Pakistan has enormous potential. Though, for the time being, it is a squandered opportunity due to a variety of factors such as the war on terror, insufficient marketing, weak public and private sector infrastructure, and other factors like services.” The Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) alongside with the PTDC have an acute role in providing guidance for the sustainable progress of tourism segment. The MoCC has shown positive additions under the present government with prominent undertakings like the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami, plastic boycott, Clean Green Initiative, Electric Vehicle strategy and thought to dispatch green structure guidelines to counter the effect of the travel industry related development (Rashid, 2021).

The competitiveness of the travel and tourism industry of a country compared to other countries shows where the nation is presently standing. For this purpose, ‘Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index’ (TTCI) is developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its ‘Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report’ on 140 economies including Pakistan, and published in September 2019. This is no doubt an easy way to calculate the ability of a nation to appeal and maintain tourism and travel, while at the same time focusing on act of the included organizations, structure of governance and markets presentation. The travel and tourism industry of Pakistan is not in a good position according to the TTCI 2019 report, it ranks at 121 from a total of 140 countries and it was at 124<sup>th</sup> position according to TTCI in 2017, but now it is improved by three

positions according to 2019 report. The report shows that Pakistan falls in the lowest 25% of nations, where most of them relate to low and lower-middle income economies and among them 26 belong to Sub-Saharan Africa. Pakistan can be considered as the least competitive nation in the region of South Asia according to its travel and tourism industry with a satisfactory security and safety (134<sup>th</sup>) circumstances (Javed, 2019).

Pakistan is a country enriched with natural beauty and the tourism sector is developing (Chen & Chiou- Wei, 2009). This old region is known for its unique historical and cultural heritage. The nation gets a lot of vacation spots at Jaba, Kalam, Swat, Balakot, Malam, Shangla, Muree, Ayubia, Gilgit, Chitral, Naran and Kaghan valley, and other ancient ranges of mountain in the nation (Arshad, Iqbal, & Shahbaz, 2018). There are many tourist spots in the northern areas of Pakistan and these zones have remnants of lands related to its particular legacy and it is considered as the topmost destination comprising of numerous appealing waterways, lakes, valleys and mountains (Hye & Khan, 2013).

Pakistan proposes a number of top ecotourism places in the world. These includes high mountains like Karakoram, Himalayas and the ranges of Hindu Kush, glaciers, tough cliffs, alpine fields, coniferous woods, sub- mountain bush forest, a wide variety of flora and fauna, deserts, sea shores, swamps and coastline. Pakistan is having 10 out of 18 mammal orders on the planet containing the Mediterranean Pigmy Shrew as world smallest and the Blue Whale as the largest warm-blooded creature (Israr, Shafi, Khan, Baig, & Khan, 2009). Pakistan is a nation of extraordinary experience and nature that offers numerous exercises to pull in the eco-tourists, for example traveling, mountaineering, mountain biking, wilderness boating, mountain and desert jeep safaris, wild pig chasing, trout fishing, watching birds, watching Indus dolphin, yak and camel safaris. The cultural celebrations involve the Shandur Polo celebration, Silk Rout celebrations, Kalash celebrations,

Kanpur water sports celebration, food dresses and friendliness of the host community. Shandur Polo is a customary competition which is composed every year on the Shandur Pass at the world most noteworthy Polo ground having an altitude of around 3700m from the level of sea. In this celebration, an outdoors town is built up and furthermore traditional music and dancing platforms are organized (Arshad, Iqbal, & Shahbaz, 2017).

According to the Tourism Division of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism, the tourism sector is the ninth chief basis for foreign exchange incomes in Pakistan. The travel and tourism industry can encourage GDP growth of the nation. This sector presently contributes to 7.4% of the total GDP of Pakistan. Hospitality and tourism are considered as the second rapid developing industries, in terms of foreign direct investment and 410 billion rupees of investment was made in this segment in 2017. Ecotourism can also help in the alleviation of poverty of a region through tourism activities that create sustainable incomes without hurting or putting in danger the fragile and subtle natural and cultural resources of a particular area. Whereas according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) the travel and tourism contributed to \$ 811.0 billion or 10.4% of the total GDP in 2018. It is likely to rise by 3.6% in 2019 and expected to increase by 3.7% pa to 11.5% of the total GDP in 2029. On the other hand, it contributed to employment by 10.0% of the total employment rate in 2018 which was expected to increase by 2.9% in 2019 or 10.0% of the total employment. It is further predicted to rise by 2.5% pa or 11.1% of the total employment by 2029 (Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2019 world., 2019).

In Pakistan, the tourism and travel sector's direct input to GDP in 2016 was \$ 7.6 billion (2.7%) and it was expected to rise up to Pakistani rupees 833.8 billion (5.1%) in 2017 and predicted to add up to 1,432.1 billion Pakistani rupees (5.6%) pa to the total GDP by 2027. The share of travel and tourism sector in employment was 1.337 million jobs making 2.3% of the total employment

in 2016, this was expected to grow up to 1.368 million jobs (23%) in 2017 and would increase to 1.757 million jobs, a rise of 2.5% pa by making 2.3% of the total employment in 2017. While, the indirect share of this sector in the total employment was around 3.550 million jobs by making the total contribution of almost 6.0% in the employment rate. This was estimated to increase by 3.0% and 3.657 million jobs by 2017 and growth of 2.7% pa by 2027 creating 4.783 million jobs which will make 6.3% of the total employment (Travel and tourism economic impact 2017 Pakistan., 2017).

The World Development Indicators (WDI) of World Bank highlight the importance of security related concerns that determine the global tourist arrivals as well as receipts from them the total tourist advents raised by 8% pa in 1995 to 2000 but it decreased by -11% in 2001 to 2003. This negative impact on the worldwide tourist arrivals was due to 9/11 attacks by the terrorist in the USA and leading to hard security procedures in the country. In 2007 to 2008, the universal tourist arrivals restarted to grow. In 2003 to 2011, the improved yearly progress rate of worldwide tourist appearances was 11%. A larger number of about 1.161 million tourists' entrances were recorded at the end of this period. Tourist comings decreased by 17% in 2012 as a result of a series of domestic attacks by the terrorist. An increase in the tourist advents can be witnessed due to better security conditions in the country during the period of 2015 to 2016 (Punjab tourism for economic growth project, World Bank., 2017).

There is abundant potential in travel sector in Northern Areas of Pakistan which is not a hidden mystery. This region has got fascinating sites, a unique cultural heritage and very hospitable people which can be considered as a competitive advantage for drawing the interest of tourists from all over the world. This place is having a great historical importance in terms of political and soldierly conflicts between the British, Chinese and Russian domains. Soon after the ending of British rule

in 1947 in the sub- continent, the individuals of this district chose to join Pakistan through a well-known native rebel against the administration of Maharaja of Kashmir.

Five out of fourteen mountain tops with an altitude of more than 8000 meters including the world's second tallest pinnacle (K-2) and the absolute biggest glaciers outside polar districts are situated in Gilgit Baltistan. Recognizing the immense capability of the travel industry and its consequences for downstream enterprises, the government of Pakistan just as the GB Administration are concentrating on the travel industry for business openings, generation of job opportunities, accomplishing higher economic development and to inform the outside world, about "The shrouded treasures" of this region.

Ecotourism necessitates a promise to safety with regard to all associates in travel industry. That is, it entails a connotation between visit managers, important government offices, NGOs, academia, local societies and travelers for the protection of cultural and natural assets. The policies regarding tourism should be organized properly by taking consultation from significant private and public stakeholders. A well-planned ecotourism will not only benefit the area financially by engaging the residents in tourism related employments as most of the locals earn their livings through travel industry, at the same time protecting the natural resources of the region.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Ecotourism can be considered as an alternate form of the travel industry that is continuously gaining importance worldwide during the previous few years. There is a growing interest in people to spend their holidays in natural places and they are well aware of ecology and its conservation, hence we can say that ecotourism has gained the position of the rapid growing sectors of the travel industry worldwide (UNWTO, 2001). World Tourism Organization (WTO) revealed the significance of ecotourism in the worldwide industry by proclaiming year 2002 as International Year of Ecotourism. It offers improved linkages between different countries, lessens the leakage of profits out of a nation, produces local jobs, creating a multiplier effect on the economy and promotes sustainable development (Khan, 1997; Belsky, 1999). Tourism sector is considered as the largest and fastest growing industries nowadays. It is growing with an increasing rate worldwide even in the periods of recession. It is a source of creating capital for many developed countries.

Northern areas are known for its beautiful landscape and enriched with natural resources. Tourist arrival in Gilgit-Baltistan has increased over the past few years, this has created serious management challenges for both the tourism managers and the government. The increasing flow of tourists in Gilgit Baltistan has put pressure on the fragile ecosystem services of the region which are the major sources of livelihoods of mountain community. To meet the high tourist demand, locals are using both the barren and agro land for the construction of hotels, guesthouses and other tourist facilities, this un-planned over construction puts pressure on the natural landscape of the region. Thus, in order to make tourism sustainable in the region, there is a need to develop alternative models and thus, ecotourism is one of the viable models. However, the potential and

significance of mountain ecotourism is yet to study in the case of Hunza valley and thus, this study fulfills the gap.

### 1.3 Research Questions

- Does ecotourism create sustainable livelihoods for mountain communities?
- What are the factors that attract eco-tourists in the area?
- How ecotourism can be promoted in the region?

### 1.4 Research Objectives

The overall aim of the study is to discover the role of ecotourism in the creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities in Hunza, while the specific objectives include:

- **To identify if ecotourism creates sustainable livelihoods in the region**

This objective focusses on how ecotourism creates livelihoods or employment opportunities for the locals that sustained for a longer period of time without putting pressure on the fragile eco-system of the region.

- **To identify various factors that contribute in attracting Eco-tourists**

This objective ascertain the factors that contribute in attracting eco-tourists in the region. The factors that needs to be protected to attract more and more ecotourist in the area for both the economic and social development of the place.

- **To formulate a policy brief about ecotourism potential in Gilgit-Baltistan**

This objective focusses on providing a policy brief regarding ecotourism potential in the region. It focusses on tourism that is based on an improved system leading to sustainable tourism in the area.



## 1.5 Explanation of the Key Concepts

**Ecotourism:** It is a responsible visit to natural and un-disturbed places which protects the environment or ecology and sustains livelihood of the local population.

According to (Ziffer, 1989) ecotourism is “A type of tourism centered on an area's natural history, particularly its indigenous cultures. In the spirit of appreciation, engagement, and sensitivity, the ecotourist visits relatively untouched places. The ecotourist uses wildlife and natural resources in a non-consumptive manner and contributes to the visited areas through labor or financial means intended to directly helping the preservation of the place and the financial welfare of the people living in that area.”

**Sustainable Livelihood:** A livelihood includes the abilities, assets, and actions needed to earn living. It is considered sustainable when it can handle and recover from shocks and pressures and sustain or improve its abilities, activities, and assets, both at present as well as in the future, while not damaging the natural reserves (The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Proposition 5), 2017).

The concept of sustainable livings was presented by The Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development for the first time, and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development extended the idea in 1992, upholding for the accomplishment of sustainable livelihoods as a wide objective for poverty alleviation.

According to (Krantz, 2001) the idea and approach of sustainable livelihood have been practicing by The Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) most recently. Driving advocate Ian Scoones of definition of sustainable livelihood (SL):

“A livelihood is made up of the skills, assets (both material and social), and activities that are required to make a living. A livelihood is sustainable if it can withstand and recover from stresses and shocks, while also maintaining or improving its capabilities and assets without jeopardizing the natural resource base.”

## **1.6 Significance of Study**

Tourism sector is considered as the largest and fastest growing industries nowadays. It is growing with an increasing rate worldwide even in the periods of recession. It is a source of creating capital for many developed countries. In Northern areas tourism related activities are largely based on its beautiful landscape and sensational sceneries of huge mountains. The unique cultural and wildlife in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) makes it even more special in archaeological legacy (IUCN, 2003). The travel and tourism industry is one of the significant benefactors to the economy of the northern areas, however no official measurements are accessible but it is assessed that 50% of the universal travelers coming in Pakistan visit GB (Ahmed, 2003).

Tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan is considered as nature based tourism because of natural beauty of the region, unique landscape, high mountain peaks, glaciers and lakes, diverse culture and rich biodiversity. The current tourism development in Gilgit-Baltistan is not as per principles of ecotourism because ecotourism requires to have a minimum impact on the natural resources of the region, ensure local economic development and also it ensures the maximum satisfaction of the tourists. Therefore, this study highlights the potential of ecotourism and it also argues that there is dire need to follow the model of ecotourism for the sustainable tourism development in Gilgit-Baltistan. This study argues that policy makers need to design tourism policy in such a way that ensures conservation of the fragile ecosystem services of the region, local economic development

and it also ensures maximum tourists' satisfaction. There is a need for a well-planned ecotourism in the region and this research argues in building a framework that is more sustainable and will improve the management system for tourism in the area that will ultimately lead to environmental conservation and solve the economic problems of the natives.

### **1.7 Structure of Thesis**

The study is coordinated into five chapters. Chapter one incorporates an introduction to the topic. In the second chapter various themes have been examined which are almost corresponding to the topic in the literature review. Methodological framework used in the study has been described in the third chapter. The fourth chapter portrays the data analysis along with the outcomes of the study. Conclusion, policy recommendations and limitations to the study have been explained in the fifth chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

#### **2.1.1 Tourism**

The tourism industry has appeared as an important strength for sustainable socioeconomic development worldwide (Wakimin, Azlina, Hazman, Hwang , & Lee , 2018). The main objective of sustainable tourism is to visit the sites without damaging or hurting the nature and the local community and also creating a positive influence on the society, environment and the economy of the country as well (Tang, 2011). An extensive agreement is made on the idea that there should be a sustainable tourism growth, through there is an ongoing argument on how to achieve it (Gossling, et al., 2005). Because Tourism involves moving to the genral place, local transference, lodging, vacation, entertainment, food and shopping. It is related to a travel for trade or commerce, friends, family and for leisure (Hwang & Lee, 2019) .

The sector of travel and tourism are considered as essencial economic activities across the world (WTTC, 2018). Likewise, the developing countries are earning a big amount of foreign exchange with the help of tourism which inturn increase their sustainable development and growth (Ekanayake & Long, 2012). It is an important source and a basis for a nation's economic growth and development in developing countries (Shahzad, Shahbaz , Ferrer, & Kumar, 2017). On the other hand, in developed countries the economic growth effects overseas travel for business purposes, this can result in an increase in the country's foreign reserves (Mahmoudinia, Soderjani, & Pourshahabi, 2011). For most of the developing nations the tourism and travel businesses are a basis for foreign

exchange revenues and are amongst the rapid growing industries worldwide (Wood, 2002). It is argued that mass tourism creates economic benefits but on the other hand it has certain negative environmental and social impacts (Bac, 2013).

It is proved that tourism has direct link with international tourism growth and economic growth in terms of output and GDP measurement. An increase in GDP automatically leads to the betterment of livelihood and local communities. i.e. as reported by Ashe (2005), when global economic growth exceeds by 4 percent, tourism growth tends to be higher, when GDP fall by 2%, tourism falls even below than GDP (Ashe, 2005).

In the period of promoting peace and development, the fast expansion of tourism helps the cultural and economic exchanges between countries and plays a big role in cultural construction, eco-friendly economic development and regional poverty alleviation. Further they claimed that it handles both economic and social importance (Luo, Chen, & Zheng, 2016).

While the world is growing more unified and dependent, the effects of this interconnectedness on the animals of faraway places like mountain areas are both positive as well as negative on a physical and cultural level. Because natural resources are so essential to small mountain villages in this area, it's also a crucial conservation landscape. The severity of the geography, their isolation, the lack of access to external markets, and the possibility of natural disasters that hit with little or no warning are all obstacles that these small mountain settlements face (Rosen, et al., 2012).

Another study conducted by Akbar, Shah, Khan, & Naeem (2017) found that natural landscape in the mountainous areas is an important resource for tourism development. They suggested that as tourism plays a crucial role in the development of the economy of a country it is imperative to aware

tourist as well as the local people regarding the maintenance and improvement of existing and also the artificial landscape of the tourist areas of Swat valley.

Pakistan is earning around \$190 million with from its tourism industry (Hussain , 2006). Its tourism activities are highly based on northern areas that have beautiful landscape, Scenery Mountain and regional wildlife as well as Gilgit-Baltistan's unique culture (IUCN, 2003). Ahmad (2003), has indicated that tourism sector contributes the largest part in the Pakistan's economy with the environmentally, ecologically and create opportunities of economic gain in Gilgit-Baltistan (Ahmed , 2003).

Recreational visits are largely about human activity that involves travel from one location to another for the sake of cultural, economic, and social exchange. People travel to exotic locales for a variety of reasons, including sight-seeing, picnicking, bird-watching, and cultural and religious experiences. However, entrance to such locales is frequently free, posing environmental risks while also depriving the cash-strapped government of revenue generated by such sites (Rafiq, Shafiqullah, & Malik, 2007). The study suggested to impose an entry fee for creation of more resources. Furthermore, resources that are conserved can benefit present and future generation (Rafiq, Shafiqullah, & Malik, 2007).

### **2.1.2 Ecotourism**

Ecotourism society of Pakistan (ESP) defines ecotourism as “An activity that provides direct monetary provision to the local populaces where travel actions are being enjoyed and generated” (IUCN, 2012).The rank of eco-tourism can be seen at national and international level as a source of welfare to the local community. Local people act as a host and play integral part in the ecotourism

industry. Income generated from tourist activities is used to spend on the well-being of local people belonging to ecotourism communities and their improvement (ESP, 2013).

Ecotourism is like enjoying world's amazing natural creation and diversity, human cultures and natural life without damaging them. Visitors shows respect towards local community, natural resources and environment. Ecotourism consists upon visiting natural places, protecting and empowering the local people and learning opportunities. Tourism industry is the largest industry in the world producing more than six hundred billion dollars through tourism industries as estimated by world tourism organization. Ecotourism is often linked with natural and cultural resources. In ecotourism the core cultural resources involve events, festivals, handicrafts, museums, local dishes and artifacts. Furthermore, these kinds of activities include travelling within nation and attract overseas tourist that provide funds to the local population for economic growth and give respect to the cultural values and the civil rights of that particular region (Arshad, Iqbal, & Shahbaz, 2017).

Ecotourism in protected regions is fast expanding throughout the world. Despite the well-documented advantages of ecotourism, it is not a panacea for resolving the complicated human needs and resource-capacity contradiction in protected areas unless it is carefully planned and managed. Despite their official protection status, national parks have been exploited for a variety of leisure activities at a high rate every year. This could harm the ecosystem of the parks (Kelkit, Celik, & Esbah, 2010). An ecotourism model that matches the Great Plains may be developed to its full potential if the region's indigenous animals can be conserved and subsequently propagated, and the enormous natural ecosystems can be preserved and recovered. Ecotourism could be a valuable source of revenue for the region's conservation efforts (Maude & Reading, 2010). Ecotourism has the potential to give an alternative economic basis, but it does not happen by itself, and it has social and environmental consequences. The local population must be authorized to

seize a sizable portion of the multiple economic benefits created by the travel industry. Local involvement in planning for development as well as outside help with the arrangement of fundamental foundation, preparation and credit is required for the prevention of multiplier leakage. Moreover, local area interest is also fundamental for recognizing negative effects on individuals who live in regions going through ecotourism improvement (Place, 1995).

Ecotourism is a well-known and rapidly expanding type of tourism. It is frequently marketed and regarded as being distinct from traditional mass tourism in that it is environmentally and socio-culturally responsible, if not even beneficial. However, the positive perception of ecotourism stems from viewing it through the lens of an ecotourist bubble, which is similar to the tourist bubble. Inside this ecotourist bubble, the objections and encounters offered to travelers are preoccupied from their unique situations, hence prompting a contorted picture of them and of ecotourism itself (Carrier & Macleod, 2005).

Ecotourism is one of the world's most promising tourism industries today. Ecotourism development has boosted the economies of many developed and developing countries. Ecotourism may become the primary source for earnings of foreign exchange in the tourism industry. For the social, ecological, economic, and cultural benefits of the local people, the government must secure their participation in ecotourism development (Bhuiyan, Siwar, Ismail, & Islam, 2011). Ecotourism is being encouraged and supported by an increasing number of people and groups around the world as a primary means of dealing with tourism's negative consequences. However, the term's meaning changes depending on who you ask, what you're working on, and where you're located. National parks, where this form of tourism has been pushed for many years, have shown that it can be a basis for considerable long-term aggregate environmental changes. In addition, ecotourism, green tourism, and sustainable tourism development are broad concepts that must be



articulated, planned, and evaluated in depth on the ground in light of the socioeconomic and environmental conditions that exist in various locations. In this regard, not only ecotourism but all forms of tourism require careful planning and management methods (Nelson, 1994).

The growth of tourism, in all of its forms, has coincided with and stemmed from the globalization movement. Traditional mass tourism was considered as environmentally detrimental and hurtful to local cultures, therefore ecotourism arose out of a dissatisfaction with it. Ecotourism is now largely seen as a feasible component of a long-term growth strategy in underdeveloped countries. Moreover, ecotourism is possibly an important financial apparatus for non-industrial nations, however its monetary advantages might convey stowed away environmental and social expenses. The test is to adjust these pressures in a manner that permits agricultural nations to receive the financial rewards of ecotourism while containing its potential for natural and social annihilation (O'Neill, 2002).

Lee (1997) found that ecotourism not only helps to preserve the natural environment but it also provides local people with very little leakages through small tourist businesses supported by local investment (Lee, 1997). National developmental strategies are developed to recognize the important role in improving the societal segmentations (Ashe, 2005). Ecotourism play a very huge contribution to the nature's sustainable preservation (Mercado & Lassoie., 2002).

For ecotourism to guarantee as a superior thing and economic productivity a serious level of collaboration is irreplaceable. On account of the reserve, tourism improvement has generally been impulsive, unstructured and reliant on "instant" persuasive programs, rather than being founded on a vital long lasting, market concerned strategy (Brenner & Job, 2006). Besides, there is no guest managing strategy that considers the particular necessities and prospects for the various fragments of the ecotourism market, while at a similar time adding to ecological assurance: in case guests

were deliberately directed to various sites of a given protected area, then, at that point the congestion and ecological deprivation it causes could be kept away from without turning to disliked and frequently unproductive methods of implementation (Brenner & Job, 2006). Considered ecological administration is imperative to the sustained capability of the travel industry situated in natural surroundings. The travel industry construction in areas of ecological and social importance has a specific obligation to save and upgrade indigenous habitats for the delight in people in the future. Furthermore, rules and accreditation projects to support and classify sustainable travel and ecotourism can be utilize by architects and engineers of the travel industry infrastructure to improve the ecological and social results of the travel industry projects and to amplify functional efficiencies (Toner, 2006).

Three key conditions must be met for ecotourism to support sustainable development in the communities that it is designed to benefit. First, opportunities to capitalize on tourism's economic benefits must be handled in a culturally acceptable manner, making them accessible to the target demographic. Second, in order for communities to profit from ecotourism, they must have secure land tenure over the area in question, also the power to make decisions related to land use in the region. Third, tourist advantages to local communities must go beyond economics; they must also support deeper social and political justice goals that, if ignored, will limit people's ability to benefit economically from tourism. The conservation results of ecotourism will be less promising, in the absence of these essentials (Charnley, 2005). When skillfully employed together, community, ecotourism, and environmental preservation, as well as environmental management, can promote social and economic growth while also preserving endangered species. As the government realizes that it cannot be solely responsible for conservation, community participation becomes increasingly important. Any proposition must be trailed by the acknowledgment and

comprehension of the local people. Most significant is if this proposition comes from the local area itself. In any case, for this to occur, training is undeniably more significant and this suggests on long term consequences (Junior & Schmidt, 2006).

Ecotourism is undeniably tied to forests, wildlife, the environment, and the natural world. In the end, and disruption to these assets may have a negative impact on the growth of industry of ecotourism. Human intervention and natural disasters are the two main forces that can wreak havoc on tourism management. Though natural phenomena are beyond our control, their effects can be regulated and mitigated by taking appropriate precautions in a timely manner. Similarly, training exercises and improved educational facilities in local communities can be used to handle human being's negative roles. Additionally, infrastructure improvements, employee positions, mobility, security updates, and increased budget allocations are all critical aspects in the tourism department's development and progress. To make this enterprise a successful and profitable industry in Pakistan, substantial efforts at the governmental level are required (Khan & Khan, 2019). Appropriate planning is essential for a well-planned ecotourism, and the tourist must have prior knowledge of the culture, biodiversity, and environment of the area to be visited. Such travelers should be informed on the right attire to wear and adequately briefed on the dos and don'ts upon arriving at their destinations. A well-designed ecotourism necessitates the use of well-trained nature guides also that may include collaboration with the societies (Shah, 2017).

It is examined that the role of community control in the success of ecotourism projects in the communities. Results showed that community control as well as infrastructure, co-operation with other organization and public relations are crucial for the success of a project. Further ecotourism controlled by the local community might have a positive influence on itself through reduced

migration by creating employment opportunities in the home town, resource development, and control over environmental and cultural misuse (Grieves, Adler, & King, 2014).

It is indicated that as there is an open market situation prevailing in Pakistan therefore eco-tourism and the probability of its success in confirming local economic benefit in the sector of tourism is influenced by elements outside the mechanism of governments or their agencies. Further, tour operators, market managers and tourists play the significant roles. He suggested some important steps to be taken to ensure a real sustainable development in the region (Haroon, 2002). A study conducted in Murree stated that most of the local people are linked directly or indirectly to the tourism industry. They claimed that ecotourism plays a significant role in the development of socioeconomic circumstances of the local community (Kausar, Mirza, Saboor, Saleem, & Khalid, 2013).

It is important to know social, economic and social impacts of ecotourism activities during planning and for sustainability in the ecotourism. Further he revealed that ecotourism promotes community development through provision of an alternate and more sustainable source of livelihood to the local community (Kiper, 2013). Ecotourism is very important component that is affected by local governmental conditions and the big source of income generation (Khan & Khan, 2012).

Developing countries earn and get more benefits from tourism activities as most of them are naturally beautiful like Pakistan. A large number of researcher represents the same belief about tourism and its role in economic growth and development of a country. Ogutu (2002) has indicated that ecotourism has huge impact on the rural communities because it provides infrastructure, income, exposure and employment opportunities to the local communities (Ogutu, 2002). He further indicated that developing nation get benefits and economic growth mostly from tourism and travelling activities. Fang (2002), stated that ecotourism played a vital role in the improvement of

the local economy as well as in the conservation of the environment (Fang, 2002). He further explains that due to successful implementation of ecotourism strategies the number of visitors increased causing income to increase. Governmental laws and policies have important role in developing tourism technology and improvement of local communities (Fang, 2002).

A study found that ecotourism activities help in reducing the negative tourism effects enabling both local people and tourists to get advantage from tourism activities. They suggested that more the tourists are attracted, the more income will be generated and more benefits to the local people. They further recommended that the guides and the tour operators must aware the tourists about the preservation of environment and local values, customs and laws before organizing any tour to the valley (Karim, Batra, Muhammad, Shaheen, & Parveen, 2014).

Common goal of ecotourism is the economic welfare through creation of jobs for society, incomes for companies or earnings for the parks. To get advantage from ecotourism, it is important for tourist-spots regions to make long-term plans and policies and make sure their successful implementation. It is recommended that tourism policies should include institutional reforms, diversity, sustainability criteria, gender equity, local financial incentives, peace and security and also global economic cooperation (R., Shamsudin, Radam, & Shuib, 2009). Further, the international mountain community should provide a platform to destinations of mountain ecotourism so that they can raise their profiles at not only national but also at international level (Nepal, 2002).

Ecotourism plays a fundamental role in developing countries' economy in improving the economic conditions of local people and generate income to improve their incomes. Ecotourism create a sustainable and viable tourism opportunities and at the same times, it improves the living condition of the people of that area. Community-based ecotourism obliges to considerate and support the

authorized privileges and public charge on land, its means and expansion. Ecotourism is important for the livelihood of the local communities by bringing the residents in the ecotourism business to meet their economic needs. The rural people in northern areas have knowledge, local information, strong cultural background and heritage. Northern areas in Pakistan consists on Gilgit, Ghzer, Skardu, Diamer, Astore and Ghanche. These areas have numerous places of attraction i.e. Karakorum highway, mountains, clean environment, mountain biking, rafting, spring and greenery all attracts the tourists (MUHAMMAD, et al., 2009).

Another study by Karim, Muhammad, Din, & Alam (2013) in Hunza revealed same results, they stated that eco-tourism should be encouraged as eco-tourists showed respect towards the codes of conduct, customs, local laws and other related issues. They also proved to be more responsible and friendly towards the environment. So, they suggested that eco-tourism must be promoted in Hunza and this will help in reducing negative effects of tourism and increase the benefit of both local people and tourists from sustainable tourism.

The Karakoram and Pamir mountain ranges have high-elevation mountain ecosystems encapsulate enchanting landscapes that are one of a kind biodiversity, and they are home to a variety of indigenous pastoralists' communities. These societies rely on ecosystem services to survive. Our understanding, however, differs. The economic worth of ecosystem services to a household is limited. This data is necessary for the creation of sustainable development policies (Din, et al., 2020). Ecotourism is a tool for both maintaining the natural landscape and enhancing rural population's livelihoods. It aids in reducing the detrimental effects of tourism on protected area biodiversity. There is enormous potential for developing ecotourism in the environmentally delicate regions like Gilgit-Baltistan with the increasing prospects of better infrastructure and increased connectivity under the framework of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Nigar, 2018).

### **2.1.3 Livelihoods**

Tourism & travelling are the basic of increase in foreign exchange revenues leading to growth in GDP and making economy stable (Wood, 2002). In a lot of countries, the tourism business continues to be a main source for the creation of income and job opportunities in both the informal and formal sectors (Malik, Chawdhry, Sheikh, & Farooqi, 2010) . For example (Hwang & Lee, 2019) argued that the economy of Korea is growing and making development at a high speed because of growth in its tourism activities.

Tourism embraces notable economic potential. It creates jobs and opportunities for economic growth even in the regions with fewer economic resources (Tresilian, 2006). The tourism sector plays central role in the creation of employment opportunities and increasing the economic activity in the tourist areas as linked with several subsectors liked hotels, tourist shops, restaurants, travel guides, transportation and tour operators etc.

A study on the resident's perceptions about impacts of tourism revealed that there is a high level of agreement by the residents regarding the positive sociocultural and economic influence of tourism and they also showed their desire to develop infrastructure to attract more tourists. Further, some residents strongly agreed that tourism creates employment opportunities and it promotes cultural activities (Liu & Li, 2018).

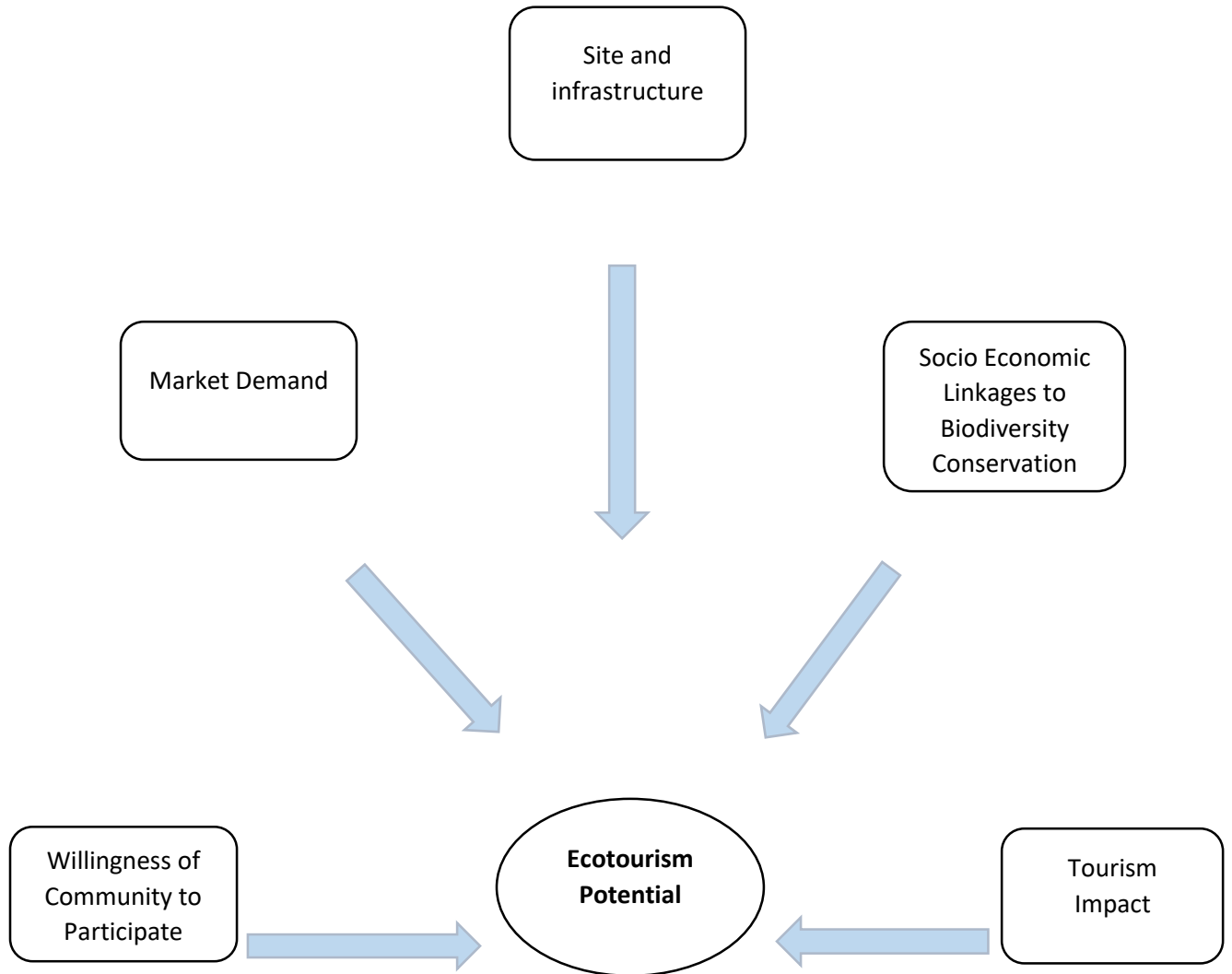
Government built hotels, restaurants and other facilities at tourist spots to properly accommodate tourism activities and local people are hired to maintain the tourism activities and facilities that means, tourism create a source of income for them. Different scholars have provided different

opinions regarding tourism. In economics, tourism plays important role in providing job opportunities and economic development in both developing and developed countries.

According to a study, tourism at Keenjhar Lake contributes to the poor local people's earning and helps them maintain their livelihoods. Furthermore, tourism at Keenjhar Lake raises the living standard of the locals through improved wages, indicating that nature-based tourism can be a successful poverty alleviation method (Mangan & Lohano, 2015).



## 2.2 Conceptual Framework



*Fig 1.1 Conceptual framework for ecotourism potential. Source (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018).*

The conceptual structure shown in Fig. 1 is used to define the potential for ecotourism. This figure indicates that ecotourism potential depends on various things including, market demand for that place, the community's readiness to contribute in ecotourism related activities, socio-economic linkage between conservation of biodiversity and tourism, the ability to attract and host tourists in the region and the influence of tourist activities on the environment (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018).

There is great potential of ecotourism in Hunza as tourism here is purely based on the natural landscape of the region. If the natural environment of the region is conserved, it can easily host more and more tourists in future. The fascinating valleys, giant mountains, eye-catching scenic beauty, and stunning views are attracting tourist every year which shows that there is a very high demand for this place by the tourists both domestic and foreign. Awareness of the local community about the consequences of tourism is vital provided the fact that they are first and most interacted by tourists. Moreover, considering the attitude and perception of local community is extremely important because until and unless local residents welcome and accept tourism, it cannot be successful. It is also imperative to make tourism products and services more efficient in a sense that the tourism demand is enough but supply of tourism products is lacking in Hunza. Ecotourism is the only way to ensure sustainable tourism in the region and the policy makers are needed to devise policies in such a way that the social and ecological concerns should be addressed while including local community in policy formulation.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3.1 Research Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research for the collection of data and its analysis. It includes thematic analysis, research design, and methods of data collection. Locale for the selection of sample, sampling method and data collection techniques are also explained in this part of research.

### **3.2 Research Strategy**

A research strategy is a step by step planning for action which helps a researcher to carry out the research in a systematic way and it provides a direction to the researcher's thoughts and efforts enabling him/her to make a detail report of the research with good quality results (Jenny, 2014).

The main purpose of this research is to introduce and advance planned ecotourism in Hunza Valley based on the development of an improved framework. I adopted qualitative research strategy for my study.

### **3.3 Research Design**

A research design is a step by step method utilized by a scholar to direct a scientific study. It combines diverse strategies and methods to lead research so that an investigation could be carried

out productively (Bhasin, 2019). According to the nature of this study, I used qualitative research approach in this study. This method helped me in finding out opinion of tourism experts related to ecotourism potential in Hunza valley, the perspective of academia about the effects of ecotourism in the region, the issues and challenges confronted by travel sector and future of the hospitality sector, the government efforts to mitigate environmental consequences of mass tourism and also on the development of ecotourism model, the tourists views on tourist attractions in the region and the effects of tourism on the environment.

### **3.4 Data Collection Method**

Data collection is a systematic method to collecting and evaluating information from different sources with a goal to achieve a precise and complete picture of a subject of interest (McLaughlin, 2020). Data can be collected both through primary and secondary sources. The selection of data collection source depends on the choice of the researcher and the availability of the data.

In this study I collected data through primary sources with help of in-depth interviews from the four main tourism stakeholders i.e. Government tourism department, hospitality sector, visitors and academia. In qualitative research data is mostly collected through interviews. When members can't be seen directly, interviews provide useful information. The questioner has more control over the information they get. They are free to choose their own enquiries. When questions are phrased correctly, they will elicit unprejudiced and honest responses (Phillips, 2016). I used interview method as a data collection tool in this study, as the study is based on qualitative research design.

### **3.4.1 Units of Data Collection (UDCs)**

Data is collected from the following tourism experts in the area.

#### **a. Government Tourism Representatives**

In-depth interview has been conducted to collect data from government tourism representatives where heads of the tourism department of government of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) have been interviewed. The interview included questions on the role of ecotourism in creating jobs or employments in the region, government plans to mitigate environmental consequences of tourism and for the promotion of ecotourism in the area. Purposive sampling is used to collect data from government tourism representatives.

#### **b. Hotels and Restaurants**

Managers of the hotels and restaurants in the area were also interviewed. They were asked about the issues faced by the hotel industry and the growth and future of this sector.

#### **c. Academia**

Through in-depth interview I also gathered data from academia. The interview included questions on the socio-economic and environmental effects of ecotourism, potential of ecotourism and how to make tourism sustainable in the region.

#### **d. Visitors**

I also interviewed visitors (domestic) to know their opinion about tourism in the region. With the help of in-depth interview I asked them about the attributes of Hunza valley that attracted them and made them to visit the place and also about the environmental

consequences of tourism. They were also asked to give their suggestions on the development of tourism in the area.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

A sample is a subset which represents the whole population in a study. Gathering data from the whole population is impossible for a researcher therefore a specific and suitable sampling technique is used in every study. Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are two types of sampling methodologies. For this study I have used non-probability sampling method. In non-probability sampling the sample is selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment to achieve a specific objective of the research, this sampling technique is mostly used in health, tourism science and experimental researches. There are several type of non-probability sampling techniques including quota sampling, snowball sampling, purposive sampling and convenience sampling. I have applied purposive sampling technique in this study. In purposive sampling a researcher selects sample on the basis of characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Through this sampling technique I only interviewed people who belongs to the tourism sector or the tourism experts were included as sample of my study.

### **3.6 Interview Method**

Interviews are quite different as compared to questionnaires as they comprise social interaction (McLeod, 2014). In this study data is gathered through in-depth interviews from the tourism experts in the region, including government tourism representatives, hotel sector, academia and the visitors (domestic). Theses interviews included open ended research questions.

### **3.7 Sample Size**

I have conducted in-depth interviews with the following respondents

- i. Academia (6 persons)
- ii. Tourism Department, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Pakistan (1)
- iii. Hospitality sector (15 hotels)
- iv. Visitors (20 domestic tourists at various destinations in Hunza valley)

Keeping in the view the objectives of study, time constraints and availability of respondents, I have interviewed the above tourism representatives. I have conducted 6 structured interviews with academicians living in Hunza valley and who were directly associated tourism and hospitality in terms of teaching and research. We had continued to conduct interviews and it was found that at 6 interviews the answers were started to repeat and thus, we stopped conducting more interviews with academicians. Similarly, the same approach was used in conducting interviews with hospitality sector and visitors and thus, in this way conducted 15 interviews with hospitality sectors and 20 interviews with domestic tourists. For the tourism department, we have conducted only one interview because we have only one office of tourism department in Hunza valley and thus, in order get some reliable data, we conducted the interview directly form the most senior official. A total of forty-two in-depth interviews were taken from the people related to tourism for the study.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data is analyzed using thematic approach. Thematic analysis is an extensively used technique for qualitative data analysis. It is a beneficial and easily reached tool for qualitative researchers. Simultaneously, it is an incredible technique for analyzing data that permits researchers to sum up,

feature key components of, and interpretation of a wide scope of data collections. In comparison with the other qualitative techniques, thematic analysis is comparatively simple in its learning and application (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis is a technique for examining qualitative data. It is generally applied to a bunch of texts, for example, interview records (Caulfield, 2019).

### **3.9 Locale**

Gilgit-Baltistan Pakistan (previously Northern Areas) is a region surrounded by huge mountains. It occupies an area of about 72,496km<sup>2</sup> with a population of around 2 million people. It borders to the northeast with Xingjian province of China, to the north with Wakhan area of Afghanistan, to the southeast it borders with Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir and towards the south it has a border with Pakistan's azad Jammu Kashmir. Gilgit Baltistan is a place where the three ranges of Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayas meet. K-2 the second greatest mountain peak in the world is also existent in this zone and not only this the region is also having many permanent glacier deposits (Ali, 2020). The northern area of Pakistan, Gilgit Baltistan has enormous potential for tourism because of its unusual mountain beauty and tourists in a huge amount around 200651 visit this region every year from across the globe (Saqib, et al. 2019). The region has potential of appealing different type of tourists and ecotourist and has exceptionally high capability of natural resources, which can advance the travel industry and ecotourism in this place (Abbas, et al. 2015). This study is conducted in Hunza valley, a district of Gilgit-Baltistan situated in the extreme northern portion of Pakistan where Pakistan connects with China. According to its geography this valley is divided into three regions, Lower Hunza (the shinaki area), Central Hunza (the burushal area) and Upper Hunza (the Gojal area). A large number of tourists (both domestic and foreign) from across the globe visit this the heavenly valley every year. Tourism potential of this region is



explained as “This little-known region in the far north of the country has the kind of startlingly striking scenery that compels you to stare out the window of your 4WD without blinking for fear of missing a movement of the landscape's majesty or one of the breathtaking suspension bridges that cross the raging rivers filled with snowmelt. Add in the people’s warm welcome, the glacial blue of Attabad Lake, centuries of history, the juxtaposition of granite and greenery, the opportunity to walk through an age-old apricot orchard along hand-cut water channels, and the blazing snow-covered glory of Rakaposhi, and you have a grand adventure on your hands.” (Abel, 2018).

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 Data Analysis

This chapter describes the analysis of qualitative data collected from the field. The data were collected from four main stakeholders of tourism in Hunza valley: 1) academia 2) hospitality sector, 3) tourism department government of Gilgit-Baltistan and 4) tourists at the destinations.

### 4.2 Perspective of Academia about Ecotourism in Hunza

Ecotourism basically is the concept of tourism that not only provides economic benefits to the visiting areas or the host communities but also protects the culture and the environment of the host region. In other words, ecotourism means travelling responsibly to natural areas while protecting the flora and fauna, biota as well as the culture of the indigenous communities. In pure academic terms, ecotourism refers to the tourism that does not damage the natural and cultural environment of tourist destinations, provides economic, environmental, and social benefits to local communities, and offers an excellent experience to visitors. In addition, ecotourism is more or less similar to what is known as environmentally friendly tourism or ecofriendly tourism. One of the professors working in the area of ecology was of the view

*“Apart from academic definition of ecotourism, I would say Ecotourism is exactly opposite tourism taking place in Hunza currently. Because ecotourism mainly focuses on protecting environment while ensuring economic and cultural development.”*

Ecotourism makes sure that economic development is not made at the cost of natural and cultural development. It basically creates a balance between all three segments of the development

encompassing economic, cultural and environmental development. A researcher working in the area of tourism in Hunza valley said:

*“Well, majority of the people know the definition and concept of ecotourism but unfortunately it is not practiced particularly in mountain regions like Hunza. Even though we have highest percentage of literacy rate, but the silence of local authorities and government over environmental damage due to tourism is beyond my understanding.”*

Explaining the concept of ecotourism, another university teacher argued that

*“Ecotourism in my view, is something that Hunza direly needs to incorporate for sure. The reason why I am saying this is ecotourism does not merely means accumulating money while destroying the natural setting and losing one’s cultural. Ecotourism means having multiple benefits from tourism in terms of environment, economic, and culture all collectively.”*

#### **4.2.1 Effects of Ecotourism**

As far as the effects of ecotourism are concerned, ecotourism itself is positive concept and it has favorable impacts on all three segments of the local community. Provided the fact that ecotourism centers or focuses on conserving natural environment and cultural heritage while attracting economic benefits to the local residents. So, ecotourism has great effects on not only economic, but also cultural and communal life of local residents. In other words, ecotourism propagates preservation of indigenous cultures, cultural heritage, and also the conservation of natural environment of local residents. Besides, it negates the environmental degradation due to tourism

and advocates for balance between economic and environmental development. Explaining the effects of ecotourism in Hunza valley a professor was of the view that

*“I think ecotourism doesn’t have any impacts for now because we know that ecotourism does not even exist in Hunza. I would rather call it mass tourism that is taking place currently. However, ecotourism (if implemented or ensured in Hunza), will for sure have numerous positive impacts including sustain our cultural identity, protecting our natural environment, and economic development of the region as a whole.”*

#### **4.2.2 Potential of Ecotourism in Hunza**

Hunza being a mountain region, is blessed with amazing opportunities some of which are not explored yet. There is not hunch that mesmerizing valleys, eye-catching scenic beauty, giant mountains and stunning views are attracting tourist every year. But, there are so many destinations and potential in Hunza that are not even explored yet. The pastures and meadows can serve and host thousands of people when handled efficiently. In addition, there is great potential of ecotourism in Hunza provided the fact that tourism in Hunza is purely based on the natural landscape of the region. If the natural environment of the region is conserved, it can easily host more and more tourists in future. The potential of ecotourism in Hunza valley is enormous as one of the professor was arguing that

*“I have travelled to more than 30 countries so far, and I believe that Hunza is having inordinate potential for ecotourism. If managed properly, tourism can be a catalyst of development not only for the Hunza region but for the country as a whole.”*

Another person associated with the academia said:

*“There is a great potential of ecotourism in Hunza as we are well aware that the only thing tourists visit Hunza for is, the natural beauty of the region. If we save it now, it will strengthen the future tourism and if we do not, then there will be no tourism at all.”*

#### **4.2.3 Sustainable Tourism in Hunza**

In order to make tourism sustainable in Hunza, it is paramount to understand the current context of tourism in Hunza. As far as the tourism in Hunza is concerned, the current development of tourism seems unsustainable provided the fact that there is no any monitoring system in the region. Tourism is growing haphazardly without any surveillance of its repercussions on the socioeconomic dynamics of the region. Besides, absence of the monitoring system to deal with tourism further exacerbates the issues of unfavorable impacts of tourism. A professor of tourism at Hunza argued that

*“I think Hunza is heading towards an unknown destination without a strategy or a roadmap. Outsiders grabbing our land and other natural resources, pollution deteriorating our environment, tourists diminishing our culture, people losing cultural values for the lust of money, all these can collectively erode us from our current position if and only if tourism is not properly managed. You can see there are no parking lots for vehicles except few big hotels, no any traffic controlling system, no concept of public washrooms, no property laws, and no any strict rules towards waste management. These all things collectively give us an alarming hint regarding future of tourism in Hunza”.*

Tourism can be made sustainable by a number of ways including discouraging mass tourism, considering environmental impact seriously, conducting empirical studies, advocating policy measures, and by sensitizing the community at large about the potential consequences of tourism.

### **4.3 Perspective of Hotel Industry**

#### **4.3.1 Contribution of Hospitality Sector to Society**

Respondents of the study emphasized that hospitality sector is beneficial not only for the business community, but for the local community at large provided that it is one of the major attributes of Hunza that attracts tourists in one way or other. In addition, it is beneficial for the youth as it offers a wide range of employment opportunities in the industry while propagating business culture in the region. The development of hotel sector directly or indirectly ensures tourism development along with promoting culture, providing economic benefits, bringing in money, and also avoiding leakage. A manager of a hotel was of the view:

*“The development of hotel sector is directly associated with economic development of the local community in a sense that it employs a huge number of local people in the industry while equipping them with required skills. It can be observed that even students are affording their education by working part time in hotels that I believe is a new trend. The concept of dependency on parents and elders has been ended. Besides, hotel industry takes the services of small entrepreneurs particularly women (buying Arzoq e.g.) which is a major contribution in economic development.”*

Tourism is more pronounced in Hunza valley in the recent years due to the enhanced law and order state in the area and thus, the expansion of hospitality sector is increasing significantly. Hospitality

sector contributes to society in various ways ranging from economic to cultural contribution. One of the respondents associated with hospitality sector was of the view:

*“One of the best contributions of hotel industry is the promotion of local cultural. Presenting cultural attires and local cuisine in the hotels, adding cultural items in the decoration, even using locally made carpets in the hotels is a gesture of cultural development and I think this is one of the most appropriate ways of sustaining your culture along with doing business.”*

The increasing mass tourism in the region put pressure on the working hours of employee as majority of the employee associated with hospitality sector have to work beyond their standard working hours. The respondents argued that in summer, they even remain on duty whole day and night to facilitate the guests.

#### **4.3.2 Engagement of Locals in Hospitality Sector**

Hospitality sector can contribute to local community if it engages local society in various business activities. Majority of the respondents were of the view that local community has been engaged in various capacities ranging from employing local people to collaborating with stakeholders. Though the intensity or extent to which community has been engaged is not enough, but at least local community is not being ignored in hotel industry. In addition, the hotel industry has always made sure the maximum participation of community in the development of hotel industry and the other way around of the managers argued that:

*“We have engaged many local employed in our hotel and we have contributed as per our capacity for the socioeconomic development of the local community. Besides, we prefer employing local people not only during peak seasons but also for off season jobs.”*

However, some of the respondents argued that they face difficulty in hiring local employee because of lack of various technical skills and thus, they have to hire employee from other parts of the country. A Marketing Manager of a well-known hotel said

*“The good is that Hunza valley has good number of young educated people (working age population) but there is mismatch between the job requirement and qualification of the individual. Young generation needs to understand the market requirement and prepare themselves accordingly. We have hired many non-locals because of not availability of required employees from local community”.*

#### **4.3.3 Tendency of Tourists and Growth in Hotel Sector**

Generally, the number of tourists is increasing rapidly despite of the global pandemic. Every year, the number of visitors increase and also the period of their stay has also been increased in the last few years. A Manager, said:

*“There is no any hunch that the number of visitors rise every year while benefiting the hotel industry. Besides, the increasing number of visitors calls for further growth of hotel industry in terms of its capacity of accommodation and quality of services.”*

Respondents argued that the current growth of hotel industry is, not good for the local community in many ways. Every individual is constructing hotels and resorts without any proper planning and consultancy. Although it is accommodating more visitors than before, but the damage it is causing to natural and traditional setting is harmful. An Executive Manager of a hotel said:

*“The definition of growth is misunderstood in the hotel industry. People think that adding an extra room or a new dish to the menu is growth. Interestingly, growth of hotel industry is making the staff more efficient and highly skilled over time, growth means improving*



*the quality of service and becoming a brand. We need to incorporate the later definition in the hotel industry”*

Favoring the current growth of hotel sector in the region, a human resource manager of a hotel, argued that:

*“Hotel industry growth in my opinion, is on the right track provided that renowned industrialist and businessmen are now heading towards Hunza for investment. As compared to other districts of Gilgit Baltistan, the hotel industry of Hunza is developing rapidly that we have multiple number of brands like Café De Hunza. Besides, hotel industry is one of the major attributes of Hunza that itself attracts numerous tourists.”*

#### **4.3.4 Issues and Future Perspective of Hospitality Sector**

As far as the issues of hotel industry are concerned, the list is quite lengthy with the absence of skilled labor on the top followed by energy crisis and scarcity of water. The hotel industry of Hunza is facing numerous challenges and the most appealing one is construction of hotels on unsustainable ways. Majority of the respondents argued that Hunza is famous for tourists because of unique landscape and mighty mountains but the current increasing construction of big building degrade the natural landscape. If the current construction of big buildings doesn't stop than one day, all the mighty mountain will hide behind the buildings.

Lack of skilled labor is another pressing issue in the region. One of the respondents was of the view that:

*“Tourism is a service-oriented industry and it requires skilled labor ranging from house keeper to top management. Unfortunately, we do not have professional staff in the*

*industry, and interestingly local residents particularly youth consider working in hotels a shame and this compels us to employ people from other regions of the country.”*

Some of the respondents argue that Even though they train staff but then they leave due to the seasonal nature of job and low salaries, this changing of lower staff creates further issues for the hotel industry. Hotel industry also faces some issues related to water and energy crisis. The industry needs to be functional 24/7 particularly during peak season that is a bit difficult due to the above-mentioned issues in Hunza. An operational manager of a hotel said:

*“Energy crisis always create issues for us as we need electricity all the time. Operating generator all the time is beyond our capacity due to the fuel issue. Most often visitors claim about the disturbance caused by energy crisis.”*

#### **4.4 Perspective of Tourism Department, Govt. of Gilgit-Baltistan**

##### **4.4.1 Ecotourism and Livelihood Opportunities in Hunza Valley**

Ecotourism will pave its path in near future not only in Hunza but also in Gilgit Baltistan. But it is important to consider that without community participation and involvement of community, concept of ecotourism is failed. Furthermore, ecotourism always produces multiple sources of livelihood for the local communities. For instance, the trophy hunting model of Hunza is a core segment of ecotourism that is not only conserving the endangered species but also contributing in the economic development of the local people. Around 75% of the earning goes to local community welfare. Similarly, rehabilitation and conservation of cultural and archeological sites have created plenty of jobs and opportunities to the local community of Hunza. An official of tourism department said:

*“Ecotourism has created numerous economic opportunities in Hunza in the past few years. Trophy hunting is an epitome in this regard. People of Passu, Khyber, and other villages of Gojal have had benefitted a lot from this model. Not only it benefits local community economically, but also conserves our rare species. We are looking forward for more comprehensive models in the said area.”*

Respondent from tourism department argued that Hunza has been always a major tourist spot attracting millions of tourists every year. Recently government has emphasis a lot on tourism development in general and ecotourism in particular. Through ensuring ecotourism, government wants to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the local people.

#### **4.4.2 Efforts to Mitigate the Environmental Consequences of Tourism**

As the central focus of current government is combating climate change, all the institutions of government at all levels are contributing towards it. Tourism department of Gilgit Baltistan is giving all its efforts to mitigate the environmental consequences of tourism. Some of the steps include management plans, public private partnership projects, advocacy and capacity building of individuals as well as organizations. Government is also spreading awareness and above all taking practical steps like declaration of Hunza as plastic free district. Besides, government is doing both tangible and intangible practical actions and steps. Vulnerable areas have been declared national parks where all activities including construction is banned. The respondent further argued that Government is doing its best to address environmental issues. Not only we are educating masses about environmental consequences of tourism, but also taking practical measures including

banning use of plastic bags, supporting waste management council, and partnering with civil society organizations to make Hunza clean and environmentally safe.

#### **4.4.3 Development of Ecotourism Model**

The development of ecotourism model calls for an integrated approach built on the mutual consensus of various departments including Tourism department, Environmental protection agency, wildlife protection, and other government agencies. Although integrated approach and long term policy reforms are missing sometimes, however, projects need to be formulated and executed through a reliable forum. Due to the lack of resources government sometimes fail to conduct feasibility sessions that further creates issues. However, the respondent from tourism department argued that the government will develop ecotourism model in cooperation with national and international organizations. This might be done through community participation especially in revival and conservation of culture, comprehensive management plans on modern footings and its core implementations, devising investment policy which are lacking, poverty reduction, civic amenities especially power and energy resources to safe guard the environment, infrastructural development, awareness and education, and implementing strict laws. The respondent further argued that developing ecotourism model is not something that can be done in the air. It calls for an integrated effort of all organizations and concerned authorities particularly academic institutions. In order to develop an ecotourism model, we need to learn from our past experiences. Some of the past measures including establishment of Khunjerab National Park, Trophy hunting, rehabilitation of Altit and Baltit Fort have resulted in phenomenal impacts that will last forever. We need to consider all these things to develop a comprehensive model.

## 4.5 Perspective of Tourists

### 4.5.1 Tourism Attractions in Hunza Valley

Majority of the Respondents argued that Hunza is one of the best tourist destinations across Pakistan. Some of the most important attributes that attract tourists include its mesmerizing and stunning landscape like Attabad Lake, its mighty junction of mountains like Rakaposhi and Passu cones, cultural heritage sites like Altit Forts and Baltit Fort, the beautiful tradition of hospitality, and above all its peaceful environment away from chaos of cities. Even though there are other tourist destination in the region, but Hunza has its own charm in everything ranging from food to atmosphere. One of the tourists argues that

*“I have been to numerous countries including Malaysia and Switzerland, but the satisfaction and mental peace I get in Hunza is something I rarely get anywhere else. The clear sky at night with shining stars, the green valley, chipping of birds early in the morning wishing us a good day is all what I want to be healthy.”*

Another tourist said that

*“I always prefer to come to Hunza whenever my husband plans about travelling. It’s not only due to the natural beauty of Hunza, but also because of the cultural beauty that lies in the hearts of local people. Little children offering Salam randomly in streets, the respect that local people give, the tradition of brotherhood and hospitality is something I cannot expect in the main cities.”*

A vlogger replied that

*“It does not matter how many difficulties I face to come here, the moment I stepped in Hunza, everything just melts away. I breathe in tranquility and balance.”*

#### **4.5.2 Environmental Consequences of Tourism in Hunza Valley**

Most of the visitors were of the view that tourism brings a significant numeral unfavorable impacts on the environment provided that it creates not only land pollution, but also noise and air pollution due to the excessive traffic. Thought it brings unfavorable repercussions, yet it's up to the government and other agencies to deal with the issue. One of the female tourists said:

*“Tourism in my opinion, is not only deteriorating the natural environment but also cultural environment. This is my second visit to Hunza. I visited Hunza back in 2015 but that Hunza was more natural and calm than today. Today I can see garbage in most of the public areas, litter everywhere, and traffic congestion on the main roads. There was no disturbance at all when I slept in the hotel room. However, today's Hunza is more different than one in 2015.”*

A male tourist shared his views as

*“I think tourism brings a significant number of unfavorable impacts on the environment provided that it creates not only land pollution, but also noise and air pollution due to the excessive traffic. Thought it brings unfavorable repercussions, yet it's up to the government and other agencies to deal with the issue.”*

#### **4.5.3 Suggestions for Tourism Development in Hunza Valley**

Some of the suggestions for tourism development are incorporating laws pertaining to waste management, establishing public washrooms, and introducing proper traffic management system. First, proper waste management system needs to be established for proper recycling of the waste

particularly plastic. The major point is the land pollution caused by tourism with heaps of garbage everywhere, this can be avoided through proper system of waste management.

A male tourist suggested that

*“In order to make Hunza clean, merely talking about it on posting on social media won’t be enough. Government needs to incorporate waste management system so that further littering can be avoided consequently making Hunza a beautiful place to visit and live in.”*

Public washrooms need to be established or it could be made a business as there is not a single public washroom in Hunza. This will not only protect nature but also profit local businesses in one way or other. A female tourist urged that

*“Sometimes we need to rush into hotels nearby or guest houses to use washrooms due to the unavailability of public washrooms. I think local residents should turn this problem into opportunity if government is not establishing free public washrooms for us.”*

Last but not the least, proper traffic control system with the specific crossing and lights needs to be incorporated in the existing system like in the cities. In Hunza, the definition of traffic system is a tired policeman standing in the middle of the road waving hands but this needs to be changed. Besides, parking lots should be made to avoid parking on roads. This will protect the environment and also make tourists feel comfortable. A tourist said

*“When I first visited Hunza, I was surprised to see traffic operating without traffic system despite of excessive traffic. I think it’s the right for local administration to realize the importance of proper traffic system.”*

## 4.6 Discussion

In line with the objectives of the study, the data shed light on the socioeconomic contributions of the tourism sector while analyzing the phenomenon pertaining to tourism. The study is an attempt to contribute not only in the existing literature but also to develop a mechanism for ensuring ecotourism in the region. It is essential provided the fact that no any proper mechanism can be developed without considering the perspectives of local residents ranging from academicians, authorities, to hoteliers and tourists themselves.

While using the data from Hunza region, the study revealed diversified views of people. In terms of tourism department, for instance, the study found that Tourism department of Gilgit Baltistan is intending to work on ecotourism model and replicate successful models of conservation throughout Gilgit Baltistan. Besides, government is trying to combat climate change and other environment related issues by consistent advocacy, management planning, capacity building programs, and public private partnerships. The study provided support to the study of (Muhammad, Ullah, & Karim, 2020), where they found that tourism can be an optimal tool for the development of local economy while establishing that tourism has improved the economic conditions of the inhabitants by providing phenomenal opportunities.

In terms of academic perspective, even though people are aware of what ecotourism is, however, they are more sensitized of the fact that currently ecotourism does not exist in Hunza region. The study demonstrated that local community particularly academia is more concerned about the potential harm that mass tourism is causing to natural environment. The study confirmed that findings of (Baig, Khan, Khan, & Bano, 2019), who found that although tourism has increased in income of people, the ill planned building of hotels and other vacationer conveniences has



demolished the natural atmosphere of the region. It is a fact now that rural tourism provides enormous livelihood opportunities for the communities associated with it but the income earned by host communities from tourism is then spent on building infrastructure resulting in unplanned infrastructure that ultimately leads to environmental degradation. And it is worth noting that academia showed a greater concern towards environmental impacts of tourism.

In addition, hotel industry showed higher satisfaction with the extent it is engaging local community and also the way it is growing. The development of hotel sector promotes culture, bringing in money, providing economic welfare, avoiding monetary leakages as well as directly or indirectly ensures tourism development. Tourism is more obvious in Hunza valley in the recent years due to the improved law and order situation in the area and thus, the expansion of hospitality sector is increasing significantly. Hospitality sector contributes to society in various ways ranging from economic to cultural contribution. However, it is confronted with numerous challenges including energy crisis, absence of skilled labor, and water scarcity. They face difficulty in hiring local employees because of lack of various technical skills and thus, they have to hire employees from other parts of the country. Lack of skilled labor is another pressing issue in the region. The trained staff leave due to the seasonal nature of job and low salaries, this changing of lower staff creates further issues for the hotel industry. The unplanned expansion and building of hotels and other amenities is yet another challenge. People are constructing hotels and resorts without any proper planning and consultancy. Although it is accommodating more visitors than before, but the damage it is causing to the natural and cultural environment is harmful. As Hunza is famous for tourists because of its unique landscape and mighty mountains but the current increasing construction of big buildings degrades the natural landscape. If the current construction of big buildings doesn't stop for one day, all the mighty mountains will hide behind the buildings.

Last but not the least, the study analyzed tourist's perspective about Hunza. Although tourists are satisfied with the facilities and environment they get at the destinations to a greater extent, nevertheless, they are also concerned about some of the issues including waste management, absence of public washrooms, and rapidly increasing road accidents due to traffic system. There is a need to establish proper waste management system for proper recycling of the waste particularly plastic. The major point is the land pollution caused by tourism with heaps of garbage everywhere, this can be avoided through proper system of waste management. Additionally, proper traffic control system with the specific crossing and lights needs to be incorporated in the existing system like in the cities. Besides, parking lots should be made to avoid parking on roads. This will protect the environment and also make tourists feel comfortable. Local authorities need to ponder over these things to make tourism sustainable.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study reveals that Hunza valley has tremendous ecotourism potential and it can contribute significantly to the livelihoods of local community if it is managed properly. Currently mass tourism in Hunza valley is increasing exponentially but it needs to be discouraged. The reasons behind discouraging mass tourism lies in the fact that the massive tourism is beyond the current carrying and coping capacity of the region. Even though tourism brings many favorable impacts in the region, but the unfavorable impacts that mass tourism brings in the form of pollution, and other issues cannot be ignored. Hunza valley is already highly vulnerable to climate change and the current increasing mass tourism is further increase the vulnerability of the region. Ecotourism not only ensure environmental protection of tourism but it can also contribute to the livelihoods of local community by engaging them in various tourism activities. As this study explored that some conservation models in form of trophy hunting etc are being practices in few villages in Hunza valley which needs to be studied and replicate to the regions. Thus, ecotourism is only way to ensure sustainable tourism in the region.

One of the most important yet ignored segments is of environmental degradation as a result of mass tourism. There is no any hunch that the environmental concern of tourism is urgent considering that current tourism in Hunza is causing severe damage to natural environment. Ranging from constructing hotels in arable land to land pollution, traffic congestion to noise pollution, tourism has created environmental issues that we could not even imagine in the past like Climate change. Although tourism has increased the income of local community but the ill planned

hotel construction and all the other facilities for visitors has destroyed the local biodiversity of Hunza. In addition, tourism has resulted in offensively crowded and unreachable places particularly in places like Karimabad. The local authority in general and community in particular need to understand that economic benefits should not be gained at the cost of natural environment.

Another important point to be considered is the scarcity of research on empirical evidences of tourism development in Gilgit Baltistan in general and Hunza in particular. One cannot ignore the importance and need to conduct scientific and technical studies on tourism development not only to analyze its potential consequences but also to develop a mechanism for making tourism sustainable based on ground realities. This cannot be done alone by the government authorities alone, universities in the region can play effective role in this regard. Before developing any mechanism to deal with tourism, research needs to be done while encompassing all the stakeholders including community, tourism department, and academic institutions. This can be done through policy dialogues engaging all the stakeholders.

Tourism directly or indirectly influences the local community in one way or other. Sensitizing the local community about the consequences of tourism is paramount provided the fact that they are first and most interacted by tourists. Besides, considering the attitude and perception of local community is extremely important because until and unless local residents welcome and accept tourism, it cannot be successful.

Apart from sensitizing community, it's important to make tourism products and services more efficient in a sense that the tourism demand is enough but supply of tourism products is lacking in Hunza. For instance, in the last few years when there was massive tourism in Hunza, hotels were unable to accommodate the tourists so they pitched their tents in gardens and fields. Instead of buying cuisine from hotels, tourists cooked their own food which is not beneficial for the local

community. In addition, the business attitude of local community towards increasing prices of products without considering future consequences, is not favorable for future tourism in Hunza. In order to deal with all these problems, it is important to make tourism sustainable via master planning that can be done through public private partnership and policy making based on extensive research.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

1. The study found that the current form of tourism in Hunza valley seems unsustainable in terms of its social and ecological concerns, therefore, policy makers need to devise policies in such a way that these concerns should be addressed. In the connection, inclusion of local community in policy formulation is highly recommended.
2. Local community needs to be trained in terms of technical skills required in hospitality sectors, therefore, governmental and non-governmental organization working in the area should to arrange training session for local community.
3. This study found that many areas in Hunza valley have very good conservation models, these models needs to be replicate in other regions of the valley in order to protect the precious ecological assets of the region.
4. The study found that the current form of tourism creates tremendous pressure on water, land use and other socio cultural issues. In order to deal with all these problems, it is important to make tourism sustainable via master planning that can be done through public private partnership and policy making based on extensive research.

### **5.3 Limitations**

This study just provide some baseline information and thus, more comprehensive study is required. There is a scarcity of research on empirical evidences of tourism development in Gilgit Baltistan in general and Hunza in particular. One cannot ignore the importance and need to conduct scientific and technical studies on tourism development not only to analyze its potential consequences but also to develop a mechanism for making tourism sustainable based on ground realities. This cannot be done alone by the government authorities alone, universities in the region can play effective role in this regard. Before developing any mechanism to deal with tourism, research needs to be done while encompassing all the stakeholders including community, tourism department, and academic institutions. This can be done through policy dialogues engaging all the stakeholders.

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## **Appendix-A**

### **a. Interview Guide for Tourism Department of Govt. of Gilgit-Baltistan**

Q1. How do you see ecotourism and livelihood opportunities in Hunza valley?

Q2. What government is going to do to mitigate the environmental consequences of tourism?

Q3. How the government will develop ecotourism model for tourism development in the region?

Q4. What are the government plans for the promotion of ecotourism in the region?

### **b. Interview Guide for Hotel sector**

**Qualification:** .....

**Age:** .....

**Gender:** .....

Q1. What do you think development of hotel sector would be beneficial for the society as a whole?

Q2. How you explain your working period? (Full time/part time)?

Q3. How you engage local community in your business?

Q4. Do you see your hotel is receiving more tourists with the passage of time?

Q5. How do you see the growth of hotel industry in the region?

Q6. What are the major issue and what is the future of hotel industry?

**c. Interview Guide for Visitor/tourist**

**Qualification:** -----

**Age** -----

**Gender:** -----

**City/town:** -----

Q1. What are most import attributes of Hunza valley that attract you the most?

Q2. Was your trip according to your expectations?

Q3. How many times do you visit to Hunza valley during your last five years?

Q4. How do you see the environmental consequences of tourism in Hunza valley?

Q5. Any suggestions for tourism development in Hunza valley?

**d. Interview Guide for Academia**

**Qualification:** -----

**Age:** -----

**Gender:** -----

Q1. What do you know about ecotourism?

Q2. What are the effects of ecotourism on the economic, social and cultural life of the local residents?

Q3. What are the possible positive environmental effects of ecotourism?

Q4. How do you see the potential of ecotourism in Hunza?

Q5. How do you think we can make tourism sustainable in the region?