

IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON TOURISM  
DEVELOPMENT IN GILGIT- BALTISTAN



*By*

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CERTIFICATE

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### **Author's Declaration**

I **Bibi Maryam** hereby state that my MPhil thesis titled “**Impact of Covid -19 On Tourism Development in Gilgit- Baltistan**” is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from Pakistan Institute of Development Studies or anywhere else in the country/world.

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*Dedication*

**I dedicate this to my beloved parents, brothers**

**And**

**Also, my husband and my beloved daughter (Anaya Baig)**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the most gracious and the most merciful. Praise is to Allah; Lord of the universe and peace and prayers be upon His final Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (S.A.W). I humbly thank Allah from whom all blessings and wisdom flow. “O Allah! there is nothing easy except what You make easy, and You make the difficult easy if it be Your Will” Muhammad (PBUM) narrated by Ibn Hibban.

I am strongly indebted to **my parents, my husband, my brothers, my in-law’s family, and friends** for their endless support both morally and financially throughout my life, especially for encouraging and making me believe in myself. This work is the result of my parent’s selfless prayers and the support of my siblings.

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## **ABSTRACT**

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the world entered an unusual scenario, with most businesses shutting down and tourism was the most vulnerable. The industry apparently entering into massive crises as a result of pandemic measures. As a result, the tourism sector is at high risk, because people cannot visit the region after fear of disease and viruses acts. airlines, road transportation, and all hotels have paused their services. This study examines the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism development in Gilgit-Baltistan, as a region that was preparing to welcome the upcoming tourism boost towards its region. In order to achieve the objective of the study, a sample of 40 respondents from Gilgit-Baltistan were chosen. An in-depth interview was conducted.

Tourism has both positive and negative effects on the local community in Gilgit-Baltistan. The local community is interested in promoting tourism as a means of economic development as a means of promoting well-being. The tourism industry has some drawbacks, such as pollution and a loss of cultural distinctiveness. The findings of this study demonstrate that how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the tourism sector in Gilgit-Baltistan and how the people are coping with the prevailing situation. COVID-19 has negatively affected the tourism sector all over the world, with international as well as domestic flights being banned and a complete lockdown of the social movement altogether COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the tourism industry in Gilgit-Baltistan. International and domestic travel has been restricted. Gradually, the government has relaxed the lockdown and allowed domestic tourists to visit Gilgit-Baltistan amid following SOPs. But this study showed some positive impact of COVID-19 on tourism industry in GB, as a result of the international airline closures, the elite class tourists were unable to travel abroad, resulting in an increase in the number of domestic visitors. Some of the challenges, as the study suggests, relates to mass tourism, lack of skilled human resources, and lack of energy source, unplanned development, external investment, indigenous rights, and quality of tourism facilities. This study also gave several policy recommendations for tourism development in Gilgit Baltistan.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Tourism, Gilgit Baltistan, Challenges of tourism

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CPEC	Pakistan Economic Corridor
GB	Gilgit Baltistan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KKH	Karakoram Highway
NCOC	National Command and Operation Centre
NGO	Nonprofit Organization
PIA	Pakistan Airlines
PTDC	Pakistan Tourism Development cooperation
SOPS	Standard operating procedure
UDC	Unit of Data Collection
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and tourism Council

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This section covers the background of the study, objectives of the study, explanations of the key terms and significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background of the study

The new pandemic novel Corona virus first appeared in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. After Wuhan, it spread all over the world and WHO (World Health Organization) confirmed it as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. To prevent the disease from spreading to other parts of China, the Chinese authorities decided to shut down Wuhan. As a result of the lockdown, the number of infected cases stabilized in mid-February 2020. A COVID-19 infection is characterized by symptoms such as a fever, cough, and possible loss. But the cases vary from person to person in that some infected person may have a few or no symptoms, while in other cases, it leads to severe illness and may even cause death. Infected people might spread the virus by coughing or spraying tiny droplets from their nose or mouth. After a brief period of time, the virus is spreading throughout the world.

According to website (World ometer2021) almost 224 countries were infected. The number of infected patients were 263,793,010 and number of deaths were 5,242,802 and recovered patients were 238,125,434. Experts are of the opinion that this disease may take a long time to vanish from the world. WHO (World Health Organization), with the help of research in some developed countries have developed vaccines to prevent the spread of this disease.



In Pakistan the first case was confirmed on 26 February 2020. The infected cases were increasing day by day and according to the (NCOCC, 2021) the number of confirmed cases till 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were 12,85,631. After spread in Pakistan, the prime minister announced to implement smart lock down in the country. During the initial stages, the government of Pakistan was reluctant for the lock down in the country due to poverty and low economic situation in the country. As the situation of the pandemic was increasing day by day, it was decided to take some precautionary measures, like wearing of masks, social distancing, imposing bans on hotels & restaurants, while educational institutions were remotely opened (online classes), however, transport system shut down across the country. The international and domestic air transport were also closed, and due to bans of travelling sectors, it adversely affected the tourism sector.

Tourism is regarded as the economic backbone of every country. It is growing into a global industry that generates a lot of money. Pakistan is known for its magnificent landscape, breathtaking vistas, verdant valleys and mountains, as well as its blue oceans and lakes.

Tourism industry properly started in the 1970s, in the era of the Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as he put lot of efforts to attract international tourists to Pakistan. Most popular mountain ranges are found in Gilgit-Baltistan, which includes the Karakorum, Great Himalayan Range and the Hindukush. A number of tourists visit the region every year. Various number of mountaineers visit Gilgit Baltistan to summit the highest peaks, including K-2, the world's second-highest mountain. Deosai National Park is viewed as the second highest plateau.

Trophy hunting play an important role in promoting the winter tourism across the country. The Wildlife Department of GB provides permits to the local, national and international hunters by

charging handsome amount for hunting of Astore Markhor, Blue sheep and Ibex in GB (Jackson & Conservancy, 2004). It contributes a lot in the economy of the local communities. Skiing is an old chapter of tourism industry in GB. Every year thousands of adventure tourists visit Naltar valley of GB in order to get position in the competition. Visitors from foreign countries also visit Naltar valley and promote the culture and ecosystem.

The travel industry has now become new and dominant source of income and considered as the back bone of economy of Gilgit Baltistan. Tourism provides opportunity to market the area globally and that is why GB is among the top best touristic destinations in the world.

As reported by the Pakistani Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), more than three times as many tourists visited the area last year. Tourism has contributed RS300 million to the local economy in the last several years, according to (Ehsan, 2019), more than 450 million rupees are predicted to be generated by the region's tourism boom, which is expected to reach 2.5 million visitors in 2018.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The entire region of Northern Pakistan and especially Gilgit-Baltistan is a rich abode for tourism industry. Historical structures, snow-covered mountains, cultural authenticity and natural environment always attracts local and foreign visitors. There are a very few studies conducted which shows the impact of pandemic on development.

Tourism industry at the global level seems to enter in big crisis due to the spread of pandemic coronavirus. Pakistani tourism industry is also in a great risk because people around the world cannot travelled to Pakistan to reduce the steps of the virus and risk distribution. Airlines,

highways, shipping have stopped their services, while following the government's orders to stop the spread of the virus, which can cause a serious hit against Pakistani economy.

This study examines how the spread of COVID-19 has impacted the tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan. COVID-19 has highly affected the tourism sector in an adverse way and may remain affected in the long run, hence in this scenario, it is necessary to measure the losses due to pandemic so that policies can be redesigned to manage tourism activities

The global tourism industry appeared to be in a state of flux as a result of the spread of pandemic Corona virus. As a result, the Pakistani tourism industry was also at risk, as individuals from all over the world were prohibited from visiting Pakistan in order to limit the spread of the virus. The government ordered all airlines, highways and shipping companies to close operations in order to prevent the virus from spreading further and harming the country's economy. Hotels and resorts had been ordered to stop their services, which caused a serious hit against Pakistani GDP. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on travel and tourism, and it is expected to continue for at least the next 1.5 years. In this scenario, it is critical to estimate the losses caused by the pandemic so that regulations can be redesigned for the tourism activities.

As per (WWTC, 2020) tourism industry contributes practically 10.4% of the worldwide GDP and for eight years, has outperformed the development of worldwide economy. This shows how the travel industry is critical to help any economy. Presently, the circumstance is very surprising as the most recent investigation showed that up to 75 million occupations are in danger which may be the explanation of loss of US \$2.1 trillion to the worldwide economy in 2020.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study explores the COVID-19 impacts on tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan.

Following are the research questions of the study:

1. How tourism effects the livelihood of people living in Gilgit Baltistan?
2. What is the impact of Corona virus on tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
3. What are the issues arising out of pandemic that needed to be addressed for improving the current situation of tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to explore the impacts of tourism industry the livelihood of people living in Gilgit Baltistan. And due to the current pandemic how it is affecting tourism industry. Keeping view of the above statement, the study has the following objectives:

1. To analyze the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism development/ Activities.
2. To investigate the different dimension of tourism and its impact on people's livelihood.

### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

The structure of the study is divided into five theme frameworks, such as chapter 1 Introduction, which covered the study's background, objective of the study, and the key terms of the study, the second chapter provides a detailed review of the literature. The third chapter describes the research methodology process and the fourth chapter contains the finding and discussion of the study, however, the last chapter of this study covers conclusion and policy recommendations.

## **1.6 Explanation of Key Terms**

### **1.6.1 Tourism**

UNWTO's definition of tourism is widely accepted, which is as follows:

*"The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business, and other purposes for not more than one consecutive year."*(Whyte, Hood, White, & Heritage, 2012). Despite the fact that tourism is considered to be one of the most important drivers of economic growth and development, sustainable tourism can have a negative impact on the local communities' living (Engelhardt & Pacific, 2005).

(Bagri & Kala, 2016) argue that, tourism used to help boom in economy because as the tourists travel from cities to border areas. According to (Wall, 1982) policy maker must make some decision in order to use tourism as a tool of economic growth in poor countries.

As deliberated overhead, tourism is the movement of individuals from place to place. Therefore, the researcher used tourism terminology in this research as a social entity who take off their native put for another place to enjoy civic amenities. Leave-taking native place for relaxation not only satisfy the tourists but also advantage for the locals in terms of economy, social and cultural ones.

### **1.6.2 COVID-19**

In December 2019, Wuhan, China, was the first to detect COVID-19. According to preliminary reports, there were more than 25 cases of pneumonia with no known cause. Chinese authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO) discovered a new virus known as a novel Corona virus (2019-nCov). Because of its rapid global spread (WHO, 2020a), the WHO declared it a global public health emergency on January 30, 2020. The World Health Organization has named the new

coronavirus disease COVID-19 as of February 11<sup>th</sup> (WHO, 2020b) A COVID-19 infection is characterized by symptoms such as a fever, cough, and possible loss. But the cases vary from person to person in that some infected person may have a few or no symptoms, while in other cases, it leads to severe illness and may even cause death. Infected people might spread the virus by coughing or spraying tiny droplets from their nose or mouth. After a brief period of time, the virus is spreading throughout the world.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Pakistan's tourism and hospitality industry is a market that emerged and for the past few years, Pakistan is ready to welcome further international tours. As a result of the country's terrorism problem, Pakistan used to have a negative reputation, but now it receives goodwill from the rest of the world and favourable reviews and support from worldwide media. In 2019, the tourism outlook was positive(Travel, 2020)This study would be an effort to provide an overview on the impact of pandemics on tourism development in Gilgit-Baltistan, and how they coping with this current situation. This study addresses a relationship between COVID-19 and tourism development. This study looks at the impact of tourism on Gilgit-Baltistan. It helped to find the challenges related tourism.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In order to explain the research methodology and procedures used to achieve the objectives of my study, I had the following research framework.

#### **2.2 Research Strategy**

Qualitative and quantitative research strategies are the major strategies. By quantitative research strategy we mean, counting the number of people or frequently occurrence of the phenomena, while in qualitative research, behaviour, motivation and actions of the respondents regarding the topic are explained (Denzin, 2000). According to (Shank, 2002) qualitative research is a form of converting systematic empirical inquiry in to meaning. By systematic he means 'planned and ordered. Empiricists believe that knowledge or investigation should be based on natural observations.

Therefore, the researcher has selected qualitative approach as it suits best with the current study objectives and research questions and is in accordance with the methods employed by majority of previous studies in the relevant literature. Through qualitative research strategy, it helps to understand the meanings, and how people perceive tourism and its impacts. Because qualitative research strategy is searching for meanings and context, it also helped the researcher to obtain in-depth data regarding the area of study.

### **2.3 Research Design**

Research study was mainly based on descriptive research design; to know the impacts of tourism on local community and how COVID-19 pandemic effected tourism industry in Gilgit-Baltistan. Furthermore, semi-structured interview took place during visits to multiple tourist resorts and meeting different tour operating companies. Information was collected from respondents through different meant: personally, face to face interaction and also through telephone too, with tourism-related people i.e., tour operating companies, transporters and local community regarding the topic. Collected data was then further analysed accordingly.

The designs of research allow the researchers to answer the research questions and clarify objectives. Qualitative research studies are better suited for exploring the disparities and diversity of social life, whereas quantitative research studies are better suited for determining the intensity of this disparity (Kumar, 2011). The questionnaire provides the demographic, which includes gender, age, occupation, districts and educational qualification.

### **2.4 Sampling**

The selection of sample or proportion from the whole population is known to be sampling. It is an important part and the main step in any research to find out in-depth information about the issue in hand (Trachoma, 2006). Trachoma defines sampling as “the act of selecting units such as individuals, groups, and organizations from a population of interest in order to generalize our conclusions back to the population from which they were picked.” A small sample of a population can thus be used as a statistical representation of a large population. This is because the researcher



cannot select the whole population which is often exhaustive, time consuming and money or resource consuming.

## **2.5 Sampling Technique**

There are various sampling techniques, used by many qualitative researchers. Sampling techniques includes both probability and non-probability.

Probability sampling techniques are: Stratified random sampling, cluster and systematic sampling, as well as simple non-probability sampling, include purposive, convenience, snowball, and quota sampling. However, convenience and purposive sampling are the most popular techniques used by qualitative researcher.

### **2.5.1 Convenience Sampling**

It includes the technique that the researcher uses to select the respondents, with whom contact of the researcher is effortlessly accessible. A non-probability sampling is one that is used both by the researchers of qualitative and quantitative study (Roscoe, 1975). In this technique, the social scientist or qualitative researchers chooses those relevant elements, who can be conveniently contacted. In other words, the researches select the nearby live persons as respondents. Thus, researcher used convenience sampling in their research as a technique for data collection from the (UDC 1), (UDC 3), and (UDC 4).

### **2.5.2 Purposive Sampling**

It is a technique through which the purpose of the research study is fulfilled. The researcher selects the respondents purposefully. By using own judgment about the units of data collection to select

and choose those units that encounters the purpose of the study (Berg, 2001). The Purposive sampling technique is commonly known as selective sampling. Most of the social researchers recruit those units that the researcher think can deliver detailed and in-depth information about the phenomena under investigation (Bell & Waters, 2018). Hence, the researcher used purposive sampling in their research as a technique of data collection from tour operators (UDC 2).

## 2.6 Sample Size

The sample size comprised of about 40 interviews, 10 interviews from each UDCs

**Table 2.1: Unit of Data Collection**

<b>S.no</b>	<b>Units of Data Collection</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>	<b>Selected</b>
1.	Managers of heritage sites and hotels in GB	Convenience Sampling	10
2.	Tour Operators and Tour Guides	Purposive Sampling	10
3.	Shops of Local Community People	Convenience Sampling	10
4.	Transporter Industry (Vehicle and Boat Owners)	Convenience Sampling	10

## 2.7 Data Collection

In social science, data collection is an essential component. The process of gathering information from respondents is known as data collection. In order to better understand social behaviour,

information is extracted from the real world and transferred to recording devices in a systematic manner. The data was collected during COVID -19 between the month of June-July 2021 in GB.

## **2.8 Units of Data Collection**

These are the units with which information is sought. Units of data collection can be individuals, products, stores, companies, etc.

For study, the units used were:

1. Managers of Heritage Sites and Hotels in Gilgit-Baltistan
2. Tour Operators
3. Shopkeeper of Local Community
4. Transporter Industry (Vehicle and Boat Owners)

### **2.8.1 UDC 1 (Heritage Sites and Hotels)**

In Gilgit-Baltistan, the cultural heritage sites have the most international and local growing interest. There are different attractive cultural heritage sites in Gilgit-Baltistan, which are about 1500 years to 750 years old.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, there are more than 500 hotels which are providing hospitality services to the tourists.

### **2.8.2 UDC 2 (Tour Operators)**

There are different tour operating companies in Gilgit-Baltistan. A tour operator is a combination of tour and travel components for the creation of holiday packages. Also, they produce and advertise flyers for promotion of their products and services.

### **2.8.3 UDC 3 (Local Community Shopkeepers)**

The local community, the researcher selected ordinary people, especially the working-class male and female population. The reason being, this UDC had more knowledge of the society and quite aware about the issues and opportunities the tourism could provide to them. Moreover, mostly comprised of the people who were actively engaged in the tourism sector and had a better insight into the impacts of tourism as well as the associated challenges and opportunities.

The most visited areas in Gilgit-Baltistan are Hunza, Skardu and Karimabad. Multiple people have started their own local shops and markets to sell their local products to attract more tourists. Some women also started their own business and started selling their hand-made and local cuisine food.

### **2.8.4 UDC 4 (Transport Industry)**

In Gilgit-Baltistan, different companies offer transportation services to tourists like jeep service, boat service, and rent a car, etc. Transportation has a significant impact on other sectors of the global economy because it facilitates the movement of goods and people. There would be no travel business if there was no transportation, and people would have no way of getting from one place to another.

## **2.9 Methods of Data Collection**

The primary data was collected through rapport building and interviews, which contained mainly open-ended questions and were conducted through direct interviews, Skype, Zoom and telecom means.

The reason to choose these UDCs was because they were directly affected from COVID-19 in tourism sector, and they knew the researcher's subject well.

### **2.9.1 Rapport Building**

(Berg, 2001) defines rapport-building as the relationship that a researcher develops with the community or individuals in the community. With this technique, the researcher can be present in the settings, study individuals and social activities without being observed, and understand and capture the essence of those settings without changing them. The researcher was able to establish rapport and guided the respondents through the interview process by using this strategy.

### **2.9.2 Unstructured Interviews**

According to (Bryman, 2016) , unstructured interviews allow the interviewee to respond freely as the interviewer asks open-ended questions. In these interviews, questions and prompts were used to obtain contextual and in-depth information.

### **2.9.3 Interview /Methods of Interview**

This is a method of the conversation between two or more people for exchanging ideas, beliefs and values. But the main purpose of interview is conversation with the respondents, and to collect information (Kvale, 1996). Similarly, according to (Schostak, 2005), interview is the long conversation between two individuals for the reason to obtain in-depth information and data over specific subject or topic which can then be interpreted accordingly. According to (Dörnyei, 2007), it is mandatory for the researcher to listen carefully to their respondents and speak less, but sometimes he can give guidance to the respondent. It is additionally required to create suitable environment for respondents through which the respondents feel free to give information and talk without hesitation.

## **2.10 Ethical Considerations**

Formal written permission was taken from the respondents prior to collecting data, for ethical and legal purposes; explaining the objectives and implications of the study. The researcher ensured that no harm came to the participating respondents. Complete confidentiality was maintained and no data was collected or used without the respondent's prior consent. The researcher has the right of analysis and interpretation of the data generated if it meets the above-mentioned condition.

## **2.11 Locale of Study**

Gilgit-Baltistan was selected as the research site because this region offers multifaceted travel industry attractions, for example, remarkable cultural pattern and historical sites. This area is famous throughout the world for its landscape.

On Pakistan's extreme north, Gilgit-Baltistan is situated; that's why it is also known as Northern Areas of Pakistan. It is one of Pakistan's most attractive areas due to its high mountain ranges, lakes, glaciers and beautiful landscape. Historically an isolated region, it opened to the world when China and Pakistan built the Karakoram highway to connect the two countries in the late 1970s. In a matter of decades, the region established itself as a brand of natural wonders and unique cultures. The area of Gilgit-Baltistan isn't just enriched with natural resources and beautiful landscapes, but there is the genuine image of life as exceptional culture and interesting dialects and music. Other than farming, travel industry is the top most industry that contributes to the financial growth of the people, hence helps in development of nation's economy.



**Figure 2.2** : Source: Map of Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. (Map by Andreas Benz)  
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## 2.12 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is the process of transcribing/ converting the raw data in a systematic way, i.e. coding & encoding, themes & sub-themes, so on and so forth. However, encoding needs an explicit ‘code’. It may be list of themes, qualification and indicators, etc. Themes as an outline exists in qualitative data that, at the very least, characterises and organises possible observations and, evaluates elements (Boyatzis, 1998). Themes may also be generated or extracted from raw information inductively or from theory or prior-research deductively. Thematic analysis has a number of overlapping purposes as described by the author such as:

- Scanning or a way to see the information
- Making sense of the related and unrelated information
- A way to analyse the data set
- A way to see, observe a person, a group, an organization and culture
- It enables the observer, scholar or researcher to enhance their sensitivity and accuracy of the particular phenomena, situation or event

### **2.12.1 Familiarizing with the Data**

Familiarization with the data plays a vital role. It allows the researcher to have strong understanding over the data collected. However, after understanding the data, it becomes helpful to transcribe the data easily. No doubt, this phase is very exhausting, time consuming and irritating but is also one of the main phases. This phase is common and applies to all forms of qualitative analysis. At this phase, the researcher needs to immerse himself/herself in the data through reading and re-reading the collected data. Make rough notes of the audio or video recording. It is mandatory to listen to the collected information, at least once. Listening or reading the data set does not mean mere reading the surface words of the same page, but reading it critically and actively to make sense of the words and what is meant. Therefore, all the collected data via audio recorder was listened carefully, understood and then transcribed into English., as all the interviews and discussion were in ‘Wakhi’, ‘Urdu’ and ‘English’ language.

### **2.12.2 Initial Codes Generating**

Generating codes at this stage gives way to systematic analysis. Codes are the building blocks or bricks. Mostly, themes and codes are used interchangeably by the students. Codes are the



individual brick while themes are the entire wall in analysis. Codes generating means labelling something that is relevant to your research questions. Notably, during reading and re-reading, if the reader recognizes this dataset as potentially relevant to his research questions, ‘code it’. In addition, codes are divided further into semantic and latent level of meanings. Difficulty at this stage to novice researcher is inevitable. In this context, all the transcribed data is read thoroughly and initial codes generated.

### **2.12.3 Themes Searching**

Thirdly, this phase consists of searching for themes. A theme is something relevant to your research questions. At this stage, the codes are then described in more detail rather than a pithy summary. In this context, after codes generating and labelling, the codes are converted into themes and sub-themes.

### **2.12.4 Themes Reviewing**

Recursive or reviewing process takes place at this stage in relation to the data set or coded data. During this phase, the themes are reviewed again and again in order to check it in relation to the collected data and explore whether the themes is working properly in relation to the data set. This is because themes are often overlapping and sometimes irrelevant. In addition, themes are often wrongly put beneath the specific code. Therefore, reviewing themes at this phase is essential. Nevertheless, all the themes and sub-themes are reviewed thoroughly. Overlapping and wrongly put themes are removed and replaced with correct and relevant themes.

### **2.12.5 Define Themes**

At this point, topics must be fine-tuned with the goal of ‘discovering the essence’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During analysis, themes and sub-themes need definition. What this theme stated, and how the sub-themes are related to the actual theme. It is therefore mandatory that all the themes and sub-themes be properly explained, and an association is established with the main theme.

### **2.12.6 Writing a Report**

A report is produced from the entire data of a researcher’s analysis, in order to provide a complete and concise story. In qualitative research, the researcher, using the informal notes and memos, goes systematically to a more formal process of analysis and report writing. Consequently, all the materials from journals, articles and reports from newspaper are reviewed and studied, resulting in a comprehensive report production.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews various studies of tourism impacts and, more specifically, impact of pandemic on tourism industry. Firstly, discusses the pandemic outbreak and its historical background and its impact on tourism industry. And secondly, looked at the impact of tourism on the local livelihood.

A pandemic, according to the Dictionary of Epidemiology, is a worldwide or widely spread epidemic that crosses international boundaries and affects a large number of people" (Last, Spasoff, Harris, & Thuriaux, 2001). The World Health Organization defines it as a situation in which an extremely pathogenic viral subtype establishes a foothold in the human population and then rapidly spreads throughout all of human civilization, to which no one (or very few) in the human population has immunological resistance (WHO., 2011 b).

The humankind has a history littered with notable pandemics that have had devastating consequences on health, economy, and even national security. Some of the most devastating pandemics in human history include smallpox, cholera (plague), dengue, AIDS, influenza (Beigel et al.), SARS, and tuberculosis (Qiu, Rutherford, Mao, Chu, & society, 2017).

#### **3.2 Impact of Pandemic**

As a result of pandemic-related events, health, the economy, and even national security have suffered though "pandemic" has a lengthy history, no clinical texts have described it, and it

continues to evolve. As a result of the extensive geographic spread, sickness development, seriousness, high attack rates and dangerousness, and contagious nature of pandemics, any pandemic has significant negative consequences. As a result of pandemics, a big number of people have been infected, and a great number of people have died.

This epidemic not only poses a major threat to the world's population, but it also has a significant economic impact. This is due to the economic impact of the pandemic crisis.' Travel was restricted, and academic institutions, markets, and sporting events were closed as a result of pandemics.

### **3.3 Pandemics in History**

The paper gave an overview from 1960s onward. Because at that time, travel industry took its first step as a massive phenomenon.

#### **3.3.1 Malaria (1969, 1975, 1998)**

As a result of the mosquito-borne disease malaria, 405,000 people died last year(Prevention, 2020)) Pregnant women and kids are the most Mauritian authorities had declared the disease to be eradicated in 1969 1975 was the second time it reappeared. In 1998, it was abolished once more. Afterwards, it returned in 1975, only to be dropped again in 1998. This disease was start in sub-Saharan nations just as Morocco, Oman and the Arab Emirates, Asia and Latin America; in particular, nations that are situated inside an expansive band around the equator. The study (Modrek, Liu, Gosling, & Feachem, 2012) has discovered just a weak connection between the travel industry appearances and the disease.

### **3.3.2 Yellow fever or dengue fever (1971-1999, 2000-2010)**

More than 50 million cases are reported each year in more than 100 countries. Outbreaks have been linked to the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Western Pacific Islands, Australia, and Southeast Asia (Dick et al., 2012). A study was conducted on the impact of dengue in 2013 that looked at the impact of dengue on Based on their current status, a 4% reduction in industry consumption in Brazil (due to dengue) would cost US\$132.3 million in global travel industry consumption and \$1.4 billion in local travel industry consumption. There are no vaccinations available. The disease can be eradicated by eliminating mosquito habitats and bites.(Nishikawa, Clark, Genovez, Pinho, & Durand, 2016)

### **3.3.3 Ebola (2014)**

When Ebola was discovered by accident in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1976, it was feared that it would spread (Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia). According to reports, it affected 30,000 people over the course of a little more than three years, resulting in 11,325 deaths (2018). Tourist arrivals fell by half, resulting in a 1.5 percent drop in GDP. Despite the fact that Ebola did not spread to many countries in West Africa, travelers perceived the entire Western African continent to be unsafe, and as a result, it had a significant negative impact on tourism. Due to this illness, the African Cup of Nations football tournament was also cancelled (Maphanga, Henama, & Leisure, 2019).

### **3.3.4 Zika infection (2014, 2016)**

This infection has not been proven to be fatal, but it is rapidly spreading, with more than 1.5 million people in Brazil infected. It spreads via the mosquitos, which have territories to the north of the

United States. The infection causes a mild fever, rashes, torment, and cerebral pain, but it is dangerous for pregnant women (Misrahi, 2016). Despite the mild symptoms and low risk of the illness, 64 percent of Americans are willing to cancel travel plans to areas where the Zika virus is prevalent. According to (Forbes, 2016), the impacted countries' lost tourism revenue could total up to \$63.9 billion.

### **3.3.5 Bird flu or avian influenza or H5N1 (1996-97, 2017)**

Birds are to be blamed for the spread of this virus. It's worth noting that this infection is common in wild aquatic birds and can easily infect domestic poultry as well as other bird and mammal species. This infection was discovered in Asia first, but it quickly spread to Europe, Africa, and other continents. (WHO, 2007). According to experts, because there is a low probability of transmission from person to person, this is not an infection that has a significant impact on the travel industry (Beigel et al., 2005).

### **3.3.6 Swine Flu (2009)**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 18,500 deaths in June as a result of the H1N1 pandemic. Previously, people who worked near pigs were infected with this virus. Prior to the pandemic, Mexico's hotel occupancy rate was 60%. After the outbreak, it fell to 10%. This precipitous drop lasted about a month, but it eventually subsided. In terms of foreign tourism, hotels on the mainland outperformed seaside resorts by more than half (55-60 %) when compared to the domestic travel industry 45% (Fenichel, 2013)

### **3.3.7 SARS: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (2003)**

This virus infects humans, bats, and other mammalian animals. It was discovered for the first time in 2003. According to World Bank estimates, the global economy has spent approximately \$54 billion on SARS, whereas an influenza pandemic would cost \$ 3 trillion, or roughly 5% of global GDP. According to a study by (Siu & Wong, 2004) people were more aware of the effects of SARS ,the China alone lost approximately \$40 million as a result of the SARS outbreak in 2003, which resulted in an estimated loss of 9.4 million international visitors to China (Wilder-Smith & disease, 2006).

### **3.4 COVID-19's Global Impact on the Tourism Industry**

Globally, the COVID-19-related international and local prohibition has had a significant impact on the economies of countries around the world, particularly the tourism industry in all of its segments. The global tourism industry is estimated to have lost \$200 billion as a result of travel restrictions imposed by various regional governments (Ozili & Policy, 2020). According to(Conde Nast Traveller, 2020), within a month of the epidemic, worldwide tourism dropped to zero resulting in a modern Covid-19. People's income is declining globally. They are at risk of illness, and they are unable to travel or spend as much money as they used to. As a result, hotels and resorts are on the verge of bankruptcy. Tourism has grown at a 4-5 percent annual rate around the world. As a result, it contributes 8% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (UNWTO, 2020).

(Yozcu & Cetin, 2019) Natural disasters and disease outbreaks are two of the many types of crises that could hit the country. Perishable tourism products (such as hotel beds and airline seats) cannot be preserved for future use because they are perishable.

An article (Hoque, 2020) provides an overview of the impact of Coronavirus (Economics) on the Chinese tourism industry. Because aren't enough passengers in China and people are afraid of the virus, several domestic and international airlines have been forced to cancel flights to and from China due to low passenger numbers. Foreign tourists in China generate approximately \$127.3 billion in foreign exchange earnings for the country. There are fewer visitors to China because all flights have been cancelled. According to this study, viral infections have a greater impact on tourism than previously thought. As a result, the country's and the world's economies suffered the most severe losses.

According (Bas & Sivaprasad, 2021) study on the tourism industry's response to a pandemic, the industry employs 3.2 million people, generates \$130 billion in economic activity and taxes, and generates £39 billion in government revenue. According to (UNWTO, 2020) COVID-19, there will be 75 million risk jobs in the travel and tourism industry in the future. There will also be a 20-30% drop in international tourists and an 80-90% drop in small and medium-sized businesses in the UK.

Another study (Korinth & Ranasinghe, 2020) that formulates the effect of the situation of the pandemic on tourism. This report, which was published in March 2020, indicated a dramatic fall in Poland, there was a 40 percent drop in occupancy compared to last year's figures, and there was an 80-90 percent drop in flight traffic at Poland Airport (due to the suspension of the international air link). There will be an increase in the trade imbalance between 2.4 and 7.1 billion euros if unanticipated overseas travel declines by 3.5 to 10.5 billion euros. according to a report published on August 4, 2020 (Mariolis, Rodousakis, & Soklis, 2020)



(Fernandes, 2020) in his research published in March 2020 stated that the world economy is affected in number of ways and the estimation of losses is not possible yet as pandemic is still on. According to his research, the lockdown has harmed businesses of all types, and those who haven't lost their jobs are at risk of losing them in the future if the situation persists. More jobs will be threatened, particularly in service-oriented economies.

### **3.5 Impact on Pakistan's Tourism industry**

Pakistan, like the rest of the world, is in a state of emergency. According to newspaper (Hussain, 2020), Pakistan's hotel industry lost more than \$100 million in February alone. There has also been a significant drop in hotel bookings, which have fallen from 95% to 40% since January. Pakistan's tourism industry is estimated to be made up of daily wagers and small-to-medium-sized businesses that rely on tourism. Since the implementation of the law, the revenue of a large number of tour guides, porters, and tour operators has plummeted.

(Kazmi & Shah, 2020) explained that the virus's spread is unstoppable due to a recent epidemic. The entire travel and hotel industry has come to a halt. This is a problem not only on a macro-level, but also on a micro-level, because many families rely on hotel and tourism revenue to make ends meet. He elaborated that because of the recent pandemic, the spread of the virus is unstoppable. Travels have come to a standstill as well as the hotel, which does not only affect the macro level but also at the micro level as well, because many families' bread and butter depends on income from hotel and tourism. Furthermore, agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries are vital to Pakistan's economy. It's easy to see how the shutdown, prolonged quarantine, and

disruption of transportation and supply as a result of the travel restrictions affect Pakistan's overall industry scenario, as well as the country's GDP, government efforts, and hope.

(Rizwan, Ahmad, & Ashraf, 2020) elaborated in his article that how Covid-19 outbreak had a negative impact on GDP growth in Pakistan, i.e., lowered it from 33.2 to 2.2%, while the global growth rate of GDP is expected to decrease from 3.1 to 2.8%. Many of Pakistan's most pressing issues include local or national supply chain disruptions, poverty, job losses, the discontinuation of formal education for 47 million students, and rising food prices. However, a dramatic increase in the air quality index has been recorded all over the world in the last few years, and Pakistani metropolitan areas are polluted as a result of a lack of transportation as well as industrial and agricultural operations. As a result, hotspots and activities that are significant contributors to as a result, long-term environmental effects such as increased demand for natural resources and increased exploitation may occur.

(Iraqi, 2007) stated that, tourism has a positive and significant impact on any local community. Due to the increase in tourism work levels, living standards have increased. Local residents have a positive impact on tourism development. They prefer more tourism in their area

(Khalil & Kakar, 2007) a study found that tourists are the main source of economic growth. This plays an important role by increasing revenue from the formal and informal sectors. Because of various events and activities of the number of tourists, the amount of employment opportunities increases. Economic growth and income from tourism is directly proportional, which means increasing tourism income, means stability in economic indicators. Tourism expenditure presents

encouragement in the economy and it shows the impact of positive tourism in the Pakistani economy.

### **3.6 Research Gap**

Researcher found a key gap as previous studies looked at the impacts of COVID-19 in various sectors of Pakistan, but this study is unique in that it looks specifically at Tourism industry. This study is also distinct because the context is distinct, as it explored impacts of the pandemic on tourism sector and the coping strategy in Gilgit Baltistan, hence in the current study, researcher is trying to address and fill this gap.

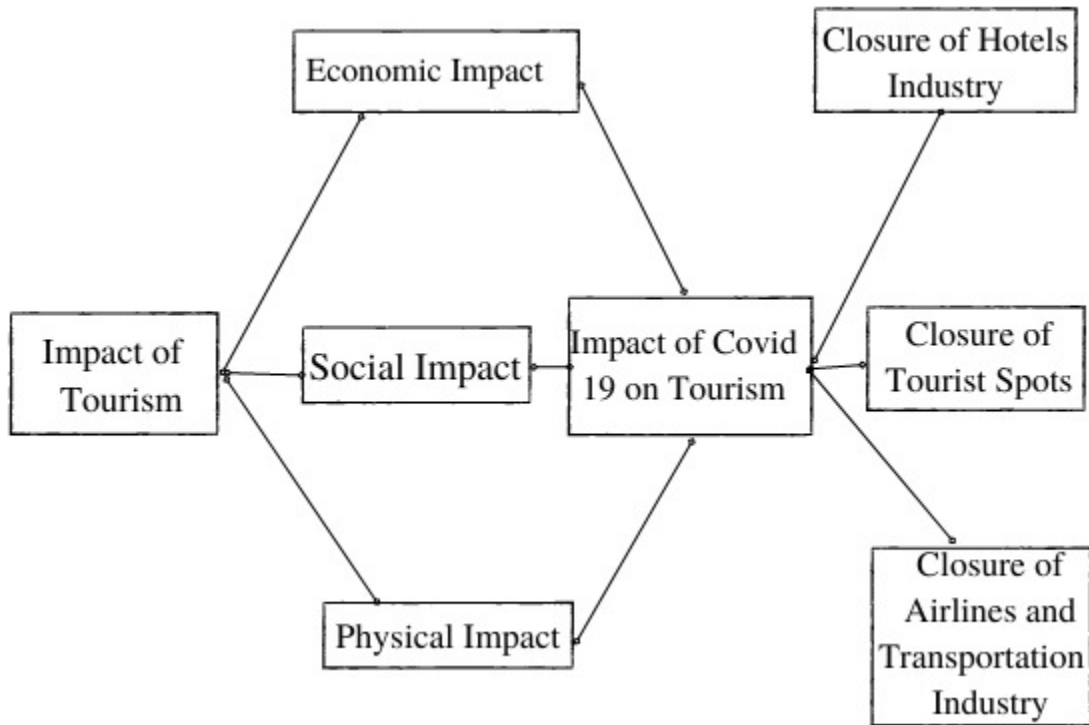
### **3.7 Conceptual Framework**

This scientific investigation necessitates the establishment of a conceptual foundation. Before the actual investigation began, it was clear to the researcher which concepts would be used and which areas of the study would be observed. In reality, this study was initiated and completed due to the applicability of these ideas.

There are many different studies which have addressed the impact of tourism on livelihood. According to (Mathieson & Wall, 1982) , they suggested that tourism development generated three great impacts which are economic impact, physical impact and social impacts in the destination area. As tourism sector plays a very important role in country development and more specifically Gilgit-Baltistan being one of the world-famous tourist destinations, but this study addresses the pandemic effect on the livelihood of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and especially on tourism sector

The study of (Akama & Kieti, 2007) addresses some outcomes to tourism development. Specifically, it relates to the distribution of tourism benefits to all local participation in tourism. The (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002) suggested tourism is important and integral element of development strategy for any country. The expansion and advancement of tourism is considered and justified on its boosting role in social and economic development.

To compensate for this decline, the travel industry will lose half of its jobs and revenue by 2020. According to the International Air Transport Association, global airlines are expected to lose a record \$84 billion in 2020. That is more than three times what they lost during the Global Financial Crisis (Forum, 2020). According to (Faulkner, 2001) the hospitality and tourism industry is the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As a result, natural disasters and pandemics in every part of the world have a negative impact on global tourism. Several studies have demonstrated the societal impact of epidemics and pandemics, such as the imposition of movement and travel restrictions, border closures, and even the establishment of quarantine zones (Espinoza, Castillo-Chavez, & Perrings, 2020). COVID-19 has had the greatest impact on the hospitality industry. People all over the world are spending less and travelling less as a result of a lack of flexible income, the hotels and resorts are on the verge of insolvency, the hospitality industry's situation is even more dire.



*Figure 3.1:* Conceptual frame work of the study

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The proceeding section discusses the findings gathered from tourism-related personnel such as operating companies, hotel and heritage managers and local community shopkeepers of Gilgit-Baltistan, to meet the research objectives to answer the research questions

Developing a community's tourism business maximises the positive impact chosen while minimising the potential negative impact. As a first step, it is critical to identify any potential negative effects. Tourism has a wide range of documented consequences. The development of tourism can have a variety of effects on community.

#### 4.2 Impact of Tourism

In Pakistan's north, tourism is a major source of income. However, the increase in tourism-related economic activity has also led to an increase in pollution, noise, and congestion, as well as an increase in the demand for water and energy. The unplanned nature of tourism also has a negative impact on local populations and the environment.

Tourism has been criticized for its negative impacts. However, it also has multiplier affects. These affects include: economic, socio-culture and environmental effect (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill, & practice., 1993). Economic impacts of tourism include:

- Foreign direct investments

- Increased job opportunities for local community
- It boosts the local entrepreneurship
- It increases local as well as regional development
- Increase in tax revenue, benefit to local community and government.

However, there are negative consequences with tourism as well. Such as inflation and higher land values. It creates a big issue for the local people. On the other hand, it provides and utilizes their cash for goods and services, injecting financial resources to the host community, resulting in enhanced living standard.

#### **4.2.1 The Economic Impact of Tourism**

Tourism is the backbone of a country's economy. The tourism sector is one of the potential sectors that grows at a rate that is faster than time to time, and according to World Bank data (Bank, 2019) tourism income in Pakistan was US \$948 million in 2019 and grew at an average rate. As the top employer, tourism industry plays a critical and crucial role in sustaining and developing the economy of a country. Thousands of people are employed in tourism, including hotel workers, truck drivers, hoteliers, farmers, and tour guides. Tourism, in order to generate revenue and raise living standards, creates more job opportunities, ranging from entry-level jobs at low wages to high-paying professional positions in management and technical disciplines at higher wages. As the tourism industry grows, new opportunities for investment, development, and infrastructure spending emerge. Many of these jobs are seasonal, resulting in underemployment or

unemployment during the off-seasons. Prices for goods, services, land, and housing may rise as a result of increased demand, raising the cost of living.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, traditional means of livelihood, like livestock breeding and agriculture, have also changed. Larger numbers of people are engaging in the services industry, working away from their places of birth, which has a social cost. In this scenario, the tourism industry comes as an alternative that keeps the job seekers close to their homes, and yields more revenue compared to traditional means of livelihood. Therefore, a larger number of people are seeing opportunities in the tourism industry and engaging in sole or joint ventures, like opening restaurants, launching transport services, building hotels and motels, opening guest houses and starting tour-operating companies.

The study showed that the 2010 disaster (Attabad Lake) changed the geographical, Political, Social scenario of the region. The influx of domestic tourism changed drastically which has positive as well as negative impacts on the region. Job and business opportunities increased; women have started their small businesses/ shops of locally made items. Women of the area started working in hotels. Tourism has increased the economy of that region here. People outside of that area are also interested in investing there and some have really started good business.

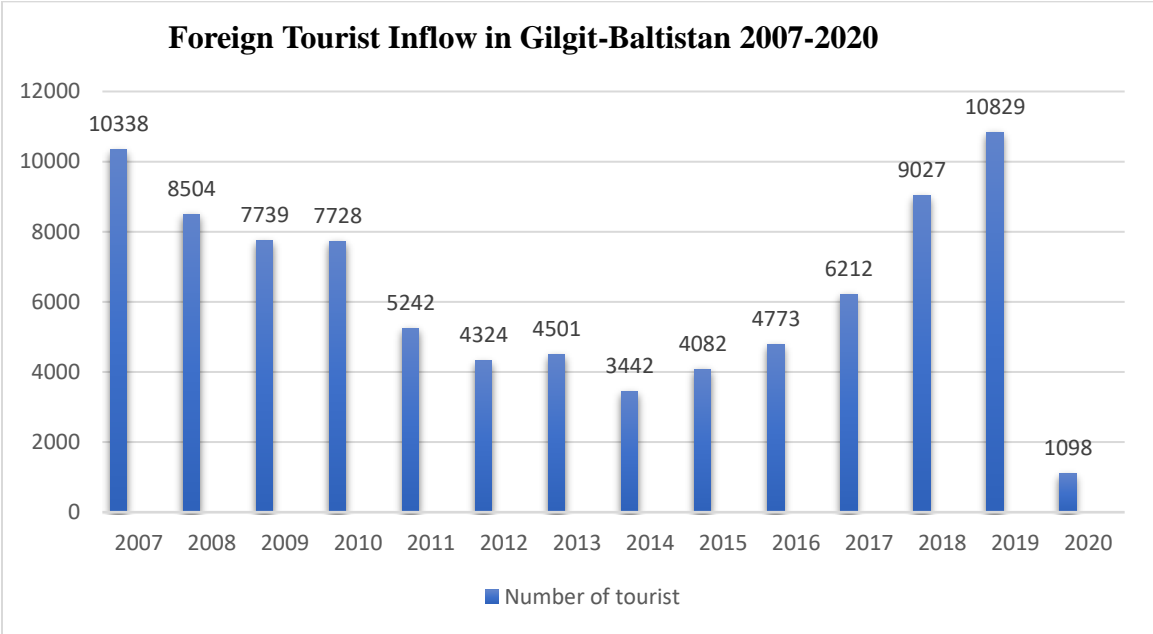
Tourism is one of the major income-generating sources in Gilgit-Baltistan after employment, agriculture, livestock, border trade, and mining. The study showed that, around 60% of the population are affiliated with the tourism industry and happened to be positively impacted since the past fifty years. After an influx of more than 2 million domestic tourists in the past five years has provided the opportunity to this industry to further grow and benefited these hotels and



camping sites. It resulted in creating employment opportunities for hundreds who are affiliated with tourism and hospitality. It also benefited local communities that are affiliated with related value chains i.e., vegetables, fruits, poultry and tour operating fields.

There are two types of tourists: one is international and the other is domestic tourist. Both tourists have economic benefits as the international tourist brings foreign exchange in the country which is very beneficial for a country. Foreign tourists bring foreign remittance to the nation while domestic circulates the money within the country. The number of international tourists arriving in GB from 2007 to 2020 was shown below.

**Table 4.1:** Foreign tourist inflow in Gilgit-Baltistan 2007-2020



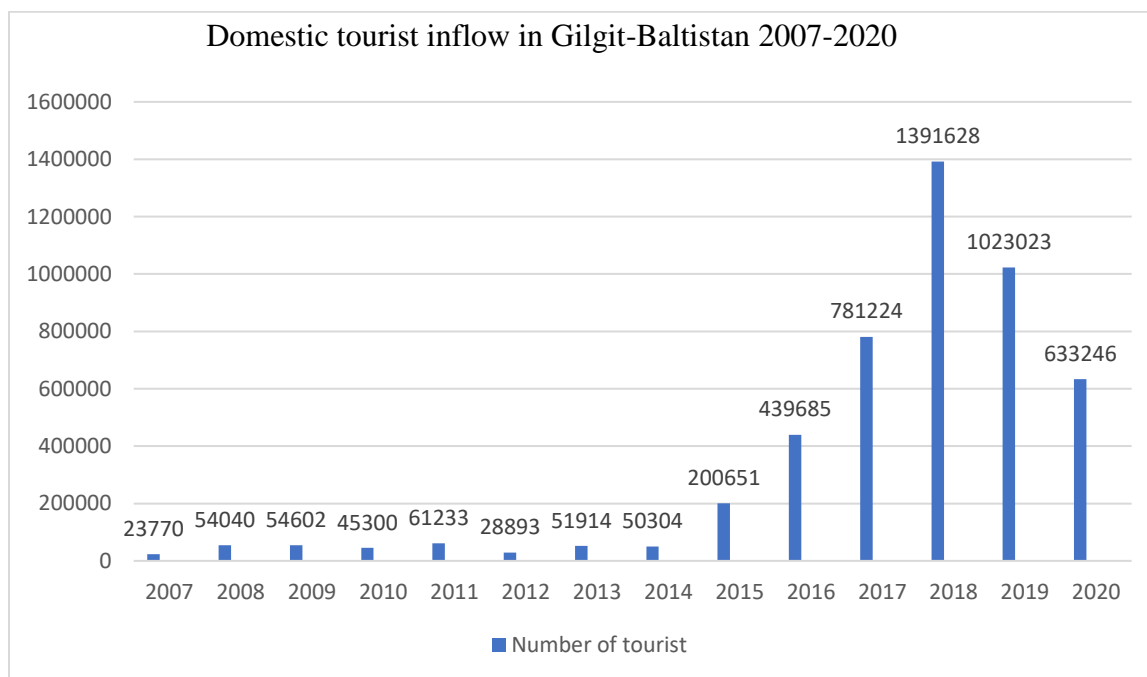
Source: Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Department

#### 4.2.2 The Domestic Tourism

In the last few years, the number of Pakistani tourists has risen dramatically, with most of them travelling with their families and friends. Leisure, soft adventure trekking and camping are their primary goals. Moreover, researchers noted that COVID-19 situation dramatic increase in the number of domestic tourists visiting the country over the past few years. Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Department data shows that domestic tourists travel to Gilgit-Baltistan for a variety of reasons.

The number of domestic tourists arriving in GB from 2007 to 2020 was shown in below table.

**Table 4.2:** Domestic tourist inflow in Gilgit-Baltistan 2007-2020



Source: GB Tourism Department

Hence in this aspect, international tourists are more beneficial for the economy of Pakistan. International tourists do bring revenue for the local community, but it is specific. They travel along

with their appointed tour guides and go to specified places. So, in this regard, a hotel manager responded in this way:

*“When an international tourist visits the area, ‘ghareeb k liey smile aur ameer k liey paisa tha’.* Which means, when a foreigner would visit the area, they would just give a passing smile to the locals or take some pictures. But when it comes to the local tourists, they do bring in financial gains even for the local people, who they interact with them in the form of shop owners and transport use. That has had a positive impact on tourism”.

Industrial sector plays an important role in the growth and development of economy of any country. Majority of respondents identified that there is a lack of industries in Gilgit-Baltistan. Since there are no industries, majority of the revenue is collected through tourism and is a major factor in the economic revenue generation. Most people work as tour guides, tour operators, hotel managers, mini tuck-shop owners, and porters.

#### **4.2.3 Infrastructure Development**

Tourism infrastructure includes complimentary facilities, equipment, systems, processes and resources needed to function in every tourist destination. It mainly includes roads, trains and airports which makes tourist destinations accessible by tourists.

A tour operator replied that:

*“Tourism comprises of three important components which includes access, accommodation and communication. Before the 2000s, flow of tourists was low. Reason was due to the lack of basic components. We didn’t have access flight because it was subject to weather, KKH was often blocked. There was no proper communication system, but now the situation has improved; KKH*

*road is improved due to CPEC, and there is easy access due to Naran and Kaghan. The communication system has improved now. We have almost network facility in tourist spots with 3G and 4G internet connectivity and accommodation has also improved. Flights system has improved and weather dependency decreased”.*

40% of the respondents agreed that tourism has had a great role in infrastructure development in Gilgit-Baltistan. The infrastructure has been improved at high rate, more and more luxurious hotels and metallic roads are being built in GB. The due to flow of tourists, new spots are developed and discovered. One example is of Ondra Poyga, which is located in Gulmit, Gojal Hunza, where the community worked together and made a new tourist spot.

A local shopkeeper shared their point of view:

*“Besides direct beneficiaries of this tourism sector, provided opportunities to bring different development projects in the subdivisions, such as Gojal. For instance, Japanese tourists constructed school, vocational centres and library, whereas a German lady completed 100 km long water supply project in memory of her father who died in Batura glacier in the 1960s in Passu. A European lady, Ms. Velma, constructed a high school and girls’ hostel for students etc. That means an influx of tourism has impacted the education, health, living condition of the local communities.”*

The study showed that tourism has a great role in infrastructure development as the “Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) announced to launch beautiful Air Safari flights from different cities of Pakistan to Gilgit-Baltistan which is a good initiative to promote tourism. Tourists are able to enjoy the panoramic view of the K2 and the mighty snow-cap, including Nanga Parbat and Deosai.

60% of the respondent said that tourism has no such role in infrastructure development; meaning there is weak infrastructure. Gilgit-Baltistan's tourism industry, a lack of adequate infrastructure is a major obstacle. Because of the lack of road access, roadside facilities, medical assistance and rescue services, and general tourist facilitation, travel can be difficult and uncomfortable for tourists. Many tourist destinations have limited accommodations, and there are no standards for quality control or service.

#### **4.2.4 Women Empowerment**

Women empowerment is defined as the process of empowering women in which women take participation in workforce, attaining the capability to make strategic choices and take part in decision making. Tourism has given great power to women, globally. The desire to have an occupation, to have higher education and to support their family. It can, moreover, provide challenges as well as new opportunities for women. During the past decades, the tourism industry has boosted women's employment in this sector. The tourism industry offers opportunities for self-employment as well as small and medium-sized income-generating activities. This new culture of entrepreneurship is transforming the culture of Gilgit-Baltistan. Especially noteworthy is the emergence of female entrepreneurs who have successfully established businesses in different towns and villages of the area. Women make different embroidery, caps, shawls, coat, sweaters and handicrafts which are famous in the area. There are different sectors in which they can be involved and be a part of the economic growth. It includes the production and distribution of dry fruits, making traditional food as well as hotel management, etc. In some districts of GB, the society encourages women to come forward and work side by side with their male peers.

A hotel manager from Diamer identified the change that has been seen in the last 30 years, as per his experience *that*:

*“If tourist photographers would take pictures of women while taking pictures of the scenery, they were beaten. The situation has changed drastically. As education penetrates deeper in the district Diamer now, women are now more involved in the teaching and health sector. Change is not an overnight thing, but it will take time. Education has improved for girls in Nagar. Hunza is relatively moderate due to the AKDN (Aga Khan Development Network) institutions. Women empowerment is more visible in Hunza as compared to other districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Imamti Institutions focus was not only on Ismailis, but others did not adopt the change.”*

One of the female restaurant owners shared her experience in the hospitality sector.

*“According to her, she had switched to hotel business from being a teacher. She changed her career direction when she got a chance to study abroad for a year. She got her degree from abroad and took a wise decision to change her field of earning, as she refers. People were not happy and she was often discouraged for making this decision. Teaching is preferred over hotel job for women especially, therefore, she was not encouraged to run her business, and people were not appreciating her start-up. She faced many challenges in the industry, but she never gave up. She believed in herself and her strength, and was running the hotel quite better than what people had expected. She now is happy, satisfied and has an improved economic base, and content in with her current situation. She further added that she encourages other women to pursue their dreams and believe in themselves, more specifically, she encourages women to join the hotel industry as it is a very good source of income and promising field of work.”*

The study showed that in GB, there are very few women in the hospitality sector. It is believed that wherever in the world tourism and hospitality were boosted, the reason behind it was women. It is very important to involve women in this sector. When they are involved in this sector, then they became empowered and independent.

Out of all, the majority of the women entrepreneurs are from Hunza, who are involved in running cafes and restaurants, housekeeping and owning their own hotels. There is a great opportunity for women to take advantage of this booming industry of tourism. The women whom the researcher interviewed had a very positive approach towards their business and how it has improved their overall confidence as well as their financial situation. Women entrepreneurship and empowerment has increased with managing restaurants and guesthouses with promoting local food and getting direct access to income. Tourism has a great role in terms of women empowerment, as with the development of infrastructure requirement increase, household income increases. Women can produce a lot of things at home and sell them. When they become financially stable, they become independent. Women are running cafes and small businesses and some have craftsmanship.

#### **4.2.5 Promote Local Organic Foods**

A country's cultural expression is characterised by its food and drinking pattern. The majority of the tourists are attracted by traditional foods. However, parallel to these expressions, tourism industry has changed traditional food choices for the local communities as well. Many tourists who visited these places have a high demand of local food because of its organic nature and nutritional value. Most of the local foods are Molida, Chapshoro, Sharbat, Mull, Dawdoo, Gharal, Chumus, Mumtu, etc.

The study showed that, the demand for local food has increased multi-fold during the past three years. This is because it's rich in nutrients and are organic products. For instance, in summers, the demand in organic locally made juices of apricot and cherries has increased. Apricot juice has medicinal values and is locally used to treat diseases related to digestion, constipation, and heart-related issues. So, with the passage of time, these local cuisines are gaining popularity among international and domestic tourists.

#### **4.2.6 Education and Awareness**

The study showed that tourism has a vital role in education and awareness. Ethics play a vital role in tourism. Gilgit-Baltistan is more sensible and ethical in business dealing as compared to Naran-Kaghan and Babusar, Murree etc. It is because of their interaction with international tourists. The locals learned a lot from those tourists. The international tourists are more focused on preserving the value and traditions and hence their dealings with the local tourists reflected that. Those tourists also took part in educating the local youngsters whenever they got the chance.

The study also identified that tourists were not only visiting Gilgit-Baltistan for the scenic beauty, but also for the high morals and respect that the local people have for their elders and each other. The concept of saying 'salam' to passers-by is something that the tourists acknowledge and respect and they want to expose their children to such environment so that they can learn the positive behaviour and implement the same in their daily lives.

#### **4.2.7 Country's Soft Image**

As per respondents, tourism has developed the country's positive image, as a few years back Pakistan was considered not a safe place for foreign tourists and even the domestic tourists didn't



feel safe when visiting different tourist sites within Pakistan. The country was in a state of political unrest. There were numerous suicide bombings and kidnappings of foreigners in Pakistan, making it impossible for tourists to visit the country. However, now that tourism is thriving in Pakistan, the country is presenting a very positive image.

#### **4.2.8 Environmental Impact**

The environment includes air quality, coping or carrying capacity of that area, water, wildlife, and natural phenomena. Environmental quality is greatly associated with tourism activities, as a result of tourists' littering, waste, and pollution, some of the activities inflict severe damage on the natural environment (i.e., noise, solid waste, air, and water). Tourism development and the overuse of natural resources jeopardizes the natural environment. However, this relationship between the tourism industry and the environment is complex. For instance, different lodgings, motels, parking systems, roads, and infrastructure are constructed for the facilitation of tourists, which causes high degradation of the natural environment. In addition, it also creates positive impacts on the natural environment in terms of preservation and conservation of natural resources. Our natural environment consists of water, soil, air, forests, etc. Whenever any change occurs, it ultimately affects others negatively or positively. For instance, if water is polluted by tourists, it then results in a grave danger for flora and fauna. Similarly, if an industry or even a hotel is constructed in order to accommodate tourists and all the sewerage disposed into the rivers, it causes multiple skin disease, dysentery, infections because the water may be used by some members of the community living downstream. Water quality disturbs tourism development through infrastructure construction and maintenance. As developing countries is characterized for its low level of

housing, freshwater scarcity, drainage and sewerage system, etc. thus, tourism inclusion to a particular arena increases pressure on the existing sewerage system. It also increases the number of impervious surfaces, resulting in turning into water bodies.

Tourists are responsible for a great deal of pollution. Such as the infection of water due to vessels, the emission of toxic gases from transportation, and other human activities result in air pollution and global warming, which leads to depletion of the ozone layer (Holden, 2004).

The study showed that, one of tourism's negative affects is environmental pollution, that tourists are littering the region with wrappers, shopping bags and all other pollutants. They are leaving behind tons of garbage, which is not being managed efficiently, resulting in the destruction of habitat and natural beauty. Hotels, markets, and restaurants also often lack sustainable waste-management capacity or practices. This will lead to immense solid-waste-management-related problems in the years ahead. It is quite possible that the communities will, eventually, demand curtailing of over-tourism.

Currently, there is a lack of proper waste management and disposal mechanism in different regions of GB. The common practice is open dumping and direct disposal of wastes into the water bodies (river, stream, and lacks). For example, in Hunza and particularly in Gojal, there is no proper waste management system deployed in the hotels and restaurants and the owners of the hotels have requested the government to take incremental steps to address this issue in order to protect the health and wellbeing of the environment. The study found that 85% of the hotels are practicing open dumping system and their wastes go directly into the river and lake, for instance in Atabad lake.

#### 4.2.9 The Cultural and Social Impact

Communities may benefit or suffer as a result of tourism's social and cultural ramifications. Tourists bring a wide range of values to the town and have a significant impact on family life and behaviour. As a group, or even as individuals, we may try to appease tourists or engage in tourist-like activities. Interactions between locals and tourists can have an impact on creative expression, either positively or negatively.

The role of the local people in promoting the value of the local culture is very important. Most of the traditions are unique and has its roots connected to some of the regions of China, Russia, Tajikistan, etc. It is important to be aware of the roots and value it. For tourists, every aspect of culture in the north brings a unique experience; from the basic structure of the houses, cultural events such as *Nowroz*, *kitixid tagham*, *Chinee (traditional festivals)*, the unique and simple food, each and every aspect is different and unique and can provide a great opportunity to boost the local culture.

The tour operator with extensive experience knowledge in development filed responded in this way:

*“Tourism can help preserve cultural identities. It depends on how recipient communities look towards tourists and how the people portray themselves and their culture. As we are losing our cultural values fast. Just wearing a Gilgiti cap is not enough to preserve the culture. Culture is related to the values and ethics of the people. Cluster living is gone; communal living has brought distance. People are becoming more individual. Tourism can either ruin or preserve a culture if the regulators i.e., government as well communities should design and implement it.”*

The tourists bring with them their own culture. As the majority of the merchant (entrepreneur) class adopts the languages of business (i.e. Urdu and English), the usage of the local languages (Wakhi, Burushaski, Shina, Balti) gets affected. Already endangered, the local languages are further degrading because of the impact and influence of foreign languages, which increases with the arrival of millions of tourists every year, in addition to other factors.

According to locals, the growing number of tourists and their interactions with the locals have improved their understanding and inspired them to preserve their traditional heritage. According to a local shopkeeper,

*“Many philosophers, writers, artists, and other prominent people are visiting this area. I'm glad I got to meet them. It expands my cultural horizons and increases my knowledge. The truth is that if I hadn't been here, I would not have met these people. Only tourism development has brought these people here, which I consider to be a great privilege for our region. The growing interest of tourists in local culture and tourist destinations not only motivates businesses and locals to preserve their heritage, but it also serves as a source of pride. As a result, locals believe that tourism allows them to socialise, learn about different cultures, and present the town's natural and cultural heritage to the world, among other things.”*

The study has found that the society in Gilgit-Baltistan is changing. Egalitarianism is being replaced by competitiveness, which is a characteristic of the merchant/entrepreneur class, with a focus on profit maximization. For centuries, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan have lived in strongly gelled and supportive communities, which are now on the verge of collapse, because they are being replaced by a new kind of competitive society.

#### 4.2.10 Promotion of Traditional Handicrafts and Artefacts

Gilgit-Baltistan is famous for traditional handicrafts such as hats, jewellery, and wooden equipment etc. Tourists spend a lot of money on things every day, and the demand for those products grows. Local entrepreneurs attribute this to a surge in tourism development. Increased demand has a significant impact on the local economy as well as the city's social life. A large number of new businesses have opened in the last five years. Increased retail demand raises land prices and creates construction and interior design job opportunities.

As a result, in recent years, new businesses and industrial groups have sprung up to meet the needs of local consumers. Because the majority of workers in this sector are women, traditional industry is thriving and has a significant impact on the local economy and social life.

**Table 2 .3:** List of Gemstones and Handicrafts

S.no	Products	
	Gem Stones	Handicrafts
1.	Ruby	Wallets
2.	Feroza	Bags
3.	Emerld	Choghas
4.	Topaz	Rugs

### **4.3 COVID-19 and Tourism**

Initially, COVID-19 had a devastating impact on tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, like other parts of the world. When the COVID-19 virus was discovered, the area was closed to visitors for several months. Hotels, allied industries, transporters, tour operators, and farmers were affected as there was no demand for the services and goods they were offering. This caused losses worth millions of rupees. Hotel and restaurant owners incurred high utility costs but were not able to generate income, thus getting into debt.

Pakistan was named as one of the best tourist destinations for 2020 by a US travel magazine (Travel, 2020). Due to this prediction, many peoples started investing in hotels, restaurants, guest houses, small tuck shops, but this pandemic completely reverse the situation, adversely affecting the tourism sector. Most people borrow loans from banks and it is a very hard time for them to manage their basic necessities.

All the respondents agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the tourism industry, not only in Gilgit-Baltistan but worldwide has affected this sector. International and domestic travel has been restricted. There was no business at all during the initial months of pandemics. Gradually, the government has relaxed the lockdown and allowed the domestic tourist to visit Gilgit-Baltistan amid following SOPs. Very few of the hoteliers, shop keepers and transporters have got benefit out of it. The government has not announced any packages of help for people associated with the tourism industry though they suffered heavy losses. The businessmen were unable to pay their staff including chefs, waiters, and janitorial staff their salaries.

As Hunza is the border area between China and Pakistan, many of the people in the area are doing business on this route. They range from small shopkeepers to people running businesses in both countries. As COVID-19 emerged in China, the border was immediately closed for the traders. Since then, it has been a nightmare for the business community, whose business relied on the route. The border has been sealed for almost two years now which severely impacted the traders in Pakistan in general, and Hunza in particular. Their source of income was blocked and the goods had been stopped. Some of them have shops on the other side of the border which has been closed since December 2019. They have not been able to cross the border to run their small shop. Besides all others factors that has affected the hotel, tourism and trade in the region, closing of the Pak-China border was a major one, which effected the business community. Pak-China border provides a gateway for a major business community, which has now been left abandoned. Not only have the local suffered, but also the business in the south, which used to trade goods that were imported from China through the border route.

#### **4.3.1 SOPs for the Tourism Industry**

The National Command and Operations (NCOC) have amended standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the tourism sectors, and it has been decided that the SOPs would be strictly implemented to avoid chances of a complete lockdown. People lacking vaccination certificates are not be allowed to enter tourist spots in Gilgit-Baltistan. The new guidelines include mandatory mask-wearing by every tourist at all the destinations, use of hand sanitizers, possession of negative Corona virus test upon arrival and national identity card, and compliance of social distancing outdoors.

A tour operator replied in this way:

*“The COVID-19 pandemic not only changed the activities but changed the mind-set of the people around the globe. Even the superpower countries were also affected from this pandemic.”*

People have suffered a lot because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The business activities almost came to zero. Following the action plan and instructions of the government of Pakistan, people have managed to come out of this crisis. The smart lockdown has minimised the miseries of the people as hotspot of COVID-19 were locked and the rest of the areas were free to move.

The study showed that the SOPs were being followed on the business level but the tourists, specifically local tourists, were giving a hard time with the policies and would not follow the given protocols. The local businesses were ensuring to add signs and hand sanitizers, to ensure that the protocols for COVID-19 were being followed. However, the tourists would not abide by the required instructions and it did impact the way business was being conducted.

#### **4.3.2 Positive Impact of COVID-19**

Although COVID-19 has had an overall negative effect on the economy of the whole world, it seemed to have somewhat of a positive effect on the economic boost in the Northern Areas. Since international flights have been cancelled, the elite class has directed its interest in exploring the beauty of the North. A lot of national celebrities have recently visited and continue to do so. It has had a positive impact on the economy with the money circulating within the country rather than on international trips.

As a result, not only was the Northern Area brought into the spot light in the local media, but the international media as well. There is a major influx of tourists, both local and international. This



has pushed a lot of local people to direct their attention towards catering to the influx of tourists. It has given way to the construction of many small local business, that provide a lot of services from basic food items to hotels as well as camping sites, where the tourists can relax and enjoy the beautiful view.

### **4.3.3 Coping Strategies in COVID-19**

The study showed that the people had different methods to survive the financial crisis of the COVID-19, such as taking loans from banks, minimizing their spending, limiting their budget and sticking to the needs rather than wants. They prioritised their spending as per the requirement and tried to manage the savings that they had from their businesses. The prevailing condition brought them to the point where they had to keep a check on their budget while trying to get their businesses back to the old routine. The lifestyle had to change and they did that, pulling back their families from a well-lived life to survival mode was a way to handle the then situation to avoid being burdened by loans or worsening situation.

One female tour operator responded in this way:

*“Although COVID-19 impacted the business, costs were reduced and some businesses were closed, however, it did give way to new opportunities. The women involved with tourism ensured to look for new ways to continue their work and did so by going online, staying positive and spreading the same through social media. They also started selling and marketing their products (dry fruits, honey, oil, etc.) online. Hence, they did not make this pandemic an excuse, but an opportunity to look for new ways to improve and increase their business model.”*

COVID-19 had unfortunately put a ban on the source of income of those households, which was affecting in so many ways. However, they had to cope during those hard days and their coping mechanism were differing from one another.

The study highlighted that many of the local business owners started working in their fields, which became the ultimate source of their livelihoods. As agriculture had been and still is the biggest source of livelihood in the region, even some farmers generate income by selling fruits, and other cash crops. Hence, the COVID situation had brought back some businesspeople to the traditional source of livelihood and became source of income in those hard days.

A hotel manager shared his experience that how he handled the after-effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

“I was running a hotel and a stationary shop, as with the closure of tourism industry, markets and school, I was unable to provide financially to my family. So, I looked at other modes of business and ended up becoming a contractor in another village. It was a new venture which proved to be quite hard initially. He mentioned the following Prince Karim Aga Khan’s quote as his

motivation: a person should have three skills.”

#### **4.4 Challenges regarding Tourism**

Tourism is a complex sector with many challenges and in particular, in Gilgit-Baltistan, there are some great challenges which are as following.

#### **4.4.1 Natural Disaster**

This region is highly prone to such disasters and recently an abrupt increase in the frequency of natural disasters, including glacial lake outbursts, earthquakes, flash floods, land sliding and avalanches have also increased.

Studies have found that natural disasters may create long-lasting impacts on the lives of people. For instance, back in 2010, due to landslides in upper Hunza, a lake was formed. As a result of this disaster, 18 people lost their lives and more than 150 families were displaced. Such stories are common in every part of GB. In recent years, the frequency and intensity of these natural disasters have drastically increased in various parts of GB and some researchers attribute these to changes due to global warming and climate change.

The study showed that, natural disaster is a major challenge for the tourism. During rain and snowfall, roads are mostly blocked, making it impossible for the by-road travellers to travel. They are sometimes stuck for days at a time while the roads are being cleaned of debris and landslides. During the summer months of June and July, there is a higher rate of rain and water flow. It also is the time when a majority of the tourists turn towards the north to enjoy the weather and site. Lack of basic infrastructural facilities results in tourists facing roadblocks, which gives rise to further issues such as lack of access to basic facilities of food, stay and fuel for the road, etc.

**Table 4.3:** List of Recent Natural Disaster in GB

<b>S No</b>	<b>Natural Disaster</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Badswat Glacier Outburst	July 2021
2.	Atabad Landslide	2010
3.	Shisper Glacier Outburst	2018,19,21

#### **4.4.2 Lack of Infrastructure**

Poor infrastructure is the top most challenge which is resulting in tourists over influx in those areas where infrastructure is better. Tourists prefer to visit those places where basic facilities are better, for example, roads, hotels, restaurants, telecommunications, etc. Another challenge is people of Gilgit-Baltistan do have not enough resources to establish or construct good hotels and restaurants, so government should encourage the people by providing business loans on favourable terms. That will result in improved hotels, restaurants, shops, and transportation systems so tourists' inflow will increase.

The study showed that the number of hotels and restaurants in the region is lesser, compared to the flow of tourists. In total, on one day, all the hotels combined cannot accommodate more than a thousand people. Due to this issue, guest houses are sprouting in the middle of villages and residential areas, further increasing a sense of insecurity among the locals.

Gilgit-Baltistan lacks the infrastructure needed to make tourism a viable, long-term, source of responsible tourism. This includes a sufficient number of hotels, restaurants, tracks, trails, and systems for collecting and disposing of trash.

For new development, concrete is mostly being used. There should be more focus on using local materials such as stones and mud. A respondent gave an example of an international tourist who was staying in a modern built room but was not happy with the charges and the charges had to be reduced for him. When the same tourist was taken to a fort, a traditionally built structure, the same tourist was willing to give double the amount. On inquiring, he identified the value of tradition and locally built homes, which is what he had come to experience. Hence, the respondent suggested focusing more on making resorts and small huts than to build gigantic modern architectural buildings.

#### **4.4.3 Lack of Basic Health-Related Facilities**

One of the main challenges in Gilgit-Baltistan is the lack of basic health facilities, as the flow of tourists increased, the rate of accident increased as well. The Karakoram route is now far more frequently used due to the increase in domestic tourism. With the increase in the number of vehicles on the road, the rate of accidents has also increased. There is an immediate need for emergency points where people can be taken care of in case of emergencies. Because in the current situation, they are referred to Gilgit, and takes some 3-4 hours for injured patients to reach basic medical necessities.

#### **4.4.4 Lack of Quality Services**

Too often, tourists complain that they are unable to get high-quality services in the Gilgit-Baltistan

region, as the rooms in hotels and guest houses are not properly equipped with energy and other utilities to make the journey comfortable for them. Food quality, and variety, also remain a major challenge, despite there being some progress.

#### **4.4.5 Energy**

The electricity transforms the most recent development interventions into viable models. It promotes education, businesses, health, communication, and job opportunities. Gilgit-Baltistan has an acute shortage of electricity. Due to this, winter tourism remains unexplored as the locals do not have affordable and environmentally friendly energy needed for heating and recreation. Hoteliers and restaurant owners have to spend millions annually on running diesel generators, which, apart from being a drain of monetary resources, is also a cause of sound and air pollution. There is a great opportunity for the economy in winter tourism. Even though in winters even the basic facilities are hard to get due to lack of electricity, tourists still come to visit either for trophy hunting or sightseeing. Improving the energy shortage will positively impact the tourism industry.

#### **4.4.6 External Investment and Indigenous Rights**

Big investors from outside Gilgit-Baltistan invest heavily in prime locations, thus constricting opportunities for the locals who do not have the financial means to compete. Gradually, the tourism industry will be led by people from outside Gilgit-Baltistan, which creates questions about the locals' rights over their land and resources. This issue also has a political dimension which gets expressed every now and then through agitation, criticism, and other means online and on the streets.

The study indicates that there is a growing trend among the local people to sell their local properties to non-local investors. In the long run, this will have a negative influence. The locals, when running their business, take into account the well-being of their surroundings, their culture as well as their employees, since they are local as well. In the case of non-local investors, their main goal will be profit. They will not be concerned with anything else, hence the main essence of tourism will be lost.

One of the respondents explained this by saying that giving away their own properties and rights to being entrepreneurs is like “*Malik sey mali banna jana*”. Giving the property away and becoming a gardener instead’. They will create small employment opportunities where a local business owner will be bringing in entrepreneurial growth to the region. For the people who do not have enough sources or knowledge on how to run a business, they can lease their lands and have horizontal growth along with the non-local investors/entrepreneurs. There needs to be a set rule on this on a district level, limiting the sale of properties, which is currently being done at an extensive level at this point.

As per the study, tourism is a ‘smokeless industry’. On the surface, it may not show, but internally can cause a lot of problems.

#### **4.4.7 Safety and Access Issues**

Tourism scholars asserted that tourism and the increasing number of tourists promoted evil, prostitution, and gambling in tourist destinations, as well as reduced the benefits of tourism development, creating negative perceptions of tourism in the minds of the host community. These difficulties are cited as the most significant drawbacks of tourism growth in some places. In

comparison to other parts of Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan has a low crime rate, including murder, robbery, and pick-pocketing. However, proving this finding with statistics is difficult because crime statistics are only stored by the police and are nearly impossible to access. According to the study, there is no crime in the city during the day or at night. One respondent said that due to political priorities, and ‘safety concerns’, many parts of Gilgit-Baltistan remain closed for tourism, which is depriving visitors of opportunities to explore the region freely. There are also complaints about intrusive law-enforcement practices that deter tourism.

However, the safety and security of tourists in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly along the Karakorum Highway and in the Diamer District, has become a very serious issue at times. In recent attacks on foreign tourist camps and local buses, militants and extremist elements have killed a large number of people. Because of the extensive media coverage of these events, both in national and international media, the region has developed a negative national and international reputation.

#### **4.4.8 Unplanned Development and Construction**

Due to the upsurge of the tourist inflow, there has been increased unplanned development of hotels and restaurants as well as parking spots. The majority of the respondents claimed that there is drastic construction of hotels restaurants but there is no planning. Most of the hotels have parking issues. Gilgit-tourism Baltistan’s industry is entirely unplanned. There is little effort made to count the capacity of various tourist destinations, and the flow of tourists to these sites is unregulated as a result. It’s not uncommon for expeditions to leave enormous volumes of solid and human waste along the walking trail and in popular mountaintop camps. A large part of this is due to a lack of regulatory systems, as well as a general lack of knowledge



#### **4.4.9 Mass Tourism**

Mass Tourism is a term used to define the phenomena in which more people visit a region than its capacity to accommodate or entertain them. Mass tourism, often, is unsustainable, reduces the quality of tourism and often leads to social and environmental problems for the communities. The majority of respondents said that mass tourism is a big challenge in GB. After 2015, the tourist flow has increased many folds.

Having tour operators aids in providing a quality experience to the tourists as well as ensuring that the local people and environment is not negatively impacted. The tour companies need to be registered, so that they follow the rules and regulations and filter the kind of tourists that can access the area. Mass tourism, if not controlled, only negatively impacts the economy and environment.

Also, many companies present themselves as mass tourist operators, but are not properly registered and are mostly fake. There needs to be a check on such companies by the competent authorities, and it must be ensured that skilled mass tourists are allowed to operate the region.

#### **4.4.10 Lack of Skilled Human Resource**

In Gilgit-Baltistan, there is a shortage of skilled experts in all disciplines of tourism and hospitality. An institute for the study of tourism and hotel management does not exist, most of institutes are in cities, but the expense of training is high-priced for young people. Secondly, there are no mandatory criteria for particular trade certifications to work in tour operations or hotels and restaurants because there are no regulatory systems. In other words, everyone has the option of working according to there the absence of regulatory mechanisms, there are no mandatory

requirements of certain trade qualifications to work in tour operations or hotels and restaurant field. So, everyone is free to work within their own capacity.

#### **4.4.11 Quality of Tourism Facilities**

As per the study, there are a few tourists' facilitation centres. Most of the existing tourism facilities, other than a few shining exceptions in the region, lack facilities needed or expected by the tourists. There are limited options for dining in or out. Hygiene also remains a concern.

#### **4.4.12 Proper Education for Tourists**

The study shows that most of the domestic tourists need proper education about the area, culture and the environment as they are not a real traveller because a real traveller always cares about the environment and culture.

Not only do the tourists not preserve the environment, but they also litter the area and provide an overall negative experience for the local people. Many such cases have been highlighted on social media, where the tourists are accessing private lands and taking fruits from places that are private properties, as well as misbehaving with the local females.

At the local level, on each district entry point, there should be tourist facilitation centres that provide brochures to the tourists on the SOPs of visiting the local places. They should ensure that there be penalties for not following the given instructions.

#### **4.4.13 Lack of Public Toilets**

GB government requires a well-maintained public toilet system. If possible, they need to set up western style public toilets for men and women with the right water supply, toilet tissue, soap, and

towels. A tourist fee can be implemented for toilet supplies, if necessary

#### **4.5 Role of Government**

As compared to previous governments, the current ruling party has taken a few initiatives to encourage tourism promotion. However, it is nowhere near the requirement, based on the current demand of the tourism sector. As observed, based on the influx of tourists in the past 5–8 years, more focus needs to be directed towards tourism. NOCs have been abolished along with the introduction of e-visas. It is a great opportunity for the government to greatly boost its economy if the right policies are made and implemented and investment opportunities are created for the local businesses. As per the majority of the respondents, the government needs to be more involved. Not only will it boost the development at the local level, but the government will be able to generate enough revenue to contribute to paying off the national debt.

The study showed that, the government is playing an important role in tourism promotion; that the current government, Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), introduced a new E-visa policy in order to revive the tourism industry, and no-objection certificate (NOC) is no longer required for foreigners who wish to visit specified areas of Pakistan.

A local shopkeeper replied in this way:

*“The government has no such role in tourism promotion but thanks to the blogger, vloggers, social media and private tv channels, they are always promoting tourism” so in this regard government supports local blogger, writers, and short filmmakers in portraying the positive image of the region, and built viable security and tourist facilitation points in every district of GB. They should engage media including, print, social and electronic media”.*

A tour guide shared his view that:

*“Somehow at GB level, the government is promoting tourism through different ways. The government is marketing at both national and international level and participating in different international expo, celebrating different cultural festivals, and distributing promotional materials.”*

Government of Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan should devise a strategy for the promotion of tourism. A government-level policy should be developed on the basis of Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and that should be implemented. Road infrastructures should be developed and improved. The security of tourists should be enhanced and ensured. Loans should be given to prospective businessmen on easy terms. The global comprehensive advertisement should be made to attract more tourists. Pakistani embassies and high commissioners around the world should be tasked to promote the beauty of Pakistan and especially Gilgit-Baltistan. The government can also take initiative by providing low-interest loans to businessmen or to inspiring businessmen for the construction of hotels, restaurants, shops and other entertainment businesses. Furthermore, tourism should be declared as an industry and financial package should be announced.

A local shopkeeper shared his view:

*“Government should support local blogger, writers and short filmmakers in portraying the positive image of the region. They should build a viable security and tourist facilitation points in every district of GB and engage media including, print, social and electronic media.”*

The government needs to make policies to protect the environment and locals' means of livelihood. Rich investors from outside the region are establishing better facilities, which reduces

opportunities for the locals and makes them a pariah in their own region. The government needs to establish functional and efficient systems to protect the environment in the villages, towns and cities. Currently, the government is failing to mitigate the environmental impact of tourism, which is hazardous for the locals.

The study suggested that, the government needs to be more involved. Not only will it boost the development at the local level, but the government will be able to generate enough revenue to contribute to paying off the national debt.

#### **4.6 Tourism in the Next 5-10 Years**

The finding showed that there is a favorable tourism policy from the government. It is expected that tourism will flourish in the country, especially in Gilgit-Baltistan, manifolds. It is expected that infrastructure in the region will improve. Basic facilities including hotels and restaurants and improvements in transportation methods will result in greater flow of tourists. But if this sector is not properly managed, it will result in congestion and distraction in the region. It is important to regulate the rules and regulation of tourism policy, mass tourism always bring negativity in the region, so the government should implement the rules and regulations.

A hotel manager respondent in this way:

*“After decades of difficult law and order situation in Pakistan, tourism has shown a great potential for growth. Tourists are like birds, wherever there is peace, they visit more frequently.*

*The Law-and-order situation of the country and region is very essential for the growth of tourism. The current situation seems very conducive for tourism.”*

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This section discusses the conclusion and recommendations and as well as policy implications of the study.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

Tourism industry has been hit hard by COVID-19. After releasing a locking barrier, safety measures are being taken care of for the opening of the industry in stages. To revive the tourism the government design of the SOP which gradual tourism recovery.

Tourism is a backbone of the economy in Gilgit-Baltistan. A number of people are associated with this section of the economy. Businesses related to hotelling, transportation, adventure tourism, general supplies, food items are flourishing. People are being employed by the aforementioned businesses so the quality of life of people improves. The tourism industry has led a tremendous impact on the lives of the locals because of which a huge development has been started in the region in terms of infrastructure which is a clear indication of economic development of the locals. The locals have contracted hotels, resorts, restaurants and other basic infrastructure. Hundreds of youngsters have started their own business and created job opportunities for others. Similarly, women have initiated their own small-scale business and some of them are now successfully running it in various regions of Gilgit-Baltistan. As the tourists' inflow increases in the area, the culture of the area got the opportunity to propagate. People of the world know the culture of the

area. Sometimes tourism has a negative effect on the local culture of the area. The culture of the visitors may also affect the local culture and norms. Tourism usually has a negative effect on the environment as an influx of tourists results in a lot of garbage in the tourist spots and surrounding areas. It makes the environment worse unless appropriate arrangements are not made. Many women have opened shops and restaurants in Gilgit-Baltistan which helps them improve their quality of life. Local embroidery work, traditional fresh and dry fruits, and traditional foods are prepared by women of the area to earn their livelihood.

COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the tourism industry in Gilgit-Baltistan. International and domestic travel has been restricted. There was no business at all during the initial months of pandemics. Gradually the government has relaxed the lockdown and allowed the domestic tourist to visit Gilgit-Baltistan amid following SOPs. Very few of the hoteliers, shop keepers and transporters have got benefit out of it. The government has not announced any packages of help for people associated with tourism industry though they suffered heavy losses. The businessmen were unable to pay their staff including chefs, waiters and janitorial staff their salaries. Some of the businessmen got the benefit of the halt in business activities as they managed to repair their hotels and some have constructed new hotels as construction activities were open during the pandemic. The study showed that the people had different methods to survive the financial crisis of the COVID-19, such as taking loans from banks, minimizing their spending, limiting their budget and sticking to the needs rather than wants. They prioritised their spending as per the requirement and tried to manage the savings that they had from their businesses

There is a number of challenges faced by the tourism industry in Gilgit-Baltistan. Poor infrastructure is the topmost challenge which is resulting in tourists over influx in those areas where infrastructure is better. Tourists prefer to visit those places where basic facilities are better, for example, roads, hotels, restaurants, telecommunications, etc. Another challenge is people of Gilgit-Baltistan haven't enough resources to establish or construct good hotels and restaurants, so government should encourage the people by providing business loans on favourable terms. That will result in improved hotels, restaurants, shops, and transportation systems so tourists' inflow will increase. Training and development are another challenge that the tourism industry is facing in Gilgit-Baltistan. Improved training and development in hoteling, mountaineering, tracking, etc. will help increase revenue.

Government should make proper policies and implement them in the area. Ensuring the proper infrastructure and basic needs like electricity, sewage, and solid waste management mechanism in the area. The government can also take initiative by providing low interest loans to businessmen or to aspiring businessmen for construction of hotels, restaurants, shops and other entertainment business. Furthermore, tourism should be declared as an industry and financial package should be announced. Gilgit-Baltistan is facing acute shortage of electricity and clean drinking water. Government should ensure that adequate electricity is provided. Clean water for drinking should be made available. Supplies of basic essential products from down country should be facilitated. That includes food items, fuel, LPG etc. GB government should support local blogger, writers and short filmmakers in portraying the positive image of the region and engage media including, print and social media for tourism promotion.



### 5.3 Recommendations

As a result of this research, several recommendations can be made for quality tourism development and sustainability in the region. As a result, understanding how locals perceive the impacts of tourism is very important because tourism relies heavily on the goodwill of locals. Some of the suggestions made were as follows:

- The government should take initiative by providing low-interest loans to businessmen or to aspiring businessmen for construction of hotels, restaurants, shops, and other entertainment businesses. Furthermore, tourism should be declared as an industry and a financial package should be announced.
- Mass tourism needs to be controlled using either a ticketing system to ensure that quality lot comes to the north or only the registered tourist companies should be allowed to bring in the mass tourists. Important for reducing the harmful effects of mass tourism. The government can regulate tourism in the region by establishing laws.
- It must be ensured that only registered tour operators are allowed to bring in mass tourists. This will not only filter the kind of tourists that visit the area, but will also reduce the negative impact of mass tourism such as loitering and security of private properties.
- The study suggests that if we want to attract more foreign tourists, then we should have museums, libraries and improved forts because foreign tourists are more interested in exploring the true heritage and culture of the place. In Gilgit-Baltistan there is no any museums in, the government needs to build museums and libraries to preserve cultural identities.

- The government should increase the production of ground and air transportation. The majority of the country's highways are in flux, particularly local routes and those that run through the north, which are constantly being upgraded.
- The study suggests that there is lack human resources so, it is most importance is creating an institute; a 'centre of excellence' which develops and implements relevant policies for how tourism should prevail in Gilgit-Baltistan. With the expansion of tourism in the north, there is a need for skilled human resource. Not only in the form of entrepreneurs, but also basic labour such as managers, chefs, waiters, housekeeping, etc. The main focus should be on the youth as they need to be trained so they can professionally continue in this field in the longer run.
- Winter Tourism requires government's attention. There is a need to improve the electricity and road conditions in the area, as it worsens during the winter season. Winter season provides a host of new opportunities to the local economy, in the form of winter games; something that can bring tourists in the winter season as well.
- There is a need for community-based tourism. It is actually a form of responsible tourism which supports the local communities and improves their livelihood. There must be a committee in every village which can look after and manage the tourism activity in area and coordinate with government.
- There is much need to develop eco-tourism policy so that economic benefits can be achieved without damaging the ecosystem. If it is not well designed, managed, and monitored, can bear the form of mass tourism that produces unexpected results, very negative and unwanted in the environmental context.

- The government needs to invest in the power sector to boost economic activities and to further expand tourism opportunities. Currently, the potential of tourism is not being realized because of a lack of required power supply.
- Instead of staying home or guest-house concept, there must be one modern tourist village in every district of GB, and this modern tourist village should have all the requirements. No such tourist village is currently constructed in Gilgit-Baltistan. It will have a positive impact on the economy of GB. Not only will it provide a world-class service to the tourists, WTO will also aid financially in the upkeep.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Guide for Tour Operator

#### IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GILGIT- BALTISTAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the role of tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
  - i. In terms of employment,
  - ii. Infrastructure development,
  - iii. Cultural promotion,
  - iv. Women empowerment
2. What are the positive and negative impacts of tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
3. How COVID-19 pandemic effect tourism industry in Gilgit?
  - a. And in particular as a tour guide how you effected and how your company cope with this COVID-19 situation? What type of tourist are you dealing?
4. What are the challenges in Gilgit Baltistan regarding tourism? And what do think how to overcome these challenges.
  - a. What are the challenges you face during COVID-19 situation?
5. What is the role of Government and what role the government can play to promote tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
6. What are your recommendations for improvement for tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
7. How do people cope with this pandemic so far?
8. Where do you see this tourism industry in next 5-10 years?
9. Do you have any policy/ recommendations for local government, administrative authority or police/law etc. to ensure peace and safe environment for tourists/locals?

**Appendix B:**  
**Interview Guide (Hotel Owner/ Manager)**

**IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GILGIT- BALTISTAN**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the role of tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
  - i. In terms of employment,
  - ii. Infrastructure development,
  - iii. Cultural promotion,
  - iv. Women empowerment
2. What are the positive and negative impacts of tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
3. How COVID-19 pandemic effect tourism industry in Gilgit?
  - a. And in particular as a hotel/ guest house /heritage manager how you effected and how you cope with this COVID-19 situation? What type of tourist are you dealing?
  - b. Is it a challenge for you to work under COVID-19 SOPs?
  - c. Do tourists cooperate with you to follow the COVID-19 SOPs?
4. What are the challenges in Gilgit Baltistan regarding tourism? And what do think how to overcome these challenges.
  - a. What are the challenges you face during COVID-19 situation?
5. What is the role of Government and what role the government can play to promote tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
6. What are your recommendations for improvement for tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
7. How do people cope with this pandemic so far? Where do you see this tourism industry in next 5-10 years?
8. Do you have any policy/ recommendations for local government, administrative authority or police/law etc. to ensure peace and safe environment for tourists/locals?

## Appendix C

### Interview Guide (Transporter)

#### IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GILGIT- BALTISTAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the role of tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
  - i. In terms of Employment,
  - ii. Infrastructure development,
  - iii. Cultural promotion,
  - iv. Women empowerment
2. What are the positive and negative impacts of tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
3. How COVID-19 pandemic effect tourism industry in Gilgit?
  - a. And in particular as a in transporter industry how you effected and how your company cope with this COVID-19 situation?
  - b. What type of tourist are you dealing?
4. What are the challenges in Gilgit Baltistan regarding tourism? And what do think how to overcome these challenges.
  - a. What are the challenges you face during COVID-19 situation?
5. What is the role of Government and what role the government can play to promote tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
6. What are your recommendations for improvement for tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
7. How do people cope with this pandemic so far?
8. Where do you see this tourism industry in next 5-10 years?
9. Do you have any policy/ recommendations for local government, administrative authority or police/law etc. to ensure peace and safe environment for tourists/locals?

## Appendix D

### Interview Local Shopkeeper (Female)

#### IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GILGIT- BALTISTAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Education: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the role of tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
  - i. In terms of employment,
  - ii. Infrastructure development,
  - iii. Cultural promotion,
  - iv. Women empowerment
2. What are the positive and negative impacts of tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
3. How COVID-19 pandemic effect tourism industry in Gilgit?
  - a. And in particular how you affected and tell me about your company and what type of tourist you are dealing? And how your cope with this COVID-19 situation?
4. As a women what type of challenges, you faced while working in this industry?
5. What are the challenges in Gilgit Baltistan regarding tourism? And what do think how to overcome these challenges.
  - a. What are the challenges you face during COVID-19 situation?
6. What is the role of Government and what role the government can play to promote tourism in Gilgit Baltistan?
7. What are your recommendations for improvement for tourism industry in Gilgit Baltistan?
8. How do people cope with this pandemic so far?
9. Where do you see this tourism industry in next 5-10 years?
10. Do you have any policy/ recommendations for local government, administrative authority or police/law etc. to ensure peace and safe environment for tourists/locals?