

# Native's Perception of Socio-Economic Impacts of Tourism: A Study of Poonch District

<sup>1</sup>Shah Nawaz, <sup>2</sup>Prof. Ashok Aima, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Bharti Gupta, <sup>4</sup>Prof. Flavia Stara

<sup>1</sup>D Research scholar, <sup>2</sup>Professor, <sup>3</sup>Assistant professor, <sup>4</sup>Professor

<sup>1</sup>Shah Nawaz, Department of Tourism and Travel Management,

<sup>1</sup>Central University of Jammu.

**Abstract :** Poonch, a remotest north-west district of Jammu and Kashmir state harbours tremendous potential of tourism development. The district has its own unique combination of different cultures as it has been dwelled by different rulers in different phases of history. Despite of being one of the popular tourist destinations, the district lacks proper tourism planning and development roadmap. In the present era when sustainable tourism development is the major concern for the all the developing and developed countries, participation of local community in tourism development in the district of Poonch has been neglected. Local residents play a vital role in the development of tourism, as the host community in a particular area is a primary part of the planning process for the tourism development. The World Heritage Policy has given special importance to the community based approach. Considering community participation an important element of tourism development, the present study is an attempt to understand how the Gujjar community perceive the tourist impact on economy and culture of the community. The study also evaluates the participation of stakeholders in tourism of the study area; and how level of participation is associated with perceived economic and cultural impact of tourism in the area. The outcome of the study reveals that the concerned residents expect a positive impact from tourism development. The Positive impact is manifested from resident's belief that tourism can enrich community development in different ways such as service enhancement, improving the quality of life and making significant economic developments. Besides that, local residents also expect festivals and cultural shows have the potential to become a major tourist attraction and thereby help inducing a sense of pride among the locals. The study also bring forth suggestions for improving the tourist footfalls by taking all stakeholders on board and work cohesively for making the study area a competitive tourist destination.

**Keywords - Indigenous tourism, community development, tourist destinations.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the biggest multi-religious and multi-cultural countries in the world with a diverse stream of tribal communities within the country who still have their roots with the ancient traditions. However, very little is known about Indian tribes. The SC (Schedule Caste), ST (Schedule Tribe) Commission in its 1961 report has mentioned that STs are known as indigenous people under international law (Atal, 2015). A tribe is a "Social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or family ties with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognised leader recognised leader: indigenous Indian tribes" (Agang 2016). Most of the anthropologists describe the tribe as an isolated, self-contained, and primitive social formation (Be'teille 1998), which needs to be explored at various dimensions for their economic upliftment through modest means of tourism development. About 400 tribal communities have been officially declared which are indigenous in the country. Most of these communities are now embracing modern cultures and imitating different languages (Xaxa, 1999). Predominantly tribal across the country are traditionally making their dwelling units in isolated regions, in the northern most part of Jammu, they are concentrated in Himalayan regions as they get more connected with the natural resources and forests (Andrabi, 2013).

Indigenous tourism is defined as tourism activity in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture to serve as the essence of the attraction (Hinch and Butler 1996). Indigenous communities are the showcase of cultural diversity and traditional inheritance of a particular nation. Indigenous tourism is a strong source of financial, physical and socio-cultural development of any region and it is assuming significant importance in tribal areas so far as their socio-economic well being is concerned.

At present challenge is being faced in maintaining an optimum balance between economic development and preservation of cultural expressions of tribes. Preservation of the indigenous culture of Tribes is facing challenges in the form of loss of cultural values due to the mobilisation to urban areas for more attractive economic resources. It is assumed that if economic activity of tourism is planned with sustainable approach of community participation then the adverse impacts on culture can be avoided to a great extent. To protect harmful obsessions, local residents must take part in tourism planning and promotion strategies for tribal tourism development in their respective areas. Tourism is versatile tool of poverty reduction and inculcates pride and creativity among the inhabitants with regards to their cultural values (Sriastava, 2016). Inhabitant tribes have great opportunities to share their views and culture with different people across diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.

Out of the twelve tribal communities of J&K, Gujjar is one of the largest tribal community in the state. In the state, only tribal communities have predominantly maintained their valuable traditional culture. It is believed that Gujjars migrated from Gujarat to Jammu and Kashmir (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2015). Predominantly Gujjars in the state of Jammu and Kashmir inhabit Poonch and Rajouri districts. Traditionally, every year Gujjars visit the Himalayan mountains in summer season in search of pastures and move back in lower regions in winter season. Inhabitants of this district stay in Kacha Houses (ordinary house) whenever they visit high ranges of mountains which is called Dhoks. Due to lack of basic facilities such as electricity, fuel supply, they use wood of this area which is called Dhini in local language. They are also facing a lot of other problems at Dhokas and the road connectivity, lack of water supply, danger of wild animals, insecurity, unfavourable environmental conditions etc. Mostly they stay in groups to protect their animals from thieves and wild animals. In spite of various hardships in their tradition lifestyle they

enjoy this life in their own way. Their primitive culture reflects their uniqueness. The geographical isolation and physical interaction make them distinctive from the other communities. They always travel with the flocks of buffalos, and other cattle. They deem their livestock much valuable as they are predominantly dependent on them. Both male and female members contribute equally to complete their daily routine work. They have only single resource of their income that is their livestock and their by-products like ghee, butter, and cheese and their selling in the market fulfil their financial requirements. Their undiluted culture has the tremendous potential to expand the scope of tribal tourism in the district. The indigenous tourism based on tribal tourism in the scenic backdrop of Poonch can be a significant pull factor for the potential tourists who are motivated by natural environment and cultural values of the destinations. The natural beauty of the Poonch district is manifested in the form of number of lakes, waterfalls, historical monuments, shrines and much more. Many fairs and festivals are also held by Gujjar tribal community like weight lifting, hand power and wrestling at Sakhi Maidan at Mender and if channelized properly, can become a potential source of competitive advantage for tourist attraction of the region.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of 'Tribal tourism' as defined by Terry Ward, journalist and travel writer, is "a new form of travel in which tourists visit tribal villages in order to be exposed to a culture completely different from their own." Numerous tourists visit tribal areas every year in diverse state of India such as Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland and Himachal. Tribal tourism generates financial avenues for supporting the tribal communities which inhabit some isolated region. Tribal regions can be major cultural and natural tourism destinations with the support and attention of responsible tourism development authorities and the active participation of local community in tourism development planning. Local Government must recognise the significance of the local culture with the touristic point of view. Tourism can be main source of income generation and can play a vital role in social and cultural development (Panigrahi, 2005). Tourism generates employment opportunities and play a great role in upliftment of living standard of the locals through which they understand the importance of conservation of their traditional culture and natural flora and fauna, which are the main sources of tourism attraction (Ankomah and Crompton, 1990).

There are various requirements to develop the tribal regions for promoting the indigenous tourism in terms of infrastructure development such as hotels, restaurants, caravanserai and other infrastructure which can make the tribal areas as unique tourism products having the immense potential to upgrade the financial conditions of the indigenous communities (O'Gorman, McLellan and Baum, 2007). Tourism creates financial support for the tribes in terms of fetching financial benefits to younger strata of population but in the same community aged persons are not actively taking part in tourism activities and head of the family members are having sole importance in the family (Ishhi, 2012). Although the tourism have the positive impacts on the local community but there can be some negative effects as well, in case of mass tourism. This is responsibility of concerned authorities to take measures for overcoming the challenges of negative impacts and promote the sustainable indigenous tourism in the region. Tourism contributes in upgrading the life style of the natives and provides the opportunities of job creation and infrastructure development (Briedenhann & Wickens 2004). Gujjar community in J&K is dispersed in different districts across the state and tribal community have maintained their primitive cultural identity. Gujjars are the integral part of state culture. But some Gujjars are settled in urban areas and as such their age old culture is getting contaminated (Abha, 2012.) There are various basic constrains in the tribal regions which impede the promotion of indigenous tourism. Local residents have no awareness regarding tourism related activities, their promotion and local governments are not giving appropriate consideration to develop the basic infrastructure like roads, accommodation facilities, promotion etc. Tribal regions have the immense potential to attract not only the indigenous tourists, but also people from abroad interested in tasting vast cultural horizons (Notzke, 2004). There are various constraints to promote the tourism in the tribal areas. Although Most of the tribal areas are having a great potential of tourism development but there is no road connectivity, accommodation facilities etc. tourism is one of the major income resource for the locals specifically for developing countries. Indigenous tourism play vital role in life style upliftment of the locals creates many business opportunities and is capable to reduce the poverty (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2013).

There are more than 400 groups in Indian society which are officially declared as scheduled tribes. Now the tribal community is one of the largest society of the country (Xaxa, 1999) Constitutional provisions for development of tribes while protecting their language, culture and actual social reality can play a vital role, As recently tribal communities are changing their culture and way of living style (Xaxa, 2005), according to 2011 census, the tribes in India are economically, socially and politically backward, living in far flung areas (Andrabi, 2014). It is also declared that more than 20 lakh Gujjar and Bakerwal tribes are living in Jammu and Kashmir state and 66% population of tribes are living Below Poverty Line (Gul, 2014). Primarily, the Gujjars were nomadic but now they have settled in plain areas (Suri, 2014).

## 3. PARTICIPANTS

For the purpose of the study data are collected from the residents of district Poonch. And statistical package of social science (16.0) has been used to analyse the data. The respondent included in the sample are above 18 years old and are the locals of the Poonch district. Non- probability sampling technique is used to get the target sample. Total 270 questionnaires were distributed among the residents, evaluation is done on the basis of 220 questionnaire. 50 questionnaires were discarded as they were not filled properly or by the people below 18 years. 62.3% of respondents were male and 37.7% were female. 50.6% of respondent were from 21 to 40 years old, 10.1 % were from 41 to 60 and 39.3 % are above 60. Question was asked about their qualification, 30 % were below graduate, 42.8 % were graduate and 27.2% were masters. Out of 220 respondents 65.5 % respondent were self employed, 20.8 percent were government employed and 13.7 % are in privet jobs.

### 3.1 Objectives of the study

1. To identify the level of participation of Gujjar tribes in tourism in Poonch district.
2. To understand the perception of Gujjar tribe regarding the economic and cultural impact of tourism on the basis of their participation.

### 3.2 Research Hypothesis

H1: The distribution of economic impact of tourism is same among the two groups.

H2: The distribution of cultural impact of tourism is same among the two groups.

### 3.3 Measurement

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher has selected the quantitative approach for seeking responses and analyzing the results. Being an exploratory research, questionnaire was developed regarding perception of tribal people towards tourism economic and cultural influences of tourism and the participation of locals in the tourism in the area. 7 questions asked to know the economic impact, 6 questions have been asked to know the cultural impact of tourism (Chand, 2013, Gallardo & Stein 2007). 3 questions have been asked to measure the participation of Gujjar community in tourism taken from the study of Aref, 2011. A conceptual research model is proposed for the better understanding of the research figure 1.

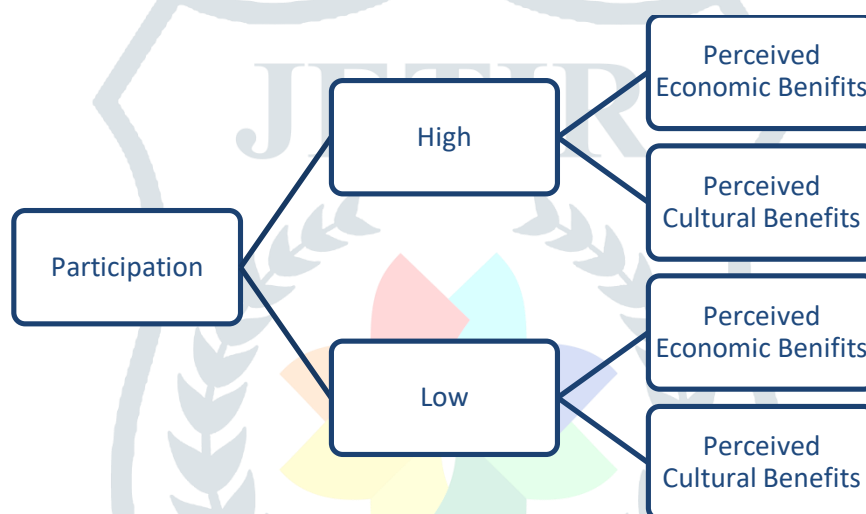


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

## IV. RESULT

Before finding the association between the level of participation and economic and cultural impact of tourism, reliability of all the dimensions are checked individually. Reliability analysis resulted in Cronbach's alpha of 0.783 for economic impact of tourism, 0.741 for cultural impact of tourism and 0.703 for participation dimension table 1. Reliability bench mark value  $< .700$  and above is used in the study (Santos, 1999)

Dimension	Cronbach's alpha
Economic Impact	0.783
Cultural Impact	0.741
Participation	0.703

Table 1: Reliability

### Median split

To find out the respondent who are less participative in tourism activity and those who are highly participative in the same median split with help of SPSS was done. The 220 sample of the respondent were divided in two groups on the basis of median, the respondent who scored below the median for participation dimension are considered less participative and the respondent who score more the media considered high participative (Table 2).

Dimension	Scale mean	Scale median	Percentage scoring	
			Above median (High participative)	Below median (Low participative)
Participation in Tourism	10.82	12	53.64%	46.36%

Table 2: Median split

### Hypothesis Testing

T test is conducted to check the association of two groups of participation with the economic impact and cultural impact of tourism in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. Participation is considered as grouping variable for economic and cultural impact of tourism. Statistically significant difference is found among both the group for economic impact of tourism and cultural impact of tourism.

#### Economic Impact of Tourism

H1: level of participation has significance association with economic impact of tourism

The result of economic impact of tourism reflects that there is a significant difference between the highly participative and low participative groups,  $p=0.03$ ,  $t=3.34$  signifies that the two groups have different perception regarding the economic impact of tourism in district of Poonch. High participative group find more economic impact of tourism compared to low participative group table

#### Cultural Impact of Tourism

H2: Level of participation has significance association with cultural impact of tourism

The result of cultural impact of tourism reflects that there is a significant difference between the two groups (high participative and low participative). Both the groups perceive cultural tourism impact differently, mean value signifies that the high participative find tourism impact more on culture compared to low participative.

Dimension	Involvement		T value	Sig
	High	Low		
Economic	4.21	3.58	3.34	0.033
Cultural	3.86	3.24	2.63	0.040

Note: Scale ratings: 1 = strongly agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = disagree; 5 strongly disagree; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The parentheses beside the mean scores indicate the rank of the mean values.

Table 3: Result of t test

### HYPOTHESIS TABLE

Hypothesis	Sig Value	Result
H1	0.033	Supported
H2	0.040	Supported

Table 4: Hypothesis table



#### 4. CONCLUSION AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Gujjar community of Poonch district has unique culture by dress language and geographical isolation, they traditionally move in high mountain ranges in pastures land with their animals. People of this community have positive perception towards tourism promotion in the area as they consider that they will be benefitted by tribal tourism development in different ways such as upgrading the life style and pride of cultural identity. Besides this, Indigenous tourism has great potential to bring financial development across the district. Tribal areas can develop the tourism inflow and can create many opportunities of businesses for indigenous community. Local people can engage in diverse tourism activities and will get job in tourism industry. The Result of present study signifies that people who are more participative in tourism activity find more economic and cultural benefits of tourism to the community, that's signifies that, policy makers and the tourism organizations should involve the locals while making any plans for tourism development. Also, Tribal tourism can give confidence to locals for exploration and undertaking of entrepreneurship avenues. Besides this, Culture of indigenous community will be revived as the local fair and festivals of tribal community reflects the tremendous potential to attract the indigenous tourism. Many traditional works of community will upgrade, which will make aware the locals to understand the importance of their culture. Local cuisine will be great source of tourist attraction in tribal villages of the districts. It will open various paths to promote the diverse types of tourism in the area. Local community of the study area is well aware about the nearest beautiful areas which have the potential to attract the different tourists and these will feel pride in guiding the tourists towards tourist attractions.

Although the study area have the tremendous potential of indigenous tourism development but there are various challenges of indigenous tourism development. This research can unleash tourism potential of this area that can be converted into diverse types of tourism to showcase to the inhabitants. Indigenous community participation in tourism promotion is main key to success of indigenous tourism. It will also provide measures on how to overcome challenges facing the tribal Tourism. The study will aid the policy makers in planning for development issues in strategic planning and laws and regulations. Research in this field will be useful in developing tourism in and around tribal areas.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Abha, C. (2012). Culture and Identity Formation A study of the settled Gujjar Community in Jammu.
- [2] Ahmed, I., & Ahmed, J. (2015). Socio-Economic and Educational Status of Tribal (Gujjar and Bakarwal) of Jammu and Kashmir: An Overview. Available at SSRN 3139413.
- [3] Agang, S. B. (2016). *When evil strikes: Faith and the politics of human hostility* (Vol. 10). Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- [4] Ankomah, P. K., & Crompton, J. L. (1990). Unrealized tourism potential: The case of sub-Saharan Africa. *Tourism Management*, 11(1), 11-28.
- [5] Aref, F. (2011). Sense of community and participation for tourism development. *Life Science Journal*, 8(1), 20-25.
- [6] Atal, Y. (2015). *Indian Tribes in Transition: The need for reorientation*. Taylor & Francis.
- [7] Bétéille, A. (1998). The idea of indigenous people. *Current anthropology*, 39(2), 187-192.
- [8] Briedenhann, J., & Wickens, E. (2004). Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas—vibrant hope or impossible dream?. *Tourism management*, 25(1), 71-79.
- [9] Agang, S. B. (2016). *When evil strikes: Faith and the politics of human hostility* (Vol. 10). Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- [10] Ahmed, I., & Jahan, N. (2013). Rural tourism-prospects in rustic Bengal. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(16), 163-172.
- [11] Andrabi, A. A. (2013). Development of Education of Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 2(4).
- [12] Beteille, A. (1998). The idea of indigenous people. *Current anthropology*, 39(2), 187-192.
- [13] Briedenhann, J., & Wickens, E. (2004). Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas—vibrant hope or impossible dream?. *Tourism management*, 25(1), 71-79.
- [14] Chand, M. (2013). Residents' perceived benefits of heritage and support for tourism development in Pragpur, India. *Turizam: međunarodni znanstveno-stručni časopis*, 61(4), 379-394
- [15] Gallardo, J. H., & Stein, T. V. (2007). Participation, power and racial representation: Negotiating nature-based and heritage tourism development in the rural south. *Society and Natural Resources*, 20(7), 597-611.