

Research Article

Tourism and Its Impact on Local Economy: A Study on Pelling Area, Gyalshing District, Sikkim, India

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Received: 21/Oct/2024; **Accepted:** 22/Nov/2024; **Published:** 31/Dec/2024

Abstract — The role of tourism industry is pivotal in uplifting the economy at all levels: national, state and local. This study will emphasize on the two major features of tourism industry i.e. the socio-economic development which helps in generating employment opportunities for the local people which will definitely aid in improving their living conditions and secondly on the mental contentment of the tourists who visit this place for various purposes. The growth and the progress of the tourism industry largely depend on the satisfaction of the tourist. The economic impact analysis is presented here by examining the various factors like gender, age, sex, religion, length of stay, purpose of visit, spending behaviour and the perception of the tourists on the various infrastructural amenities available in the study area and by comparing the income earned by the residents from various business activities carried out in the study area during the peak tourist season and lean season.

Keywords — Tourism Industry, Generate Employment, Strengthen Local Economy, Pelling, Sikkim, India.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, tourism has not only seen a considerable increase in the number of tourist destinations, but also experienced a significant expansion globally [1]. As other economic sector, the tourism sector is also based on four main production factors: labor, physical capital, technology, and environmental resources. The development of tourism industries is believed to be able to generate job opportunity since tourism is a labor-intensive sector [2].

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Its rapid growth and development contributed in the socio-economic development of the nation [3]. One of the chief reasons that governments support and promote tourism throughout the world is that it has positive impact upon economic growth and development [4].

The tourism sector is an important social phenomenon in almost every society due to the basic human tendency to have new and memorable experiences concerning adventurous activities, learning, and amusement. Besides, there are several factors which motivate tourism such as socio-cultural, religious, and business activities. The basic human urge to know about unreached parts of the globe is an important factor which fosters tourism. Tourism not only enhances the country's GDP, but also creates a part of business and makes a difference seeing the citizens living blissfully [5].

Sikkim is a Himalayan state. It shares international boundaries with china from North, Nepal from West, and Bhutan from East and national boundary of West Bengal from South. Sikkim has a total area of 7096 square kilometres and more than 46 percent of the total land is covered by forest area [6]. Natural beauties of Sikkim make her as one of the growing tourism destination in India. Tourism is one of the most important services providing industry in the state. It is generating income and employment to the local community in the region [3]. The north eastern tourist spot of India is Sikkim, which is famous due to its geographical location having scenic landscape, ice-beauty and a very pleasing environment [7]. Sikkim state is abundant in natural resources and because of its beauty the tourism industry is expected to play a major role in the economic development of the state.

Sikkim has six districts namely Gangtok, Mangan, Namchi, Gyalshing, Pakyong and Soreng. Pelling, a beautiful town in the Gyalshing district of Sikkim, has become the second biggest tourist destination in the state after Gangtok [5]. The main attraction of the place is the breathtaking sight of the Mt. Kanchendjunga and the neighbouring peaks. In fact, the nearest aerial view of Mt. Kanchendjunga in the world is observed from Pelling. Pelling also has sites for mountain biking, rock climbing, village tours, meditations, apart from serving as a base for a number of treks in the region. The scenic town of Pelling is a perfect holiday destination for all nature and history lovers and adventure enthusiastic. Pelling, a beautiful petite town sited at a height of 6,800 ft is situated

between the two old Buddhist monasteries (Pemayangtse and Sangacholing). Today, Pelling is one of the best chosen tourist hotspots in Sikkim. Tourism is the main source of income of for the people residing in Pelling. In view of the present perspectives, the present study examines the impact of tourism on the local economy.

2. Related Work

Tourism is one of the major sources of economic escalator in the world. In India too tourism is the main economic driving force with a host of sectors like transport, hospitality, education, health, banking, pilgrimage and many more. At present, rural tourism/village tourism, eco-tourism and agro-tourism is also gaining momentum along with conventional tourism. The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, the tourism minister's from different states in India and the private stakeholders are working very hard to transform India into a productive tourist destination in the world [10].

Tourism industry will definitely improve the socio economic status of all the people who are involved in this activity directly or indirectly. It is providing jobs to millions of people in the country irrespective of caste, creed, educational qualifications and gender. Moreover, it brings with it improvement in infrastructure such as transport and communication which is the heart and brain of all the other producing units. An increase in the spending on transport infrastructure will have a multiplier effect on transport sector output and in turn increase the GDP [11]. Therefore, a good transport system will have a positive impact on various sectors of tourism and will help in enhancing the income of the country.

For a tourism industry to flourish, it has to be oriented towards its guests, very especially in taking care of the needs of the customer, their requirements, fulfil their expectations in order to improve the image of their hotel business. Quality of the service and the satisfaction of the guest play a very important role if an entrepreneur wants to survive in the competitive tourism market [12].

Sikkim a beautiful north eastern state of India in the Himalaya is a home to many different categories of tourist ranging from the nature enthusiast to the organic food lovers to the adventure admirer. Tourism is the, main source of income in the state providing jobs to the majority of its population. Tourism contributes maximum to the local economy by creating employment and generating income to the residents [7]. Hence, it is important to understand the inconveniences faced by the tourist and take initiatives in improving the services for the sustainable growth of tourism industry in our state. Therefore, the present study, "Tourism and its Impact on Local Economy: A Study on Pelling Area, Gyalshing District, Sikkim, India" hold significance since the main source of income of the people residing in Pelling is tourism.

3. Methodology

The researcher has used both the secondary and the primary data to analyse the impact of tourism business on the local

economy. Primary data is collected through the survey from local business owner's viz. local hotel owners, shopkeepers, car-drivers etc. and the tourists visiting the study area. The secondary data is collected from Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2011 and tourism related data from "Government of Sikkim," Annual Report – 2009-10, Department of Tourism, Gangtok, Sikkim, 2010 and other various published and unpublished documents including articles, journals, books, newspapers.

In this paper sample analysis is done through the design, which includes both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. The study is done with the help of total 150 samples taken for the purpose of study. Among the total sample, 70 are of the residents (business owners) and 80 samples are from the tourists, which is taken to analyse the impact of tourism on the local economy of Pelling, Gyalshing, Sikkim. The study is undertaken during May, 2024.

In order to study the topic of tourism and its impact on local economy, three steps are used: pre-field work, field work and post-field data processing.

- 1. Pre-Field Work:** The pre-field work included collection of some information, collection of data from Census of India, selection of the study area, determination of the objectives and designing the survey schedule or questionnaire.
- 2. Field-Work:** During the field work, the researcher conducted survey of the residents engaged in various business activities and the tourist.
- 3. Post-Field Work:** Post-field work included tabulation of the collected data, statistical representation of the data and the analysis of the data.

4. Results and Discussions

Here, the diverse aspects of the tourists are revealed which comprise social, economical and other specific features. Also the different aspects of the business owners/residents are studied.

4.1 Sex:

Table 1: Gender division of tourists and the business owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Gender	No. of Tourist	Tourist (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Male	58	72.5	48	68.57
Female	22	27.5	22	31.43
Transgender	00	0	0	0
Total	80	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

From the survey conducted of 80 tourists and 70 business owners, most of them are male in both the cases i.e. 72.5 percent and 68.57 percent respectively. It is found that the tendency of touring is high among the male population in the study area. Also majority of the male population are engaged in tourism business in the study area. 31.43 percent of the female population is engaged in tourism business in the study area is moreover a positive indication and this data needs to be enhanced through various awareness programme and government schemes favouring the womenfolk.

4.2 Age

Table 2: Age of the tourists and the business owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Age	Number of Tourists	Tourist (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Upto 30	15	18.75	09	12.86
30 – 60	52	65	56	80
Above 60	13	16.25	05	7.14
Total	80	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 2, above shows the age of the tourists visiting the study area and the business owner’s in the study area. It is clearly seen that the majority of the tourist belong to the age group of 30 to 60 years. Hence, it gives us an idea that it is the population in the middle age group whose preference for touring is high. In case of business owners, it is found that majority (80 percent) of the business owner’s fall under the age group of 30 to 60 years.

4.3 Marital Status

Table 3: Marital status of the tourists and the business owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Marital Status	Number of Tourist	Tourist (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Married	60	75	55	78.57
Unmarried	18	22.5	13	18.57
Widow/Widower	02	2.5	02	2.86
Total	80	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 3 above depicts the marital status of the tourists visiting the study area and the marital status of the local business owners from the study area. It is found that the majority (75 percent) of the tourists are married. So, it is the married couple who travel more. In case of business owners, 78.57 percent of them are married, 18.57 percent are unmarried and 2.86 percent are widow/widower.

4.4 Religion

Table 4: Religion followed by the tourists and the business owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Religious Group	Number of Tourist	Tourist (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Hindu	69	86.25	38	54.2
Buddhist	02	2.5	27	38.6
Christian	08	10	02	2.9
Muslim	01	1.25	03	4.3
Jains	0	0	0	0
Sikhs	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0
Total	80	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

It is evident from the table 4 above that from the sample, 86.25 percent of the total tourists visiting the study area is Hindu, 10 percent Christian, 2.5 percent Buddhist and 1.25 percent Muslims. In case of business owners, 54.2 percent are Hindus, 38.6 percent are Buddhists, 2.9 percent are Christians and 4.3 percent are Muslims. In both the cases whether tourist visiting the study area or the business owners in the study area, it is dominated by Hindu population.

4.5 Nationality

Table 5: Nationality of the tourists and the business owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Nationality	Number of Tourist	Tourist (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Indian	71	88.75	70	100
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0
European	08	10	0	0
American	01	1.25	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0
Total	80	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 5 above shows that the study area is dominated by Indian (domestic) tourists with 88.75 percent; followed by European tourist with 10 percent and American tourist with 1.25 percent only. All the business owners in the study area are India Nationals.

4.6 Community

Table 6 : Community Status of the Business Owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Community	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
ST	30	42.9
SC	01	1.4
OBC (Central)	11	15.7
OBC (State)	12	17.1
General	16	22.9
Total	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May 2024.

From the table 6 above, it is clear that 42.9 percent of the business owners belong to Scheduled Tribe community. The locality is dominated by Scheduled Tribe community.

4.7 Category

Table 2.7: Category of the Business Owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Category	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Local	54	77.1
Non-Local	16	22.9
Total	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 7 above gives a clear picture that out of the 70 business owners in the study area 77.1 percent have Certificate of Identification (Sikkim’s Domicile) whereas 22.9 percent of the business owners are from the other states of India viz., Bihar and West Bengal.

4.8 Address of the tourist visiting the Study Area

Table 8: No. of tourists visiting the study area from different parts of India

State	Districts	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
West Bengal	Hooghly	11	13.75
	Bardhaman	03	3.75
	Uttar Dinajpur	02	2.5
	Malda	03	3.75
	Jalpaiguri	03	3.75
	North 24 Parganas	13	16.25
	South 24 Parganas	01	1.25

	Kolkata	26	32.5
	Howrah	03	3.75
	Alipurduar	01	1.25
Maharashtra	Mumbai	03	3.75
Sikkim	Pakyong	01	1.25
Bihar	Patna	01	1.25
	Total Domestic Tourist	71	88.75
	Total Foreign Tourist	09	11.25
	Total Tourist (Domestic + Foreign)	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 8 above depicts the number of tourists visiting the study area from different parts of India. It is observed from the study that majority of the domestic tourist are from Kolkata district (32.5 percent), North 24 Parganas district (16.25 percent), Hooghly district (13.75 percent) of West Bengal. Few tourists have come from the other districts of West Bengal namely Bardhaman, Uttar Dinajpur, Malda, Jalpaiguri, South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Alipurduar. Domestic tourists from other states like Bihar and Mumbai is also detected in few pockets. Even people from other districts of Sikkim travel to Pelling for pilgrimage and educational purpose and to visit the newly constructed sky walk which is one of the main centres of attraction in the state.

The number of foreign tourists visiting the study area amounts to 11.25 percent, the figure which is quite dismal and therefore initiatives has to be taken by both the Government and the residents to boost international tourism.

4.9 Educational Status

Table 9: Educational status of the tourists and the business owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Educational Status	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Illiterate	0	0	01	1.4
Primary	02	2.5	10	14.3
Secondary	02	2.5	38	54.3
Sr. Secondary	13	16.25	07	10
Graduate and above	63	78.75	14	20
Total	80	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 9 above gave an idea on the educational status of the tourist visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Majority of the tourist (78.75 percent) visiting the study area is Graduate and Post Graduate. 16.25 percent of the tourist has completed Sr. Secondary level education and very less tourist (2.5 percent each) has done the primary and secondary level education. It is very good to know that none of the tourist who visited the study area is illiterate.

While observing the educational status of the business owners in the study area, it is seen that majority (54.3 percent) of them had completed Secondary education, 20 percent of them has achieved higher education, 10 percent has completed Sr. Secondary school education, 14.3 percent has achieved primary education and 1.4 percent were illiterate.

4.10 Occupational Status

Table 10: Occupational status of the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Occupational Status	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Government Service	23	28.8
Private Job	24	30
Retired	10	12.3
Housewife	01	1.3
Student	05	6.3
Others	17	21.3
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 10 above shows the occupational status of the tourist visiting the study area. It is found that the majority of the tourists (30 percent) are in the private job, 28.8 percent are in the government service, 12.3 percent are retired, 6.3 percent are students, 1.3 percent are housewife and the rest 21.3 percent are in the other occupations which included gift shops, utensils shop, car driver etc.

4.11 Nature of the Business

Table 11: Nature of the Business of the Business Owners in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Nature of Business	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Hotel	03	4.3
Tour & Travel	05	7.1
Restaurant	04	5.7
Fast Food	16	22.9
Grocery	17	24.3
Taxi Driver	12	17.1
Others	13	18.6
Total	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 11 above depicts the nature of the work of the business owners in the study area. Out of the 70 numbers of the business owners surveyed in the study area, it is found that 4.3 percent were running hotel business, 7.1 percent were into tour & travel business, 5.7 percent were in restaurant business, 22.9 percent were running fast food corner, 24.3 percent had grocery shops, 17.1 percent served as taxi (car) drivers and 18.6 percent were into other business comprising of barber, curio shops, utensils shops, medicine shop etc. It is found that majority of the business owners are engaged in grocery shops followed by fast food business, car drivers, tour & travels, restaurant and small hotels. Almost all the bigger hotels in Pelling are leased out to the people from other states of India especially West Bengal. This is such a pitiable practise which needs to be reduced or abolished so that every local hotel owners will run their own hotel business and provide employment opportunities to all the local youths seeking job as per their efficiency and qualification. If such initiative is taken, the unemployment situation in Sikkim could have been reduced if not eradicated. Therefore, there is a need to discover the data regarding the leased out number of hotels in the study area in particular and the state in general and work accordingly for the betterment of the state.

4.12 Length of Stay

Table 12: Length of stay of the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Length of Stay	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
1 Day	01	1.25
2 Days	55	68.75
3 Days	08	10
4 Days	11	13.75
5 Days	01	1.25
6 Days	02	2.5
7 Days	01	1.25
8 Days	01	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 12 gave an idea about the length of stay by the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. It is found that majority (68.75 percent) of the tourist stayed for 2 days in the study area, 13.75 percent of the tourist stayed for 4 days and 10 percent of the tourist stayed for 3 days. It is also found that 1.25 percent of the tourist halt in the study area for a day, another 1.25 percent for 5 days, another 1.25 percent for 7 days and the remaining 1.25 percent for 8 days. The Government and the local NGOs like Pelling Tourism Development Association (PTDA) should come forward and increase sightseeing points to extend the number of days of stay by the tourist in the study area.

4.13: Number of visits

Table 2.13: Number of visits by the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

No. of Visits	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
First time	40	50
Second time	23	28.75
Third time	05	6.25
Multiple time	12	15
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 15: Income spend by the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim for lodging, food, transportation and activities

Expenditure (in Rs.)	No. of Tourists & Tourist (%)							
	Expenditure on Lodge		Expenditure on Food		Expenditure on transportation		Expenditure on Activities	
Below 5,000	42	52.5 %	47	58.75 %	10	12.5 %	56	70
5,000 – 10,000	06	7.5 %	09	11.25 %	13	16.25 %	06	7.5 %
10,000 – 15,000	05	6.25 %	06	7.5 %	09	11.25 %	02	2.5 %
15,000 – 20,000	07	8.75 %	02	2.5 %	09	11.25 %	0	0 %
20,000 – 25,000	03	3.75 %	0	0 %	11	13.75 %	0	0 %
25,000 – 30,000	0	0 %	0	0 %	01	1.25 %	0	0 %
30,000 – 40,000	01	1.25 %	0	0 %	04	5 %	0	0 %
40,000 – 50,000	0	0 %	0	0 %	06	7.5 %	0	0 %
Above 50,000	0	0 %	0	0 %	01	1.25 %	0	0 %
No Comment	16	20 %	16	20 %	16	20 %	16	20 %
Total	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 15 above shows money spend by the tourists visiting the study area for lodging, food, transportation and other activities. It was found that the majority (52.5 percent) of the tourist in the study area has spend less than Rs. 5000/- for lodging, 8.75 percent of the tourist has spend in between Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 20,000/-, 7.5 percent of the tourists has spend in between Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- followed by 6.25 percent in between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 15,000/-, 3.75 percent

Table 13 above depicts the number of visits by the respondent in the study area. It is found that 50 percent of the tourists are first time visitors, 28.75 percent of the tourist are second time visitors, 15 percent of the tourists are multiple time visitors and 6.25 percent of the tourists are third time visitors.

4.14 Monthly Income

Table 14: Monthly income status of the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Below 30,000	12	15
30,000 – 60,000	15	18.75
60,000 – 90,000	19	23.75
Above 90,000	29	36.25
No Response	05	6.25
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 14 above depicts the monthly income of the tourists visiting the study area where it is found that the monthly income of the majority (36.25 percent) of the tourist's is above Rs. 90,000/-, 23.75 percent of the tourist's monthly income is between Rs. 60,000/- to Rs. 90,000/-, 18.75 percent of the tourist's monthly income is between Rs. 30,000/- to Rs. 60,000/- and 15 percent of the tourist's monthly income is below Rs. 30,000/-. Out of 80 tourist respondent's, five of them did not want to share the status of their monthly income. The study shows that the majority of the tourists in the study area are middle income group. Therefore, the focus of the government and the policy makers should be towards developing infrastructures that will encourage higher income group people to travel to Sikkim.

4.15 Expenditure for Lodging, Food, Transportation and Activities

in between Rs. 20,000/- to Rs. 25,000/- and 20 percent of the tourists did not want to share their expenditure on lodging. It is evident from the study that majority of the tourist are budget tourist whose spending on lodging is meagre.

In case of spending on food, it is clear from the study that majority (58.75 percent) of the tourist in the study area spend less than Rs. 5000/- for food followed by 11.25 percent tourists spending in between Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10,000/- for

food, 7.5 percent in between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 15,000/- and 2.5 percent in between Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 20,000/-. 20 percent of the respondents from the study area did not want to share their expenditure on food. From the study again it is obvious that majority of the tourists in the study area spend very less amount on food.

While looking at the income spend on transportation by the tourists it is found that majority (16.25 percent) of the tourist in the study area spend in between Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- on transportation. 13.75 percent tourists spend in between Rs. 20,000/- to Rs. 25,000/-, 11.25 percent of the tourists spend in between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 15,000/- and Rs.15, 000/- to Rs. 20,000/-. 7.5 percent spend in between Rs.40, 000/- to Rs. 50,000/-, 5 percent spend in between Rs.30, 000/- to Rs.40, 000, 1.25 percent tourist spend above Rs. 50,000/-. 20 percent of the tourists denied to share their expenditure on transportation in the study area. When compared with the expenditure for food and lodging, the expenditure by the tourist on transportation is quite high.

Observing the amount spend on activities, it is found that the majority (70 percent) of the tourist spend below Rs. 5,000/- in the study area. 7.5 percent of the tourist spend in between Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10,000/- and very few (2.5 percent) of the tourist spend in between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 15,000/-. 20 percent of the tourist did not want to share their expenditure on activities.

4.16 Category of Accommodation

Table 16: Category of accommodation for the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Category of Accommodation	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Hotel	70	87.5
Lodge	07	8.75
Guest House	02	2.5
Others	01	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 16 above shows the category of accommodation for the tourist where it is found that maximum (70 percent) number of tourist prefer residing in hotels and very few tourist reside in resorts and guest houses.

Table 19: Perception of the tourist about the availability of the tourist infrastructure

Perception of the Tourist on Infrastructure	No. of Tourists & Tourist (%)													
	Availability of the Local Transport		Quality of the Road		Cleanliness of Accommodation		Quality of the Food		Price of the Food		Price of the Local Handicrafts		Hospitality of the Local People	
Fully Satisfied	23	28.75 %	0	0 %	24	30 %	19	23.75 %	13	16.25 %	12	15 %	32	40 %
Satisfied	47	58.75 %	10	12.5 %	42	52.5 %	46	57.5 %	28	35 %	19	23.75 %	37	46.25 %
Moderately Satisfied	02	2.5 %	08	10 %	07	8.75 %	09	11.25 %	23	28.75 %	11	13.75 %	04	05 %
Fully Dissatisfied	02	2.5 %	22	27.5 %	01	1.25 %	01	1.25 %	12	15 %	19	23.75 %	0	0 %
Dissatisfied	0	0 %	17	21.25 %	01	1.25 %	01	1.25 %	0	0 %	05	6.25 %	0	0 %
Moderately Dissatisfied	0	0 %	20	25 %	01	1.25 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	01	1.25 %	0	0 %
No Comment	06	7.5 %	03	3.75 %	04	05 %	04	05 %	04	05 %	13	16.25 %	07	8.75 %
Total	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024

Table 19 above shows the perception of the tourist about the availability of the local transport in the study area. It is found

4.17 Accompanying Person

Table 17: Persons accompanying the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Accompanying Person	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Family	63	78.75
Friends	09	11.25
Alone	07	8.75
Others	01	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 17 above shows the type of people accompanying the tourist in the study area. It is found that 78.75 percent of the tourist is accompanied by family, 11.25 tourists are accompanied by their friends, and 8.75 percent of the tourist has come alone. This figure shows that the majority of the tourists visiting the study area comprise of family tourist.

4.18 Place of Food

Table 18: Place of food preferred by the tourists visiting the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Place of food	Number of tourists	Tourists (%)
Hotel	57	71.25
Restaurant	18	22.5
Guest House	02	2.5
Resort	02	2.5
Others	01	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 18 above shows the place of food preferred by the tourists visiting the study area. It is found that 71.25 percent of the tourist preferred to eat in the hotels where they reside. In fact majority of their accommodations includes both food and lodging. This is the reason why they eat in the hotel where they reside. 22.5 percent prefer to eat in the restaurant. The numbers of tourists who prefer to eat in the resorts and guest house are very less.

4.19 Perception of the tourist about the availability of the tourist infrastructure in the study area

that 28.75 percent of the tourists were fully satisfied with the availability of local transport in the study area while 58.75

percent of the tourists were satisfied, 2.5 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied and 7.5 percent of the tourist did not want to give their comments on it. Majority of the tourist were satisfied which is a clear indication that the availability of the local transport system in the study area is pleasing.

It also shows the perception of the tourist about the quality of the road in the study area. It is found that 12.5 percent of the tourists were satisfied with the quality of the road in the study area while 10 percent of the tourists were moderately satisfied, 27.5 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied, 27.5 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied, 25 percent were moderately dissatisfied and 3.75 percent of the tourist did not give their view points on the quality of the road available in the study area. The majority of the tourists were not happy with the quality of the roads available in the study area. Hence, the quality of the road has to be improved significantly if the number of tourists is to be enhanced in the study area.

While looking at the perception of the tourist about the cleanliness of the accommodation, it is found that 30 percent of the tourists were fully satisfied with the cleanliness of the accommodation while 52.5 percent of the tourists were satisfied, 8.75 percent of the tourists were moderately satisfied, 1.25 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied, another 1.25 percent of the tourist were dissatisfied, another 1.25 percent tourists were moderately dissatisfied and 5 percent of the tourists did not share their views on the cleanliness of the accommodation. Hence, it can be concluded that the majority of the tourist in the study area were satisfied with the cleanliness of the accommodation in the study area.

Examining the perception of the tourist about the quality of the food available in the study area, it is found that 23.75 percent of the tourists were fully satisfied with the quality of the food available in the study area while 57.5 percent of the tourists were satisfied, 11.25 percent of the tourists were moderately satisfied, 1.25 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied, another 1.25 percent of the tourist were dissatisfied, another 1.25 percent tourists were moderately dissatisfied and 5 percent of the tourists did not share their views on the quality of the food available in the study area. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the tourist in the study area were satisfied with the quality of the food available in the study area.

While observing the perception of the tourist about the price of the food available in the study area, it is found that 16.25 percent of the tourists were fully satisfied with the price of the food available in the study area. 35 percent of the tourists were satisfied, 28.75 percent of the tourists were moderately satisfied, 15 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied and 5 percent of the tourists did not respond. Majority of the tourist in the study area were satisfied with the price of the food available in the study area.

The perception of the tourist about the price of the local handicrafts in the study area declare that, 15 percent of the

tourists are fully satisfied with the price of the local handicrafts in the study area. 23.75 percent of the tourists were satisfied, 13.75 percent of the tourists were moderately satisfied, 23.75 percent of the tourists were fully dissatisfied, 6.25 percent of the tourists were dissatisfied, 1.25 percent tourists were moderately dissatisfied and 16.25 percent of the tourists did not respond. However, 52.5 percent of the tourists were satisfied, while 31.25 percent of them were dissatisfied with the price of the local handicrafts in the study area.

Understanding the perception of the tourist about the hospitality of the local people in the study area, it is found that 40 percent of the tourists are fully satisfied with the hospitality of the local people in the study area. 46.25 percent of the tourists were satisfied, 5 percent of the tourists were moderately satisfied and 8.75 percent of the tourists did not respond. Nevertheless, it is concluded that the majority of the tourists were satisfied with the hospitality of the local people in the study area.

4.20 Monthly income of the business owners during the peak tourist season and lean period in the study area

Table 20: Monthly income of the business owners during the peak tourist season and lean period in the study area in Pelling, Gyalshing, West Sikkim

Monthly Income (in Rs.)	In Lean Season		In Peak Season	
	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)	No. of Business Owner	Business Owner (%)
Below 10,000	33	47.1	0	0
10,000 – 20,000	14	20	06	8.6
20,000 – 30,000	06	8.57	05	7.14
30,000 – 40,000	02	2.9	07	10
40,000 – 50,000	04	5.7	07	10
50,000 – 60,000	03	4.3	05	7.14
60,000 – 70,000	01	1.4	07	10
70,000 – 80,000	02	2.9	04	5.7
80,000 – 90,000	01	1.43	04	5.71
90,000 – 1,00,000	04	5.7	04	5.71
Above 1,00,000	0	0	21	30
Total	70	100	70	100

Source: Field Survey, Pelling, Sikkim, May, 2024.

Table 20 above shows the monthly income of the business owners in the study area where it is found that the monthly income varies during the peak tourist season and the lean season. If 47.1 percent of the local business owners earn below Rs. 10,000 during the lean season then it is found that none of the business owners monthly income is less than Rs. 10,000/- during the peak tourist season. On the other hand it is found that during the lean season none of the business owners earn more than a lakh but during the peak tourist season the monthly income of 30 percent of the business owners is above Rs. 1 lakh. This constructive variation in the monthly income earned by the residents (business owners) during the lean and the peak tourist season reflects the positive impact of the tourism in the local economy of the study area.

5 Conclusion

Tourism industry is the biggest industry in the Sikkim state where majority of its population are engaged on it directly or

indirectly. This service sector provides employment to the people irrespective of their educational status. It is observed that it has been successful in providing job opportunity to the most illiterate person and to the most literate person in the study area. The tourism industry of Pelling, West Sikkim is one of the crucial facets that support a lot for the local economy of the state. It has helped in increasing the living standard of the local people by providing them employment and making them financially independent. Pelling is the heart and the soul of Sikkim's tourism industry due to its geographical location having picturesque scenery, ice-beauty, historical monuments and a very pleasant atmosphere rich in culture and tradition. Pelling is prosperous in nature blessed with world's third highest mountain peak, old monasteries, coronation throne, ruins, wish fulfilling lakes, hot spring, holy caves and waterfalls. As a result, different types of tourism can be prepared here including trekking, eco-tourism, wellness and adventure tourism and many other recreational forms of tourism. Mainly tourist from the other states of India visit Pelling to enjoy the nearest aerial view of the third highest mountain peak of the world "Mt. Kanchendjunga" and enjoy the serene climatic condition and the geographical landscape to ease themselves from their hasty busy schedule. The people from Bhutan, Nepal and various parts of Sikkim come to Pelling for pilgrimage purpose. From the tourist profile, it is discovered that 72.5 percent of the tourist are male and 65 percent of them fall in the age group of 30 to 60 years. 75 percent of the tourist are married and 86.25 percent of the tourist belong to Hindu community. Majority of the tourist in the study area i.e., 68.75 percent had come for recreation purposes. Majority (68.75 percent) of them prefer to halt for 2 nights in the study area. 50 percent of the tourist visited the study area for the first time whereas 28.75 percent was visiting for the second time. The most interesting part is that 15 percent of the tourist had been visiting the study area multiple times. The expenditure on transportation was quite more compared to the expenditure on food, lodge and other activities. Majority (30 percent) of the tourist in the study area have monthly income above Rs. 1,00,000/-. 87.5 percent of the tourist preferred staying in hotels. It was also found that 78.75 percent of the tourist travelled along with their family. 71.25 percent of the tourists preferred eating in the hotels since their accommodations included both food and lodging at the time of booking. Majority of the tourists were satisfied with the availability of local transport in the study area but they were dissatisfied with the quality of the road available in the study area. The government and the local residents should improve the quality of the road in the study area. If the quality of the road is maintained, the inflow of the tourist will definitely increase manifold. Majority of the tourist were satisfied with the quality of the food that was available in the hotel and also their price. But many tourists were not satisfied with the price of the local handicrafts. But certainly they were happy with the kind of hospitality they had received from the local people. Most of the tourists were from Kolkata and North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. International tourist comprised of 11.25 percent, the figure which is very gloomy. Hence, it is obligatory to find why the number of international tourist flow in our state is depleting. It is a

matter of great concern and research in this area need to be prioritized.

Tourism contributes positively to the local economy by creating employment opportunity and generating some income to the residents. It provides additional jobs ranging from low-wage entry-level to high paying professional positions in areas of lodging, restaurants, transportation etc. [7].

From the study it was discovered that the income of the residents engaged in tourism business varied during the peak tourist season and the lean season. It was observed that 47.1 percent of the business owners earned below Rs. 10,000 during the lean season but none of the business owner's monthly income was less than Rs. 10,000/- during the peak tourist season. On the other hand it was found that during the lean season none of the business owners earned more than a lakh but during the peak tourist season the monthly income of 30 percent of the business owners is above Rs. 1 lakh. This constructive variation in the monthly income earned by the residents (business owners) during the lean and the peak tourist season reflects the positive impact of the tourism in the local economy of the study area. In other words, the monthly income during the peak tourist season is more than the monthly income during the lean season. This findings show that there is a positive impact of tourism on the local economy.

As per the researcher, the nature of the business carried by the residents included hotels, tour & travel, restaurant, fast food, grocery, car/taxi drivers and others which included barber, curio shops, utensils shops and pharmacy. Regarding hotel business, the researcher has taken into study only the hotels functioned by the local residents. During the study, it was found by the researcher that most of the hotels in Pelling are leased out to the people from other states of India especially West Bengal. Hence, an appropriate study in this area is required and if the hotel businesses are carried by the local residents, definitely the unemployment situation existing in our state can be eliminated because tourism is such a sector which can provide employment opportunity to all sections of the people ranging from illiterate to highly literate population.

Data Availability

The data used are available in the manuscript and with the author.

Conflict of Interest

There is no Conflict of Interest

Funding Source

No Funding was received for this research

Authors' Contributions

The author has visited the study area personally and interacted with the respondent's minutely and without any predisposition. It is her sole contribution.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge all the 150 respondents who have given their precious time in responding to the questionnaire. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to all my friends, mentors, well wishers and of course my family members for always being there to support and guide me in the times of my difficulties.

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