

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ITS SOCIOECONOMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS IN KAGHAN VALLEY, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has expanded rapidly in Kaghan Valley, one of Pakistan's best-known mountain destinations, yet the local consequences of this growth remain insufficiently documented. This study examines the drivers of tourism development and its socioeconomic and sociocultural impacts using a mixed-method design. Primary evidence was collected through 100 questionnaires administered to local residents and tourism-sector workers, field observations, and a focus group discussion with five community participants. Secondary evidence was used to describe the valley and assess the relationship between tourism's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and Pakistan's GDP from 1995 to 2020 through an error-correction model. The findings identify transport infrastructure, accommodation, public services, government institutions, and media visibility as major drivers of tourism growth. Tourism generated employment, supported local businesses, improved access to infrastructure, and raised household living standards. However, employment was highly seasonal: 70% of the reported tourism-related jobs were seasonal, compared with 20% part-time and 10% full-time jobs. The error-correction model reported a positive short-run association between tourism contribution and GDP (coefficient = 8.33, $p = .003$) and a significant adjustment term of -0.64 ($p = .007$). Respondents also reported higher prices of land and goods, pressure on local culture, declining traditional arts, language shifts, crime concerns, child labour, pollution, and land degradation. At the same time, 70% believed that tourism promoted contact, mutual understanding, and social harmony. The study concludes that tourism can contribute substantially to local and national development, but its benefits depend on planned infrastructure, environmental regulation, year-round employment, labour protection, and community-led cultural preservation.

Keywords: Kaghan Valley; tourism development; socioeconomic impacts; sociocultural change; seasonal employment; sustainable tourism; Pakistan

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism can expand local revenue, create employment, stimulate infrastructure investment, and encourage cultural interaction. These benefits are especially important in peripheral mountain regions where livelihood options are limited and where roads, communications, public services, and markets often develop slowly. Tourism

growth, however, can also increase the cost of land and essential goods, produce seasonal and insecure work, place pressure on natural resources, and transform local cultural practices. The central policy question is therefore not whether tourism should grow, but how it can be managed so that economic gains are distributed locally while social

and environmental costs remain within acceptable limits.

Kaghan Valley lies in Mansehra District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and is widely recognised for its lakes, forests, mountains, rivers, wildlife, and distinctive cultural landscape. Balakot serves as the principal gateway to the valley, while Naran, Shogran, Saif-ul-Muluk, Babusar Pass, Manoor, and Sharan are among its prominent destinations. Improved security, road access, accommodation, electricity, communications, and online visibility have increased tourist arrivals. The thesis on which this article is based reported an estimated 1.5 million visitors during the summer season at selected destinations, illustrating both the economic potential of tourism and the intensity of seasonal pressure on local infrastructure and ecosystems.

Existing research has documented Kaghan Valley's archaeological, cultural, ecological, and landscape assets (Ali, 2005; Jamal, 2009; Shah et al., 2013). Other studies have examined climate and water resources in the Kunhar River basin (Mahmood et al., 2016), agricultural vulnerability (Safdar et al., 2014), and the hydropower potential of the Kunhar River (Khan & Zaidi, 2015). At the national level, scholars have highlighted the importance of infrastructure, security, governance, and investment for Pakistan's tourism sector (Arshad et al., 2018; Khan & Rasheed, 2016), as well as the potential for regional tourism associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Ali et al., 2017). Despite these contributions, there remains limited field-based evidence that jointly assesses economic opportunities, employment conditions, cultural change, community perceptions, and environmental pressures in Kaghan Valley.

This study addresses that gap by analysing the development of tourism and its effects on local society and culture. It also uses national time-series data to examine the reported relationship between tourism's contribution to GDP and Pakistan's GDP. The paper asks four questions: (1) What factors have driven tourism development in Kaghan Valley? (2) What socioeconomic benefits and costs are associated with tourism? (3) What sociocultural changes do local residents associate with tourism? and (4) What policy actions are

required to support more sustainable and inclusive tourism development?

2. Conceptual and Empirical Background

The original thesis combines several development perspectives. A modernisation perspective emphasises the role of roads, electricity, communication technologies, hotels, and market expansion in transforming remote regions. From this viewpoint, tourism operates as a growth pole: infrastructure built for visitors also improves residents' mobility, access to services, and commercial opportunities. This perspective is relevant to Kaghan Valley because road improvements, electricity projects, accommodation, and digital promotion have directly altered access to the region.

A dependency-oriented perspective draws attention to unequal control over tourism assets and the possibility that external investors capture a disproportionate share of benefits. Hotels, transport services, tour companies, and commercial land development may generate income, but they can also increase prices, displace traditional livelihoods, and make the local economy dependent on seasonal demand. Neoliberal tourism strategies may attract private capital and expand service markets, yet weak regulation can shift environmental and social costs to communities.

A sustainable-development perspective provides the most appropriate integrative framework for the present study. It requires economic viability, social inclusion, cultural continuity, and environmental protection to be pursued together. In practical terms, this means creating stable local employment, protecting workers and children, maintaining public access to natural assets, controlling waste and land degradation, preserving cultural practices, and involving residents in tourism planning. Community participation is particularly important because local people experience both the benefits and the burdens of mass tourism, and recent tourism scholarship treats meaningful community participation as a prerequisite for effective sustainable destination development (Iqbal et al., 2022).

Empirical research on Pakistan's tourism sector consistently identifies infrastructure, political

stability, professional services, investment, and institutional coordination as important determinants of growth (Arshad et al., 2018; Khan & Rasheed, 2016). Sustainability research in Pakistan's hotel industry further indicates that tourism enterprises must integrate environmental and social practices into routine management (Sajjad et al., 2018). More recent Pakistan-focused evidence links international tourism with economic growth and highlights the importance of infrastructure, security, investment, and institutional conditions (N. U. Khan et al., 2022). Research on mountain tourism in Pakistan also stresses the need to balance economic value with climate and environmental vulnerability (Ali, 2023), while a study focused directly on the Naran-Kaghan region documents land-cover change and environmental degradation associated with tourism expansion and changing climatic conditions (Yasin et al., 2023). Provincial policy work similarly identifies basic-service deficits, weak coordination, environmental pressures, and limited stakeholder participation as major constraints on sustainable tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Hussain et al., 2023). These findings support a multidimensional assessment of Kaghan Valley in which tourism is evaluated not only through visitor numbers and revenue, but also through employment quality, community welfare, cultural change, and ecological pressure.

3. Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method design combining primary field evidence with secondary data analysis. The primary component consisted of 100 questionnaires administered through personal interviews to local residents and workers associated with the tourism industry. The original thesis reported that 80% of respondents were male and 20% were female, with participants drawn

from different age, income, education, and occupational categories. The questionnaire included open-ended questions on employment, business development, income, living standards, prices, seasonal work, social interaction, clothing, language, traditions, moral values, folk culture, handicrafts, and local environmental conditions. A focus group discussion with five community participants was also conducted. Participants identified practical problems and proposed interventions, including clean drinking water, public washrooms, all-season road access, snow-removal machinery, local tourism committees, and chairlift or road connections to less accessible sites. Field observations were used to contextualise questionnaire responses and assess infrastructure, tourism services, land use, and visible environmental pressures.

The secondary component used annual data for Pakistan's GDP and tourism's contribution to GDP, reported in current US dollars for 1995–2020. The thesis identifies the World Travel & Tourism Council as the data source and reports that EViews was used for estimation. Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests were applied to assess stationarity. Both series were reported as integrated of order one, while the residuals from the long-run equation were stationary at level. On that basis, an error-correction model was estimated to examine short-run association and adjustment toward long-run equilibrium.

The analysis is descriptive and interpretive. Survey percentages are reported as presented in the thesis, and the econometric coefficients are reproduced without re-estimating the original model because the underlying dataset was not included in the submitted document. This approach preserves the source evidence while avoiding claims that cannot be independently verified.

Table 1. Study design and data sources

Component	Source and sample	Purpose
Questionnaire survey	100 local residents and tourism-sector workers; 80% male and 20% female	Assess socioeconomic and sociocultural perceptions and experiences

Component	Source and sample	Purpose
Focus group discussion	Five community participants	Identify local problems, priorities, and practical recommendations
Field observations	Tourism locations in Kaghan Valley	Contextualise infrastructure, services, land use, and environmental conditions
Secondary time-series analysis	Pakistan GDP and tourism contribution to GDP, 1995–2020	Examine the reported short-run and long-run relationship using an error-correction model

Note. The thesis does not document the sampling frame, response rate, questionnaire reliability, or formal ethics approval; these details should be verified before journal submission.

4. Results

4.1 Drivers and Pattern of Tourism Development

The evidence identifies road access and transportation as the most basic conditions for tourism growth. The N-15 corridor connected Mansehra, Balakot, Kaghan, Naran, and the upper valley and substantially reduced the isolation of major destinations. Improved mobility made it easier for tourists to reach the valley, enabled local producers to access markets, and encouraged investment in accommodation, food services, transport, and retail. At the same time, traffic congestion, winter closures, and limited access to remote attractions remained major constraints.

Accommodation expanded alongside visitor numbers. Hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, and small commercial services became concentrated in Naran, Kaghan, Shogran, and other accessible locations. This expansion created work and investment opportunities, but the source thesis also reported uneven service standards, inadequate sanitation, limited professional training, and the absence of high-quality accommodation in some locations.

Public infrastructure and institutional support also influenced growth. Road schemes, hydropower development, electricity, telecommunications, water supply, and security improvements contributed to the valley's accessibility and commercial viability. Government tourism agencies, training institutions, local authorities, and non-governmental organisations supported tourism through promotion, capacity building, infrastructure, and post-disaster recovery.

Nevertheless, respondents described weak coordination, limited planning, and inadequate implementation as persistent problems.

Media visibility emerged as another major driver. Television programmes, films, guidebooks, newspapers, websites, travel blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms introduced new audiences to Kaghan Valley. Digital media reduced information barriers and allowed hotels, tour operators, and guides to advertise directly to potential visitors. This exposure encouraged demand for established destinations and helped publicise less familiar sites such as Manoor and Sharan valleys.

4.2 Socioeconomic Impacts

Employment and local business

Tourism generated a wide range of occupations in hotels, restaurants, retail, transport, accommodation, travel services, guiding, and other activities. Hotels and restaurants accounted for the largest reported share of job creation (33%), followed by shops and local industries (21%) and accommodation and travel services (17%). Tourist guides accounted for only 2%, while other activities represented 26%. The distribution indicates that tourism's local employment effect is concentrated in hospitality and small-scale services rather than specialised professional occupations.

Business-duration data also suggest recent commercial expansion. Thirty-five per cent of surveyed local businesses had operated for two years, 18% for two to five years, 16% for five to ten years, and 31% for more than ten years. The large share of relatively new businesses was interpreted

in the thesis as evidence that tourism had become increasingly attractive to local entrepreneurs. The principal weakness was seasonality. Seventy per cent of reported tourism-related jobs were seasonal, 20% were part-time, and only 10% were full-time. This employment structure exposes

households to income instability and encourages high worker turnover. It also limits the development of a skilled, permanent service workforce because enterprises recruit intensively during peak months and reduce operations during winter.

Table 2. Tourism-related employment and business indicators

Indicator	Category	Percentage
Employment by activity	Hotels and restaurants	33%
Employment by activity	Shops and local industries	21%
Employment by activity	Accommodation and travel agents	17%
Employment by activity	Tourist guides	2%
Employment by activity	Other activities	26%
Employment status	Full-time	10%
Employment status	Part-time	20%
Employment status	Seasonal	70%
Business duration	Operating for two years	35%
Business duration	Operating for two to five years	18%
Business duration	Operating for five to ten years	16%
Business duration	Operating for more than ten years	31%

Note. Percentages are reproduced from the field-survey tables in the thesis. Employment-by-activity categories total 99% because of rounding.

Living standards, infrastructure, and prices

Respondents generally associated tourism with higher household income, more employment opportunities, and greater investment. Naran was described as having changed from a relatively poor settlement into one of the more prosperous communities in Mansehra District. Tourism also stimulated related activities such as transport, agriculture, food supply, orchards, handicrafts, and local markets. Improved roads and mobility allowed residents to market products more widely and gave communities better access to services. Infrastructure created for tourism produced spillover benefits for local residents. Roads, communications, restaurants, public spaces, accommodation, and some health and utility

services improved as visitor numbers grew. However, development was spatially uneven and concentrated around accessible destinations. Remote communities continued to face weak roads, limited electricity, poor mobile connectivity, inadequate medical facilities, and restricted banking services.

Tourism also increased the cost of land, housing, accommodation, and consumer goods. Demand for hotels, villas, commercial units, and residential plots raised land values, particularly in major destinations. The effects were beneficial for landowners and investors but created affordability problems for residents without property assets. Seasonal demand also contributed to inflation in

food, transport, and accommodation during peak periods.

4.3 National Tourism–GDP Relationship

The time-series component of the thesis examined annual GDP and tourism's contribution to GDP from 1995 to 2020. Both series were reported as non-stationary at level and stationary at first difference, while the residuals from the long-run equation were stationary at level. These results were used to justify an error-correction specification.

The short-run coefficient for the change in tourism contribution was positive and statistically

significant (8.330948, $p = .0032$). The error-correction term was negative and significant (-0.640182 , $p = .0068$), indicating that approximately 64% of a deviation from the estimated long-run relationship was corrected within one year. The model had an R^2 of .449 and an overall F-test probability of .00142. These estimates support an association between tourism activity and national output in the source analysis, although they should not be interpreted as establishing causality because the model contains only two aggregate variables and does not control for other determinants of GDP.

Table 3. Reported error-correction model for Pakistan's GDP

Variable/statistic	Coefficient/value	Std. error	t-statistic	p-value
Constant	3.63E+09	2.73E+09	1.329	.1974
Δ Tourism contribution	8.330948	2.522773	3.302	.0032
ECM (−1)	−0.640182	0.214124	−2.990	.0068
R^2	.449055			
Adjusted R^2	.398969			
F-statistic	8.965685			.001420
Durbin–Watson	1.192108			

Note. Dependent variable: Δ GDP. Adjusted sample: 1996–2020. Values are reproduced from the thesis. The exact WTTC dataset/report citation should be verified by the author before submission.

4.4 Sociocultural Impacts

Cultural practices, language, and identity

Respondents perceived tourism as a significant source of cultural change. Contact with visitors introduced new clothing styles, consumption patterns, behaviours, and expectations. In Naran, 56% of respondents stated that tourism influenced local dress, compared with approximately 10% in Balakot. The thesis further reported that 95% of respondents in Naran and 90% in Balakot perceived tourism's effect on cultural customs as negative, although the intensity of change differed between the two locations.

Traditional handicrafts, local dance, and folk songs were described as declining. More than half

of male respondents and 15% of female respondents associated tourism with the weakening of traditional handicrafts. Thirty-five per cent attributed the decline of the local Gatka dance to tourism, while many others blamed media exposure. Regarding the folk song Qanchi, 35% associated its decline with tourism and 40% were reportedly unfamiliar with it. These findings suggest that tourism interacts with broader forces of media, urbanisation, education, and generational change rather than operating as a single cause.

Language practices were also affected. In Naran, 20% of respondents reported trying to speak Urdu at home because of frequent contact with visitors. This change may facilitate communication and

commercial interaction, but it can also reduce the everyday use of local languages. Respondents also expressed concern that the growth of mass tourism weakened local identity and moral norms, particularly among younger people.

Social interaction, peace, and civic participation

Tourism was not viewed only as a threat. Seventy per cent of respondents believed that tourism brought people into contact, encouraged cultural exchange, improved mutual understanding, and reduced social tension. Local festivals and public events created opportunities for different groups and castes to gather, while interaction with visitors exposed residents to new ideas and broadened social networks.

Tourism also increased awareness of the economic value of cultural and scenic assets. Respondents linked tourism with stronger interest in environmental conservation, heritage protection, community organisation, and local participation. These benefits were most likely where residents were involved in decision-making and could see a direct relationship between conservation and livelihood opportunities.

Crime, child labour, and environmental pressure

Respondents associated mass tourism and urbanisation with theft, drug trafficking, gambling, and other forms of crime. The study does not provide official crime statistics, so these results should be treated as community

perceptions rather than measured changes in crime rates. Nevertheless, such perceptions can reduce trust between visitors and host communities and can weaken the social legitimacy of tourism.

Child labour was identified as a serious concern. Respondents estimated that more than 10% of people under 18 engaged in tourism-related work in parts of Kaghan Valley, particularly in hotels, restaurants, and minor commercial activities in Shogran and Naran. Because the original study did not provide an age-stratified labour survey, this estimate requires independent verification. Even so, the observation highlights the need for labour inspection, school-retention programmes, and enforcement of child-protection laws.

Environmental pressure included waste disposal, river pollution, deforestation, construction, land conversion, and degradation associated with tourism infrastructure and hydropower development. Visitor concentration during peak periods exceeded the capacity of sanitation, waste-management, and transport systems. Recent spatial and field-based research in the Naran-Kaghan region similarly reports that tourism growth is associated with settlement expansion, forest conversion, and wider land degradation under changing climatic conditions (Yasin et al., 2023). Without effective regulation, the natural assets that attract tourists may be progressively damaged.

Table 4. Summary of major tourism impacts reported by respondents

Dimension	Positive effects	Negative effects
Economic	Employment, business formation, income growth, market expansion	Seasonal work, price inflation, unequal gains, dependence on peak-season demand
Infrastructure	Improved roads, communications, accommodation, and services	Congestion, uneven access, pressure on utilities and public facilities
Social	Interaction, mutual understanding, festivals, civic participation	Crime concerns, labour exploitation, conflict over behaviour and resources
Cultural	Visibility of local heritage and potential support for preservation	Changes in dress and language; decline of handicrafts, dance, and folk songs
Environmental	Greater recognition of the value of natural assets	Waste, pollution, deforestation, land conversion, and ecosystem degradation

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that tourism in Kaghan Valley operates as both a development mechanism and a source of risk. The strongest benefits are visible in employment, small-business formation, road access, market expansion, and household income. These outcomes are consistent with the modernisation view that transport, services, communication, and investment can integrate remote mountain regions into wider economic networks. They also support national-level research that identifies infrastructure and stability as central to Pakistan's tourism growth (Arshad et al., 2018; Khan & Rasheed, 2016).

However, the quality and distribution of benefits are uneven. The dominance of seasonal employment means that many households remain economically vulnerable despite higher visitor numbers. Local participation is concentrated in low- and medium-skill services, while larger investments in land and accommodation may favour wealthier residents and external entrepreneurs. Rising land prices can create wealth for owners but can also deepen inequality and restrict access to housing and commercial space. These patterns reflect dependency concerns about who controls tourism assets and where tourism revenue ultimately accumulates.

The reported sociocultural impacts are similarly mixed. Tourism promotes interaction, peace, and awareness of local heritage, yet residents also associate it with cultural homogenisation and the weakening of traditional practices. Media, education, migration, urbanisation, and generational change are likely co-drivers, so tourism should not be treated as the sole cause. The practical implication is that cultural preservation cannot rely on limiting contact with visitors. It requires active documentation, community-controlled festivals, support for artisans, local-language initiatives, and education that presents cultural heritage as a living resource rather than a commercial performance.

Environmental sustainability is the most urgent long-term challenge. Kaghan Valley's tourism economy depends directly on lakes, forests, rivers, landscapes, biodiversity, and a clean mountain environment. Unregulated construction, weak

waste disposal, traffic congestion, deforestation, and land degradation therefore threaten the economic basis of tourism itself. This concern is consistent with wider evidence that mountain tourism is highly exposed to climate variability and climate-related hazards because it depends on sensitive natural resources and seasonal conditions (Steiger et al., 2024). Pakistan-based mountain-tourism research likewise argues that rising recreational demand must be accompanied by careful planning and environmental risk management (Ali, 2023). Sustainability practices in accommodation and destination management, as emphasised by Sajjad et al. (2018), should be treated as core business and governance requirements rather than optional activities.

The econometric results complement the local evidence by indicating a positive association between tourism contribution and national GDP. Recent Pakistan studies using time-series methods also report positive links among tourism, economic growth, and broader well-being (A. Khan et al., 2021; N. U. Khan et al., 2022). However, the model should be interpreted cautiously. Aggregate GDP and tourism contribution are mechanically related measures, and the specification does not control for investment, exchange rates, security conditions, global demand, natural disasters, or macroeconomic shocks. The analysis is therefore best read as descriptive evidence of co-movement rather than proof that a one-unit increase in tourism independently causes an 8.33-unit increase in GDP.

6. Policy Recommendations

Integrated destination planning. A single valley-level framework should coordinate land use, transport, accommodation, utilities, environmental protection, disaster preparedness, and visitor management. Planning should include local government, tourism agencies, community representatives, businesses, environmental specialists, and transport authorities.

Year-round livelihood development. Seasonal dependence can be reduced through winter tourism, cultural tourism, trekking, guided nature activities, handicraft markets, agricultural tourism,

and training for off-season occupations. Support should prioritise locally owned enterprises and women's participation. Recent provincial eco-tourism initiatives have also linked camping and adventure facilities with youth livelihoods and the protection of local environments and heritage (United Nations Development Programme, 2023).

Transport and public services. Road maintenance, snow-removal machinery, traffic management, parking, public transport, safe walking routes, clean drinking water, public washrooms, mobile connectivity, electricity, banking, and emergency medical facilities should be expanded before further mass promotion.

Professional standards and training. Tour guides, hotel staff, transport operators, restaurant workers, and tourism officials require training in customer service, languages, hygiene, first aid, environmental practice, and cultural sensitivity. Certification can improve service quality and create skilled career pathways.

Environmental regulation. Construction controls, carrying-capacity assessments, solid-waste systems, wastewater treatment, plastic reduction, river protection, reforestation, and monitoring of ecologically sensitive sites are essential. Hotels and tour operators should be required to meet enforceable environmental standards.

Cultural preservation. Local communities should lead the documentation and revitalisation of Gatka, Qanchi, handicrafts, oral histories, local dress, and regional languages. Tourism revenue can fund cultural centres, artisan cooperatives, school programmes, and community festivals.

Labour and child protection. Authorities should enforce minimum labour standards, prevent child labour, inspect tourism businesses, and link vulnerable families to education and social-protection programmes. Employment growth should not be accepted at the cost of exploitation.

Visitor code of conduct. A clear code should address waste disposal, clothing and behaviour near communities and religious sites, respect for local norms, fair payment to guides, wildlife protection, and responsible use of trails, campsites, rivers, and lakes.

Community participation and benefit sharing. Local tourism committees should participate in project selection, monitoring, and revenue

allocation. Transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms can reduce conflict and increase support for conservation and visitor management. This approach is consistent with current evidence on meaningful participation in sustainable tourism and with policy proposals to institutionalise community and private-sector voices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tourism-development authorities (Hussain et al., 2023; Iqbal et al., 2022).

7. Limitations

This study is based on a relatively small cross-sectional survey of 100 respondents and one focus group discussion with five participants. The original thesis does not clearly document the sampling frame, participant-selection procedure, response rate, questionnaire validation, intercoder procedures for qualitative responses, or formal ethical approval. These omissions limit the generalisability and replicability of the findings.

Several percentages in the appendices appear internally inconsistent, and some claims are based on respondent estimates rather than administrative records. The present article therefore reports only the principal results that were clearly stated in the thesis and flags estimates that require verification. Future research should use probability-based or stratified sampling, include women and marginalised groups more fully, collect seasonal data across multiple years, and triangulate perceptions with official records on employment, prices, crime, child labour, visitor flows, and environmental quality.

The national econometric model is bivariate and uses aggregate annual data. It does not establish causality and may be affected by common trends, measurement overlap, omitted variables, structural breaks, and the COVID-19 shock. Replication with the underlying dataset, full diagnostic testing, and a broader model is required before the estimates are used for policy forecasting.

8. Conclusion

Tourism has become a major force of economic and social change in Kaghan Valley. It has created employment, encouraged new businesses, improved roads and services, expanded markets, and increased the visibility of the valley's natural

and cultural assets. The reported national analysis also shows a positive association between tourism contribution and GDP. These benefits explain why local residents generally support tourism development.

At the same time, the current pattern of growth is highly seasonal and insufficiently regulated. Rising prices, insecure employment, uneven benefit distribution, cultural change, child-labour concerns, waste, pollution, congestion, deforestation, and land degradation reduce the quality and sustainability of development. The central conclusion is therefore conditional: tourism can improve local welfare, but only when expansion is matched by planning, regulation, public services, labour protection, environmental management, and meaningful community participation. A shift from visitor-number growth to destination stewardship is necessary if Kaghan Valley is to retain the environmental and cultural qualities on which its tourism economy depends.

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