



Assessing the Economic, Social, and Cultural Impacts of the Tourism Industry in Sudurpaschim, Nepal

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Abstract

Tourism has become a crucial catalyst for development in various regions of Nepal, particularly in the rural and underdeveloped provinces. This study examines the influence of the tourism industry on economic, social, and cultural integration in Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal. A causal-comparative research design employing a quantitative approach was used. Data were collected from 228 respondents across two districts: Doti and Kanchanpur. This study examined the economic, social, and cultural impacts of the tourism industry using three distinct simple linear regression models to assess the relationships.

The results indicate a statistically significant positive economic impact of tourism ($R^2 = 0.355$, $\beta = 0.596$, $p < 0.001$) and a similarly significant positive social impact ($R^2 = 0.376$, $\beta = 0.613$, $p < 0.001$). However, the findings revealed no significant cultural impact ($R^2 = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.017$, $p = 0.795$), suggesting that tourism may exert a neutral or potentially negative effect on cultural integration in the region. It may be due to a specific cultural perspective in the area.

The findings underscore the pivotal role of tourism in fostering economic development in Sudurpaschim while simultaneously highlighting concerns regarding its cultural ramifications. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and development planners, aiming to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism growth.



Keywords: Tourism Industry, Economic, Social, Cultural, Sudurpaschim, Nepal, Regression Analysis

1. Introduction

The tourism industry has emerged as a major force in terms of global economic and sociocultural growth, especially in developing countries that are blessed with natural and cultural heritage (Shrestha, 2023). They are involved in the complicated rejuvenation of local economies, higher levels of social cohesion, and the preservation of cultural heritage (Ge & Chen, 2024). Nepal is renowned for its beautiful landscapes and rich cultural practices, and there has been an increase in the activities revolving around tourism, which contributes significantly to national revenue and employment (Gyawali et. al, 2022). However, the impact of tourism is not equally spread to all areas, as some areas are less explored, such as the Sudurpaschim Province of Nepal, although their involvement in the tourism industry is rising. Sudurpaschim is characterized by exceptional unity in terms of ethnic diversity, natural beauty, and historical heritage, making this region a potential tourist destination hub (Karki et al., 2024). The economic development of tourism in the area not only implies positive consequences impacting financial prosperity, such as higher income and more employment, but also positive impacts on the social level, such as community empowerment and the development of infrastructure (Shrestha et. al, 2023). At the same time, tourism may influence economic, social, and cultural processes through the proliferation of heritage preservation policies or inflated cultural commodification (Bhatta et al., 2022). Such a multidimensional nature of the effects is important in providing a detailed picture to policymakers and stakeholders so that the sustainable development of tourism exists in harmony with community well-being.

Empirical research documenting the economic, social, and cultural effects of tourism in the province of Sudurpaschim in Nepal is lacking, and the vast majority of past studies were carried out in Nepal in the Annapurna and Everest regions (K C, 2021). The importance of Sudurpaschim Province, in addition to recent government activities in enhancing the tourism industry to boost regional growth (Paudel et al., 2022), makes the study relevant to fill this gap and determine the effects of tourism on local economies, social setups, and cultures in Sudurpaschim. These results provide a deeper understanding of how tourism performs in remote and emerging destinations, providing evidence on strategies that can be used in sustainable tourism policies.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Economic Impact of Tourism

Undoubtedly, tourism is a driver of economic growth, especially in places where natural and cultural resources remain unexploited (Wissink, 2023). It creates new jobs and leads to the development of local economies as well as government revenues in the form of taxes and receipts of foreign exchange (Igoumenakis et al., 2023). Tourism can be an essential income gain in developing nations, allowing the rural economy to be more diverse and reducing



poverty ((Eslami & Namdar, 2022; Ramkissoon 2023; Sanchez del Rio-Vazquez et al., 2019; Rogerson, 2018). Empirical research has been conducted in Nepal to determine how tourism has promoted the growth of income and entrepreneurship in households at the local level (Chen & Li, 2024). In particular, areas with minimal industrial development, such as Sudurpaschim, offer viable regions of economic growth through tourism. The hypotheses were as follows:

H1: The tourism industry has a significant positive economic impact.

2.2 Social Impact of Tourism

Tourism confers significant social advantages by enhancing community infrastructure, improving public services, and facilitating intercultural exchange (Kanwal, 2020). Positive social impacts encompass advancements in education, health services, and overall quality of life within host communities (Eslami & Namdar, 2022; Ramkissoon 2023; Sanchez del Rio-Vazquez et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the social effects of tourism are contingent upon local governance and the extent of community participation (Alamineh et al., 2023). Research in Nepal has shown that tourism can promote social cohesion and cultural pride when managed inclusively (Labadi, 2021). In Sudurpaschim, the tourism sector has strengthened social networks and heightened awareness of environmental and cultural conservation (Shrestha et al., 2019). The hypothesis is:

H2: The tourism industry has a significant positive social impact.

2.3 Cultural Impact of Tourism

The cultural dimension of tourism involves both preservation and commodification of local heritage (Su, 2019). While tourism can safeguard traditions, festivals, and historic sites, it may also result in cultural dilution or loss if not managed with care (Wasela, 2023). Cultural sustainability advocates promote tourism development that respects and upholds indigenous values (Sailesh and Reddy, 2023). Research conducted in Nepal's trekking regions suggests that cultural tourism has the potential to empower marginalized communities and preserve their intangible cultural heritage (Dangol et. al, 2024; Eslami & Namdar, 2022). However, in less-developed tourism destinations such as Sudurpaschim, cultural impacts remain underexplored and are often overshadowed by economic priorities (Igoumenakis et al., 2023).

H3: The tourism industry has a significant and positive impact on culture.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

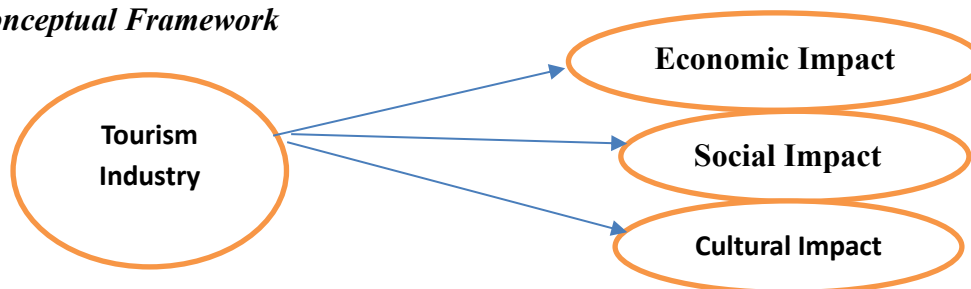
The tourism industry's development is a multifaceted phenomenon that can significantly influence various aspects of a destination. Economic impact is often the most readily apparent, encompassing factors such as increased employment opportunities, enhanced infrastructure, and a boost in local business revenue (Kaiser & Barstow, 2022). Economic growth can lead to improved living standards for residents and contribute to the overall development of a region (Cen & Yan, 2022).

At the same time, the social and cultural impact of tourism development is also significant, although it can be less concrete. This kind of social impact could cover the transformation of community behaviours, population movements, and the transformation of the social structure of the local area. Usually, cultural impacts are reflected in cultural interactions between tourists

and locals. They can result in either constructive outcomes, that is, cultural learning and the continuation of traditions, or destructive outcomes, that is, commoditization of cultural values or loss of authenticity (Kapoor, 2025). These three categories of economy, social, and cultural are closely interlinked, so that transformations in one of the areas often produce effects on others, which is a complex pattern of correlations to determine the development of tourism destinations (Sanchez del Rio-Vazquez et al., 2019; Eslami & Namdar, 2022). Based on the literature, this study conceptualizes the development of tourism industries as a moving force that evokes three economic, social, and cultural effects.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Source: (Sanchez del Rio-Vazquez et al., 2019; Eslami & Namdar, 2022).

Based on the above conceptual model, this study employs three separate regression models to assess the impact of the tourism industry on its economic, social, and cultural dimensions. The regression models are structured as follows.

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ economic impact} + \epsilon_1$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_0 + \beta_2 \text{ social impact} + \epsilon_2$$

$$Y_3 = \beta_0 + \beta_3 \text{ cultural impact} + \epsilon_3$$

Where,

Dependent Variables: Economic Impact, Social Impact, Cultural Impact

Independent Variable: Tourism Industry

ϵ = error Term

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A causal-comparative survey research design (quantitative) was used to investigate the economic, social, and cultural impacts of tourism in Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal. Quantitative design implies the use of numerical information collected through surveys (Levitt et al., 2018). Through a causal-comparative design, it is easier to establish the relationships that exist among different variables; that is, to investigate the effect of tourism on the local economy, society, and culture (Heidari et. al, 2017). This research technique is common in social science studies and promotes the practical study of attitudes and interpersonal relationships between variables (Levitt et al., 2018).

3.2 Study Area and Population

The research was conducted in two Sudurpaschim Province districts (Doti and Kanchanpur) due to the growing tourism industry and the representativeness of the socioeconomic context



of the province. The population that was studied represented people who were directly involved or affected by the tourism trade and included local businesspeople, government employees, and locals who were directly or indirectly related to the tourism business (Sloan et. al. 2014).

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

The respondents were selected based on a purposive sampling technique in which respondents provided knowledge or experience related to the impact of the tourism industry. It is a commonly used nonrandom sampling practice that guarantees the incorporation of information into rich cases (Shamsudin et al., 2024).

A total of 228 respondents participated, which is within the sample size requirements proposed in the work on multiple regression analysis (Rahi et. al, 2019).

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

A structured questionnaire on the research topic was administered using the KoboToolbox. This electronic data collection platform is highly flexible and supports offline data collection in the field (Gangopadhyay et al., 2024). The questionnaire had two parts. The demographic section gathered information about gender, age, education, occupation, and district. The primary section used a five-point Likert scale to evaluate respondents' perceptions. The Likert scale is an old, proven means of measuring attitudes and opinions, as it is reliable and valid (Alhassn et al., 2022). The questionnaire involved the adapted use of items employed in previous research (Sanchez del Rio-Vazquez et al., 2019; Eslami & Namdar, 2022).

3.5 Pilot Test and Reliability

The pre-test of the instrument was conducted before the main survey to determine the clarity and reliability of questions, to improve the quality of the questions in the questionnaire and reduce measurement errors (Olteanu, 2018). According to the construction principles of the survey, the final number of questions was pre-tested to offer soundness, clarity, and understandable meaning (Tate et al., 2023). According to Nunnally (1978), during this process, the internal reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. In contrast, a value of 0.70 was considered suitable in terms of reliability (Perera et. al, 2022). The findings revealed that the instrument had good reliability and strong internal consistency regarding all variables, as the Cronbach's alpha values achieved personal perspectives of over 0.8.

3.6 Data Analysis

SPSS version 26 was used to analyze the data exported into the KoboToolbox. The demographic characteristics were summarized using descriptive statistics. The tested hypotheses concerned the links between the tourism industry and its economic, social, and cultural effects using Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regressions (Truong et. al, 2020).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In this study, voluntary cooperation, a lack of understanding of what they were getting into, and personal privacy of the data were ensured. The participants were well aware of the objectives of the study and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Such ethical principles coincide with those according to which people can conduct a study (Levitt et al., 2018).



4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study comprised 228 participants from Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal. The gender distribution indicated a higher proportion of male respondents (n = 138, 60.5%) than of female respondents (n = 90, 39.5%). The age distribution of respondents predominantly comprised individuals aged 31–40 years (32.0%), followed by those aged 21–30 years (27.2%), and 41–50 years (21.5%). A smaller segment of respondents were either under 20 years (6.1%) or aged 51 years or above (13.2%). Regarding educational attainment, nearly half of the respondents (48.2%) had completed a secondary education. Approximately 28.1% had a bachelor’s degree, 15.8% had a master’s degree, and a minority (7.9%) had an education beyond the master’s level.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	138	60.5
	Female	90	39.5
Age	Below 20 Years	14	6.1
	21–30 Years	62	27.2
	31–40 Years	73	32.0
	41–50 Years	49	21.5
	51 and above	30	13.2
Education	Secondary	110	48.2
	Bachelors	64	28.1
	Masters	36	15.8
	Above Masters	18	7.9
Occupation	Hotel Business	84	36.8
	Government Employee	43	18.9
	Business	56	24.6
	Other	45	19.7
	District	Doti	167
Kanchanpur		61	26.75

In terms of occupation, the majority of respondents were engaged in the hotel and hospitality sector (36.8%), followed by general business (24.6%), government employment (18.9%), and various other occupations (19.7%). This occupational distribution indicates a significant connection between respondents and the tourism industry and related economic activities, providing valuable insights into the practical implications of tourism development in the region. Geographically, the majority of participants were from the Doti district (73.25%), with the remaining respondents from Kanchanpur (26.75%).



4.2 Correlation Analysis Between the Tourism Industry and Its Impacts

To investigate the associations between the tourism industry and its perceived economic, social, and cultural impacts in Sudurpaschim Province, Pearson correlation analysis was performed.

Table 2

Correlation Analysis of independent and dependent variables

		Tourism Industry	Economic Impact	Social Impact	Cultural Impact
Tourism Industry	Pearson Correlation	1	.596**	.613**	.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.795
	N	228	228	228	228
Economic Impact	Pearson Correlation	.596**	1	.765**	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.958
	N	228	228	228	228
Social Impact	Pearson Correlation	.613**	.765**	1	.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.548
	N	228	228	228	228
Cultural Impact	Pearson Correlation	.017	.003	.040	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.795	.958	.548	
	N	228	228	228	228

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between the tourism industry and its economic impact ($r = 0.596$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that, as the presence and development of tourism activities increase, financial benefits such as income generation, employment opportunities, and local business growth also tend to rise. This finding corroborates previous literature that emphasizes the contribution of tourism to regional economic development (Baniya et al., 2017).

The tourism industry demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with social impact ($r = .613$, $p < .001$), suggesting that tourism development is linked to enhancements in social infrastructure, community engagement, and potentially social cohesion. This observation is consistent with previous findings, which indicate that tourism often strengthens local social structures through community interaction and the provision of services (Thapa, 2012).

The correlation between the tourism industry and cultural impact was weak and statistically insignificant ($r = .017$, $p = .795$). This finding suggests that the current scale or nature of tourism in Sudurpaschim may not exert a significant influence on cultural preservation, appreciation, or change. This may also indicate a deficiency in culturally focused tourism initiatives, a lack of awareness among local communities regarding the role of cultural tourism, or negative perceptions of people towards changing cultural aspects.

Furthermore, a robust positive correlation was identified between the economic and social impacts ($r = .765$, $p < .001$), suggesting that communities experiencing greater financial benefits from tourism also perceived improved social conditions. This finding suggests a



synergistic relationship between economic prosperity and social development facilitated by tourism (Liu et al., 2025). Conversely, correlations involving cultural impact were minimal and statistically non-significant across all variables, underscoring a potential research gap or area that necessitates a strategic policy focus in tourism planning and development.

4.3 Regression Analysis: Predicting Tourism’s Impacts

To assess the predictive influence of the tourism industry on the perceived economic, social, and cultural impacts in Sudurpaschim Province, three distinct simple linear regression analyses were performed. The tourism industry was designated as the independent variable, whereas each type of impact (economic, social, and cultural) was considered individually as the dependent variable.

The initial model assessed the tourism sector’s capacity to forecast its economic impact. The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation, with the tourism sector significantly predicting economic outcomes (R = 0.596, R² = 0.355, F(1, 226) = p < 0.001). This indicates that the tourism industry accounts for approximately 35.5 percent of the variance in the economic impact. The adjusted R² value (.353) provided a good fit to the model with little overestimation. These findings are in line with the hypothesis (H1). These results are in line with the findings of Baniya et al. (2017), who acknowledged that tourism is important for the improvement of the local economy, especially in rural and underdeveloped regions.

In the second regression, industry was found significant predictor of social impact (R² = .376, F (1, 226) = 613, p < .001), particularly in the tourism industry. The model predicted 37.6% of the variation in social impact and an adjusted R² =.373, signifying a strong model. This result favours the second hypothesis (H2). This indicates that the development of the tourism industry is related to the improvement of community participation, social services, and infrastructure, which aligns with past research findings in a similar phenomenon (Ramkissoon, 2023).

Table 3

Regression Model Analysis

Model	Predictor(s)	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Results
1	Tourism Industry	0.596	0.355	0.353	0.50605	Positive Prediction
2	Tourism Industry	0.613	0.376	0.373	0.48013	Positive Prediction
3	Tourism Industry	0.017	0.000	-0.004	0.70226	No Predictive Relationship

Dependent Variables: Economic Impact, Social Impact, Cultural Impact

Regression model three showed that the tourism industry had no significant predictive value for the cultural impact (R² =.000, p =.795). This adjusted R² was negative (-.004), which implied that the model might not fit well and also indicated that the tourism industry will not have any meaningful predictive value at the cultural level based on the outcome in the current



region of study. This finding is incongruent with the third hypothesis (H3), though. The lack of a meaningful relationship implies that cultural tourism has not been successfully developed or prioritized in the Sudurpaschim region, a trend also observed in the rest of Nepal, where the economic aspect can be prioritized over cultural preservation (Nyaupane, 2015; Kapoor, 2025). On the contrary, the cultural impact of tourism on stakeholders was adversely affected because of the lack of originality in cultural values and ethics.

4.4 ANOVA Results of Regression Models

To further evaluate the significance of the regression models assessing the impact of the tourism industry on the economic, social, and cultural dimensions, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each model. The results are summarized as follows.

Table 4

ANOVA Results of Regression Models

Table with 7 columns: Model, Sum of Squares, df, Mean Square, F, Sig., Results. It contains data for Model 1, Model 2, and Model 3.

Dependent Variables: Economic Impact, Social Impact, Cultural Impact

Predictors: (Constant), Tourism Industry

The regression model assessing the economic impact of the tourism industry is statistically significant (F(1, 226) = 124.64, p < .001). This finding suggests that the tourism sector makes a substantial contribution to explaining the variance in economic outcomes in Sudurpaschim. A large R value of .355, as determined in a previous analysis, supports the overall suitability of the model because it indicates that 35.5% of the variation in the economic impact is explained by tourism development. This finding supports Hypothesis 1 and corresponds to previous studies showing that tourism triggers economic growth in rural regions (Nyaupane, 2015; Kapoor, 2025).

The social impact regression model was significant (F (1, 226) = 135.92, p < .001). The result supports the claim that tourism undertakings are determinants of changes in social forces and community participation in the area of analysis. Approximately 37.6% of the variance in social impact was considered by the model, which means that Hypothesis 2 was supported. This observation is in line with the second study, which suggests that tourism indeed maximizes

social capital, particularly in terms of establishing better infrastructure and greater involvement of locals (Kapoor, 2025).

By contrast, the regression model assessing cultural impact was not statistically significant ($F(1, 226) = 0.068, p = .795$). This finding indicates that tourism activity does not significantly predict respondents' perceptions of positive cultural impact. The near-zero R^2 value and non-significant p-value suggest that tourism has not yet exerted a substantial influence on cultural heritage or awareness in the Sudurpaschim region. Consequently, Hypothesis 3 was not supported..

4.5 Regression Coefficients: Interpreting the Influence of Tourism

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the tourism industry's impact on economic, social, and cultural outcomes in Sudurpaschim Province, both unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients were analyzed. These coefficients provide insight into the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the independent variable the tourism industry, and each dependent variable.

Table 5
Beta Coefficient

Model	DV	Predictor	B (Unstd.)	Std. Error	Beta (Std.)	t	Sig.	Results
Model1	Economic Impact	(Constant)	1.249	0.244	—	5.116	.000	Significant Positive Effect
		TI	0.649	0.058	0.596	11.164	.000	
Model 2	Social Impact	(Constant)	1.342	0.232	—	5.793	.000	Significant Positive Effect
		TI	0.643	0.055	0.613	11.658	.000	
Model 3	Cultural Impact	(Constant)	3.885	0.339	—	11.464	.000	No Significant Effect
		TI	0.021	0.081	0.017	0.260	.795	

Dependent Variables: Economic Impact, Social Impact, Cultural Impact

In the first model, the tourism industry has a statistically significant positive social force about its impact on the economy, with an unstandardized (B) cumulative coefficient score of $B = 0.649, t = 11.16, p < .001$. This implies that there was an economic impact score of 0.649 as the tourism industry activity increased by one unit. The standardized coefficient was 0.596, which is interpreted as a strong positive relationship. The results confirm Hypothesis 1 and are in line with other studies citing the role of tourism in boosting employment, revenue, and investment in local economies (Ge & Chen, 2024).

In the same line of argument, the second model revealed that there was a strong positive impact of the tourism industry ($B = 0.643, 0.613, t = 11.66, p < .001$). This implies that social well-



being is significantly impacted by tourism. Tourism developments have been linked to improvements in social infrastructure, services, and community involvement. Such findings support Hypothesis 2 and reflect the findings of studies emphasizing how tourism can contribute to community cohesion and service accessibility (Nyaupane, 2015; Kapoor, 2025). In contrast, the third model indicated that the tourism industry had no significant effect on the cultural impact ($B = 0.021$, $\beta = 0.017$, $t = 0.26$, $p = 0.795$). This finding implies that variations in tourism activities do not substantially alter respondents' perceptions of cultural influences. The near-zero standardized beta and non-significant p-value suggest that the tourism sector has not yet meaningfully engaged with local cultural heritage or practices. Consequently, Hypothesis 3 is not supported. This result is due to the fact that cultural benefits often necessitate intentional policy-driven efforts and community involvement (Nyaupane, 2015).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the economic, social, and cultural impacts of the tourism industry in Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal. Using empirical data collected from 228 respondents across two districts (Doti and Kanchanpur), the findings offer valuable insights into the role of tourism in regional development within this relatively under-explored province. The results demonstrate that tourism exerts a statistically significant and positive influence on both the economic and social dimensions, although it does not significantly affect the cultural dimensions.

These findings substantiate that tourism has a significantly positive impact on the regional economy. Regression analysis revealed a moderate-to-strong correlation between the tourism industry and economic impact ($\beta = 0.596$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 35.5% of the variance. These results align with the research conducted by Baniya et al. (2020), who demonstrated that tourism substantially contributes to job creation, income generation, and business opportunities in rural Nepal. The tourism industry in Sudurpaschim Province appears to function as a catalyst for local enterprises, particularly in the domains of hospitality, transportation, and handicrafts, indicating that investments in tourism infrastructure may have a cascading effect across other sectors.

Additionally, the significant ANOVA result ($F = 124.64$, $p < .001$) underscores the explanatory capacity of tourism within economic contexts. This finding supports theoretical models of tourism-led growth (TLG), which posits that tourism can stimulate capital formation, foreign exchange earnings, and entrepreneurial innovation, particularly in regions endowed with untapped natural and cultural assets (Lin et al, 2019). The social impact of tourism was also significantly positive ($\beta = .613$, $p < .001$), with the model explaining 37.6% of the variance in social outcomes. Respondents reported enhancements in community engagement, interpersonal relations, and access to social infrastructure, likely a consequence of tourism-related development and service expansion. This is consistent with Zhang et al. (2021), who observed that tourism fosters social cohesion, enhances civic pride, and promotes community participation in destination management. Moreover, the expansion of tourism may lead to



enhanced educational and healthcare services, improved infrastructure, and increased awareness of social issues through cross-cultural interaction.

On the other hand, the cultural impact of tourism was not linked to any statistically significant relationship with the tourism industry ($\beta = .017$, $p = .795$), which means that the tourism sector in Sudurpaschim has not yet had an important interaction with the existing local culture or has affected it in a big way. This can be explained by the fact that the region was in the development phase of tourism, and its initial emphasis was on economic reasons rather than cultural conservation or promotion. As already provided in previous studies, such as that of Nyaupane (2015), cultural influences usually require deliberate and participatory planning and marketing implementation to achieve tangible outcomes. Furthermore, if there is no cultural influence, it might imply that there is little integration of cultural attractions or traditional operations in tourism services. Unless there are plans to incorporate the local festivals, languages, crafts, and rituals into the tourism scene, the cultural value of tourism remains underutilized. This observation implies that there exists a gap and an opportunity for planners of regional tourism to take a more considered and culturally sensitive approach to the development of tourism.

The results substantiate the hypothesis that tourism can catalyze multidimensional development. Despite obvious economic and social benefits, the low level of cultural impact leads to apprehensions about the thoroughness of tourism-induced development in this territory. In recent years, cultural dimensions have been integrated into tourism policies to achieve sustainable results (Ruhanen, 2020). When this balance is not present, tourism risks have been too far-sighted, only for the economic and social good of people, without considering cultural heritage and identity (Dawson and Lück, 2022). To make tourism sustainable, three major factors should be emphasized: economic, social, and cultural. Through engagement in cultural heritage in tourist approaches, tourists will have richer experiences, and the local people will have the opportunity to embrace their culture better, helping the local community and economy to flourish (Liu et al., 2020; Su et al., 2019).

6. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the economic, social, and cultural effects of the tourism sector in Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal. Based on quantitative evidence gathered through a survey of 228 individuals in the districts of Doti and Kanchanpur, this study established that tourism contributes significantly to economic and social development in the local area. On an economic level, tourism aids in the creation of employment opportunities and increases business opportunities in the local community, benefiting the local livelihood. Socially, it boosts interactions within the community, improves access to infrastructure, and enhances visibility in the region. These data confirm the broader theory of development driven by tourism, particularly in emerging and rural economies.

However, a considerable correlation between tourism and cultural impact was not detected in this study. This observation means that although tourism activities in Sudurpaschim are fostering economic and social development, they have yet to fully connect and focus on the local culture. This gap can be explained by the fact that the existing tourism activities in this



region are highly oriented towards economic benefits, with little involvement of cultural resources such as traditions, rituals, languages, and historical sites. In general, the results support two out of the three formulated hypotheses and serve as an interesting source of information about the current level of tourism development in this relatively unknown region of Nepal.

7. Recommendations

Several strategic recommendations have been outlined to maximize the benefits of the tourism industry.

Cultural tourism must be propagated because local customs, arts, festivals, and traditions must be part of tourism. Not only would this strategy bring cultural-minded tourists, but it would also support local identity in maintaining and celebrating.

Second, it is essential to increase community involvement in tourism planning and management. The local input in the sustainable tourism examples can be addressed with community local tourism models because it is possible to lay out a pattern of benefits distribution among people living in the area.

Third, tourism policy should become a practice that encourages underrepresentation, including women, ethnic minorities, and youth, by offering training, jobs, and entrepreneurship.

Finally, infrastructure development in the region should be enhanced, especially in the areas of transportation, sanitation, and digital accessibility, which are crucial to the growth of tourism. Together, these measures serve to make the tourism industry in Sudurpaschim more balanced, inclusive, and sustainable.

8. Limitations

Being a valuable piece of work, this study is not devoid of limitations.

One major limitation is that it is cross-sectional because the data were obtained at a given time, resulting in limited tracking of changes or trends over time. A longitudinal strategy would provide more information on the long-term effects of tourism.

Another limitation is the geographical area of the survey, as the study covered only two of the districts (Doti and Kanchanpur), which are relatively homogeneous in Sudurpaschim Province. Thus, these findings should be used cautiously to generalize them to other regions.

Furthermore, it should be noted that all the methodologies used in this study were quantitative, which, in turn, can be lacking in nuanced information, despite their effectiveness in revealing connections and trends. Qualitative methods, such as focus groups or interviews, can provide profound insights. Further studies may also involve other subject areas, such as government policies, tourist behaviour, or infrastructure development, to provide a more exhaustive explanation of the subject. Nevertheless, this type of research forms the basis for future studies and can be used to improve the role of the tourism sector in the economic growth of Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal.



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