

POTENTIALS AND PROSPECTS OF ECOTOURISM IN DERA GHAZI KHAN, PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is growing as an important part in tourism industry. The notion of ecotourism is to travel willingly to various natural environments, along with the reliability of not transforming the ecosystem. However, creating economic opportunities for the preservation of natural resources that provide benefits to indigenous people. This research aims to explore the potentials and prospects of ecotourism in Dera Ghazi Khan to enhance the Southern Punjab's attraction. The corresponding area of study is Fort Munro, in District Dera Ghazi Khan. The observational cross sectional study was carried out and time based convenient sampling technique was adopted. In our research, data was gathered by employing mostly quantitative methods consisting of formal interviews and semi-structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using SPSS software. GIS techniques have been employed to show the location of the study area. The results have been shown with the help of tables, figures and diagrams. From results, most of the respondents asked that they like to visit this tourist site. Currently, there are already some locations developing and some potential destinations that could be developed as the ecotourism spots. In conclusion, there is potential for ecotourism development in Dera Ghazi Khan but this development should be adaptable so that it could "meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the future generation to meet their own needs".

Key Words: Ecotourism, potential tourist attraction, tourism prospects, visitors, perception.

INTRODUCTION

During its 1st World Conservation Congress held in Montreal, IUCN officially adopted ecotourism, as Hector Ceballos Lascurain defined; "Ecotourism is ecologically responsible tour and visit to comparatively unharmed sites to relish and adore nature (also each additional cultural trait - former as well as existing) that stimulates conservation, experience less negative visitant influence, and accommodates vigorous socio-economic participation of native people." (Ceballos-Lascurain & IUCN, 1996). The greater part of tourism to undisturbed sites is not ecotourism now-a-days and hence cannot be sustained. Significance of conservation, education, traveller accountability and active participation of community distinguishes ecotourism, Formulation and development of ecotourism policies has been the focus of numerous experts with background of different fields i.e. Geographic Information System, Wildlife Management, Wildlife Photography, Marine Biology and Oceanography, National and

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State Park Management, Environmental Sciences, Women in Development, Historians and Archaeologists, etc.

In the tourism business ecotourism has been observed as the quickest rising industry which cannot be taken lightly, as per WTO; ecotourism is annually growing at the rate of 5% globally and represent the worldwide gross domestic product at the rate of 6 % with all consumer expenditure at 11.4%.The general objective of this research is to identify the potentials and prospects of ecotourism: the case study of Fort Munro in the district of Dera Ghazi Khan. The specific objectives were to i)find out the demographic profile of people visiting the site; ii) to explore the travel characteristics of tourists visiting Fort Munro; iii) to observe the activity characteristics of visitors visiting Fort Munro; iv) to identify the perception of tourists regarding the site.

Ecotourism might signify various things to differing people; nevertheless the incorporation of the prefix 'eco' (from the Greek expression oikos, signifying house or habitat) shows that ecotourism should be ecologically sensible. Presently, ecotourism is inserted in the discourses on lasting development, thus it looks for to attain the twin goals of conservation and development on what Brechin et al (2002, p.53) have termed the 'pragmatic middle surface'. The International Ecotourism Culture (TIES), a global body comprising tour operators,conservation groups, local governments and communities, defines ecotourism as a dependable happen to be unharmed sites that preserves the surroundings and boosts the welfare of indigenous individuals. Regarding to TIES (2007), ecotourism must target at lessening influence, constructing ecological and social understanding and admiration, offering encouraging experience for residents as well as visitors, yielding direct cash for biodiversity conservation, providing monetary benefits and empowerment for residents and bringing up environmental awareness.

Ecotourism has a variety of meanings because of different parties or people defined it according to their own specific interests and priorities rather than all things to all or any people Strasdas (2002). Corresponding to Okello (2003), ecotourism identifies tourism that is character founded but that looks for to minimize hazardous impact and looks for to promote conservation. Scwenk (2002) also described ecotourism as a sustainable development of tourism potentials, which consider the public, the ecological and economic aspects.

Devoid of affecting harm to either, ecotourism can take benefit from the world's remarkable variety of wildlife and human traditions. An essential requirement has been the fact that guests should show admiration for

both environment and the people who stay in it. Most importantly, the holiday industry must keep in mind a central rule (Crispin, 1994).

The word ecotourism has, lately, become a popular slogan employed by tour operators all over the world. It could be thought as ecologically, environmentally and socially accountable travel and leisure. The primary purpose of ecotourism is to preserve and keep nature also to help supply the means to accomplish that (economical and educational) through immediately sustaining indigenous areas. Further, features like the maintenance of native culture and record also share portion of the low-effect way to travel and leisure. Ecotourism involves going to natural places with the aim of knowledge, learning or taking part in practices that do not fetch unwanted things to the surroundings, at the same time safeguarding and authorizing the neighborhood communal socially and financially (Christina, 1996).

Ecotourism in each of its varieties is suggested to be often able to provide the conservation of environment and meanwhile to enable economic advantages to accumulate the neighborhood societies. Ecotourism is based on nature and this is the most frequent denominator regarding it (Cater, 2006).

Ecotourism is most effective developing sector with around progress rate of 10-15%, placing it among the leading businesses on earth: travel and leisure (Panos, 1997). Ecotourism was thought as responsible ecologically, informative tourism and visit to unharmed natural places to be able to take pleasure from and escalate aspect (accompanying ethnical features both recent and current) which helps bring about conservation and has little impact of tourists, and for energetic socio economic constructively engagement of local population (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Consequently, ecotourism looks for to protect the surroundings and natural resources as well as increasing the well-being of residents (Fennell, 2008 and Honey, 2008).

STUDY AREA

Dera Ghazi Khan is located at 30° 1' 56.949" N 70° 38' 24.884" E. The district is placed in the south western part of Pakistan. The two major towns of this district are Dera Ghazi Khan and Taunsa. From the northern side this district is bounded by Dera Ismail Khan (district of Khyber Pakhtun Khwah province) and its adjacent region, by Muzaffargarh and Layyah districts on the east, by district Rajanpur on the south and by Musakhail and Barkhan (districts of Baluchistan Province) on west. The total area of the district is 11975 sq. Km. geographically, district Dera Ghazi Khan is

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separated into two sections that is a hilly area within the west and the plain area within the east. Suleiman Mountains covers the western half of the district. Infrequent autocrosses of limestone with sandstone form these mountains. "Piedmont area", "canal -well irrigated plain area" and "riverine area" are three subdivided natural tracts of plain area of the district. Freezing winters and extremely warm summers broadly characterize climate. Wind storm is very common in summer. With an average maximum temperature of 42 Celsius, June and July are the extremely hottest months. Average of annual precipitation measured in summer is 140 mm.

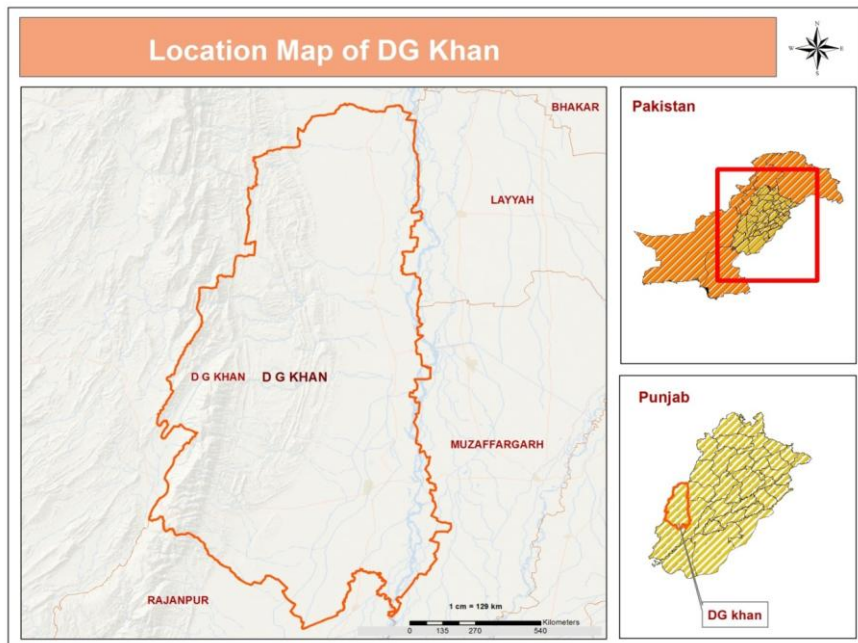


Figure1: Location of Dera Ghazi Khan-the study area

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

For this research, the data was collected by both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through questionnaire. The secondary data was also collected through different sources like different articles, journals, books and other monuments related to Ecotourism were used by the researcher. Demarcation layer of the study area was taken from Urban Unit Lahore and satellite images were also taken from Google Earth.

Data Collection Site

The data was collected for a period of three days from 10th June to 12th June 2017. The data collection site was Fort Munro, Dera Ghazi Khan. The historical Fort Munro surrounded scattered built up pockets (about 27 sq. Km) is located within the tribal area of Dera Ghazi Khan District. This tribal area is spread over 5564 sq. Km and that of the District Dera Ghazi Khan over 11975 sq. Km. Fort Munro climate is local steppe climate. Average temperature of Fort Munro is 16 Celsius. Fort Munro has an average temperature of 25 Celsius in June. June is the hottest month of the year. January has the lowest average temperature which is 4.3 Celsius. In winters Fort Munro gives deserted look with its closed markets and local residents shift to less cold areas like Dera Ghazi Khan and Sakhi Sarwar. The tourists coming to see snowfall get no facility at hill resort. Government should make the hill resort a tourist spot for all seasons with the provision of fuel, gas and other facilities for tourists and local population. Precipitation is lowest in November, with an average of 5mm in comparison with the highest precipitation of 105 mm which occurs in July. The hill resort which is the mountainous Suleiman range and Anari hills saw snowfall at intermittent intervals. The area was covered with over a foot of snow. In Fort Munro the snowfall took place after eight years. Last time snowfall occurred in 2008. A large number of people from Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Multan, Layyah, Bahawalpur and adjacent areas came to enjoy snowfall. It was wonderful to experience the snowfall but the lack of food and water spoiled the enjoyment. The lack of attraction from the government has turned this place into a curse. There are a few places to look around while at Fort Munro. Abundant pine trees are there all around with hillocks restricted only by skylines. There is landscape which is somewhat semi-arid with shrub vegetation rather than being very green. Bone fire can make the nights at Fort Munro worthwhile. Top of the hill is actually a wide platform where there is situated old Fort which was built at an altitude of 6470 feet during British rule and was named after an English civil servant, Munro. Another beautiful place to visit is Dames Lake. This small lake has boating facilities and is surrounded by orchards. Location of data collection area is showing in figure 2.

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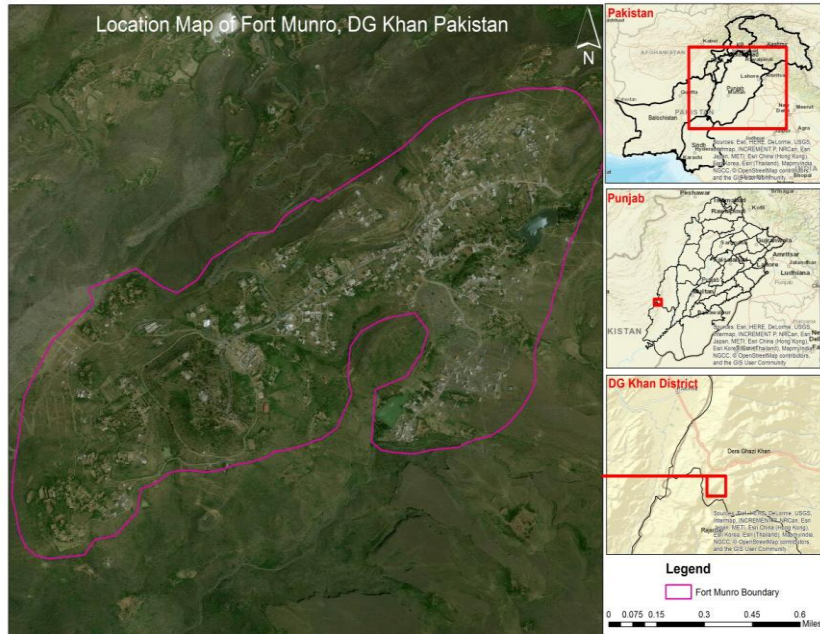


Figure 2: Location map of Fort Munro, Dera Ghazi Khan

Sampling

The observational cross-sectional study was carried as an investigation design. Primary data was gathered from Fort Munro after selection of sample size. Just for this research, respondents were the visitors of Fort Munro. Data was gathered involving 300 respondents outside and local people of Fort Munro. Convenience sampling is applied in this research to accumulate data.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using SPSS to find out the frequency, mean and standard deviation. To test different variables chi-square test to check association of different variables and to know the opinion of the respondents about the statements of the questions.

Limitation for Study

There is a terrible unavailability of data on potentials and prospects of ecotourism in Pakistan and specifically of District Dera Ghazi Khan. The significant scarcity is showing the shortage of research in this field and negligence towards mountainous area of area Dera Ghazi Khan. Collection of real figures and facts was your most difficult task for this research.

During data collection mostly respondents were hesitant to share about income.

RESULTS

Table 1 showed that out of 300 respondents, 160(53.3%) respondents were male and 140 (46.7%) respondents were female. Also from the 300 respondents, 126(42%) respondents were married and 174(58%) respondents were unmarried. Out of 300 respondents 36(12%) belong to those who have no education, 58(19.3%) having primary level education, 45(15%) were from grade 6th to grade10th, 73(24.3%) of the total respondents having intermediate level education, 86(28.7%) of the respondent have done graduation and only 2(0.7%) of the total participants have post graduate level education. Out of 300 participants 160(53.3%) were from joint family system and 140(46.7%) were from independent families. Also from our data we observed that we have only 21(7%) of the total respondents belong local region and 279(93%) of the tourists were from out of city, obviously the crowd of local visitors was very fewer than visitors from out of city.

Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Participants	Frequency	Frequency %
Gender of respondent	Male	160	53.3
	Female	140	46.7
Marital status of respondent	Married	126	42
	Unmarried	174	58
Education Level of the respondent	Illiterate	36	12
	Primary	58	19.3
	grade 6 to 10	45	15
	Intermediate	73	24.3
	Graduation	86	28.7
	Post-Graduation	2	0.7
family system	Joint	160	53.3
	Independent	140	46.7
Residential status local or out of city	Local	21	7
	Out of city	279	93

Table 2 shows that 164(54.7%) of the total respondents used public transport to reach Fort Munro site. While 136(45.3%) of the total

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respondents used personal transport. From this we examine that majority people used public transport for visiting the sites which is quite common in Pakistan, because in Pakistan most of the people do not have their own vehicles.

Table 2: Transport mode

	Frequency	%age Frequency
Public Transport	164	54.7
Personal transport	136	45.3
Total	300	100

Table 3 shows that 173(57.7%) out of 300 respondents visited this site to contact with nature. 28(9.3%) out of 300 respondents wanted to know the heritage of our country. 70(23.3%) of the total respondents answered that they visits such sites for the purpose of socialize with family. 29(9.7%) of the total respondents visited this site only for photo shooting and captured beauty of the nature in their own cameras.

Table 3: Purpose of visit

	Frequency	%age Frequency
To contact with nature	173	57.7
To know the heritage	28	9.3
Socialize with family	70	23.3
To take photos	29	9.7
Total	300	100

Table 4 shows that people of public organizations conserve more because they are responsible to conserve this site and are evaluated by local and Provisional authorities. Private organization and NGOs are less active in this area so they conserve less. According to the perception of respondents contribution of private organization and NGOs to conserve this site is just 17.3% and 17% respectively. But percentage of Public organization and Public-private partnership organization is 39.3% and 26.3%.

Table 4: Preference to conserve the site

	Frequency	%age Frequency
Private Companies	52	17.3
Public Organizations	79	26.3

NGO	51	17
Public-Private Partnership	118	39.3
Total	300	100

Form table 5 we see that 34.7% of the total respondents suggested that it is an excellent recreational space, 14.3% of the total respondents said that it is a unique space in the central region. But on the other hand, 51% of the total respondents said that it has a remarkable environmental condition. After keen observation we note that most of the people have a good perception about this site.

Table5: Perception about the site

	Frequency	%age Frequency
Is an excellent recreational space	104	34.7
Is a unique space in the center region	43	14.3
Has a remarkable environmental condition	153	51
Total	300	100

Table 6 is clear picture of the statements asked to 300 respondents about the facilities at the tourist point. 85.7% of total 300 respondents answered that it is safe place for tourism and 14.3% of the 300 respondents said that there is a good parking condition if someone want to use personal transport.

Table 6: Facilities at the site

	Frequency	%age Frequency
Has good parking condition	43	14.3
It is a safe place	257	85.7
Total	300	100

Table 7 presented the answer given by the respondents when we asked a question to them that would they like to visit the site. Out of 300 respondents 37(12.3%) said yes, if the current condition keep up, 40(13.3%) of the 300 respondents said yes, if 25% of the site is more affected, 217(72.2%) of the 300 respondents answered that they would like to visit this site if the access fee decrease 50% and 6(2%) of the 300 respondents said, yes they would like to visit the site even the access fee increase 50%.

Table 7: Longing to visit the site

	Frequency	%age Frequency
If Current condition keep up	37	12.3
If 25% of this site is more affected	40	13.3
If Access fee decrease 50%	217	72.3
If Access fee increase 50%	6	2
Total	300	100

According to the results given in table 8 computed from the data (collecting from 300 respondents), indicate that the average age of the respondent in our sample is 30 years which is quite common age for tourist, the minimum age of the respondent in our sample is 14 years and maximum age in our sample is 60 years while the standard deviation among the age of the respondent is 8.6 years which shows that on the average most of the respondents are around from 30 years.

According to table 4.8 the average combined income of the household respondent per month is 59483. However the standard deviation among the respondent per month income is quite large which showing relatively higher dispersion from the mean income of the respondents the minimum income of the household is 10000 while maximum combined income of the household is 270000.

Also from the results given in table 4.9 we seen that the minimum number of worker in our sample is 1 and maximum number of workers is 3 in a household while the standard deviation of between workers is 0.61. This shows that on the average there are 1.5 persons who work for survival of his family which is quite common in our society. The minimum travel distance is 8 km and maximum travel distance is 345km also from table 4.9, we observed that the average travel distance of the respondents are 158 km and there standard deviation is 48 km this shows that this a high variation among the respondent travel distance from their home town to the tourist spot. On the other hand, the minimum time to reach the site is 3 mints and maximum time for reaching the site is 360 mints, the average timing for reaching the site is 212 mints and the standard deviation is 67 mints this also indicate that there are some visitors which belongs to the site area and most of them are out of region. From the results presented in table 4.9 we keenly observed that the minimum cost to reach the site 30 PKR and maximum cost is 8000 PKR while the standard deviation is 1476 which is very large its shows that there is variation between the visitors cost to reach the site from their mean cost which is 1558. The average plan of the visitors to stay at the tourist site is 6 day and minimum stay of the visitors is 1 day and maximum stay of the visitors is 60 days and the standard deviation are 8 days. From the results presented in table 4.9, we seen that the average frequency of visitors is 2 times and minimum visit

frequency is 1 time and maximum visit frequency of visitors to this site is 10 times. This indicates that most of the people want to visit this site more and more.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics of continuous Nature Socio-Demographic and Socio-Economic variables

	Mini mum	Maxim um	Mea n	Std. Deviatio n
Age of respondent	14	60	30	8.6
What is your combined house hold income in (PKR)	10000	270000	59483	47733
How many members of your family work	1	3	1.47	0.61
What is the travel distance in km	8	345	158	48
What is the travel time in minutes	3	360	212	67
What is total cost to reach at the site in PKR?	30	8000	1558	1476
How much time you have planned to stay here	1	60	6	8.04
What is the frequency of your visit here	1	10	1.5	0.96
Would you like to visit the site	1	4	2.64	0.72

According to the results presented in table 9 we found that there is no association between age of respondent and the questions asked from the visitors that “would you like to visit the site?”, “Whom you will prefer to conserve the site?” and “Perception about Site” because, p-value for the Chi-square statistics is greater than the corresponding level of significance. Also sex of the respondents and the questions asked from the respondents like (“What is the frequency of your visit here”, “Are you willing to pay some additional amount for the revival of the site, If yes, then how much”, “Would you like to visit the site”, “Whom you will prefer to conserve the site”, “Perception about Site”) have no association but other variables have positive association with sex of the respondents because of comparing p-value with level of significance. After investigation the results presented in table 4.12 we found that the marital status and (“How much time you have planned to stay here”, “What is the frequency of your visit here”, “Are you willing to pay some additional amount for the revival of the site, If yes, then how much”, “Would you like to visit the site”, “Whom you will prefer to conserve the site”) have no association while other variables have association with marital status. Also after checking

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association of education level with all other variables we found that there are only two variables (“Whom you will prefer to conserve the site”, and “would you like to visit the site”) have no association with education level while other variables have association with education level.

Table 9: Result of Chi-Square Test

	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Educational	Family Status	Income	Residential Status
What is the travel distance in km	174.19 (.000)	87.45 (.000)	67.5 (.000)	325.53 (.000)	59.37 (.000)	14.12 (.000)	213.92 (.000)
What is the travel time in minutes	126.44 (.000)	29.56 (.005)	54.14 (.000)	122.76 (.000)	39.42 (.000)	82.27 (.000)	199.6 (.000)
Which transport mode you used to reach this site	56.6 (.002)	5.9 (.010)	5.65 (.012)	30.5 (.000)	2.26 (.083)	57.4 (.000)	14.85 (.000)
What is total cost to reach at the site in PKR?	161.97 (.000)	85.73 (.000)	79.9 (.000)	312.78 (.000)	96.02 (.000)	15.14 (.000)	201.7 (.000)
What is your visit purpose?	167.2 (.000)	8.72 (.033)	9.36 (.025)	130.72 (.000)	5.85 (.119)	18.11 (.000)	2.85 (.416)
How much time you have planned to stay here	820.22 (.000)	21.32 (.003)	16.28 (.131)	37.76 (.49)	31.55 (.001)	59.95 (.000)	8.4 (.68)
What is the frequency of	363.8	8.31	10.12 (.072)	134.3 (.000)	11.23 (.047)	18.77	14.238

your visit here	(.00 0)	(.1 39)				7 (.0 00)	(.014)
Are you willing to pay some additional amount for the revival of the site, If yes then how much	104 9.1 (.00 0)	30. 8 (.2 10)	20.46 (.251)	54.1 (.000)	21.32 (.212)	80 3 (.0 00)	59.14 (.000)
Would you like to visit the site	156. 3 (.00 0)	2.3 1 (.5 11)	5.88 (.120)	19.72 (.183)	11.52 (.009)	21 4 (.0 00)	23.26 (.000)
Whom you will prefer to conserve the site	236. 6 (.00 0)	.56 7 (.9 04)	5.22 (.157)	7.197 (.707)	6.3 (.091)	14 4.3 (.0 00)	5.59 (.133)
Perception About Site	64.6 (0.3 19)	.44 4 (.8 01)	.473 (.790)	17.65 (.003)	0.185 (.912)	37. 1 (.0 87)	.601 (.741)
Facilities for people at the site	36.9 5 (.17 9)	.95 (.4 42)	4.09 (.030)	59.4 (.000)	0.124 (.427)	22. 33 (.5 65)	.425 (.396)

ONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning tourism in District Dera Ghazi Khan especially Fort Munro, there are substantial number of problems that are the root cause of poor growth of this industry in this area. These problems need to be addressed to boost the growth this tourism industry in this area. Following are some problems that are worth mentioning.

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- This area is facing scarcity of potable water.
- The roads of this hilly area are dilapidated, and there are not enough transport facilities to reach this hilly resort. Private transport is not clean and regular in timings.
- There are no basic health facilities. There is no ambulance service in emergency situation.
- There are only few hotels and guest houses to stay over there.
- The deficiencies in all departments and lack of funding had serious implications in the effective management of the tourism sector in this region.
- Neither public, nor private, sector is spending to improve the infrastructure base to enhance capacity and capability to attract, hold, sustain and satisfy the tourist's arrival.

Fort Munro holds a lot of tourist attraction. Mountaineering, scenic beauty and archeological and pleasant weather have great attractions for the tourists. Ecotourism in District Dera Ghazi Khan is not being managed to its optimum. Public sector, private organizations and NGO's should invest to improve the infrastructure, to enhance capacity and capability to attract, hold, sustain and satisfy the international arrivals as well as domestic ones. There is no denying the fact that if it is properly planned and managed within tourists' carrying capacity it is likely to perform the role of catalyst of development and raise the living standards of the people in the area. Therefore, following is recommended to bring its inbuilt benefits to the people of District Dera Ghazi Khan in particular and economy of Pakistan in general.

Master Plan for Developing Fort Munro as Ecotourism Destination (2015-2040)

The Government of the Punjab has notified the Fort Munro Development Authority (FMDA) to promote the only hill station in Southern Punjab with a vision to not only develop as an isolated tourism destination, but to develop it as a Sustainable and Ecotourism Town through a regional and strategic master plan.

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