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International School of Tourism and Hotel Management
(Affiliated to Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Austria)

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The Gaze is an interdisciplinary Journal which welcomes research articles, research abstracts and book reviews for the dissemination of knowledge about tourism and hospitality. Articles should be original and unpublished, based on primary sources or field work or reflecting new interpretations, written in English, but not exceed twenty five pages. The research work should be based on global research methodology in which the researcher will be required to use parentheses or author date system.

Manuscripts should be typed double-space on A4sized paper with a 4 cm margin on all four sides. The research article should not be less than 12000 words and 8000 words for book reviews. The author should underline nothing except words which are to be italicized. Notes and references should be typed double-space on separate pages which should be included at the end of the articles. The text should refer to notes numbered consecutively throughout the article using raised numbers. The citation and references should be based on APA method. For example (The mentioned below are pseudonym,), in text citation, there should be : (Egger, 2013, p.17); Egger (2013, p.19); Egger (2013) sentences at the end (p. 15); if there are more than two authors, Egger et al. (2013, p.21). In the case of references : Thompson, L. (2013). E- Tourism, London: Sage Publication.; Smith, R. and Basnet, R. (2005). *Tourism Profile of Nepal*, Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point. In the case of more than two authors: Yagger, M., Thapa, N. and Ranabhat, K. (2013). *Rafting in Nepal*, Kathmandu: Nepal Association of River Rafting Agents. In the case of research paper published in edited book: Fisher, X. (1980). Life in the Land without Wheels. In Ortner, M. (Ed.) *Anthropology of South Asia* (pp. 40- 54), New Delhi: Adroit Publisher. In the case of research article published in the Journal: Tarlow, C. (1991). Tourism, Safety and Security. *The GAZE Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 4(1), 7-28. In the case of publication published by organization: Tourism Board (2009) *Natural and Cultural Heritage of Nepal*, Kathmandu: Tourism Board. All these formats are mentioned in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 2009, Sixth Edition, Washington, DC. Entries in the references should be in alphabetical and chronological order of authors. Tables and maps should be submitted on separate pages, numbered with headings. Notations in the text should indicate where these are to appear.

The paper will be accepted in the area of ecotourism, rural tourism, sustainable tourism, community tourism, village tourism, cultural heritage tourism, agro-tourism, pasture tourism, pilgrimage tourism, medical tourism, tourism management, tourism policy and planning,anthropology of tourism, sociology of tourism, psychology of tourism, geopraphy of tourism, economics of tourism, sport tourism, shopping tourism, tourism and corporate culture, tourism and environment, tourism marketing, tourism and nationalities, tourism and hospitality management, tourism and law, tourism disaster management, tourism and hosptality education, tourism and media, tourism, conflict and peace, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, rural tourism and tourism and research methodology.

The Editorial Board has right to accept or reject the articles for publication. If the article is rejected, it will be returned to the author. Authors receive three copies of the issue in which their article appears. The editors welcome enquiries from readers willing to review books.

Editorial Note

We are very happy to offer The GAZE, Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Vol. 6, No. 1, 2014 to our readers. This journal is published annually in English by Internatioal School of Tourism and Hotel Management, which is affiliated to Salzburg University of Applied Sciences of Austria.

The purpose of this journal is to disseminate the knowledge and ideas of tourism to the students, researchers, journalists, policy makers, planners, entrepreneurs and other general readers.

Articles and reviews in the journal represent neither the views of the concerned publishers nor those of editorial board. Responsibility for opinions expressed and for the accuracy of the facts published in the articles or reviews are solely with the individual authors.

We have realized that it is high time to make this effort for tourism innovation and development. We strongly believe that this knowledge based platform will make the industry and the institutions stronger.

The Editorial Board
THE GAZE
International School of Tourism and Hotel Management
Dillibazzar, P.O.Box: 5196, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 977 1 4434350, 4434185
Email: info@ist.org.np
Website: www.ist.org.np

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CONTENTS

Tamang Heritage Trail:A Study of Gatlang Village in Rasuwa District of Nepal

Ramesh Raj Kunwar*

Chadani Pandey**

Abstract

Tourism can be viewed as a space-time convergence between hosts and guests. The emergence of ethnic and cultural tourism implies that tourism also includes interaction and encounter between hosts and guests. Ethnic tourism provides opportunities to ethnic minorities to showcase their culture, customs and heritage. The unexplored soil of Tamang village was opened to bring them into the mainstream of development through pro-poor approach. When tourism is introduced culture is commoditised. Regarding this matter, the scholars are divided into two camps. Accordingly, one school of thought clearly advocates that tourism brings cultural transformation whereas the other camp proposes that commoditisation will not affect on the culture of host population. The economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism is dealt along with the income generation and change in gender roles. In this study, Tamang Heritage Trail as an academic subject includes tourism and ethnicity, cultural heritage tourism, tangible and intangible heritage, niche-tourism, adventure tourism ,cultural resource management and homestay. This study follows culture as multi-variate concept and tourism is composite discipline.

***Key words:** ethno-cultural-heritage tourism, authenticity,commoditization, touristic attractions, homestay*

The Tamang Heritage Trail (THT) and Tamang Heritage Trek denotes the community, heritage, space/place, and performances. On one side, there comes ethnicity in relation with with the Tamang ethnicity and the other the title itself indicates that it is heritage tourism. Therefore, it is ethno-cultural heritage tourism. As far as the area is concerned, people will visit over there to undertake trekking as

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* Prof. Dr. Ramesh Raj Kunwar is the author of seven books on tourism and anthropology. He is tourism educationist and anthropologist by profession. He is the former Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. He is also the former Dean of (then) Royal Nepalese Military Academy. Currently, he is teaching at the Central Department of Culture, Kirtipur Campus, T.U. Email: kunwardr@gmail.com

** Chadani Pandey is a Lecturer and Deputy Research Co-ordinator at King's College, Kathmandu. She is M.A. in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

an activity which has been used the term as 'romantic gaze' (Urry, 2002). Doing trekking in the mountain falls into the category of adventure tourism. Adventure tourism in the context of Nepal Himalayan region incorporates different forms of tourism such as cultural tourism, heritage tourism (also called cultural heritage tourism), religious or pilgrimage tourism, rural tourism, village tourism, eco-tourism and home stay tourism (although it is a kind of accommodation that comes within the category of hospitality). All these forms of tourism have their own nature, scope, and meaning. But in the context of Rasuwa, they could be interchangeably used. Theoretically, cultural tourism is recognized as macro-niche whereas the other types of tourism fall into micro-niche representing the specific types of tourist who will be motivated differently. In the same way, the place is commoditized according to the demand of specific group of people whose interest particularly focus on the special product. Sometimes the term 'niche tourism' is used instead of special interest tourism (e.g. Novelli, 2005; in Smith, Macleod and Hart Robertson, 2010, p.161). In his foreword to the book, Robinson (p.xx) describes niche tourism as:

an economy of imagination where individual preferences and practices are coordinated, packaged, and sold. The wants and wishes of the bird watcher, the golfer, the genealogist, the railway enthusiast, can be purchased; indeed, the fullest stretches of the imagination can be catered for.

Novelli (2005; in Smith et.al, 2010, p.161) suggests that the development of niche products is a part of a wider structural process of diversification as the tourism industry seeks to capture new and more profitable markets. In terms of product characteristics and tourist motivations, special interest tourism could be described as passive (performances, spectator sports), active (adventure sports, diving), experiential (theme parks, space tourism), adventurous (jungle trekking, tribal visits), creative (dance, painting, photography), intellectual (language-learning, heritage tourism), or relaxing (wellness tourism, bird watching.

Though the Tamang Heritage Trail as a project is new innovation to Nepal's Himalayan region, particularly in Rasuwa, popularly known as Langtang trekking destination, excluding the studied areas, the heritage trail as a concept is not new because some other tourist destinations have already introduced this concept which has been cited by S.C.H. Cheung in 1999. His work is entitled 'The Meanings of the Heritage Trail in Hong Kong' published in *Annals of Tourism Research,* 26 (3) (pp.570-588). Similarly, Polly Patullo who has written one paper entitled' Reclaiming the Heritage Trail: Culture and Identity' based on Caribbian - Jamaica's Heritage Trail published in 2006 in a book entitled Sustainable Tourism (pp.135-148) edited by Lesley France, First South Indian Edition.

Heritage tourism supply includes both intangible and tangible elements of the past that form and constitute tourism products and services. Intangible heritage and tangible heritage are often viewed as two separate realms of heritage representing 'pre-

modern and vernacular' and 'modern and authoritative' respectively. However, it is critical to recognise the deep-rooted interdependence between intangible heritage and tangible heritage. Memory, cultural knowledge and performance are grounded and embedded in tangible heritage derives from its cultural and symbolic significance. (Park, 2014, p. 206). Intangible heritage in this context is related to evoking the spiritual and the symbolic aspects of sites or places. Tangible aspects of heritage provide symbolic foundations where intangible qualities prevail (p.207).

As noted above, the nature of trekking in Tamang Heritage Trail and Lantang-Goshaikunda- Helambu trek is adventurous activities and therefore, it is adventure tourisim. The influence of adventure recreation theory as indicated in Hall's (1992, p. 143; in Kane and Tucker, 2004, p. 220) statement that adventure tourism is a commercial activity 'categorized by the deliberate seeking of risk and danger'. He defined adventure tourism as: "A broad spectrum of outdoor touristic activities, often commercialized and involving an interaction with the natural environment away from the participant's home range containing element of risk; in which the outcome is influenced by the participant, setting, and management of the touristic experience" (1992, p. 143). Adventure tourists can be divided into those participating in hard or soft adventure, which Millington (2001; in Swarbrooke et al., 2003:104-105) has defined : "Hard adventure travel requires an element of experience in the activity being undertaken, and because it encompasses an element of risk, participants must be physically and mentally fit. It includes an intimate experience with the environment and culture of the destination. Participants should be prepared for all weather conditions, sleeping arrangements and dietary restrictions. Examples includes: Climbing expeditions, arduous treks, hang gliding, rock climbing, white- water kayaking and Wilderness survival".

The visual display of people, places, and things makes them forms of "spectacle" and tourism involves the "spectaclization of place" (Urry, 1992a, p.5; in Knudsen, Soper, and Metro-Roland, 2008,p.3). Urry's reframing tourist sites as "spectacles of place" wherein the object of the gaze is typically an artful construction of signs (Midtgard, 2003;in Knudsen et al., 2008,p.3). If tourism is spectacle, then surely there are multiple parties involved in the creation of this spectacle (Squire, 1994; in Knudsen et al., 2008, p.4). In this regard, Nash suggests that tourism should generally be understood as a discourse among three sets of actors: i) tourists; ii) locals; iii) intermediaries, including government ministries, travel agents and tourism promotion boards (1996; in Knudsen et al., 2008, p.4). Davis (2001, p.127;in Knudsen et al., 2008, p.5) notes "histories, cultures, power relations, aesthetics and economics all combine at a place to create a context ". It is simultaneously nature, habitat, artifact, system, problem, wealth, ideology, history, pace and aesthetic (Meinig, 1979; in Knudsen et al., 2008, p.5). Tourist objects and places (that is to say landscapes) have local, endemic, insider meanings, and broader pandemic outsider meanings (Lowenthal and Price,

1972 in Knudsen et al., 2008, p.5). The landscape is an illusive term that is commonly associated with attractive scenery. In his seminal work, place and placelessness, Relph (1976) argued that the concept of sense of place was most applicable in the local environment, where individuals are in a position to develop deep attachments to the place. Hinch and Higham, 2006, p.100; in Kunwar, 2013, p.23.

"Seasonality is defined as a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and the other forms of transportation, employment and admissions to attractions"(Butler, 2001; Hinch and Higham, 2006, p.163; in Kunwar, 2013, p.23) Tourism by definition takes place in a tourism landscape (Knudsen et al., 2008, p.5).

Research suggests that, in most cases, people visit heritage places to enhance learning, satisfy curiosity and feelings of nostalgia, grow spiritually, relax, get away from home, spend time with loved ones, or "discover themselves" (Confer and Kerstetter, 2000; Krakover and Cohen, 2001; Porai et al., 2004; Prentice et al., 1997; Timothy, 1997; Timothy and Boyd, 2003; in Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009, p.8). One recent study (Nyaupane et al., 2006) classified heritage tourists into three types based upon motivations, combined with relics from the past, create a range of heritage tourism types.Smith accepts a broad definition of culture that embraces "almost any activity that relates to the lives and the lifestyle of human beings" (2009, p.2). Living culture is an important part of heritage tourism in the less-developed world. Agricultural landscapes, agrarian lifestyles, arts and handicrafts, villages, languages, musical traditions, spiritual and religious practices, and other elements of the cultural landscape provide much of the appeal fro tourism in Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Rice paddies and farming techniques, traditional architecture and building materials, intricate clothing and cloth, exotic-sounding music, vibrant ceremonies, and unusual fragrances and flavors are the part of the appeal (Cohen, 2001; Gibson and Connell, 2005; Hall et al., 2003 Howard, 2004; Volkman, 1990). Often, cultural festivals develop that are based on spiritual traditions, agricultural harvests, or other constituents of culture (Coulon, 1999; Hitchcock and Nuryanti, 2000; Swearer, 1995; in Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009, p.9)

Ethnicity can be defined as "the existence of culturally distinctive groups within a society, each asserting a unique identity on the basis of a shared tradition and distinguishing social markers such as common language, religion or economic specialization" (Winthrop, 1991, p.94). Though the term ethnicity is vague, it denotes a socially distinct group of people having a common culture, history and language. According to Weiler and Hall (1992, p.84; in Xie,2001), ethnic tourism "entails some form of first-hand, face-to-face experience with local people, either by visiting their land or observing or participating in local customs, rituals and other traditional activities".

Ethnic tourism thus involves first hand-on experience with ethnic communities. It refers to a kind of tourism where indigenous people or ethnic communities and their cultures are the main attracting points for tourism, and tourists get chance to interact directly with indigenous people (Weiler, 1984). In relation with this definition, Nepal can offer plenty of chances to tourists to engage with ethnic communities through various ways. In this case, home-stay tourism can help promote ethnic tourism.

Nepal is a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual country. Nepal is the homeland to a wide range of various ethnic /caste groups. There are four racial groups, 125 ethnic/caste groups, 123 dialects and 10 religions in Nepal (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Geographically, the northern region of Nepal is called the Mountain region. This region is inhabited by the Lhomis, Sherpas, Yolmowas, Langtange, Shyars, Nubris, Neyshyangwas, Narwas, Gyasumdowas, Lopas, Mugalis, Dolpowas and Nymbas (Kunwar, 2010, p.321). These people follow Tibetan-Buddhism and shamanism, and speak Tibeto-Burmese language. Similarly, the hilly region is inhabited by the Gurungs, Rais, Limbus, Brahmins, Chhetris, Newars, Tamangs, Thakalis, Chepangs, Damais, Kamis, Sarkis, Rautes, Kusundas, Magars, Gaines, Chhyantyals and so on (Kunwar, 2010, pp.321-322). Basically the caste groups such as Brahmin, Chhetris, Thakuris speak Indo-Aryan language whereas the others like Gurungs, Tamangs, Magars speak Tibeto-Burmese language.The southernmost Terai region, has been inhabited by the Kisans,Tharus, Darais, Majhis, Botes, Rajis, Madhesis, Dhimals, Satars, Rajbansis, Jhangads, Muslims and hill migrants (Kunwar, 2010, p. 322). These various caste and ethnic groups have their own cultures and lifestyles and hence make Nepal a diverse array of ethnic/caste groups and cultures. Hence, Nepal is rich in ethnic and cultural diversities, and, therefore, Nepal has plethora of scope and opportunities to promote ethnic tourism.

Tamang Heritage Trail (THT), Rasuwa was introduced by the Government of Nepal(GoN) as a part of Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (TRPAP). Rasuwa is situated north of Kathmandu which is approximately 124 km far from the capital. Everyday there is bus service from Kathmandu to Syabrubesi little far from Dhunche, the starting point of trekking to Langtang and Tamang heritage trek. The Tamang heritage trail is a completely new eight-day trail that passes through backward but culturally rich villages of Goljung, Gatlang, Chilime, Tatopani, Brimdang, Nagthali, Thuman, Timure, Briddhim and Syabrubesi (TRPAP, 2007, p.37) and inhabited by the Tamangs, one of the ethnic groups of Nepal, whose dense settelement is found in Dhading, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Kavrepalanchowk, Sindhupalchowk and in the northern part of Kathmandu.

The Tamangs are considered as one of the indigenous communities of hilly region who live in between 5,000-7,000 ft high above the sea level. The indigenous societies are what ethnobiologist Gary Paul Nabham terms "cultures of habitat". They are "human communities that have a long history of interaction with a particular kind

of terrain and its wildlife" (Nabhan, 1997,p.3; in Willow, 2011, p.116). Because the natural resources used by indigenous people today are often the same as those used by generations of ancestors indigenous communities tend to misuse these resources with a high degree of cultural significance.The Tamangs have close attachment with their natural setting. Urry(1995, p.174; in Jamal, Everett and Dann, 2003, p.144) summarises four ways in which society relate to their physical environment: stewardship (of the land for future generations), exploitation(of the land or other resources), scientization (of the land as an object of scientific investigation, intervention and the regulation), and visual consumption(of the landscape/townscape and aesthetic appreciation).

This research aims to sketch the characteristics of Tamangs in Gatlang after the initiatives of TRPAP. The home-stay facilities available in THT provide opportunities to experience the cultural and ethnic richness of these villages. However, there are hotels and lodges to provide hospitable services with the compromise in ethnographic authentic cultures.

TRPAP : A Model Tourism in Tamang Heritage Trail

With the concerted efforts made by TRPAP during its over five year's period, Nepal was able to demonstrate community based sustainable rural tourism models to reduce rampant rural poverty. TRPAP enabled the country to diversify tourism products. As a result, there were seven different tourism models developed in its six districts. Piloting new pro-poor sustainable tourism products in rural areas was envisaged as a major activity in the TRPAP design. The mid-term evaluation directed TRPAP to put more private sector focus, small business emphasis, and tourism marketing effort into the creation of these models. Subsequently, the TRPAP developed and promoted a range of new tourism products(TRPAP, 2007).

Heritage can be classified into two types: cultural heritage and natural heritage Cultural heritage is composed of: *Monuments:* architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science. *Groups of buildings:* groups of separate or connected buildings that, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or a science. *Sites:* works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites that are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

The following is considered as 'natural heritage':

- Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from an aesthetic or scientific point of view.

- Geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conversation.

- Natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

TRPAP introduced a completely new eight-day trail passing through the backward but culturally rich villages of Goljung (1946m), Gatlang (2238m), Chilime (1762m), Tatopani (2607m), Brimdang (2848m) Nagthali (3165m), Thuman (2338m), Timure (1762m), Briddhim (2230m) and Syabrubesi (1460m) (TRPAP, 2007). This trail features Tamang culture, religious sites at Parvati Kunda (lake) and Tatopani(Hot Spring), magnificent Himalayan views from Nagthali meadow hilltop, and historical fort of Rasuwa Gadhi bordering Tibet. Lodges and home stays were developed in the villages along the route, and Gatlang now has accommodation in its community lodge and cultural centre. A relatively easy, soft trekking product, the trail contains Buddhist chortens, monasteries, traditional mountain villages, interesting architecture, crafts and customs, exquisite landscapes and a natural hot spring. The Tamang Heritage Trail offers authentic cultural performances and ethno-botanical and cultural features. Its promotion has helped tourism benefits to many excluded communities in the area (TRPAP, 2007).

The title of the trek indicates "Tamang Heritage Trekking" is a cultural trekking program along the ancestral 'Tamang' villages in Langtang region with beautiful scenery and Himalayan vistas. Thus, developed pristine area offers enchanting journey to experience the rich culture and lifestyle of the Tamangs. Previously restricted area for traveler near to the Tibetan border; within the Langtang National Park is now developed as Tamang Heritage trail. The region is mostly populated by the Tamangs and people from Tibetan origin, whose culture and traditions are more likely to Tibetan Buddhist influence. Their cultural aspects, traditional way of living, crafted dresses, traditional wooden roofed houses,cultural performances are authentic experience for tourists.

Tamang Heritage Trek presents the views of several silver capped mountains including Langtang Lirung, Langtang Kerung, Dorje Lakpa, Ganesh Himal, Shringi Himal, Jugal Himal with warm Tamang hospitality (see in detail March, 1987, pp.351-357) in traditional way. The people-oriented approach has resulted in alternative livelihoods capacity building, skills training, increased agricultural productivity, employment opportunities, empowerment, and the improved ability to combat poverty.The small-scale tourism infrastructure such as the construction of trails, bridges, signposts, information centres, public (porter) shelters, improved water, sanitation, waste disposal and renewable energy projects were introduced. It has achieved successful micro finance projects, social mobilisation and institutional enhancement. A sense of local ownership has prevailed through the formation of institutions with community representation. This led to better development and mnagement of processes, and eventually resulted in better outcomes.

The trail has been developed and promoted by Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP) through the District Development Committee (DDC) Rasuwa since 2002. The trail starts from Syabrubesi, passes through Goljung, Gatlang, Chilime, Thuman, Timure and ends at Briddim. Efforts have been made to develop tourism in Tamang Heritage Trail based on four pros like Pro-Environment, Pro-Community, Pro-Poor and Pro-Women (TRPAP, 2007). In this regard, TRPAP successfully (TRPAP, 2007) introduced tourism products to new areas and new communities, with special efforts to target women and deprived groups through different trainings and awareness programs. Even in established tourism destinations, TRPAP sought to spread tourism benefits to new and more remote areas. For example, in Solukhumbu,efforts focused on new products in the more neglected parts of the district, leveraging off the strong tourism flows on the Everest route. In Langtang, the third most popular trekking area, the Programme developed a completely new circuit trail.

Table-1: Major touristic attractions of the THT

VDCs	Cultural Resources	Natural Resources	Historical Resources
Goljung	Tamang culture, Syabru Dance, Architecture, Craftsmanship, Gombas	Best view of Langtang, Sanjen, Goshaikunda range from Goljung view point,	Ghale Darbars, Meditation Places
Gatlang	Tamang culture, Syabru Dance, Architecture, Craftsmanship, Gomba	Beautiful wetland (Parvatikund), Dense forest, Orchids and Rhododendron forest, Best view from Khurpu Danda, cheese factory, water mills.	
Chilime	Fusion of Tamang and Tibetan culture, Syabru Dance	Natural hot spring, Sanjen Himan, Sanjen Kharka, Sanjen valley	
Thuman	Tibetan culture, Tibetan Dance, Unique architecture, Craftsmanship, Gombas	Scenic landscape of Nagthali, Best view of Langtang, Kerung, Sanjen Himal range from Nagthali	
Timure	Tibetan culture, Tibetan Dance, Craftsmanship	Bhotekoshi river valley, Dudh Kund lake	Historical war Fort at Borderland
Briddim	Tibetan culture, Tibetan Dance, Unique architecture, Craftsmanship, Gombas	Green forest, Musk Deer, Pheasants, Snow Leopard, Pangsang Himal, River Kund lake	

Source: Rasuwa Smarika

Cultural resources are human-made. They are artificial and constructed, whereas natural resources are more distant, both geographically and conceptually. They are the remote raw ingredients of human material cultural life (Willow, 2011, p.114). Willow further points out cultural significant natural resources must begin by acknowledging that all natural resources are culturally significant in some way, shape, or form. Culturally significant natural resources comprise the plants and animals, rocks and minerals, the water and waterways and the landscape of ecosystems that contains cultural meanings for the people who use, relate to, and behold them(Willow, 2011, p.115).

According to King(2011, p.2), cultural resources are all the aspects of physical and supra-physical environment that human beings and their societies value for reasons having to do with culture. Included are culturally valued sites, buildings, and other places, plants and animals, atmospheric phenomenon, sights and sounds, artefacts and the other objects, documents, traditions, arts, crafts, ways of life, means of expression, and systems of belief. sometimes terms like heritage are used to mean roughly the same things, or have overlapping meanings(2011, p. 4). Morse- Kahn (2011, pp.128-140) opts for 'resource' defined- paraphrasing the Merrian-Webster dictionary- as "a source of supply or support", or "a source of wealth or revenue", or "a feature of phenomenon that enhances the quality of human life".

Hence, Tamang Heritage Trail (THT) developed by TRPAP promoted community tourism and sustainable tourism in Rasuwa. The pro-poor concept stressed upon homestays and community lodges to address the problem related to accommodation in the area. Irrespective of natural settings THT offers ethnic group(Tamangs)with different art and architecture, sculptures, folk dance/music and musical instrument and local craftsmanship, festivals, religious-cum-cultural beliefs, specific local fairs, and monumental heritage-forts, chortens and mani of the historical and artistic value and other places of attraction that highly motivate tourist regarding ethnic authenticity and heritage tourism by tourists.The combination of cultural needs of the tourist and the cultural products by the localization of the resources with several trainings provided by TRPAP helped Gatlang to foster ethnic and heritage tourism. Till now the scholars and researchers of Nepal have not seen the ethnic tourism through the lens of host-guest interaction.It is important, however, to realize that native ethnic groups themselves actively collaborate in the ethnic tourist experience.

Works so far done

Smith (1989,pp.4-5) distinguished ethnic tourism from cultural tourism. 'According to her definition, on the one hand , the tourist attractions of ethnic tourism are "'quaint customs' of indigenous and often exotic people ," and , on the other hand, the attractions of cultural tourism are "'picturesque' or 'local color ,' a vestige of a vanishing life style that lies within human memory" (Smith,1989, p.4). It seems that she did not intend that the two definitions should be distinct, as she did not make a rigid distinction

between the concept of ethnic tourism and that of cultural tourism. Also she has used the term ethnic, cultural and indigenous interchangeably and the distinction is also not much clear and is questioned several times.

Wood (1984, pp. 359-62) criticized the vagueness of Smith's definitions of ethnic and cultural tourism, and presented his own definitions of them from the perspective of "the tourists' approach to cultures." "Ethnic tourism," according to Wood, "should be defined by its direct focus on people living out a cultural identity whose uniqueness is being marketed for tourists" and, on the other hand, "cultural tourism may be defined in terms of situations where the role of culture is contextual." Cultural tourism, according to Wood, enables tourists to experience exotic cultural situations and atmosphere (Wood 1984, p.361). Wood further divided ethnic and cultural tourism into four types from the perspective of 'primary' or 'secondary' roles of culture and ethnicity in tourism: ' primary' ethnic and cultural tourism (Wood1984,pp. 361-362). By means of characterizing ethnicity and culture respectively, he distinguished ethnic tourism from cultural tourism.

However, two problems can be pointed out concerning Wood's definition. The first problem is that the connotations of 'culture' as a tourist attraction is too limited in Wood's definition. The connotation of his definition covers only unmodernized or unwesternized culture. The term 'culture' as a tourist attraction should include both connotations of unmodernized and modernized culture. 'Cultural' tourist attractions, therefore, can be seen to include theme parks, museums, theaters, sports, outdoor recreation and so on (Urry, 2002). The other problem is that ethnic and cultural tourism are placed on the same conceptual level in the definition by Wood. The concept of 'ethnic tourism' should be subsumed within that of 'cultural tourism', because ethnic peoples and their exoticism as tourist attractions in ethnic tourism can be regarded as elements of a culture.

MacCannell(1992) has elaborated the origin, components and importance of ethnic tourism. He further has stated the importance of anthropology of tourism to study the ethnic tourism and indigenous tourism has also to be discussed while considering ethnic tourism. The focus is on a type of authenticity-for-tourism in which exotic cultures figure as key attractions: where the tourists go to see folk costumes in daily use, shop for folk handicrafts in authentic bazaars, stay on the alert for a typical form of nose, lips, and so on, learn some local norms for comportment, and perhaps learn some of the language. The concern here is not with the often bizarre results of the tourists' efforts to 'go native'. Rather, it is with the natives' efforts to satisfy the touristic demand, or to go native-for-tourists." In certain contexts broader terms such as cultural and ethnic (Swain,1993) tourism have also been used to encompass the indigenous tourism dimensions in whole or in part. Indigenous tourism refers to tourism activities in which indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction.

As per Rodrigo de Azeredo Grünewald (2006), ethnic tourism can be understood using two distinct perspectives: one that looks to the object of tourism, and in this case, the native who is the focus of the trip; and another perspective that would take up ethnic tourism by what the tourist sees or finds during his or her visit. The idea of tourism, in fact, seems to fall on the perspective of those who travel. If, however, the perspective was shifted to that of the native, it would be precisely the ethnicity exercised in the terms of a cultural production of traditions to be exhibited as distinctive features within the touristic ambit that would signify the ethnic character of the interaction. And this would be the case even if it occurred without the natives completely understanding it or without a formal plan for the development of tourism in their village. Therefore both the emic and etic approaches has to be considered through the lens of natives as well as tourist because the visual impact is very important. Rodrigo de Azeredo Grünewald (2006) has further defined tourist as- The touree is the native when he begins to interact with the tourist and modify his behavior accordingly. The touree is the native-turned-actor –whether consciously or unconsciously— while the tourist is the spectator. The middleman is the broker in ethnic exoticism who mediates and profits by the interaction of tourist and touree, and who, in the process, very frequently manipulates ethnicity for gain, stages "authenticity," peddles cultural values, and thus becomes an active agent in modifying the situation in which and from which he lives. With all of this it can be seen how far ethnic tourism really is from cultural tourism, or that tourism which can be defined "in terms of situations where the role of culture is contextual, where its role is to shape the tourist's experience of a situation in general.

While dealing with ethnic tourism the problem of authenticity and commoditization should also be dealt regarding the cultural product and hospitality. Due to the demand of tourist, the natives promote their traditional customs to promote authentic experience to tourists. This is the cultural involution refering the emphasis to the traditional and original culture of the natives. For example, traditional costumes, traditional means of agriculture, traditional domestic archives and the like. With the growth of tourism, the people showcase the traditional dances, songs with cultural modification. This is regarded as commoditization through changing culture. The balance between the living culture and model culture should be maintained to attain productive tourism through cultural preservation and additional values(income) to the culture. This research raised the importance of authenticity and commoditization in the promotion of tourism in Gatlang. The economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism is dealt to promote the balance between cultural involution and contextual cultural change to maximise the benefits of tourism in the study area.

The concept of ethnic tourism has not yet been defined clearly (Harron and Wiler1992; van den Berghe and Keyes1984). At times, ethnic tourism tends to be confused with cultural tourism (Smith, 1989, pp. 4-5; Wood, 1984, p. 359-62).

Tourists frequently are searching for 'authentic' souvenirs and traditions within the indigenous communities. According to Michael Harkin (1995,p. 662)they may be searching for these 'authentic experiences', but he notices that tourist attractions are no longer completely authentic, as they are "already framed and often over-determined". He relates this fact also to souvenirs, which can be anything that is part of the touristic experience and represents the experience. It depends on the ideas of the tourist what kind of representation he values and if he finds something 'authentic' or 'traditional' (1995, p. 657). Eliza Wethey (2005) distinguishes a difference between tradition and traditional, as these have different meanings. She states that a tradition is a set of practices that is changeable and passed on from one generation to the next, while something traditional is static or unchangeable and often even associated with resistance to change in contrast to the modern and urbanized world. According to Wethey (2005) many tourists see traditional textiles as those that are produced in indigenous communities using natural dyes, and ancient techniques and patterns and therefore they are more associated with the traditions of the past instead of a reflection of the present. She sees that weaving communities in Mexico, Central America and the Andes start commoditizing their traditional weavings "in order to take advantage of tourists' desire for ethnic goods, which provides them with the opportunity for income and life improvements" (2005, p. 5).

Wang (1999) gave taxonomy of three types of authenticity in tourist experiences: object-related authenticity in tourism-refers to the authenticity of originals; existential authenticity-refers to a potential existential state of being that is to be activated by tourism activities; constructive authenticity-refers to the objects by tourist or tourism producers in terms of their imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs and powers. Handler and Saxton(1988; Bruner, 1994; Wang 1999; in Belhassen et al., 2008) recognized that the term 'authenticity' has not been used consistently in the literature, suggesting that the various uses of the term can be found across studies and, at times, even within the same study (Bruner, 1989; Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1973). Through a geneological meta-analysis, Wang (1999) maps out conceptual developments of the term over the last four decades, and concludes by suggesting a classification of the different theoretical approaches toward authenticity in tourism studies. Hypothetically, this originality can be measured with objective criteria that determine whether the object is authentic or not . This approach may be affiliated with the broader academic stream of objectivism and, to some extent, with post-positivism and empiricism, all of which presuppose the existence of authenticity as a quality that can be measured. However, this approach, as reflected in the writings of Boorstin(1964) and MacCannell (1976), does not specify how or by whom these criteria are established (in Belhassen et al., 2008).

Commoditization is the process of making something, an event, ritual, performance or even people into a commodity, an article of trade, evaluated in terms of their

exchange value. It has, in general, a negative undertone when it is applied to cultural heritage, rituals, traditions, and customs (Jafari, 2000, pp.91-92). It might be interesting to see what happens to the other meanings (changed meanings)of things and services once they become commoditized, particularly under the impact of tourism. It is possible that tourism destroys or changes the meaning of cultural products, as they are commoditized, but tourism can also mean that customs, rituals and traditions remain alive when they become tourist attractions, especially if they were already in decline before tourism appeared (Cohen, 1988). According to Greenwood (cited in Cohen 1988, p. 381) commoditized cultural products lose their intrinsic meaning and significance for the local people, who in turn lose their enthusiasm for producing them. The ritual may become a performance for money, which may lead to exploitation of the locals by 'culture-brokers' or affect the culture product itself as it becomes a tourist attraction. Cohen(1988)finds the idea that commoditizing means loss of value an overgeneralization as artists will always be proud of their performances, like weavers will often be proud of their weavings. Even new cultural products can be accepted as 'authentic', and become meaningful for its producers. Just like the emergence of tourism can actually facilitate the preservation of a cultural tradition which otherwise would die out (Cohen, 1988, pp. 381-382). Tours can be arranged to visit the communities, souvenirs made out of rituals and the traditional costume can be turned into commodities.

The problem of 'commoditization' has occurred when culture and ethnicity, which were not originally regarded as economical properties, were incorporated into the modern economic system, particularly the capitalist economic system, as tourist products. The feature of the capitalist system which can be seen as an impelling force of modernization is the principle that "anything that can be priced can be bought and sold" (Greenwood, 1989, p. 173). There is no exception for the case of tourism in general nor for ethnic tourism. Through ethnic tourism, culture and ethnicity have became the direct object of 'commoditization.' Concerning commoditization and modernization, most people all over the word recognize the view that 'commoditization' arises from modernization and that this is an inevitable and irreversible trend. Mass tourism is rather seen as a factor quickening the process of commoditization.

Indigenous peoples who have chosen tourism development through ethnic tourism do not have the choice of refusing modernization. The acceptance of mass tourism through developing ethnic tourism inevitably introduces modernization along with commoditization of the hosts' culture. The fact of change and destruction of 'authenticity' through 'commoditization' is widely recognized. The problems of 'authenticity' and 'commoditization' are actively inter-related, and give rise to different questions. For example, tourists of ethnic tourism tend to demand the maintenance of authenticity to provide a sense of exoticism, whereas governments of developing countries and some indigenous peoples are prepared to accept commoditization in order to promote

modernization of their society or community). In ethnic tourism management, social conflicts often arise from the difference of respective standpoints. Further, ethnic tourism management has a dilemma: the more tourists seek for 'authenticity' of ethnicity as a tourist attraction, the more its 'commoditization' spreads and then 'authenticity' disappears (van den Berghe and Keyes, 1984).

These problems concerning 'authenticity' and 'commoditization' pose complicate and serious questions to ethnic tourism management. In contrast to these questions, a practical goal of ethnic tourism management at present is to optimize the balance between 'authenticity' and 'commoditization'. In order to achieve the goal, the question will be presented again: 'who' insists upon authenticity and how.'

Cohen (1974) points out that an expansion of a group's resource base outside its boundaries will alter the degree of dependence of occupational roles on outside resources. In case of tourism the outside resource is tourist. Smith (1989) said that tourists prefer small, inexpensive souvenirs which in turn require less raw materials- a desirable factor, too, in wildlife conservation. Further, the new cultural self-confidence and the quantity of native-made items have all but eliminated the plastic tinkers of former years and even "fake art" carved from African vegetable ivory. Likewise the crafts and dolls made from cotton, fabric and wood can be the good example with the less use of raw materials as souvenirs to tourist with the promotion of culture and ethnic tourism. Further she adds that indigenous tourism development will be self-sustaining when the financial, political, economic, and institutional aspects help to support on-going tourism efforts.

Many successful cases of ethnic tourism have been reported;they include, for example, Cajuns (Esman 1984), Athapaskan Indian (Jarvenpa 1991), Navajo (Jett 1990) and Balinese (McKean, 1989; Picard, 1993). In all these cases, success in the expression of the culture and gaining benefits through tourism can be pointed out. One criterion of success is when, by means of ethnic tourism, indigenous peoples or regional residents realize their own culture and then build and preserve their identity.They enrich their self-respect and group loyalty through expressing their own culture and value to tourists. The common tourism process in these successful cases means that, through ethnic tourism, indigenous peoples accept modernization and commoditization and, at the same time, reconstruct, maintain and intensify their particular culture. Such tourism process can be characterized by the 'cultural involution' indicated by McKean (1989) in the case of Bali. Bali is one of the most successful cases of ethnic tourism.

Culture involution optimizes a balance between authenticity and commoditization. The common feature of management among these cases signifies that hosts 'themselves' voluntarily construct their own culture and values--even if tourist activity in some of these cases was started by outsiders--and represent their own culture and ethnicity to tourists. This may be an answer to the question stated above, as to 'who' insists

upon authenticity, and can be considered as the first maxim for ethnic tourism management. (Mckean 1989, pp. 125-130).

Ethnic tourism characterized by 'cultural involution': hosts should take the initiative in managing ethnic tourism). The case of Bali has often been introduced as a good example of host's initiative in ethnic tourism management. In 1968, experts, who were asked for advice about tourism development in Bali by the Indonesian government, recommended that a part of the island of Bali should be developed as an 'enclave' for tourists, so as to avoid the destruction of the valuable ethnicity and culture of Bali. (McKean, 1989, pp. 119-138).

Unless the prerequisites are met, a host community managing ethnic tourism would be confronted with real problems such as acculturation, the disappearance or destruction of culture, and loss of identity (Crystal 1989; Greenwood 1989; Swain 1990). A method of ethnic tourism management which provides the prerequisites of cultural involution and at the same time protects the culture from destruction is the 'model culture' (Stanton, 1989). This method aims to preserve the culture and life style of the hosts by constructing an 'overt tourist space' (Cohen, 1979, p. 28) as a 'model culture.' 'Model culture' is the concept presented by Stanton (1989, pp. 247-264) in describing the management methods of the Polynesian Culture Center (PCC) in Oahu, Hawaii.

However, tourism even if balanced by cultural involution or changing culture has two contrasting perspectives regarding the socioeconomic impact of ethnic tourism on local minority residents (Adams, 2006; Boswell, 2005; Bruner, 2005; Hitchcock, 2000; Middleton, 2004, p. 73; in Ishi, 2012, p. 293). The first widely accepted perspective is that ethnic tourism has multiple benefits, such as cultural/identity revival and socioeconomic, and sometimes even political, gains for local minority residents (Adams, 2003, p. 571) . These scholars often challenge traditional arguments that question the authenticity of minority culture that is reproduced on behalf of tourism (Gru¨newald, 2002, p. 1016). In contrast, the second perspective maintains that ethnic tourism provides a limited economic return for local minority residents, although many scholars do acknowledge the positive impact of ethnic tourism on cultural/identity grounds (Cohen, 2001). Some studies point out situations where locals tolerate tourism's unwanted effects (Andriotis, 2006, p. 1082). According to these scholars, minority residents accept ethnic tourism despite the limited economic return because of its positive impact on the revival of culture and identity, which transcends the limited economic return (McKercher & Fu, 2006, p. 521; Nepal, 2005, p. 116; in Ishi, 2012, p. 293). Existing scholarly literature has focused on the analysis of the socioeconomic impact of tourism based on whether local residents participated in the tourism industry or not (Li, 2006, p. 133; in Ishi, 2012, p. 293).

Swain argues that in minority societies engaged in tourism, women often lead in the production and sale of ethnic goods (Swain, 1993, p. 35). This gendered artisan

production can rarely support an entire family, but it is, nonetheless, a source of income that is much more significant for ethnic identity than other forms of work in the state society (Swain, 1993, p. 44). The success of women's sales of textile art promotes women's economic self-sufficiency and thus changes gender dynamics within the group (Swain, 1993, p. 46). However, at the ethnic group level, women are not empowered because most women conform to cultural ideas of male and female roles within their own local and state societies (Swain, 1993, p. 48). This socioeconomic situation induces gender antagonism within the household. Patriarchal rule is challenged by the gender division of household labor in which women are now the main household income provider, but cultural ideology continues to reproduce social forms of ethnic identity (Swain, 1993, p. 42).

Kunwar (2010, p. 55) elaborates destination activities characterized by visiting native homes and villages for observation of dances and ceremonies, and shopping for primitive wares of curios. As long as the flow of visitors is sporadic and small, host-guest impact is minimal. This kind of tourism can be developed in different areas of Nepal.

Dhakal (2011) has highlighted the role of TRPAP in enhancement of livelihood and poverty reduction. TRPAP piloted its innovative model of pro-poor, pro-women, pro-community, and pro-environment tourism in the selected areas of six districts. Taplejung and Solukhumbu in the Eastern Development Region; Rupandehi in the Western Development Region; Rasuwa and Chitwan in the Central Development Region; Dolpa in the Mid Western The program demonstrated that livelihoods can be improved and poverty can be reduced through community involvement with community aspirations. Through this approach the poor were availed of better access to capacity building and financial resources. Ownership by the local community and continuous and meaningful community participation are essential for the sustainable development of rural tourism. TRPAP have contributed to capacity enhancement and increasing local people's access to financial resources through the provision of soft loans for small business ventures. Social mobilization was an integral part of the program. Almost all households in the program areas were given opportunity to be trained in vocational areas, empowered to understand the value and importance of their social belonging, facilitated and mobilized to define their priority needs, and helped to identify their objectives and design a sustainable process to achieve results. In broad sense, the aim of the program was to manage the human, economic and organizational resources to increase and strengthen community participation.

Research Methods

Methodology is not just a set of research techniques; rather, it is the set of principle that guide research. Research method concerns how one conducts research, analyses the data or evidence, test theories and creates new knowledge(Rosenau, 1992; in Kunwar, 2012, p. 2). Using a variety of methods, rather than concentrating on one

method, will help to overcome weakness, as there is no single ideal method of research in behavioural sciences (Sommer and Sommer, 2002; in Kunwar, 2012, p.2).

Methodologically, this work is based on the interdisciplinary approach to identify and study new themes that single disciplines would not be able to put into focus, describe interpret by themselves. As the research synthesize more than one approach in regard with ethnic tourism correlating cultural tourism, heritage tourism, indigenous tourism, authenticity and commoditization. Because ethnic tourism cannot be defined without considering culture tradition and its authenticity with the challenge of commoditization.

Among the various qualitative research methodological approaches (case study, ethnography, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, grounded theory and participatory action research).The research has been carried out using qualitative research in order to describe the findings of the study in natural setting.The specific informations were gathered about ethnic tourism and collected data were interpreted.Information was gathered through participant observation to attain the perceptions of host as well as guest and analyzed carefully. The qualitative research has been carried out to attain in depth view of the respondents through participant observation and in-depth interviews through continuous interplay between data collection and analysis.

The convenience sampling has been applied in this research. The population of the study were homogeneous in nature with the ease of access and hence, convenience sampling was used to select the respondents for the conduction of the research.The houses are alike with same family structure and almost same sort of economy and so on. Out of 402 household, 30 household (some of the lodge owners and home stay owners and some villagers) were closely observed to attain emic(insiders' version) view of community and 30 tourists were interviewed to attain the etic (outsiders' version) view of the tourists.

For this research fieldwork was conducted for 15 days in both Lantang region and Gatlang areas.

Primary data were collected through close observation and in depth interview with the respondents with the help of structured but unstructured questionnaire to attain first hand informations and datas.

An extensive desk study was conducted for the collection of relevant secondary information. The secondary data sources involved a wide range of materials such as books, study reports, annual reports, journals and so on. Apart from library research, internet browsing for the relevant materials also proved to be of immense help to understand the issues regarding ethnic tourism.

Tourism in Rasuwa

The history of treaking in Langtang region goes back to 1970s and this area was first explored by Eric Shipton in 1950s (Odell and Lama, 1998, p.199). Tourists in

Rasuwa mainly are the trekkers; visiting Lantang (3,420m) and Gosainkunda (4,381m) as natural trekkers and visiting Tamang Heritage Trail as cultural trekkers. The statistics of tourism profile of 2011 shows that the total 13,838 tourist visited Langtang National Park. The trip to Rasuwa is adventurous filled with cultural and natural landscapes. The authentic culture combined with serene nature gives the complete package for tourism as a product and attraction to the tourist. Major areas of cultural attraction are Gosaikunda, Langtang valley (a fusion of Tibetan and Tamang culture), Gatlang-Goljung areas (living heritage of Tamang culture and architecture), Kyangjin (3,900m) and Sing Gomba (oldest Buddhist monastery)(3,304m).

However, during the project time of TRPAP, 5,276 people visited THT out of 43,300. the exact factual sheet is unavailable in present context because the project has already phased out and the government has not conducted further research of THT.

Table-2: Distribution of tourists by year visiting Rasuwa and the THT

Year	Visitors to Rasuwa District	Visitors to Tamang Heritage Trail
2002	29,880	1,220
2003	28,660	1,435
2004	25,215	1,705
2005	35,400	5,135
2006	43,300	5,276

Source: DDC, Rasuwa and TRPAP

The Tamang Heritage Trail/Trek

As part of the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme(TRPAP), the Nepal Tourism Board initiated the Tamang Heritage Trail as a Pro-Environment, Pro-Community, Pro-poor and Pro-women project. It unfolds the rich Tamang culture with its history, monuments and the like. THT is primarily rich in Tamang culture, tradition and architect supplemented with hot spring water, historical war fort and natural attractions as ancillary products. The trail follows the row of Chhorten (small stupa) from Gatlang to Timure along the old trade route to Tibet. Tamang Heritage Trail passes through the mountain villages where the traditional architecture, crafts and style of dress has remained unchanged. Culturally rich villages like Gatlang, Goljung, Thuman, natural spring hot water at Tatopani, beautiful landscape of Nagthali, historical war fort at Rasuwa Gadhi and Home-stay village packages at Briddim are the prime areas of tourism attraction in THT. Hence, the heritage within the Tamang ethnicity of people residing in the trail through the micro and macro lenses of ethnic and cultural tourism and complete as heritage tourism.

Table-3: Itinerary for the Tamang Heritage Trail

Days	From	To	Time
1	Kathmandu	Dhunche/Syabrubesi	7-8 hours drive
2	Syabrubesi	Goljung-Gatlang	1hour and 45 minute drive or 4 hours walk
3	Gatlang	Tatopani	6 hours walk
4	Tatopani	Thuman	5 hours walk
5	Thuman	Timure	5 hours walk
6	Timure	Briddim	6 hours walk
7	Briddim	Syabrubesi	3 hours walk
8	Syabrubesi	Kathmandu	7-8 hours drive

Source: Lonely planet

Cultural Attractions of Gatlang village

Gatlang is one of the largest ethnic villages situated in the moderate climatic region. The cluster-shaped houses can be seen from the distant. It is believed that the ancestor with the motive to protect themselves from wild animals and other dangers started living in cluster. According to the survey conducted by the school and VDC of Gatlang; there are 402 households with 2119 of total population(1091 males and 1020 females). Mainly the Tamangs follow two religions: 343H/H are Budhhist and 59 H/H are Christians(VDC,Rasuwa). However, both of the groups follow mutual cooperation at hard times. The 90% of the total population are literate. The total population of Rasuwa is 43,300, out of which 29,782 are the Tamangs (CBS, 2011) who have settled in different villages of Rasuwa district.

House structure

The structure of the house looks alike in every aspect. The small wooden planks tighten together with bamboo ropes from inside, the walls are of stone and partition is made from wooden planks/plies. The doors and windows are artistic engraved with wooden carvings. However with changing time, the carvings are less than old settlements.

The ground floor of the house is used as storage of firewoods, planks, stones, grains and chicken coop in every house. All the family members used to sleep in the same room but now the partition of room is done: one for elderly member and one for the youngsters. The open kitchen with improved cooking stoves, traditional cooking pattern or gas stoves and traditional utensils are noticed. Attar – a separate corner for worshipping -holds religious importance and prohibited for the outsiders. The wooden balcony with carvings is yet another attraction of the village.

After the incentives (capacity building, awareness trainings) from TRPAP, people are aware of sanitation and hygiene, and every house has one toilet outside of the

house but within the compound. With the concept of home stays, people have managed a room of twin or group sharing in most of the houses.There are altogether 108 manis(the long free standing stone walls inscribed with Tibetan mantras), and many chortens in Gatlang.

Products

Destinations that selectively transform cultural resources into tangible products not only facilitate the exchange of this cultural experience for a financial return, but have the potential to create a situation in which the destinations can promote sustainable development through careful management of resources. Likewise, with the introduction of TRPAP ,the women have transformed the cultural practice of knitting and weaving into products in tourism. The training provided them the exposure to income with the manufacture of souvenir. They weave *bakhhu*, rug, *kammal* (blanket) from yak and sheep wool, and the cultural cap is very famous and most tourists like to buy it. Other handicrafts are: *patuka* (waist belt of cloth), *radi, kammal, bakhhu* (traditional jacket) mobile bags and seldom (a special shirt). *Parma* (reciprocal work for mutual co-operation) is the process of manufacturing mass goods with the involvement of women in weaving and knitting in leisure.

Social institutions

The male member seems busy with livestock and other labour work during day time. The firewood collection, timber collection, renovating houses and playing cards are the responsibilities of men. However, women are busy in *parma* (reciporcal work) and weaving rugs and *bakhhu* (overcoat) in traditional *taan* (handloom) Also at the time of crop harvesting in off season both men and women work together in field. However, the men cook food and do physical labour as compared to women of the community.

Social institutions are the structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. The ancestors preferred joint family for family bond and safety. Almost three generations used to live under the same roof sharing family ideologies and profession. Now, the preference is given to nuclear family. After marriage, people prefer nuclear family. However, the mother of bride is the responsibility of the groom. Arrange marriage, mutual agreement (love marriage), elopement and marriage by capture are popular forms of marriage among Tamangs of Gatlang. Ancestors used to practice polygamy which is replaced by monogamy in young generations. All the cost of marriage has to be borne by the grooms' family. After marriage, mother moves with her daughter to her son-in-laws' house. It is a tradition in Gatlang that groom has to look after his mother-in-law (wife's mother). In such case, all the ancestral property is given to daughters, otherwise there is an equal share between son and daughter. Widow and widower marriage is also common in Gatlang. However, if someone elopes with

another man, the man has to pay the double amount of the cost of marriage to first husband. Syangden, Lopchen, Teb are the clan group among Tamangs. Syangden and Lopchen are allowed to nuptial relation. Similarly, Syangden and Teb also marry traditionally. However, Lopchen and Teb are not allowed to get married as they are said to come from the same ancestor. Cross-cousin marriage is also allowed to get married. However, the concept of family planning is highly accepted by the young generation and contraceptives devices are remarkably used but the old generation discard the use and concept both. *Tungana* (traditional instrument)is played and *dohari geet* (competitive duet song) is popular in marriage with wine ceremony.

Lama is the priest who keeps name of the child after a week of birth and it is called chewar. But it was not practised in ancient time. Death ceremony is very different in the community. It is called *ghewa*. The dead body is burned and the Lama decides a day that is considered to be a good omen day to make chortens in the deceased's name. The Lama (priest) is invited after a week to recite scared mantras. Then rice, vegetables and other foods are served to all of the people attending ghewa.

Separate justice system prevails in the village. People of the village elect a chief known *Raja* and his assistant for one/two year for the justice to the local affairs and cultural preservation.The *Raja* thus elected holds special power to resolve conflict within a family and society. They settle disputes, levy fines and mete out punishments. They have rights to organize fairs and events in festivals, and decide to construct any social systems in favor of the community. However, many critical cases of theft, burglary and unjust are resolved through Police Station in Syabrubeshi. Mainly Shamansim is practised as healing method in the village.

After the introduction of the project, many awareness trainings were conducted for the communities. These trainings included family planning, gender roles and sanitation. This has helped people to use contraceptives and follow proper family planning strategies. However, the older generation denies the concept of family planning.

Attractions

The culture, tradition and customs, settlements, architect, surrounding mountains and landscape, nearby spots and forest are the major attractions of the village. Hence the natural and cultural combination add significance to the cultural heritage tourism of Tamangs. The performers play an active role in presenting ethnic culture as well as communicating with tourists. Such cultural exchange opportunities may not only provide visitors a chance of appreciating ethnic cultures, but also help them build a sense of pride of their culture. The house pattern, the domestic archives, the architecture, Parvati Kunda (lake), cheese factory, chorten and monastery (also called *ghyang* and *gumba*) water mills, village walk, traditional tilling and ploughing system and local wine brewing and tasting are the major attractions of Gatlang.

Customs and Traditions

The traditional Tamang dress is the major attraction of the village. Male and female specially elder men and women are seen in their special attire. However, young women also wear Tamang dresses but the dressing does not seem complete as compared to that of old people. Women wear *angdu*(long garb) coat, g*uni* (syama), *syade* (cap), *pani* (shoe), *kangsyup* (socks) and *che* (waist belt) and ornaments like *budil* (earring), *kolda* (beads), *thoka* (bangles). Men wear- *bakkhu, seldom* (shirt), *khanj*a, *suruwal* (trousers) and ornaments like *budil* (earring). People while making move outside their home will hold *khukur*i (knife) around the waist.

Tungana is the traditional instrument of the Tamangs of Gatlang. The villagers play folk songs through *tungana* during marriage and other festivals. There are wine festivals in the community. Baishaki is one of the wine tasting festivals of Gatlang.The whole villagers gather together in GLCC and perform folk dance and sing folk songs. The villagers are seen in their colorful traditional dress enjoying the folk dances. The dance holds its own importance as the two groups are portrayed as fighters (beneath masks) of Tibet and Nepal. It is believed that Tibet and Nepal fought at the time of their ancestors resulting into casualties to both sides. Hence, they stopped fighting and started living without prejudice. Similar story is presented with the moral that fight and wars end with the loss of either property or lives but peace prevails in mutual cooperation. The joy of cooperation is rejoiced with folk songs *(Tamang Selo)*. People enjoy new dresses and celebrate yet another year of co-operation on the first day of Baishakh (March-April).

Janai purnima, one of the biggest festivals which is celebrated by the Hindus in between August-September. The Tamangs also participate on this festival which is celebrated at Parvati Kunda. The medicinal herb called Bojo is used by Jhankri for healing and it is highly found in Parvati Kunda. The Jhankri dance in performed in midnight. Only males are allowed to participate in the festival by tradition. It is also the festival of wine.Teej is not much popular although women celebrate it with great faith for the long life of their husbands. Women have acculturated this festivals after the trail is opened. Women also began to travel and get influenced by the festival and started to fast for the longevity of their husbands. Dashain (one of the biggest Hindu festivals) is celebrated in a different way. People (specially male) put *tika*(rice mixed with blood of animals) from elders (specially male) and receive blessings, and sacrifice goat and hen. The locally grown wheat is ground in water mill and bread is prepared to celebrate the festival. The male again are seen busy playing cards and drinking while female are busy cooking and serving. The first day of Magh (Jan-Feburary) holds another important place in celebrating the harvesting year. All the crops grown annually are cooked together (*khole*; thick mixed soup) as a celebration of good harvest year. They eat and drink together but only male members are permitted to drink alcohol.

However, the tourist are deprived from experiencing festivals on their own. Though they enjoy the narration of the guides regarding these festivals, they are still eager and curious to see and experience them. However, there is no initiative taken by the Government to make an alternative arrangement for this purpose. But at the local level, people are trying to make an alternative arrangement on their own in order to serve the interests of those tourists who are interested in experiencing or attending these festivals. For example, some lodge owners are collaborating with local people to document these festivals through audiovisual mode. This would help those inquisitive tourists to, at least, see those feasts and festivals.

Livelihood

Animal husbandry is the major source living in the village whereas tourism is seasonal. Cow, goat, sheep, chauri, chicken are reared. The off season agriculture yields are potato, beans, barley, maize, millet, garlic. They are self consumed but beans, manures and potatoes are sold in nearby market and even to headquarter (Dhunche). However, tourism is seasonal yielding good exposure to the host community. The locals are highly benefited through tourism; the people with the training by TRPAP satisfy the tourist with variety of breakfast and lunch of their choices. The traditional food of Tamangs; *dhindo* (porridge)and gundrukko achar(fermented mustard leaves), *khole* are also served on request. Agriculture, tourism and animal husbandry are the chief sources of income.The soft loan provided by TRPAP has been used to add animals which has yielded in additional manufacture of souvenirs with the addition of livestock.

Leisure

Free time is used in searching grazing lands for animals and playing cards by men. Also alcoholism is visible among the older generation of men however women are busy knitting and weaving in leisure with the involvement in parma(indulgence of women in mass production of souvenirs, collecting firewoods, harvesting maize).

Accommodation

Though there are already 55 lodges in Langtang National Part (Thapa, 2014), Gatlang village comprises one community lodge i.e. Gatlang Lodge and Cultural Center(GLCC), 4 Homestays and two Lodges that offer accommodation facilities. The community lodge receives more group tourists (with guide) than individual tourists. The oldest hotel in Lantang region is Lama hotel which was run in 1973 (Bezruchka, 2001, p. 251). In Gatlang the lodge offers cultural programs featuring local wines and food. The bed charges are free whereas the nominal price is charged for food. However, the homestay offers close interaction regarding the lifestyle, domestic archives, sleeping pattern, cooking systems, dressing patterns and human behaviour. The lodge is not popular choice among the tourists because it is more commercialized and less authentic in relation to the original culture of Tamangs of the village. According to Lynch (2005b; in McIntosh et al., 2010, p. 3), homestay is

also defined as commercial home. In Gatlang, home stay offers such type of accommodation where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place with a host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is to a shared to some extent. Therefore, the host and tourist both prefer homestay as compared to lodges and community lodge. Tourists find their stay more authentic and enjoyable in home stays.

Homestay

As cited by Weaver (2006), Dernoi (1981), for example, defined it as a form of tourism in which visitors are accommodated in the houses of local residents. This mode of alternative tourism, commonly referred to as homestaytourism, was in fact well articulated by the late 1970s, with formal programmes in Denmark ('Meet the Denes'), Jamaica ('Meet-the-People') and the US state of Connecticut ('Friendship Force'), among other destinations. Dernoi estimates that home-based alternative tourism at the time accounted for about 15 per cent of all foreign stay over nights in Bulgaria, 9 per cent in Slovenia, 1 per cent in Mauritius and 0.1 per cent in India. Wall (1997a) describes the homestay sector as a significant indigenous initiative that included over 1600 available rooms in the early 1990s. One of the most widely cited examples of pioneering alternative tourism, though not strictly home based, is the cultural villages of the Casamance region in southern Senegal, which were established beginning in the mid - 1970s and accommodated 20,000 visitors in 1990 (Echtner, 1999; in Weaver, 2006, p. 39).

In order to know about homestay, first and fore-most it is important to know what the home represents. Rybczynski(1998; in Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000, p.103) identifies the meaning of home as bringing together the meanings of house and of household, of dwelling and of refuge, of ownership and of affection. 'Home' meant the house, but also everything that was in it and around it, as well as the people, and the sense of satisfaction and contentment that all these conveyed. Thus, home has multiple meanings, and operates on different levels both simultaneously and for individuals. Adding commercialized hospitality to the equation further complicates the dimension of the home and its meanings.

'Home' as an idea is not a simple concept but one which has multiple meanings and significance: worksite, memories and associations, place to rear family, a refuge, prison, statement of independence; ideas of security, affection and comfort (Franklin, 1986; in Lynch and Mac Whannell, 2000, p. 103); a place of self-expression, a cocoon, a place of deep contentment in the innermost temple of the soul (Lynch, 2003); a relatively recent term of nostalgia (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000, p.103); associated with comfort, domesticity; a place under feminine control; place of ritual and customs (Telfer, 1995; Rybczynski, 1988); site of patriarchal relations. In this study, the home is connected with a small accommodation business to which Lynch (2000) has coined the term as "home-stay" and "commercial home" enterprise (McIntosh et al., 2010, p. 3).

According to Lynch (2005b, p.534; in McIntosh et al., 2010, p.3), " Commercial home" refers to types of accommodation where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place with a host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is, to a degree, shared. "Commercial home" therefore embraces a range of accommodation types including some (small) hotels, bed and breakfasts....., and host family accommodation, which simultaneously span private, commercial and social settings".

In the context of Nepal, Sedai (2011, p. 112) writes, "home-stay tourism is a community based programme introduced by the Government of Nepal (GoN) to provide accommodation facilities for tourists. In this programme, villagers host visiting tourists, and provide them food and accommodation facilities as a paying guest and in a completely homely environment." In Nepal the concept of home-stay was introduced to address the accommodation problems of ecotourism (Thapaliya et.al., 2012, p. 105). Therefore, home-stays are available on rural areas. Home-stay tourism in fact can promote ethnic tourism because there will be direct host-guest interaction and tourists can directly experience the cultural life of a community. For those tourists interested in ethnic tourism, this can be a beautiful experience. However, as of now home-stay tourism has not been advocated strongly as a way to bolster up ethnic tourism.

There are 297 home-stays developed in eight various rural villages in Nepal (NTB/CEST, 2010). This includes Sirubari (Syangja district), Gurung Heritage Trail (Ghalegaun-Pasgaun-Nagidhar), Barapak homestay (Gorkha), Tamang Heritage Trail (Rasuwa), Indigeneous Peoples Trail (Ramechhap), Numbur Cheese Circuit (Ramechhap), Shree Antu (Ilam) and Olangchula Gola (Taplejung). These home-stays provide 1020 tourist beds in total. Among these, Shree Antu has the highest number of tourist beds, 403 tourist beds, whereas Olangchula Gola provides only 12 tourist beds (NTB/CEST, 2010).

Amenities

The introduction of TRPAP developed the necessary infrastructure, acknowledged for its transparency and rural development interventions. These include small-scale tourism infrastructure such as the construction of trails, bridges, signposts, information centres, public (porter) shelters, improved water, sanitation and waste disposal. The village holds continuous supply of electricity from Chilime Hydropower, telephone lines and community taps. The groceries are tourist friendly; sanitizer, toiletries, chocolates, energy drinks and soft drinks are available according to the tourist comfort. The daily goods are available in local groceries whereas huge volume are bought from Syabrubeshi and Betrabeti. The hot and cold bucket shower is yet another experience amidst the authentic experiences. The 4 homestays ,1 lodge and one community lodge give the unique cultural experience to the tourists with variety of food choices, local wine tasting, cultural dances, folk songs and many more. The effective host-guest interaction gives the tourist good sense of authentication despite the different mode of communication whether using pen, pencils or some communicative languages.

Community's Perception of Tourism

Tourism brings several benefits to the host community. With the concept of pro-poor development and poverty alleviation through rural tourism, TRPAP provided training of various areas such as basic hospitality and English language, small hotel and lodge management, food and beverage services, cookery and bakery, eco-tourism, local tour guide, basic english language, home-stay management, professional trekking guide, tourism enterprise development, management capacity enhancement and general awareness training for porters.

TRPAP successfully encouraged local cultural . It has helped to revive the local culture, which was at the verge of extinction. Local groups, the majority of whom are women, have successfully adapted their cultural programs for commercial use, performing for guests at a reasonable cost.The Community Lodge and Cultural Centre was developed with the villagers so they can engage with commercial activities. The Tamangs of Gatlang are now aware of the benefits of tourism. Tourism has not only enhanced their economy but also provided them sense of ownership and pride(Dhakal, 2011).

People believe that tourism has enhanced livelihood, increased employment, created awareness, local resources, promoted culture, upgraded lifestyle, increased health and sanitation possibilities to meet the need of tourists.

Tourism in Gatlang has strong multiplier effect to the rural livelihood of the community. The study findings indicate that 31% respondents perceived the benefit of tourism for education sector. Likewise, 57 percent respondents perceived the benefits for agriculture sector, 31percent for livestock and 78 percent for general business such as home stays, lodges and groceries.

Table-4: Distribution of respondents by multiplier effects of tourism in other sectors

Perception	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Education Sector	22	31
Agriculture Sector	41	57
Livestock	31	43
General Business	56	78

The research finding revealed that the community is happy with benefits from the tourism. Majority of those (61 per cent) says that community are getting much benefits as many of them own a home stay or lodge. Further, much people are aware of the benefits from tourism as they are invited to perform cultural dances and get to sell their products. Very few respondents (8 percent) view tourism as least beneficial. The reason for such can be attributed to either ignorance or unaware of tourism due to their old age.

Table-5: Distribution of respondents by the degree of benefits achieved from tourism

Perception	Number	Percentage
Very Beneficial	20	61
Normal	10	31
Very Little	2	8
None	0	0
Total	**33**	**100**

Tourism in Gatlang has benefiting rural poor community through the infrastructure development. The majority of the community household perceived that tourism has helped bringing community infrastructure. Tourism has helped bring much on community infrastructure such as roads, trail, bridge, community taps, electricity, telephone, resting places, sign posts and so on.

The local people has promoted their traditional dress (women), traditional domestic archives, traditional agriculture, water mills as major cultural attractions. This living culture has been portrayed as cultural involution by the villagers. In addition, the changing culture is presented to the tourists. The modification of the dances and songs to comfort tourists are presented as model culture.

Tourist's Perception about Gatlang

The maximum number of tourists visited Gatlang for wilderness trekking. Also they are cultural and natural trekkers. Again the ethnicity/culture and heritage attracted tourist as motivational factor and many tourists have regarded Gatlang as a treasure of Tamang Heritage Trail but at the same time, discourage the cultural change in the community through tourism and favors cultural involution instead. They prefer homestays as authentic cultural experience and hospitable than lodges.

Tourist's Perception of Individual Attractiveness in Gatlang

To identify the attractiveness of individual tourism resources, visitors were requested to assign the value i.e. 3 for strong, 2 for medium and 1 for low for the individual attraction/resources.

Table-6: Distribution of tourists by the weightage of various Touristic Attraction

Perception	Strong (3)	Moderate (2)	Low (1)	Total Weightage	Attractiveness Position
Tamang culture, tradition and customs	15	12	3	72	1st
Tamang settlements and Architect	11	17	2	69	2nd

Perception	Strong (3)	Moderate (2)	Low (1)	Total Weightage	Attractiveness Position
Surrounding Mountains and Landscape	13	12	5	68	3rd
Nearby spots	11	13	6	65	4th
Forest	9	11	10	59	5th

The research data indicated that Tamang culture, tradition and customs stands for the first position with the weightage value (72) followed by Tamang settlements and architect (69), surrounding mountains and landscape (68), hot spring (68) and the forest and wildlife (59) as second, third, fourth and fifth position respectively. From above findings, the major tourism activities in the THT can be elaborated as cultural study, village walk, observation of live craftsmanship and old aged architectures, cultural performance and wilderness trekking.

Hospitality Facilities in Gatlang

The hospitality of host was also studied with the tourists interviews .57 percent visitors perceived that the host community were very hospitable, followed by 36 percent community who perceived the hospitality as just hospitable and 7 percent rated the hospitality as poor.

Table-7: Distribution of tourists by the rating of Hospitality

Perception	Number	Percentage
Very hospitable	20	57
Hospitable	8	36
Poorly hospitable	2	7
Total	**30**	**100**

Visitors Perception on Modes of Accommodation

Community lodge, home stay and normal hotel/lodge offer accommodation facilities at Gatlang. Research findingrevealed that majority of the trekkers (70 percent) use local hotel and Home-stay.Some group trekker use (23 percent) tented camping. About 7 percent trekkers use a combination of both the facilities.

Table-8: Distribution of tourists by the use of modes of accommodation

Modes of accommodation	Number	Percentage
Local hotel, lodge, Home-stay	21	70
Tented camp	7	23
Both	2	7
Total	**30**	**100**

While asking the visitors for their perception on the condition of accommodation facilities, the Home-stay and community lodge was perceived as good and sufficient for accommodation. Most (70 percent) of the visitors perceived hotel/lodge facilities as fair. The tea house and camping site facilities was perceived as the poor and insufficient by the   respondents respectively.

Also, the visitors are surprised by the availability of choices in food of their preference like porridge, cornflakes, chocolates. However, the taste of food did not meet the visitors' expectation. But the local wine was highly demanded and they enjoyed local wine tasting with great excitement. The groceries were satisfactory according to the visitors.

Table-9: Distribution of tourists by the rating of infrastructures

Infrastructure	Sufficient	Moderate	Poor	Total
Telecommunication	5	12	13	30
Trails	25	3	2	30
Road	0	28	2	30
Resting places	20	7	3	30
Drinking water	10	13	7	30
Electricity	20	5	5	30
Sanitation	5	5	20	30

The data indicated that the infrastructure is not so well developed in Gatlang. However, the resting places, drinking water and electricity are satisfactory. The tourist can get hot drinking water if they ask around the route and their stay. However, some nominal price is charged for the water. The sanitation is very poor even with the availability of separate toilets in every house. Most of the tourists are satisfied with the trails. The resting places are also appreciated whereas tourists are unsatisfied with the sanitation scenario of the village.

Overall Satisfaction Level

The overall experiences of the visitors stand the THT as a potential tourist destination. Of the total visitors, 37 percent concluded the visits as very satisfactory followed by 63 percent visitors who concluded the visit as satisfactory.

Economic Impact of Tourism in Gatlang

Tourism is genuinely powerful and unique force for the change in community. According to statistics of tourism 803,092 tourists visited Nepal collecting NRs 30,725,870 revenue in the year 2012.Ethnic tourism supports the tourists stay in natives and observe day to day life from dawn to dusk, family, marriage, religion, festivals, dressing patterns, life cycle ceremony, culture and so on. Although Trishuli Somdang highway linked the villages more than two decades ago and tourists started to come to Langtang on trekking,

residents of northern parts of Rasuwa had not seen any change in their livelihood. Surviving on a subsistence-based farming and living in most unhygienic place, their per capita is among the lowest in the region. According to District Development Committee Rasuwa, four northern remote villages Gatlang, Goljung, Chillime, Briddim and Thuman are most underdeveloped parts of the district. However the program contributed to the poverty alleviation objective of the government through review and formulation of policy and strategic planning for sustainable tourism development that are pro-poor, pro-environment and pro rural communities and pro-women and enhance the livelihood of the people with tourism as income generating activities.

The geographic setting (habitat), the heritage(monasteries, *chortens*, *manis*, architecture), the effects of acculturation(history and change) and the inexpensive souvenirs are the cultural attractions of Gatlang.

With the technical and financial support granted from DFID, UNDP, SNV-Nepal through TRPAP, DDC Rasuwa has been able to efficiently implement the rural tourism programme in the northern part of the district. A new tourism product called Tamang Heritage Trail has been developed and promoted comprising the settlement of the poor people in Gatlang, Chillime and Goljung area.

TRPAP has tremendously changed the life of local people of The Tamang Heritage Trail. The opening of the closed route has given many fruitful exposure to the locals. TRPAP not only opened the route but also opened the path to connect the rural people with the outer world. The people otherwise would have been backward in every aspect of infrastructure and opportunities. It initiated to run roads to the village from Syabrubeshi to Gatlang which in resulted in alternative livelihoods capacity building, skills training, increased agricultural productivity, employment opportunities, empowerment, and the improved ability to combat poverty.The initiative through Venture Capital Fund (VCF) of TRPAP provided soft loan to the locals along with the trainings. The interested people were given the trainings of guide, porters, and cooks to combat poverty and enhance their livelihood. The women were given training to weave the woolen products and the pricing of the products. The free time is thus utilized as knitting and making many woolen products. TRPAP opened community lodge and encouraged many to open home stays. The establishment of toilets, water supply have helped a lot in sanitation however the sanitation is not that good. The sign posts, public shelters are of great help to the tourists.

The TRPAP VCF has overcome these constraints by making soft loans with simple procedural formalities available to the rural poor to start small enterprises. This initiative has helped people to continue their traditional source of income through animal husbandry in Gatlang. Many have added the number of chauris, goats, oxen through the soft loans from TRPAP. This pioneering model has shown positive results. (See detail in appendix 1)

The GLCC, built with TRPAP support, is a wonderful structure in terms of design and architecture. It has separate dormitory-type accommodation for men and women, a dining room, solar-heated showers, toilets and an incinerator for waste disposal. It has a beautiful courtyard in the front for open-air cultural performances. A spacious hall on the ground floor can be used for indoor cultural shows, meetings and exhibitions. The Lodge and Centre is developed and managed by the Sustainable Tourism Development Committee(STDC). The committee has deputed a young woman and boy to look after visiting tourists. They are very courteous. The woman says: "*I am not only getting economic benefits, but I'm also developing cooking and hospitality skills from the training and practical work at the Centre.*"

Once locals are confident enough to develop home-stay or lodges in the villages, the Centre will be converted into a Tamang Museum and Cultural Centre.A local villager happily admits: "*Due to the accommodation facility developed in the village, tourists have begun to arrive. It has given us much benefit to sell chicken and vegetables to the Lodge.*" In Rasuwa, the project has brought not only infrastructures but the project also contributed to develop Tamang Cultural Heritage Trail as a new tourism product which has all components to attract tourists and extremely helpful to generate income with local ownership and benefit sharing.

Socio- Cultural impact of tourism in Gatlang

It is very difficult to assess socio-cultural impacts. The influences are not always apparent, as they are often indirect, hard to measure, ambiguous and dependent on value judgments. Not only tourists, but also local people who travel for education, trade or other purposes bring in new ideas and behavior that affect cultural practices. The world is now connected together through media and information technology. Often, socio-cultural impacts are hard to disentangle from wider processes of development (also Ashley, 2000), or globalization (Blench, 2001; DFID 1999). The Tamangs of Gatlang, for instance, have not only become more affluent, but also more westernized after tourism has taken off in their areas. Tamang culture has undergone many undesirable transformations - for instance neglecting their traditional agricultural and pastoral activities, which always formed the basis of their traditional culture, and sending less lamas to their monasteries, withdrawal. of the use of their traditional dress, linguistic acculturation and so on.

Many cases of cultural involution and changing culture were noted by the researcher. On the one hand, the women and older generation people emphasize on cultural involution through their traditional dress, traditional farming, traditional life style and traditional weaving in *Taan to* provide extremely authentic cultural experience to the tourists through living culture. On the other hand, due to the incidence of commoditization as changing culture, they showcase the performances as per the nature of tourists as a model culture. The dances and songs are modified to attract tourists and the tourists enjoy the front stage authenticity without taking back stage

authenticity into consideration. The shoes used in dances are not traditional, the main instruments *tungana* is not played. The model culture as mentioned by Smith(1989) to maximise the benefits of tourism are also adopted by the natives. This has promoted the commoditization of the cultural products of Gatlang. The proper balance between the authenticity and commoditization may however result in the increment of tourism. However, the marketing of the tourism products has increased the public awareness about the importance of ethnicity as a tool for resource conservation and cultural preservation through ethnic tourism.

Also the power relation between the people in the communities have changed a lot after the incidence of tourism. The class difference is emerging with rich getting richer through home stays and lodges and poor the poorer. This has slowly fueled the latent conflict within the community. However, the community lodge has somehow helped to minimize this risk through the benefit sharing (income is used to promote culture and other activities within community)within the societies and promoting localization of the resources.

However, the Tamang themselves have heartily embraced these changes, feeling that the economic prosperity brought by tourism has directly helped to improve their general living standards and significantly improved their quality of life. Many changes are natural byproducts of development, in fact highly sought after by Tamang community.

Tourism as a tool for socio-cultural conservation

It is clear that tourism has contributed the promotion of development by providing for, and enhancing, for instance infrastructure, educational opportunities, water and electricity supply and health care provisions. It has functioned as a direct tool for the conservation of the rich cultural heritage of the Tamang people. Tourism has fostered pride in cultural traditions and provided Tamang people value (and income) to the maintenance and restoration of authentic cultural features, and support community development – for instance by helping to avoid urban relocation by creating local jobs. Studying the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in THT, tourism has led to a revitalization of the Tamang culture, as the international exposure of their culture after the scaling of The Tamang Heritage Trail(THT) has made them a 'celebrated people'.

Tourism and acculturation

The term 'acculturation' takes place in a complex and piecemeal fashion, and is more a matter of give-and-take between individual world-views. To take of the 'socio-cultural changes' brought by tourism can be a shorthand only, part of a larger understanding of the way in which universally, people go and look beyond themselves in order to be and know themselves (Kunwar, 2002, p.72).Tourism is very much relatedwith clothing; the changes in clothing is highly visible as an influence of tourism

in Gatlang. After the opening of closed route to Gatlang, the natives can easily get western clothes and footwears which they carry as status symbols. The nominal new patterns of food are visible but yet maximum population still prefer their traditional staple *dhindo*. The cross cultural communication is easy with the elementary English courses by TRPAP but resulted in the linguistic acculturation. The impacts on cultural environment: history with change in cultural landscape, language with change in vocabulary of languages(linguistics acculturation), food acculturation, dress acculturation, religion with decrease in the cultural practices with western influence of tourist, values and norms with change in family size and structure are visible in Gatlang.

Others, however, claim that tourism has had many negative impacts on the socio-cultural environment of the mountain communities. The erosion of cultures and associated values such as the dissolution of distinctive cultural attributes and traditions (e.g. changes in people's behavior, dress and lifestyles), changes in family and social structures, pollution of sacred places and a breakdown in religious beliefs, and a loss of traditional community support systems were reported by the respondents. The tourists, mostly by the virtue of their purchasing power, may eventually destroy the very thing they came to visit, by transforming local cultures into commodities for sale, and changing sustainable lifestyles into an extractive and consumptive lifestyle (e.g. King and Steward 1996). However, it is arguable to what extend this is necessarily bad or threatening to the cultural heritage. Is it bad that a dance that is traditionally performed only during certain festivals are now staged several times per year, if this increases the pride in local cultural traditions and allows the people to gain a better living from it, and may bring cultural aspects to the forefront that otherwise might get lost or forgotten.Again, the pattern is dynamic and impacts are not necessarily stable or constant. However, tourism is frequently accused of destroying authenticity through commoditization of cultures, traditions, festivals, dance, rituals and food which is produced for monetary gain.

Negative impacts on culture generally manifest themselves early, but once communities start profiting from tourism they tend to place more effort on reviving the cultural characteristics that attract tourists in the first place. Similar is the scenario of Gatlang. People were unaware of the benefits of tourism earlier and were non-cooperative but with time tourism benefitted t and changed their lifestyle with provisions of infrastructures, and job creations. Now, the people highly appreciate tourism and its benefits with the sense of ownership.

Tourism in Gender mainstreaming

In Gatlang, the Tamang community, men traditionally worked as the head of the household; however, many have now become dependent on the income that women and young children earn. This new gender division of labor in the household income structure conflicts with patriarchal gender complementarity. Women are aware of the

benefits of tourism and realise that their skills can be used to earn money by producing attractive souvenir items.With training and study visits, women have learned how to mobilise local resources for tourism, such as village visits, handicraft exhibitions and showing local culture to tourists. Women and the poor have been empowered through special awareness programmes, capacity building activities, and skill development and leadership training. Also the men of the family are busy with livestock. Due to the land topography, usually men live in the field with livestock during winter and during summer move to higher altitude. Hence, many decisions are taken by women to the tourists.This "contradiction" and "stigma for men" has led to alcohol and narcotic abuse among the community's men. According to the nesting double marginalization structure , the role of kin-based household economies to strengthen ethnic identity and gender roles are threatened.

Naturally, this is not to say that tourism development should take place without any regard for the socio-cultural environment, or that appropriate strategies can help mitigate unwanted impacts at least within the limits of acceptable change.

Tourism Leakage

The general perception among local is that the local economy is benefitted more by free individual travelers (FITs) as they consume local services, such as accommodation, whereas the organised troops bring their own supplies. These yields of substantial portion of income from tourism remain at the local level with the consumption of local foods and engagement of local people. However, in Gatlang the communities believe that tourists may not like to consume local food and they provide multiple choices of tourist-friendly food imported from Dhunche. This has resulted in the tourism leakage in Gatlang. But the visitors are encouraged to try local eggs, local wine and originally prepared alcohol(raksi, jaand). This has however helped to decrease the leakage of tourism expenditure in Gatlang to some extent.

Tourism Safety and Security

Safety and security are the major deciding factor of tourism. Tourist's behaviour and their visits are highly dependent on the management of safety, security and risk. However, the emergency service and rescue service is not managed. Though Gatlang is not that difficult grade of trekking but the mountains are steep as the trail furthers to Tatopani, Briddim and Timure. However, no case of emergency is noted till the date. Whereas Lantang Trek is regarded as one of the unsecured treks with many cases of disappearance and looted. Recently Banskota (2014) has exposed some 26 tourists visiting mountainous areas of Nepal are disappeared. Out of which 3 trekkers have been disappered in Langtang-Gosaikunda areas. In this regard, the police authority assumes that the reason of disappearance of the tourists is they do trek alone with no guides and therefore, they might have murdered because of having their belongings such as camera, mobile and cash along with them (see in detail Kunwar and Barmashkha,

2014). So, the system should make strong strategies to combat these sorts of events and help to promote safe trekking and tourism. The entry point of tourists should maintain good and authentic records of the tourists arrival and exit. THT was found as the best model of rural tourism development to establish and set indicators of sustainability for tourism development in rural context of Nepal.

Conclusion

Tourist sites are seen not merely as stages where tourists perform, but as the physical platforms for collective reflection and articulation of group identities (Chronis, 2006, p. 267). Hence, Gatlang as tourist site reflects rich culture, ethnicity and traditional village. The village is cluster shaped with specific roof of wooden blocks and walls of stones. All the 402 houses look alike in structure with wooden carvings in windows and doors. The room structure of kitchen bedroom, family size, rites and rituals have helped a lot in attracting tourists. With the introduction different trainings by TRPAP Gatlang has created more job opportunities and happy families. The strength of tourism attraction in Rasuwa was found very strong. Tamang Culture was found as the prime tourism product complimented by the natural and historical attraction as an ancillary products. The research findings indicated the blend of cultural experiences and nature trekking as the composite motivation factor for the visitors. Majority of the visitors have rated THT as strongly potential destination along with unspoiled Tamang culture .

Tamang culture, tradition and customs have been rated as the prime attraction through the homestay in Gatlang. The tourists choose their stay in homestay for authentic experience from dawn to dusk. This has encouraged the locals to preserve their culture along with the monetary gain from the tourists. The presence of flora and fauna, an important motivation for the general trekkers in Nepal, seems relatively poor in THT. Besides strong tourism resources and hospitable people, the demands for Gatlang Trekking was constrained by the insufficient information, accommodation and infrastructure, rescue/emergency facilities. The social incentive in the form of grant for tourism infrastructure development, skill development training, flow of soft interest loan as venture capital fund (VCF), promotional support are found very strong in THT. It lacks proper zonation of area and analysis of carrying capacity for the sustainable use of resources and greater satisfaction of the visitors. The use of improved sanitation, toilet and improved energy devices by general people (besides tourist business people) is very lower.

THT was found as the best model of rural tourism development to establish and set indicators of sustainability for tourism development in rural context of Nepal. Various cases of cultural involution and changing culture based issues have been concluded and established from the study.The place marketing is highly valuable in promoting any destination. Local tourism institutions have been involving in the planning and development of tourism activities through participatory approach. Still,

the present resources and confidence level of those institutions seems relatively lower to continue the efforts. Management and control mechanism was found relatively very poor. Nevertheless, it deserves high level of control mechanism for the participation of women and poor and participatory decision making. With the concept of place marketing and SWOT analysis, Gatlang can claim itself to stand tall among all the other touristic destinations. The collaborative efforts from local,public and private sectors can promote ethnic tourism in Gatlang to great extent.

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Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development in Khumbu Region

Chanakya P. Rijal*

Abstract

As a result of highly impressive socio-behavioral temperament and character of the Sherpas in the eastern mountains, many people may be influenced to visit Nepal again and again and the outcome could be the spread of global brotherhood of the Nepalese people. The Sherpas are regarded as the symbolic source of inspiration by means of their simplicity of living, grounded religious and spiritual faith and trustworthiness – all contributing in an experiential living in the Himalayas.This article presents with an exploration of the problems, challenges and prospects for promoting sustainable mountain tourism keeping the Hilarity of the Sherpa Spirit at the center of concern while establishing aworldview on sustainable tourism development and supplementing it with the grounded multiple realities via ethnographic dialectics.

Keywords: *Sustainability and sustainable tourism, goals of sustainable tourism, pillars of sustainable tourism, Sherpa Hilarity and Sherpa spirit.*

This work has explored sustainable tourism as an instrument to accomplish a two-fold objective of any business -- for achieving the fulfillment and innovation by means of formal and informal organizational initiatives. The informal practices affect the values and behaviors, whereas the formal ones establish rules and procedures required for the innovation and task accomplishment.

It has been identified that sustainability is built on a select principles that are grounded with environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of development. This exploration attempts to confirm that the hilarity and working spirit of the people in a locality, accompanied by optimal use of environmental resources, promotion of socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, focused economic operations and community-wide shared commitment serve as the building blocks of sustainable tourism development in any context.

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* Dr. Rijal is a freelance researcher cum development strategist and also has depth involvement in teaching for higher education at different universities and colleges. Currently, he has been involved in working in the areas of sustainable mountain tourism through entrepreneurship development with specific focus on Khumbu Region of Nepal and teaches at Nepal College of Management, Dhobighat, Kathmandu Unversity.

"I wish, the enactment of federalism in the country will bring back our wish and dream of promoting the Khumbu Region as a symbol of pure tourism for adventure, pilgrim and spiritual learning for rest of the world; by then there will be many attractions built in our areas -- even in isolated and distant villages so that the tourists will extend their stay in the communities; there will be more jobs and earning for our people, especially the poor ones", shared the key participant at Khumjung Valley.Yes, the people of this region are waiting desperately for good days to come. And, sustainable mountain tourism could be promoted with several evidence-based practices to generate economic viability, local prosperity, local employment, social equity, visitors' fulfillment, local control, community wellbeing, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, efficient development and consumption of resources, and environmental purity.

Methodology of works: As part of qualitative investigation, this work has been primarily based on an extensive review of existing literature in the area of interest that includes the works on S*herpa* character and insights on sustainable mountain tourism development. Further, the work has been supplemented by *the h*elp of a single key participantshared insights produced in the form of an ethnographic dialectics. In addition, as the present researcher *has be*en closely working in the Khumbu Regionsince last five years, a lot of self- experiential learning-based information has been used. The total makeover of this work has involved at least four visits in this region since last five years, each visit consuming a stay and working period of minimum tendays. This article is not the final outcome of the ongoing work. It is rather, an initial part of qualitative inquiry.

Rationale of the work: The idea of writing this article as a link to learn about promoting sustainable tourism development in the Khumbu Region came into existence as a result of present researcher's continued interest and commitment to work closely for the promotion of Nepalese tourism and also as a gratitude to the commitment of the Sherpasof Nepal, who in fact, have contributed to the immeasurable extent to make Nepal and her culture, tradition and value systems better known in the world context. This work has been expe*cted to s*erve as an integrated source of learning for various concerned agencies including the students, higher education teachers, explorers, national and international policy makers, and many others.

Qualification of the key participant: The key participant of this exploration is a legitimate Sherpa-- born, grown, living and working at the Khumjung Valley, the heart of the Khumbu Region. This is a gentleman on his late fifties. He runs a village resort. He has an extensive travel exposure of the nation, and the world at large. His contribution on development, protection and promotion of Sherpa land culture, tradition, value systems and nature conservation has been widely regarded by all stakeholders in the region. Therefore, the present researcher firmly believes his responses would be closer to the grounded reality-based truth. The present researcher firmly believes this participant as one of the most legitimate representative sources for learning about the hilarity of the Sherpas.

Meaning of the thematic constructs: Sustainable mountain tourism development is the key thematic construct of this article. It is quite relevant to refer more authentic institutional insights onto it before going through the article. For this, the present researcher found the insights of United Nations Environment Program and United Nations World Tourism Organization ([UNEP, & UNWTO], 2005), which state sustainable tourism as – the tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing diverse needs of the visitors, industry, environment and host communities. It has been further stressed that the principles of sustainability refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development -- all focused to maintain a suitable balance between these three dimensions to guarantee a long-term prosperity.

Basically, sustainable tourism aims to – 1. make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute the key elements in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity, 2. respectthe socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance, and finally, 3. ensurefor viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income generating opportunities and social services to the each host community, and contributing to poverty alleviation (UNEP, & UNWTO, 2005).

It has been vigorously emphasized that achieving sustainability in tourism is a long-term, continuous proposition of development that requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders with strong backing from the national and internal formal and structural systems including politics as well as general structural governance systems to ensure wider participation and consensus building.

As part of continuous process, it also requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. At the same time, sustainable tourism is also aimed at maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction by ensuring meaningful experiencesfor the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable practices amongst them.

Similarly, Sherpa Spirit'another equally important thematic construct used in this article, may be referred to as the holistic and value-driven way of the Sherpa life, which is governed by their religion, especially the Tibetan Buddhism and belief on spiritualism – a supernatural power of forces the sinless people possess, as the Sherpas believe (Kunwar, R. R., 2014; depicted from a personal discussion with the present researcher; &Klatzel, 2009). Further, the present researcher would like to recall the term 'hilarity' as the gaiety or jollity of the Sherpa people as a source of inspiration to the rest of people(Klatzel, 2009).

About the researcher: ChanakyaP. Rijal holds a PhD degree in Leadership from Kathmandu University, Nepal after obtaining an MBA degree from Maastricht School of Management, The Netherlands. DrRijal has earned several diplomas specializing in corporate communications, institutional governance, computing, strategic thinking, and teaching pedagogies. In his career span of about 25 years, he has an extensive experience of establishing and promoting a number of successful education institutions in Nepal. He has worked for teaching right from pre-primary to doctoral levels, worked for establishing the national policies and relevant benchmarks on research and quality assurance and accreditation, worked as a freelance expert for research and innovation, professional development, social welfare initiatives and academic writing. DrRijal also holds proven expertise in systems thinking for holistic development. He has executed many assignments with specialization in project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, sustainable development, new business development and truthful branding of products and services. DrRijal can be reached viarijalcpr@gmail.com.

Preamble

The mountain tourism is synonymous to adventure travel and it is one of the fastest growing but least understood forms of international and intercultural tourism product mix. Its role in the economic development of remote places and impact on local society, economy, and the environment has not fully been comprehended, eventhough it has been adoptedenthusiastically by many third-world nations from the perspectives of long-term sustainable development and promotion of tourism as it is also considered a metaphor to learning cross-cultural andsocial practices. Mountain tourism is widely known as experience economy which defies the norms of traditional commodity exchanges (Zurick, 1992, & Jack, & Phipps, 2005) and it requires a deeply touching 'effect' to confirm a more sustainable future.

Building on core-periphery of tourism theory, Zurick(1992) has proposed an adventure travel spatial-linkage model with an aim to connectNepal's remotefrontiers with the globaltourism economy. The model confirms that the adventure tourists movethrough a hierarchy oftravel gateways beforereaching adventure destinations, mostly locatedin isolated, subsistence population areas. Thismovement produces a unique structure of tourism space that in turn, contributes to theformation in Nepal of regional developmentssuch ashilltowngateways, hinterland tourismdestinations, and multi-use parklands. This scholar has also suggested with an adventure tourism impact model to address the tourism related problems associated with exceedingsocial andenvironmental carrying capacities. In addition, the model includes more positive impacts linked to converging the interests of Nepal's national economy, indigenous populations, tourists, andconservation development works. Of course, with its steady growth, adventure tourism in Nepal will playan increasingly important role for national andlocal development in the frontier areas but it equally requires closer attention for confirming the sustainable conservation and promotion of such destinations.

The World Tourism Organization ([WTO], 2005) has pointed out tourism as an activity that has grown by around 25 percent globally in the past 10 years, right from late 1980s to late 1990s, by holding almost 10 percent of the world's economic activity and also a major generator of the employment world*wide.McMinn* (1997) also agreed on this reality and stated that tourism is the world's largest industry as it employs one out of each nine employees with approximately 6 percent of the global gross national profit (GNP) generation whereby it has served as a panacea for the third-world countries to resolve their numerous socio-economic problems.At the same time, it is observed that tourism, especially the mountain tourism,also has critical impacts on natural and built environments and on the wellbeing and culture of host populations(McMinn, 1997). Thus, it requires closer attention from the sustainability point of view.

WTO (2005) revealedthat the concept of systematic approach to sustainable tourism development commenced in around 1980s and today it has become one of the major focuses of each member state and respective community globally as the way to a better future whereby the governments, respective communities and other immediate beneficiary stakeholders are made more responsible and acco*untabl*e in this noble mission.There are many advocacies that the policies to promote sustainable development should take full account of the opportunities offered by the tourism.

On the other hand, it is a bitter fact that Nepal cannot be promoted as a high consumption, industrial production destination. So, there is an immense need of an assessment to identify and cash on what the country is better off. Apparently, as gifted by the nature, Nepal may have tremendous potential for at least three sectors – tourism, agriculture and hydropower (Rijal, 2014). So, the national developmental emphasis must be on effective promotion of these three sectors and the national developmental and industrial priorities must address the issue of sustainable development and promotion of these nature gifted sectors.

Also from the perspective of sustainable resource management, production and marketing, these sectors may have higher advantage. According to Chowdhury (2013), more than 1 million tourists visiting to Nepal annually have daily per capita spending of above US $ 100. Since the country is regarded as one of the authentic and ethnic tourism destinations, it has witnessed itself as one of the foreign direct investment (FDI) and power surplus nations in the world. As a result, tourism in Nepal has become a point of attraction for the global investors. In fact, tourism may be promoted as an integrated element for the promotion of water and agricultural prospects too, visualizes (Rijal, 2014).

Sustainable development is an old concept but has received high emphasis these days in every sector globally. It re-emerged in the 1960s, as global economic growth gathered speed after World War II. In 1980 the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) based in Geneva, issued the World Conservation Strategy and

brought the cautious and sometimes negative thinking of the conservationist approach to development and with the positive but sometimes heedless world of the developer. It set the stage for the publication of the Brundtland Report of 1987, a work created by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), and the work from which most of the current thinking on sustainable development stems as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, sustainable development became a globally agreed agenda by the nations of the world (Lane, 2014).

Sustainable tourism development has to be promoted as a holistic means of prosperity social footed with at least four principles – 1. integration of the ideas of holistic planning, cross-sectoral planning and strategy making, 2. emphasis on importance of preserving essential ecological processes, 3. need to protect both human heritage and biodiversity, and 4. requirements that development should be carried out such that the productivity does not deplete resources for the long-term, future generations. In the present Nepalese context, the same principles may be directly applicable for mountain tourism development.

All what Nepal requires now includes a long-term shared vision, national commitment, public-private collective efforts, and defined priority of the country on its agenda of tourism development, especially for mountain tourism. Availability of the best training

and education system, leveraged transportation facilities and widened communication systems serve as the key infrastructure required for the overall development of a destination (Chowdhury, 2013).

In fact, very fast development of China, South Korea, Singapore and HongKong are the best examples of such transformation in Asia by promoting these three drivers of socio-economic development (Rijal, 2014). Among these three requisites too, the development of tourism should be regarded as the primary driver as it would leverage the wisdom, liberation, envisioning, empowerment, commitment, conceptual and technical competence and leadership strength required for ideation, planning, development and promotion of rest of sectors, making Nepal a lovely destination for the world of travelers.

The Sherpa Hilarity and Sustainable Tourism Development

As it applies to the personal observation of the present researcher, the naturally grounded personality disposition, serving spirit with focused mindset, religious and traditional valuesystem and cultural practices are a few of the loving characteristic features of the Sherpas in the Khumbu Region of Nepal that might have influenced many people working for at least something related to them. In fact, once the visitors are served by the Sherpasof this region, such visitors love to come back again and again.

As a symbol of their gaiety, one of the most important characters Sherpasin hospitality, a visitor must not leave the house unfed or without a drink, shared the key informant of the present researcherat Khumjung Valleyduring a two-day discourse on Sherpasof the mountains in Nepal. It is quite apparent learning in the region that the guests are often offered with the Tibetan tea or home-made wine as part of welcoming ritual in the locality. The visitors of high standing profiles will be served a snack, or even a complete free meal, if a Sherpa offers it free; it must be accepted as freesolace as it is offered by heart. Even the offerings at the cost of visitors do trace a complete solace of Sherpa spirit so that the customers feel just like service by soul. Such a behavior might have been linked with their spiritual value system as the Sherpas of this region have a belief that the people having evil thought about others would negatively affected by the negative waves of 'spirit'. For example, Kunwar (1999) in a scholarly work entitled *"Fire of Himal: An Anthropological Study of the Sherpas of Nepal Himalayan Region",* has recognized the religious and spiritual footage of the Sherpa behavior and their cognition to represent an authentic Nepalese tribe that has capacity and reason of being a source of inspiration for learning about human values.

Kunwar (1999) has performed a depth, multi-fold, cultural-anthropological and social systems diagnoses of the overall value systems, language, traditions, religion, economic subsistence, behavior of human settlements, and geo-biodiversity-based learning about the Sherpas and overall livelihood in the region – all presented in the form of an ethnographic narrative. This scholar has observed closely the Sherpa religion and spirituality right from its evolution in the region.This is one of the best works to explain the Sherpa hilarity and meaning of 'fire' in a true sense.

Other source of creation of hilarity in this community is that the guests in Sherpa homes have complete access to both the kitchen and the area set aside for worship. 'Such a practice results in creation of brotherhood with the visitors', shared the key participant after the morning tour of the valley. In fact, the Sherpas are quite open for experiential learning with them in many respects.

A more recent work on Hilarity of Sherpa Spirit came into realization of the present researcher as a result of present researcher's little understanding and knowledge of gaiety of spirit of the Sherpasin the Khumbu Region. The present author firmly believes that Sherpa Hilarity in Khumbu Region of Nepal is the biggest link to the success of each endeavor targeted to sustainable development in the great Himalayan glacier made heavenly region. Klatzel (2009) has noted that the world has been influenced heavily by rich cultural heritage of Sherpas, especially in the Khumbu Region of Nepal.Yes, Sherpa culture is very much important and worth learning, especially for those who are interested to learn about different cultural paradigms in the Himalayan region. More importantly, Sherpa culture and tradition on caring the guestsserves as a source of natural learning about the work, life and deeds attached approach to execute the eastern methodology of *'Atithi Devo Bhawa'* meaning -- may the guest be treated as the God.

The natural environment itself serves as one of the key sources of survival for the Sherpas in the Great Himalayas. As almost all the region has been situated within the buffer zone of Sagarmatha National Park, preserving nature, natural beauty and natural inhabitants and plants has been regarded as an important responsibility exhibited by the Sherpas in the region. Maintaining the quality of human and rest of natural life,making sure that the visitors understand their responsibility on conservation, and at the same time, providing with world class hospitality services to each visitor has been observed to be the marvelous job performed by the Sherpas. And this is what the present researcher intends to project as the outcomes of the Sherpa Hilarity and Spirit.

Surprisingly, though these people are less educated in terms of formal education, they render with such a high quality service and their living itself proves as one of the world class best practices. May be, it is because each member in the Sherpa society respects the value of the 'spirit' they have faith on (Kunwar, 1999), and is equally concerned about the consequences of failure to abide by the power of such a spirituality.

However, everything cannot continue moving smooth and clear on its own as expected forever. It needs be timely and adequately nourished to safeguard its sustainability with lasting future prosperity. In this work, the present author has attempted to explore a number of areas alarming for the sustainability of the Hilarity of the Sherpa Spirit as one of the national assets of Nepal tourism.Newssome et al. (2002, as cited in Raasch, 2004) indicated that as the nature-based tourism occurs in the natural setting, it may require more efforts to fostering adequate understanding and conservation of the natural environment by means of an eco-centric philosophy whereby the natural environment continues to serve as a platformfor learning about the society. In this respect, the people in the Khumbu Region of Nepal also seem to be in need of tangible support and protection in their mission to promote tourism and natural life in Himalayan region.

Sustainability, in any context, may be referred to as a holistic composition of development with more viable, resilient, quality focused, futuristic and needs-based approaches to promote empowerment and ownership, and at the same time, it continues to embrace local, regional, national and international integration of the values, concerns and priorities.Sustainable tourism, on the other hand, can be defined as a service consuming the optimal use of social, natural, cultural and financial resources in an equitable and self-sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life promoted in partnership with the government, the private sector and other national and international communities. For example, United Nations Organization(UNO, 1992), on its international conference on environment and development, has stated –

Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we

depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfillment of the basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can – in a global partnership for sustainable development (Agenda 21; Chapter 1; Preamble 1.1).

The conference passed with emphasis a number of resolutions with an aim to accelerate international cooperation for sustainable development in the developing countries and related domestic policies on combating poverty, help changing consumption patterns, empowering demographic dynamics on sustainability, protecting and promoting health conditions and human settlements, and integrating the issues of environment and development (UNO, 1992). The resolution emphasized the protection of atmosphere and land resources, combating deforestation, managing fragile ecosystems and many other concerns of sustainable environmental development as the global concerns for the conservation and its management as common means of global sustainable development of environment. The conference firmly recognized the reasons and ways how the women, youth and indigenous people and their communities could be involved in the global mission of environmental protection and development.In fact, environmental sustainability is the backbone of tourism sustainability (Kunwar, 2010; &Klatzel, 2009) as it promotes the ecosystem and ecotourism, which are one of the core concerns of the visitors of any place.

Similarly, sustainable development is the act of meeting the development needs of the present without compromising the requirements and ability of the future generations of humanity and institutions to meet their needs (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], as cited in Kunwar, 2010).

The United Nations World Tourism Organization ([UNWTO], 1996; as cited in Castellani, &Sala, 2009)has definedsustainable tourism as a development initiative that leads to management of all resources such a way that the desired socio-economic and aesthetic needs can be accomplished while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological and biological processes and diversity, and creation and promotion of valuable life support systems without hampering the existing supernatural systems and subsystems. Sustainable tourism responsively takes full account of current and future socio-economic as well as environmental impacts while delivering the needs of the visitors, industry, local environment and the host communities. The concept is universal and may apply equally in all parts of the world for each sector.

In Nepal, specifically in the eastern high hills and mountains, the main concern for emphasizing sustainable tourism serves multi-fold purposes. The nation is at a cross-road to ensure adequate and appropriate national capacity to manage the tourism sector. It has to continually improve the tourism marketing mix in light of emerging global trends. Time and again, the nation has been forced to develop efficient and

cost effective transportation options to facilitate adequate destination accessibility. At the same time, the nation also has to ensure the sustainable use of natural environment and cultural heritage for the benefit of wider spectrum of the society and beyond. For this, it is equally important to develop and strengthen the links between tourism and other sectors nationally and globally. Also it is equally imperative to manage the health, safety and security issues that impact the long-term outcomes of tourism as one of the key sectors of national economic development.

In this respect, mountain tourism in Nepal needs be strengthened keeping in view at least a three-pillar philosophy – economic, social and environmental pillars to confirm its sustainability (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2012).Principally, sustainable tourism development requires not only improved general and mass marketing, but it also requires creation and promotion of more effective niche markets, enactment of relevant rules and regulations, optimal use of environmental resources in tourism development, maintain essential ecological processes and help to conserve natural resources and biodiversity (Rijal, 2014).Sustainable forms of tourism should respect the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to the inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. Tourism also contributes to improving the quality of life with meaningful, wider participation that results in lasting beneficial effects to the communities.

In fact, sustainable tourism attempts to confirm more viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits that are fairly distributed to all the stakeholders by means of stable employment and income generation opportunities. There is no single model for the implementation of sustainable tourism. Instead, a mix of right management practices, appropriate legislative instruments and right forms of partnership are needed, depending on the given situation.

More importantly, the KhumbuRegion, as a key tourism destination, has its own features, assets, problems and vulnerabilities which may be completely different from that of other such destinations.Klatzel (2011) has observed a number of such distinctions in respect with Sherpa language, occupations, food and clothing, housing and décor, customs and religion in the Khumbu region – these all may be considered as the aspects aligned to the idea of Sherpa Hilarity for sustainable tourism promotion.

The Quest of Learning

As a trainer and university level educator in the field of hospitality management sciences, the present scholar has been always concerned to explore the problems and prospects of promoting this very special sector of national socio-economic development in Nepal. In this respect, the researcher has attempted to give continuity to years' long journey of exploration about the Sherpas of the Khumbu Region of Nepal. In this article, the present researcher has attempted to explore the problems and prospects

of promoting sustainable tourism in the Khumbu Region in light with Hilarity of Sherpa Spirit from different respects of sustainable mountain tourism development in this very special touristic destination of the country.

This article provides a brief account of content information on sustainability with specific attention to hospitality and tourism industry and introduces the concept of sustainability that may be of useful in hospitality and tourism education and training. The present researcher expects that it should serve instrumental to its readers to identify relevant themes in sustainable mountain tourism management in a variety of hospitality related sectors including the management of resources, issues pertaining to conservation and continuation of typical regional traditions and cultures.

The present researcher was much interested to uncover the different facets attached with the issue of sustainable tourism promotion in the KhumbuRegion by means of a more qualitative discourse to be substantiated by grounded facts collected through an ethnographic dialectics on multiple realities which could be triangulated by the help of depth personal field observation and extensive review of existing literature related to the concern of the present inquiry.

Evolution of Memorable Stage

Many scholars have attempted project the evolution of services as the source of evolution of service economy. For example, Rijal (2014), Keelson (2012), and Kotler and Armstrong (2009) have pointed that the early era of industrial revolution between mid-eighteenth century to its end the overall focus of the industry was on 'production' concept as there were only a few firms producing the commodities to meet the demand of the total population of the world. Thus, mass production was considered as the most feasible concept in those days.

As the time passed, such a situation influenced more people, governments and other institutions to come into the world of business in early 1900s to till 1950s and the competition emerged among the firms and gradually resulted in evolution of competition imperfection. It forced industry's 'production orientation' to be added with 'product orientation' as the public and private enterprises perceived that mass production alone was not enough to address the growing competition. By then, the customers and consumers had become choosy and product quality was already considered as a means of cross-product comparison. Thus, the focus on product concept emphasized quality orientation of the firms and the product quality became the means of fighting in competition, which ultimately added onto the increasing level of quality consciousness among the firms and consumers.

Then after, gradually, emerged a series of philosophies including selling concept, marketing and communications concept, customer orientation, societal marketing concept and finally, the holistic marketing concept till reaching to the early twenty first century.

Another beauty of evolution of these concepts is that in each stage of evolution, the newer concepts evolved as an additional, supplementary concept to earlier existing concepts. As a result, the entire philosophy of managing the world of business could flourish. On the other hand, such a development over time pushed up the transformation of traditional four Ps (product, place, price and promotion) of the marketing mix elements into 7 Ps (product, place, price, promotion, people, processes, physical evidence of operations) in a more service dominated economy, again as a supplementary thematic evolution of business (Rijal, 2014; &Loveluck, Wirtz, & Chatterjee, 2011) and service became an integral component of each type of business.

In the discourse of the present day business world, it has been found to be benefitted significantly as a result of emergence of a highly noble concept of transforming the diversity of services within tangible classifications and tourism has emerged as one of the globally recognized sources of business priorities. Tourism has been considered as one of the purest forms of experiential economy worldwide. For example, Pine and Gilmore (1998) have defined 'experience economy' as the final phase of an economic progression to mark the early twenty first century. As it has been discussed earlier, it evolved through the phases of commodities, goods, services economies, and finally stage of memorable experience of the services received.

In fact, experience economy applies equally to all sectors of business. Say, for example, an automobile retailer would like to serve with an impression to create a realization of being at the helping hands. Similarly, the customers of a retail stores should feel being cared of their product needs. An airline's passengers should get to be exposed with a safe, comfortable and welcoming journey, and similar should be the memories of travelers to a destination after their journey is over. These are a few examples of experiences – the memories of the felt wellbeing.

Further, pioneering in their work on 'experience economy' Pine and Gilmore (1998) have presented this concept as the 'stage' function of economy. In their proposition, the scholars have presented experience as an economics' role and it has been claimed that the nature of offering is memorable in experiential service economy. Such a memory is attached with the 'personal attributes' of the beholder of memory on received services. The method of supply of service is revealed over a period of time on full realization or recollection of experience. The seller plays a role of stager. The buyer acts as a guest whereby the perceived sensation serves as the factors generating demand. The assumption is that better service delivery may generate positive sensation on services delivered. In other words, it is a real perception made by the consumer after having experience of the marketing offerings (Rijal, 2014).

In tourism, all what the firm sells is the experience and retention of the customers and their positive referrals to other prospects partly depends on the experience the firm is able to generate among the past customers. Finally, experience economy may be referred to as an integral component of tourism business as the sole business is

focused on imparting in customers the life term experiences with positive memories. Thus, it may be noted that higher the degree of positive experience of the services delivered, higher would be the prospect of business sustainability of such an offering.

The Goals of Sustainability and Ways Out

Sustainability may be considered as one of the tools to achieve organizational success. For example, United Nations Global Compact-Accenture CEO Study (2010, as cited in Bertels, Papania, &Papania, 2010) identified a two-fold objective of sustainability as emphasized by almost 93 percent of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) participating in the study. It was widely reported that sustainability was initiated for achieving the 'fulfillment and innovation' by means of formal and informal organizational initiatives.

These scholars could explore 'fulfillment' as the practices for delivering the current sustainability commitments and 'innovation' as the means that move the organization further along the path to sustainability. On the other hand, these scholars also could explore that the informal practices affect values and behaviors, whereas the formal practices establish rules and procedures required for the innovation and task accomplishment.In fact, the extent of an organization's success will partly depend on the extent to which it cherishes the attainment and innovation through its formal and informal means of operation.

The present researcher firmly believes that this concept may equally apply for the sustainable development of a community too. Thus, the prospects and problems of sustainable tourism development in the Khumbu Regionshould be observed from these two perspectives – fulfillment and innovation – and two approaches – formal and informal. And the key tasks associated in this mission, as suggested by Bertels, Papania and Papania (2010), should include clarifying the expectations, taking initiatives for capacity development for change, building momentum for change and fostering continued and shared commitment for transformation.The idea is quite similar to the philosophical insights of Rijal (2011) as this scholar has suggested at least six philosophical insights for a more sustainable institutional development leading to total quality management (TQM) process climate. The identified initiatives include total participation, customer focus, system standardization, shared commitment, continuous improvement and compliance with the macro-environmental systems development as the philosophical roots of a high quality organizational process climate.

The Pillars of Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development

Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a continued balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Shared commitment may have greater influence on sustainability of the three pillars.

The key participant at KhumjungValleyalso revealed a number of grievances on the grounds of sustainability. The participant argued with the proof on lack of adequate commitment and accountability from the government's side despite the fact that each account of revenue collection from tourism in this region was directed towards the state's treasury fulfillment. The participant questioned whether it was a responsibility as well as accountability to spend at least a share of such funds for the sustainable development, promotion and maintenance of such touristic destinations for which the visitors pay a large amount of revenue in different forms of accounts to the nation.

Practically, sustainable tourism development must be initiated with optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity. Similarly, respect of socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities, conservation of their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribution to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance also play important roles. Equally important is to ensure viable, long-term economic operations by providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation. And finally, sustainable tourism may not sustain unless the concerned agencies are able to make it a common mission with shared commitment for development (Rijal, 2011; Bertels, Papania, & Papania 2010; & Kunwar, 2010).

Somehow, the present researcher could observe lack of knowhow on local branding and promotion of locally available input based food and beverages (F&B) items in the region. As a result, a significant volume of revenue generated through F&B services was being pumped out from this region. Timely and adequate focus on such an idea could serve as a new dimension in this philosophy.

In a more recent work, a scholar has provided with a number of explicit guidelines and principles of sustainable tourism development (Kunwar, 2010) with emphasis on total participation, stakeholder involvement and cooperation from within and beyond the community, local ownership and business linkage within and beyond the community, focus on sustainability of the key resource base and respective community goals, joint-effort on capacity development, shared accountability and task responsiveness, mass training and development of the respective agencies involved, and positioning it as a pure means of overall development of the region.Apparently, these ideas are rooted with the ideas shared by early scholars advocating in the evolution of various marketing concepts as discussed earlier in this article.

Neto (2003) has concluded that new approaches to sustainable tourism development in the developing states need not only seek to minimize the local environmental impact, but also should give greater priority to community participation and poverty reduction with more emphasis on 'pro-poor tourism' approach at both national and

international levels. Another scholar has emphasized that the principles of sustainable tourism development be composed of environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects linked to the target place (Schorner, 2011). Similarly, Thierstein and Walser (2000) have identified as many as five thematic components of coverage of the sustainable tourism development which include rationalization of environment, economy, society, processes and ethical perspectives.

The key participant of the present researcher at Khumjung Valley feared if the national and international agencies and the local communities advocating sustainable mountain tourism in the region were firm enough to consider such thematic components as the integral elements of 'common focus' to give it a systems' approach to sustainability. However, the key participant agreed the relevance of consideration of these elements as part of holistic approach by saying, "I do not see anything more than this to be considered, though I have little knowledge about these talks of you, the more educated people." He meant to confirm the relevance and completeness of the thematic coveragewhile addressing the issues concerned to sustainable tourism development in the region. He further added, "I can work with you with guarantee of support from our Sherpa people to promote the Sherpa spirit with prays for this, but I cannot guarantee for the positive attitude of the park people, neither that of other national and international non-government agencies. One thing, for sure, the government's approach cannot be predicted as we have very much bitter experience of receiving its support in the past when the community was in severe need." It confirms the commitment of the local community but at the same time it also indicates…the problem may be rooted beyond the local society here.Ultimately, may the Sherpa Hilarity win the mission for such a genuine purpose!

"I wish, the enactment of federalism in the country will bring back our wish and dream of promoting the Khumbu Region as a symbolic destination of pure tourism for adventure, pilgrim and spiritual learning for rest of the world, and by then, there will be numerous points of attraction built in our areas, even in isolated and distant villages so that the tourists will extend their stay in the communities and there will be more jobs and earning for our people, especially the poor ones", shared the key respondent.

Naturally, the earner benefits the first and the most. Here, the Khumbu Region is the earner and it must receive the benefits out of its earning the first – it is all about 'the first earner should get the first benefits. It is a universal norm and the situation may turn dangerous if timely addressing fails in this issue.Khumbu Region is a great earner of foreign revenue for Nepal and Nepal must take care of it for a more sustainable development and prosperity of its people and the natural setting at large. That is clear from the verse of the key participant too. It is, indeed, a great lesson for us and we the learners of federal democratic economic policies must pay respect to this concern.

The Aims of Sustainable Mountain Tourism Development

The learning insights from different sources in this respect reveal that every mission with development focused initiatives must have a number of defined aims to be attained. For example, Korèekovã, Pasca, and Rouby (2011) have performed a closer review from at least five different approaches to sustainable mountain tourism development and synthesized that it serves as the building blocks for the generation of income and employment. These scholars have presented tourism as one of the most productive business sectors. The ways out as suggested by these scholars include fair distribution of income to the concerned communities, and preservation and promotion of environmental and cultural heritages in order to ensure the long-term viability. It also requires adequate and authentic training and education of the business operators as well as consumers. In fact, the tourists need be made aware of the impact of their choices. More importantly, the operational affairs need be promoted through mutual cooperation between stakeholders, businesses, authorities and the tourists to provide for the right framework of operations in action.

The present researcher firmly believes that sustainable mountain tourism development in Nepal, especially in the Khumbu Region, must be considered in respect with its potential to – 1. generate economic viability, 2. empower local prosperity, 3. promote the local employment quality and quantity, 4. promote social equity, 5. reward with visitors' perceived fulfillment, 6. capacitate and maintain local control, 7. promote the community wellbeing, 8. explore and promote the cultural richness, 9. maintain physical integrity of the locality, 10. promote the development and protection of biological diversity, 11. improve the efficiency of development and consumption of local resources, and 12. contribute significantly in maintaining environmental purity of the destination so as to make the place to be able to keep on appealing the visitors for travel visits time and again in the long-run. The subsequent sub-sections present with the existing reality in respect with these potentialities in the Khumbu Region.

Economic viability serves as one of the key aims of sustainable development of any sector. In mountain tourism, economic viability serves as a backbone to ensure the viability and competitiveness of the tourism destinations and enterprises so that they can be able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in longer runs without distorting the natural and social systems.

For example, Neto (2003), in a work aimed at the exploration of a new approach to sustainable tourism development for moving beyond environmental protection, has concluded that the new approaches to sustainable tourism development in the developing world should not only seek to minimize local environmental impact, but also it should give greater priority to community participation and poverty reduction to a greater extent and utmost potential to do so.

In the context of Khumbu Region, in particular, more emphasis should be givento a 'pro-poor tourism' approach at both the local communities and national levels. The key participant revealed his innocence in confirmation of economic viability of the different development and protection or conservation initiatives carried out by the government and non-government agencies in the region. The participant added, if there was a training and development program being conducted with involvement of the local people and if it concludedwithout conveying a meaningful value how, where and when to implement the ideas evolved or shared during such discourses, it could just establish an example of the wasteof participants' valuable time and involvement nullifying the cost of opportunity. This participant meant to share that each effort vested with an aim to promote sustainable tourism development must first address the ability, willingness and maturity of the larger spectrum of the beneficiary society to move on the expected mission. And, equally important concern is that such initiatives must serve instrumental in generating continued economic means of bread and butter for the target groups in the longer runs.

A more recent work by Shokirov, Abdykadyrova, Dear and Nowrojee (2014)empirically confirmed that a larger segment of population reside in remote, mountainous communities with limited access to general infrastructure, services and opportunities, confirmed the same in UNWTO (2005). As a result, the incomes in such places are low, natural resources are being depleted, and the lack of social and economic assets has forced many people to seek opportunities elsewhere. UNWTO (2005) has identified such rate of outbound migration to be more than 30% of total population in many places. In the case of Khumbu Region, the key participant reported that most of the youth from many communities, including from the market zones, had already been migrated to either other parts of the country or abroad in search of better opportunities for livelihood.

In course of addressing such an issue more rationally, the poor, remote mountain-based communities must receive a great deal of socio-economic returns by means of each endeavor targeted for sustainable tourism development in the region (Shokirov, Abdykadyrova, Dear, &Nowrojee, 2014), which in turn, should serve as a developmental resource to confirm sustainability through perceived economic viability and value. This idea matches with the expectation of the key participant of the present researcher.

Local prosperity should be considered as another important aimof sustainable tourism development to maximize the contribution of tourism for the economic prosperity of the host destinations, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally. However, there is hardly some evidence of state contribution to develop adequate infrastructure leading to local prosperity in the present context of Khumbu Region in Nepal.

The key participant exchanged his grief that the government collected revenue from each tourist visiting the Khumbu Region but hardly paid it back to the communities

for constructing local treks, healthposts, schools and Gumbas – the most essential infrastructures. The key participant revealed, "We are self-generating the electricity and drinking water, and there is not a single contribution by the state to construct the treks and management of sanitation these days.How can we be convinced on government's shared commitment for building and promoting the local prosperity?"At the same time, the participant reported that there existed a highly congenial and shared feeling among the community members for the collective promotion of 'total wellbeing' of the society at large.

In fact, the key participant's claim could be further confirmed by relating it with the evidence of the present researcher's prior learning about the collectivism of the Sherpas in this region. A few years back, almost all households in many remote villages of this region were badly hit by an earthquake and the district administration was so late to respond with immediate action that the situation urged the local communities to come up with their self-initiated moves to collect funds to support the victim households. In an another example, the local community members had raised almost NRs. 500,000.00 to upgrade the infrastructure of local public health center at Namchebazar.

According to Buckley (2012), sustainable tourism development generates a multi-fold impact on promoting local prosperity in the form of a number of demographic effects that include empowerment of the gender and other roots of diversity, promotion of education and life skills among the local stakeholders, collective participation in conflict negotiation and peace building, increased demand of the locally produced materials, and enterprise development leading to entrepreneurial culture in the remote areas.

Really, it is a matter of pride in the Khumbu Region that the women have been taking leadership in almost all areas of entrepreneurship, social development and other respects. For example, almost three years back, the present researcher got an opportunity to participate in a local women group initiated program on afforestation in the areas of stone-mines nearby Namchebazar. The noble contribution of the women was even appreciated by then Ambassador of India to Nepal, who was the chief guest of its inaugural ceremony. More than 7,000 plants were transplanted in the stone-mined areas, vulnerable for land erosion. The concept was entirely initiated by the local visionary women and a large troop of Nepal Army from SagarmathaNationa Park actively supported in this mission. The local key participant in this respect recalled it as an impact of the Hilarity of the Sherpa spirit on collectivism for positive causes.

Equally, sustainable tourism development in the mountain regions will result in forced development of infrastructure in such disconnected and deprived areas. As sustainable tourism emphasizes innovation and adoption of newer practices, hopefully it may serve instrumental in the promotion of more prosperous human, institutional and rest of environmental livelihood in such destinations (Shokirov et al., 2014; & Buckley, 2012).

Other many studies have noted that many mountain communities around the world promoted ecotourism ventures to remodelthe problems of underdevelopment and environmental degradation. However, there is almost no evidence of agreement on what components such missions of tourism development should cover in totality. For example, Nepal (2014) has explored the value of ecotourism in the mountains and found that it would foster responsible tourist behavior, conservation of important wildlife habitats and ecosystems, appreciation of local cultures and traditional lifestyles, and provision of sustainable forms of livelihood for people living in remote areas and communities of such destinations.

In fact, all these behaviors will contribute significantly in leveraging local prosperity in the target locations.More importantly, the mountain tourism destinations in the developed economies are characterized by consolidation of businesses to increase profits and efficiency through reduced management costs and internal structural adjustments which also contribute significantly for the promotion of local and regional prosperity, the scholars have concluded(Buckley, 2012; & Nepal, 2002).

The key participant of the present researcher too happened to share similar experiences by saying that the people who once did not have money to buya packet of life-saving Jeevanjal, a means of rehydration in times of urgency, at NRs. 40, now the same people were enjoying maintaining bank deposits as provision money to be used in times of such urgency. This all was the outcome of their involvement in tourism activities, according to the key participant, meaning that sustainable tourism development results in creation and promotion of prosperous local livelihood. At the same time, the key participant also regretted about the drifted behavior of thee new generation. He shared, "Sometimes, our youth is seen to be more lured, so quickly. As a result, the negative side of the spirit – the evil side –affects them adversely and the consequences are beyond imagination." "Sometimes the collective purity is helpless to nullify such an individual impurity, in the cases where mostly the younger people expect much higher rewards that what they actually deserve through rational means", exchanged the key participant. This all confirms that the Sherpa spirituality rests on the ground of purity of mind, body and soul, as a whole of spirit.

Employment quality and sustainable tourism development must keep on strengtheningside by side where the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism should witness the same, including the level of pay, conditions of the services and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or in other ways.

The key participant's verse in this respect was that though the efforts made so far by the different agencies to promote skill competence and working knowledge among the local people remained quite commendable, still there was a big room for bringing forward the people from remotest areas of the remotes. This person said that there existed a severe geographic remoteness within the remote areas and the people benefiting first were mostly from the market zones in the region.

Another grievance this person shared was that thedifferent places in the region were left with hardly a few youth of the learning stage for the agencies to train them and guide towards their overall socio-economic prosperity and development. He asked, "To whom would you train as almost all the capable and needy youth have migrated outside?" This question itself seems to be big and challenging enough for the agencies working in this respect.He also added, "We the remaining people of the age are left with hardly business opportunity for about four to five months in a year and we have to survive by doing nothing for remaining period of the year. We need to survive on earnings we make in such a short earning seasonal periods by working for about a quarter of the year and remaining time passes away just idle." Could there be an alternative affordable for these people in this idle time? The present researcher is quite concerned, if something could be done for them to engage in their idle time. Such a situation might have affected the prospect of employment to a greater extent in this region.

In respect with the owner's treatment of the employees in the family managed resorts, hotels and restaurants, the present researcher could find hardly any cases of mishandling the workers. Instead, the junior workers were observed to be treated as close as their own children by the owners and the workers were mostly recognized as the beloved assistants. Both the parties shared with good amount of humor, respect, love and care to each other. This confirms a positive message emerging from the hilarity of the Sherpa spirit again.

Social equityand sustainable tourism must go side by side. Sustainable tourism must be developed and promoted within the premise of social equity seeking a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.Similarly, a share of proceeds or the earnings of such exchanges must be spent on promoting social equity. All geographic segments in the remote communities may not receive equal attention and interest of the visitors. In this context, it becomes a social obligation of the haves communities to take care of the needs of the non-haves communities. The Sherpa spirit also has been widely accepted as a source of such cognition – the purity of thought on socio-economic wellbeing of all.

In this respect too, still there is a lot of work left to be done as the entire region severely lacks an equitable distribution of economic, social and emotional benefits of tourism in the region. The households located in the distant outskirts supply with required workforce and other local means of production but these households get the least benefits of tourism in the region, despite the fact that the local people widely accept the idea of helping the poorer communities. The key participant revealed, "The households aside the treks have become golden pieces and the just behind to them are lying under the shed of the candle.We are simply unable to bring forward the backward segments, and it hurts us a lot as we are Sherpaswho value equitable living, at least among the Sherpa communities."

Visitor fulfillmentand sustainable tourism development should be considered congruent initiatives. The policies and programs should be initiated keeping in view the priority that the visitors are provided with a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or in other ways. For example, there is hardly some scope of free drinking water available for the travelers in the Khumjung Valley, neither there is full coverage of the local resorts and restaurants in all outer catchments. In this respect, the key participant shared the grievance that the district administration at Solukhumbu was neither favoring, nor supporting the local user groups. Despite the release of funds from the capital city, the district administration wasreported to be less cooperative in this respect to release the budget in timely and needful manner. Similar was the case of sanitation. The only public toilet in the Khumjung Valley was in the closed state at the time of present researcher's visit during the peak touristic season in fall 2014.There was a thick, constant smoke coming out of round the clock burning of the solid waste materials disposed at the burning center. Is it an environmentally safe and sustainable idea? In fact, the smoke might have affected adversely the rare wildlife too. The key participant also agreed.

Local controlis another equally important aim of sustainable tourism as it has to be promoted by engaging and empowering the local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their areas. It can be achieved in consultation with, and direct support of a number of other stakeholders.

The key participant had an adverse experience in respect with national mechanism's readiness to promote local control over resources and procedures of tourism development in the *Khumbu Region*, especially in respect with the present national policy on utilization of revenues collected by means of tourism accounts.

As it has been already discussed above, the local community severely felt deprived of return of adequate amount of money earned by the state through tourism exchanges in the region. In this respect, the key participant complained, "We generate local resources and construct Gumbas in different places. We have developed a*Sherpa Museum* using a lot of time and efforts. We guide the visitors to the different smaller to larger peaks. They visit all these places as we have maintained them visitable. The state charges a huge amount of money to them for allowing their visits to our places but this money does not come to our hands. The state collects it and hardly gives back for spending on building local infrastructure to appeal more tourists to visit the ountryside destinations. I firmly believe, it is all affecting the natural law of local controlover returns coming from the accounts of tourism here." In fact, this dialectical exchange has a firm rooting with the prevailing poor national policy, structural governance and culture which fails to pay adequate attention with the spirit of federalism.There is an immediate need of effective policy intervention at both national as well as local levels in this respect to empower the hard earners with their control over what they earn in the name of tourism related national accounts.

Community wellbeingshould be empowered by maintaining and strengthening the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation, as another equally important objective of sustainable tourism development.

More subtly, as stated by Lane (2014), excessive exploitation of tourism can destroy the future it promises by rendering the destination dependent on its dollars, then declaring a spoilt destination unfashionable and redundant. Ineffective operation of the tourism cycle can affect both large resorts and rural retreats, rich and poor countries alike. Tourism is a volatile, fashion industry. So, it needs be well-understood and well-managed to confirm its sustainable impacts for the host society and natural setting, at large.

The key participant was concerned in this respect and shared that the *Sherpa* community was always aware of, and convinced to maintain adequate silence and dignity of destinations. However, this participant had a good reason to oppose the present national policy that allows everybody to climb the peaks. The key participant questioned, "Where remains the dignity of the pure Himalayas, if the state allows every type of person to climb, and in any number every season?" This participant was of the opinion that only a select number of physically, mentally and socially healthy people should be permitted to climb the pure mountainsas it has been considereda part of their spiritual reality. The present researcher is yet to learn a lot in this respect before disclosing on this dimension further for general readers, who otherwise, may be innocent about this reality. The ongoing exploration entitled *'Hilarity of Sherpa Spirit'* has a reasonable promise to disclose more on this subject.

Cultural richness has to be promoted as an outcome of sustainable tourism development in the mountains and anywhere else and it should be promoted with respect and enhancementof historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, values and distinctiveness of the host communities so that each destination will be appealing the visitors in a unique way and in the form of a good memory – the stage of experience.

A scholar in a more recent work feared the consequences of failure to effective management of sustainable tourism development as it can have serious cultural impacts. According to this scholar, the tourists are mostly wealthy and sometimes they have a tendency of acting like demanding guests (Lane, 2014). Their dominant nature may ruin local customs; turn land values and labor markets upside down; make local languages redundant; and shift the balance of political power in favor of distant multi-nationals. In some scenarios tourism can bring vice and crime. In this respect, the actors of tourism development in innocent areas need be much thoughtful.

The key participant reserved that the *Sherpa* customs and traditions cannot be

easily affected just as a result of visitor influence as each member of the Sherpa society has grown up with rightly nurtured family and community value systems on gaiety of Sherpa spirit and spirituality. He said,"Our Sherpas rather teach them the core spiritual value systems and Tibetan Buddhism, both of which nurture people towards peace and non-violence."

Physical integrityis another important contribution of sustainable tourism development which is expected to be promoted by maintaining and enhancing the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, to avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.

According to Lane (2014), failure to handle the issue of sustainable tourism development can have powerful physical impacts on touristic destinations - farm and forest landsmay be swept away for airport and road construction, hotels and golf courses - often in scenic regions. Physical impacts can be complex and far-reaching - ski run development clearing trees can open the way to soil erosion, leading to landslides and potential major disasters. Heavily used areas can suffer erosion from sheer numbers of visitors - mountain erosion in the Himalayas arethe classic examples. Whole ecosystems can be damaged, if the players of mountain tourism fail to manage it effectively.

Lane (2014)has further stated that in the recent years, the impact of the transport system as a fundamental means of modernization of tourism has been increasingly recognized.They burn large quantities of fuel in a fuel hungry world; they produce large quantities of emissions in a world beset by climate change issues. On top of it, the climate change and transport issues are major issues that loom over the world of sustainable tourism development.

Many pasture lands in the Khumbu Region are now at a cross-road of devolution as a result of occupational acculturation, urbanization, and outbound migration of the working class people from this region. Development of village resorts, hotels and restaurants in fertile lands has been affecting adversely the rare forms of agriculture and cattle rearing. On top of it, numerous cases of landslides were reported to be taking lives of many people and damaging a lot of other property each year in different parts of the region as a result of poor or inferior landscaping in agricultural lands.

The key participant shared it as a result of failure to maintain adequately required vegetation in the glacier made slopes. There is enormous chance of landslides during the rainy and snowing seasons and the wildlife is equally affected. The key participant envisioned if a share of money collected out of visitor economy could have been spent for this purpose, the high hills would have been made even beautiful to roam around for the visitors and the wild life also would have been improved. 'We are in need of a tangible master plan now', he paused. He was of the opinion that each household must maintain green color tin-roofs; there must be a consensus that each adult member

living in the society or working there should have a social responsibility of sowing and growing at least ten plants every year; there should be shorter periods of freedom given to the community members for the collection of firewood.

Biological diversityhas been considered as another outcome of sustainable tourism. It is equally important to support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize the damage to them.

Draper (2000, p. 408) has suggested, "As a concept, 'sustainability' refers to the ability of an ecosystem to maintain ecological processes and functions, biodiversity and productivity over time."This scholar has further explained a more pragmatic meaning of 'sustainability' as an understanding what the people must learn how to sustain environmental resources so that they continue to provide benefits to all concerned stakeholders,other living things, and the larger environment of which they are a part. According to this scholar, sustainable tourism must involve balancing approach to social, economic and environmental objectives so that tourism will remain viable in an area for an indefinite period of time.

The key participant, as a popular conservation activist in the region, shared that the community at its best level of experiential and observational learning must be allowed to take the initiatives of their choices in terms of development, protection, promotion and conservation of biodiversity in the region. He suspected that the people walking to the area as the external visitor experts may not know rightly what type of biodiversity would naturally fit in the region. In this respect, he shared that the local people were quite discouraged as there was little recognition and respect of the local indigenous technology and knowhow. He said that the development activists were less patient to listen to the community people. As a result, the efforts initiated for the promotion of biodiversity in the region could not yield the results to the extent of expectation.

Resource efficiencymust be witnessed as an outcome of sustainable tourism development whereby the focus should be on minimized use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.The key participant reported that there was a massive use of firewood in the region. He stated, "It takes about 30-40 years for a pine tree to grow as a mature source for firewood but there has been a massive use of it. Not only firewood, pine is only the source for infrastructure construction in the region." It can be openly observed inmany areas that the people keep huge piles of firewood. The local administration and user groups allowpeople to collect the firewood once or twice a year. Similarly, the human settlements require a lot of pinewoods for construction purpose.

There is urgency of enactment of an alternative strategy. Especially, the general public and business institutions operating in the localities of Khumbu Region have been facing a daunting task of identifying suitable and feasible alternatives in respect

with the arrangement of 'fuel for fire' which is one of the noble means of living in the society.

Environmental purityshould be considered on top of above all as the idea of sustainable tourism development aims to minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.

The key participant at Khumjung Valley shared, "Look, in our early days, there was little forest here around our villages but today we have grown a lot of them. It is a great success in this glacier valley. We have done it. But one problem always rings in my mind. That is – in early days there used to roam around a number of wild animals in this area but today our children cannot see any of them, any time."

In fact, there could be at least three main reasons behind it -- 1. the localities have converted to crowd, 2. there is constant burning of waste materials in different places in each community zone, and/or 3. the animals might have disappeared due to illegal poaching. There has appeared an anomaly; despite the community success in growing green forests, the wild life has been declining in the region.

The root of the problem may be residing within the level of intensity and diversity of tourism initiatives causing the environmental purity that the local community and respective stakeholders are capable of maintaining in their own. For example, the noise and air pollution are increasing day by day – both generating fear for the wild life. Some quick alternatives are needed.

The Department of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Tourism, Provincial Administration of the Western Cape (2001) made a significant landmark in sustainable tourism development in the Western Cape areas by inducing more pragmatic and participatory policies with defined roles, duties and accountabilities of the civil society, conservation activists, and local, regional and central government structures.National and regional level administration has been sought with responsibility of development and enactment of relevant policy guidelines, whereas the local community stakeholder groups are made responsible for an effective implementation of such policies in action. This could serve as a best practice for Nepal.

Conclusion

As a purely independent and indigenous practice, the tourism industry, in any context, should not be governed either by the government or the market forces injected from outside. To achieve a more sustainable form of tourism, it should rather be successfully driven by self-regulation as being the best way forward for rest of the world.

The above all discussions confirm that the sustainable mountain tourism development in the Khumbu Region should be initiated not just by planning for tourism, but also by integrating tourism into a balanced and futuristic relationship with broader socio-economic, cultural and heritage development interventions in the

region. That is the way in which sustainable tourism fulfils its requirement to think holistically as an integral part of social life in the region. In many rural areas the watchword is that the mountain tourism should be a tool for rural natural and heritage conservation, service retention and diverse development. However, there is a key caveat -- sustainable development cannot be created by planning alone, it needs be worked in line with the marketand local ground realities.

The ground reality is that the mountains are melting. The fires are burning everywhere. The forests are cut down. Pasturelands are being cultivated. People are migrating. Mobilization of the earning from tourism has been centralized. And many more are the anomalies. All what the entire region of Khumbu requires is a swift, collective, proactive and reactive move.

Sometimes, if things do not move as expected, the state mechanism should regulate them rather than creating coercion or imposing explicit measures which the community would be in other way position of their implementation. Equally important aspect is that the public settlements in the mountain regions of Nepal are still innocent of market intelligence and as a result, they may vulnerable to be abused by the so called intelligent and tactful people from other places. For example, Buckley (2012) has revealed that some tourism advocates still use the political approaches to avoid environmental restrictions and to gain access to public natural resources. In this context, the state machinery should take it into consideration to provide with such a regulation that the indigenous people of this region should find themselves proud of being the natives of the Khumbu Region.

The tourism researchers must consider socio-cultural and environmental issues as integral components of their inquiry in every type of research conducted. Moreover, the universities and higher education institutions should consider the ground reality-based requirement of training and development of the people and institutions living and working in such regions keeping in mind the broader sustainability as a lasting outcome of any initiative undertaken.

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National Images – Challenges for South Asian Sub-regional Nations to Sustain Tourism Growth

Rabi Jung Pandey*

Abstract

An image on tourism industry products gives potential traveller an important sense of emotional security. They can establish harmonious relationship between themselves and the outside world. National image is a long term investment and should be considered every time a decision is made at high or low levels of management. Marketers of the tourism product should not underestimate the value of a national image and its effect upon tourist behaviour. The steady growth in the world tourism market has earmarked its importance globally. Inevitably such tourism activities have an impact on wider economies, in both the developed and the developing world. Realizing the fact and importance of tourism, there is growing awareness worldwide. However, there is still relatively little appreciation of the specific operating characteristics of tourism firms, and especially of tourism entrepreneurship within developing countries. The development of national tourism policies, long-term tourism master plans, and tourism marketing strategies clearly highlights the significance that governments all over the world are attached and giving utmost priority to the industry. It is equally important to understand that the reliance on international tourism as a strategy for economic development might be precarious for the country. This is justified by the fact that it is so often associated with a dependency upon external sources of growth. This type of situation will be observed by those countries, which will be having their internal political conflicts, or in other socio-political tribulations. Therefore, such external sources at that time tend to be fickle in nature. Tourism being very sensitive and psycho graphic industry, choices of tourist destinations is susceptible to large fluctuations, particularly because of economic conditions in the tourist's country of origin or the political situation in the holiday destination. Likewise, there also exist significant socio-economic and geographical dimensions of tourism dependency. The growth of the

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* Mr. Pandey is the Director of Nepalese Tourism Research and Service Center (NTRSC).

tourist industry and its potential for stimulating economic development through service sectors has contrived an important point in much of the literature on tourism. South Asian Sub-regional countries are considering tourism as an important industry for their livelihood. Different concepts and different philosophies on tourism are gaining wider recognition in this sub-region. That is why, research and studies going on widely into these areas. However, regardless of considerable dispute on the subject there is still little conformity as to tourism's role in economic development where the governments will be having many more other socio-economic obligations. In such countries, the overall picture of tourism's role is found to be somewhat blurred with some challenges, not only by the different assessments of economic development, but also by its socio-cultural and environmental implications as well.

Keywords: national image, challenges, SASEC, destination choice, sustainability

Introduction

The study of national image is somewhat recent addition in to the field of tourism research. However, various study show that national images do, indeed, influence tourist behaviour (Echtner and Ritchie,1991; Chon,1992a; Pearce,1982; Hunt,1975). Every individual is believed to have own perception of reality. Of all the stimuli that confront traveller, he/she receives only those that conform to his/her own image. Traveller sees and hears not what is there, but what they prefer to see or hear (Mayo,1973)

National image has thought to have a decisive role in an individual's travel purchase related decision making process. The individual travellers satisfaction / dissatisfaction with a travel purchase largely depends on a comparison of his/her expectation about the destination, or a previously held destination image, and their perceived performance of the destination (Chon 1990,1992).

However, the remarkable growth in the tourism industry during the last eighty years has brought major challenges in tourism marketing. With the development of new area in the world for tourism, the destination choices available to consumers have continued to expand. Moreover, present consumers who are facilitated by increased leisure time, wider and varied sources of information, high disposable income and efficient transport networks, have ample opportunity to choose the best one from larger variety of nations. As a result, in this complex and competitive global market place, the national marketers are facing them busy, influencing consumer to make decision in their favour. This challenging situation has created the need for positioning the nation into an effective way (Calantone et al., 1989). Furthermore, various study suggest that, in order to promote a nation as a destination successfully in the targeted

market, the product should be favourably differentiated from the competitors or it should be positioned positively in the minds of the consumers (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Cohn, 1989, 1990, 1992; Christopher, 1984; Batson, 1991), whereas, creation and management of a distinctive and appealing perception or image, is the key element of the positioning process.

As suggested by Goodrich (1978) and Chon (1990) the strong, positive images are more likely to be marketed and preferred in the travel decision process. The awareness of the tourism product which is made up of experiences, learning, emotions, and perceptions, can be described as knowledge producing a specific image of the tourism product, which could affect an individual's preferences and motivates towards tourism. However, while developing a strong national image, it needs creativity and hard work. It cannot be implanted in the public's mind overnight nor seeded by one media vehicle alone. Furthermore, it should be carried out in every communication vehicle available, with regular intervals. Images, beliefs and perceptions of an individual what Hunt (1975) suggests will contribute for the successful development of new tourist areas, equally, as a tangible recreation facilities and other tourist resources contributes towards destination.

Pizam et al., (1978) supporting Hunt suggest that the consequence of the interaction between a tourist experience at the destination areas and the assumptions he/she had about the destination is the satisfaction of the tourist. Mayo (1980) also state that among alternative choices available to travel destination, the subjective judgement a traveller makes about alternatives available is dependent on a number of factors among which the most important of these of the image of the each alternative and its perceived ability to satisfy his/her needs. To conclude, traveller's satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the comparison between travellers' accumulated image and actual image which is gathered from travel experience. The change arising from satisfaction and dissatisfaction would have a lot to do with the national image.

Condition to Travel

It is argued that economic and cultural distance and the relative cost of living at the destination will attribute the aptness of a traveller to particular destinations. Economic distance are associated with the time and cost of reaching a destination, whereas cultural distance relates the differences in cultural between the origin area and destination. Cost at a destination are not an absolute quantity, but have to be considered reciprocal to the value of the travellers own current (Cooper et al., 1993).

According to Pearce (1985), to be able to satisfy their desire to travel, travellers must be able to meet various conditions, such as be able to afford both time and money and should be able to overcome obstacles to travel. The economic distance and the cost at a destination defined by Cooper et al. seem to have the same notion which Pearce has described as time and money.

The growth of leisure time which has brought about by technological and other improvements has greatly increased the amount of time available for tourism, especially in developed nations. The technological development with the application of sophisticated marketing and management techniques has helped to stimulate to the tourism activities. According to Cooper et al. (1993) the ability to undertake the trip and the nature of that trip will be influenced by two broad interrelated factors: (a) life style - Which include income employment, holiday entitlement, educational attainment and mobility; and (b) life cycle - Where the age and domestic circumstances of an individual affect both the amount and type of tourism demanded.

Among the life style factors, income and employment are closely linked and employ importance upon both the level and the nature of tourism demanded by an individual, while time budget, leisure time and paid holiday entitlement is complex. Paid holiday entitlement tends to be more generous in developed economies and less so in the developing world. Whereas, level of educational attainment is an important determinant of travel aptness as education extends perspectives and stimulates longings to travel.

In life cycle factors, the penchant to travel, and the type of tourism experience demanded, is closely related to an individual's age. At each stage in the life-cycle individuals can be thought of as having preoccupation's, interests, and activities. Each stage in the life-cycle is said to characterise by particular combinations of the three factors.

Therefore, the demand for tourism is influenced not only by the amount of leisure time available but also the distribution of that time throughout the year. In most countries the demand for tourism is marketed seasonally. Factors such as institutionalised holiday periods when schools and many businesses close down or certain groups traditionally take their holidays and climatic conditions in the market areas and destinations give rise to 'peak' and 'off' seasons. To be able to travel, tourists must not only have the time but also sufficient financial resources to enable them to do so. Hence, it can be concluded that the determinants of tourist demand are basically, income, time, and age.

Lavery, et al (1990) asserts that as tourism became more and more organised activity, the organisation of travel have become more established institutions. The onset of the airline industry signalled the beginning of the end, not only for long distance rail services but more decisively, for the great steamship companies. In the 1950's and 1960's, international tourism began to reach mass markets in many countries. This was stimulated by the development of relatively cheap and fast air transport and by the application of sophisticated marketing and management techniques by producers in what was now recognised to be the tourism industry. The domain for international tourism has increased steadily since 1960 and the total number of arrivals has grown dramatically.

Destination Choice Behaviour

In recent years, because of the rapid growth of both travel demand and the tourist industry, the need to study the nation as destination - choice process has become more important. Together with this growth, the struggle of the industry to attract more potential tourists has also grown. At the same time, tourist have become more experienced and sophisticated in both destination choice and their expectations towards "tourism product". There is no doubt, therefore, that solving the destination - choice perplexity and constituting a sound theoretical framework for this process are no longer becoming a matters of purely academic interest, but also has become applicable to the highly sensitive tourist industry, urging a better understanding of this process. This situation has created a fundamental question as to the course of action that should be taken in order to attain a better understanding of the mechanism behind the destination - choice process.

Mansfeld (1992) and Chon (1990) asserts that some factors will effect on tourist movement just before starting of their actual trip. The researchers have named it as determinants for destination choice. In this approach it has been assumed that a variety of tourist needs, expectations, and backgrounds will result, different choice process, producing various patterns of tourists.

It has been argued that, earlier mathematics and economics were the only theoretical contributing factor to understand the decision making process. Which in later has found to introduce as a normative decision theory as probability, utility, and heuristics. It is argued that, this decision theory has been captivated from the social sciences, especially psychology and social psychology. Moreover, these closely related disciplines have dominated research into decision problems at both individual and society (Edwards et al., 1965; Lee, 1971; Savage, 1954; all cited in Mansfeld, 1992).

At present, in most of social sciences, it is argued that research into the decision making aspects is dominated by the random - utility theory and the probabilistic approach. Its advantage over the rational deterministic approach is found to believe in assumption which lies in the utility or utilities of a certain alternatives those are composed of both rational and irrational elements. By analysing them both, Mansfield (1992) argues that one can reveal a more sensible understanding of their nature and the pertinent consequence of their influence on the decision process and its repercussions. Many, social scientists believe that as with many other kinds of choices, the nation as destination choice of tourists involves a degree of uncertainty (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

With reference to basic tourist conditions such as climate, quality of the services, quality of the accommodations, and the attitude of the hosts sometimes are unknown at the time when decisions are being made. Prevailing sources of tourist information can only exhibit a picture of the probability, of acquiring a given product or services

at a particular potential destination, on the basis of the image it has created. This suggests that the random utility based behavioural probabilistic approach should be adopted for the study of the tourist choice against the disadvantage of the normative - rational approach. According to the later approach, the literature suggests that individual goes through several decision stages as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Model of Tourist Destination Choice
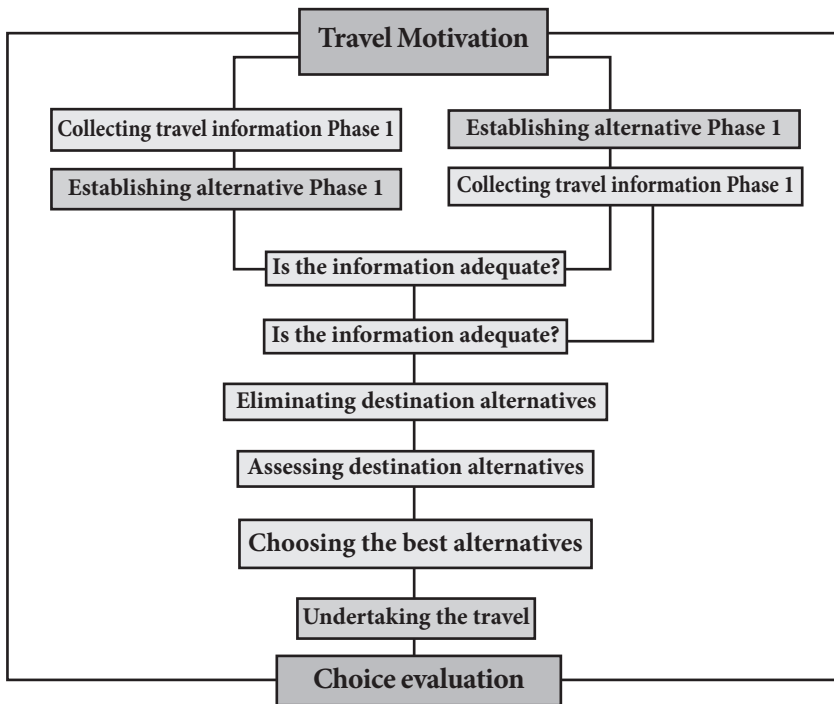
Source : Mansfeld (1992)

These destination choice processes is very much controlled by both the push and pull factors that design travel behaviour. Factors which motivate an individual traveller are "push" factors, and this motivation process, or push, is aggravated by the "pull", which attractive tourist destination areas exert upon travellers. Further, the "push" and "pull" factors, help account for travel patterns in the world today on the local, national and international scale. Whereas, two factors operating together function as antecedent events for an individual's travel motivation (Chon, 1990). However, it is argued that a primary image of the destination is constructed at the point when the push and pull factors co-exist. Furthermore, individual traveller's initial decision to travel to the destination is the sum of the two components: the individual traveller's

perception of the attractiveness of outcomes related to his travel objectives; and the perceived   beliefs and likelihood of accomplishing his or her needs and wants.

However, the smallest group affecting an individual's decision is the family. Some researchers (Van Raaij and Francken, 1984) suggest that destination choice is an entire family rather than an individual decision, whereas, other study (Jenkins and Henry, 1982), show that husband will have the major role in forming the destination - choice process, leading wife and the children's contribution unpretentious.

South Asian Region as Tourism Destination

According to the UNWTO, international tourism and travel now constitutes the world's largest and most rapidly expanding industry with growth over 5 per cent annually. Globally, more than 1087 million international tourists move from their place of permanent residence each year, and this figure is expected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020 (UNWTO, 2014). Given the diverse nature of tourism activity, it follows that there exist an equally diverse range of both positive and negative impacts. At the local and national level, the economic benefits of tourism are frequently cited by every nation to be the most significant factor. However, in addition, social and environmental opportunities are also considered, which include an improved community infrastructure and conservation of the environment. To judge the benefits exactly, the negative impacts that accrue by tourism should be evaluated. It is increasingly recognised that tourism should use and adopt natural and protected areas to facilitate wider social, economic and environmental development – and that it should be sustainable.

As has been defined by UNWTO (2005), 'sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host countries while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future development'. Likewise, it is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs are fulfilled while on maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support system.

Pondering over the above definition, it is cleared that sustainable tourism development pose challenges to the host countries regarding improving the living standard both in the short and long term; satisfying the demands of the growing numbers of tourists and continue to attract them. But at the same time the natural environment must also be safeguarded. Above all, new knowledge and skill need to be developed among local people to attain sustainability by involving them in the management of their tourism resources. This ultimately will benefit the local people directly from the utilisation of these resources creating positive image of the host countries/destinations. With the new knowledge and skills, it will help local people to develop tourism in a sustained way with threefold interactive development system, where, economy will be linked with environment and society. Proper management

of natural resources and the environment will keep all these three elements of development moving forward without harming others.

The South Asian region and in particular the sub region comprising Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Indian with South Asia Sub regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) is endowed with diverse cultural and natural resources. It includes many natural and cultural heritage sites inscribed in the World Heritage list, an ancient cultural heritage dating back over 5,000 years, and a rich diversity of ethnic groups with distinctive lifestyles. The sub region is the ancient heartland of Buddhism, and contains a landscape that includes the world's highest mountain Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) in the Himalayan range, and also some of the world's largest coastal mangrove forests and longest sea beaches, as well as containing internationally recognized biodiversity hotspots (ADB 2008).

The unique natural and cultural heritage endowments of the sub region itself has attracted an estimated 9.2 million international tourist arrivals in 2013 with average length of stay of estimated at 15.2 days and average spending of $215.32 per day (excluding Bangladesh) (Table 1). About 42% of arrivals in these countries originate from Europe dominated by the UK and France. About 22% market share comes from within the sub region (SAARC countries), 11% from East Asia dominated by Japan, South Korea and the People's Republic of China, followed by various smaller markets that together account for 25% of the market. Pilgrimage, visiting friends and relatives, and other leisure-orientated travel comprise the main reason for visiting the sub region (GON 2013, GOI 2013, SLTDA 2013, TCB 2014, UNWTO 2014a).

In 2010, the SAARC countries had attracted around 7.3 million international tourists (Table 1) who stayed for an average of 14.9 days and spent an average of $121.20 per day. However, in 2013, the annual average growth in tourism to these countries sustained 10.53% or nearly 2.1 times the growth of global international tourism. Likewise, Bhutan and Sri Lanka have experienced a massive growth of 10.25% and 26.7% respectively in 2013 over the period 2012. Similarly, in 2013, Bhutan has recorded the highest average spending per international tourist per day with $572 followed by Sri Lanka and India with $ 156.5 and $ 90 per tourist per day respectively. Comparatively, Nepal lags far behind among other SASEC member nations to motivate tourist to spend except Bangladesh, which does not exhibit any tourist statistics after 2010.

Table 1: International Tourist Arrivals to SASEC Countries (2008 – 2012)

(In Thousands)

SASEC Countries	International tourists Arrivals						Arrivals % Change 2012/13	Average length of stay (2013)	Average spending per day US$ (2013)
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013			
Bangladesh	349	267	303	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bhutan	28	23	41	64	105	116	10.25	6.85	572#
India	5283	5168	5776	6303	6577	6968	5.9	31.2**	90**
Nepal	500	510	603	736	803	798	-0.7	12.6	42.8
Sri Lanka	438	448	654	856	1006	1275	26.7	10**	156.5
Total SASEC Countries (Millions)	6.598	6.416	7.363	7.959*	8.491*	9.156*	10.53*	15.2*	215.32*
Total South Asia (Millions)	10.3	10.1	12	13.7	14.4	15.5	6.1		

*Excluding figures from Bangladesh
** Figure indicates of 2012
# Average spending by International visitors only

Source: UNWTO, 2008 – 2013, and other specific country Annual Statistical Reports (2008 – 2013)

Challenges to SASEC Countries to meet tourism demand

Nepal

Tourism Cluster Analysis for Nepal Competitive Industry Diagnostic report prepared by World Bank in 2013 indicates that Nepal has yet to show up on the list of top destinations for high-end Chinese, Indian, Western European and US markets. Although wealthy travelers from those markets do visit Nepal, the country itself ranks below other destinations popular with wealthy travelers – particularly those from Asia. For instance, the top ten holiday destinations for China outbound travel in 2012 were Hong Kong (6,281,317), Macau (3,275,065), TaiwanÊ(2,761,160), Thailand (2,698,199), South KoreaÊ(2,249,438), Singapore (1,358,139), JapanÊ(1,162,770), MalaysiaÊÊ(1,105,669), Vietnam (635,100), ÊFrance (631,651).ÊSimilar preferences can be observed with wealthy Indian and other Asian markets.

Similarly, this study also reveals that Nepal has a considerable mix in arrivals, although Asia accounts for just over half (57%) of all international visitors in 2012. India traditionally contributes the largest share of international arrivals (due to its geographic proximity and strong cultural ties) followed by China (8.9%) and Sri Lanka (8.7%) respectively. The Indian market share, however, has declined from its 1999 peak of one third of total arrivals (33.4%) to 23.2% in 2013. With almost 180,974 arrivals in 2013 (all by air as land arrivals are not recorded), India remains a major generating market for Nepal (MoCTCA, 2013). Other main source markets for Nepal in 2013 in order of size are USA (47,355), Thailand (40,969), UK (35,668), and Republic

of Korea (19,714). Most Sri Lankans (97%) and Thais (82%) are arriving by land to visit Lumbini with short stay and generally low spend patterns.

According to MoCTCA (2013), total international arrivals in Nepal for 2013 have been registered as 797,616 persons with decrease of 0.7% over 2012 and 57% increase from 2009 (509,956). However, arrivals in 2011 had registered 22.1% growth (736,215 visitors) over the year 2010, which can be considered a positive response to Nepal Tourism Year (NTY 2011) in terms of visitor growth (Table 1). Looking at the international market and growth trends, Nepal's neighbors are amongst the fastest growing spenders: China (38%) and India (32%). Other top spending markets with substantial Buddhist populations include South Korea, Japan and Thailand (UNWTO 2014). Asia and the Pacific recorded the fastest growth across all UNWTO regions, with a 7% increase in international arrivals comprising average annual growth of 6%, 9.4%, 4.1% and 4.4% of North-East Asia, South-East Asia, Oceania and South Asia respectively. About 75% of all visitors to Nepal enters by air to Kathmandu, currently the only international airport in the country. The average length of stay in 2013 was 12.6 days, which was 3.5% more compared to the previous year (MoCTCA 2013). To apprehend a greater share of wealthy travelers, Nepal still need to focus on improving the quality of its current supply of tourism services including quality accommodation facilities, and complement these with high standard tours, attractions and activities that match high-end western, eastern, and north & south neighboring market demand.

According to MoCTCA (2013), over 12 year's period, the country has experienced a spectacular change on accommodation sector. The total number of registered tourist standard hotels in Kathmandu Valley and outside Kathmandu has decreased from 439 and 449 in 2001, to 335 and 272 hotels in 2006 respectively, reflecting the period political conflict in the country (Table 2). With the revival of tourism following the peace agreement in 2006, the total number of hotels has recovered to 422 and 314 in 2009. However this was still 4% lower in Kathmandu Valley and 30% lower outside Kathmandu than in 2001.

Table 2: Hotels available in Kathmandu Valley and outside Kathmandu 2001 to 2013

Hotel Category	Year														
	2001			2006			2009			2012			2013		
	Number of Hotels		Number of Rooms	Number of Hotels		Number of Rooms	Number of Hotels		Number of Rooms	Number of Hotels		Number of Rooms	Number of Hotels		Number of Rooms
	Kathmandu	Outside		Kathmandu	Outside		Kathmandu	Outside		Kathmandu	Outside		Kathmandu	Outside	
5 Star	5	1	1051	8	1	1539	8	2	1539	8	NA	1539	8	N/A	1539
4 Star	8		755	2		190	2		190	2	NA	190	2	N/A	190
3 Star	12	2	482	12	5	455	11	6	372	15	NA	596	15	N/A	596
2 Star	26	6	1085	30	6	1223	27	4	1138	29	NA	1213	26	N/A	1093
1 Star	25	12	653	29	12	725	26	11	564	26	NA	564	24	N/A	483
Non Star	230	234	2812	254	248	3228	348	291	5010	442	NA	6985	482	N/A	7934
Registered & Under Construction	133	194	5186			-			-			-			
Total	**439**	**449**	**12024**	**335**	**272**	**7360**	**422**	**314**	**8813**	**522**	**NA**	**11087**	**557**	**N/A**	**11835**

Source: MoCTCA Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2001- 2013
NB: No data available for Hotels outside Kathmandu from 2010

Despite political upheavals, investment in hotels in Kathmandu in recent years has picked up with an increase in numbers representing 464 in 2010, 503 in 2011, 522 in 2012 and 557 in 2013. However most of the growth is in the low end of the market. The Valley's eight five-star hotels with 1,539 rooms are unchanged since 2006. At this point in time, a total of 557 hotels with 11,835 rooms are available in the Kathmandu Valley to cater over 800,000 visitors, in contrast to 2001 when 230 hotels with 6,838 hotel rooms provided for 300,000 arrivals (by air only) (Table 2). However, as only three – four - and five-star hotels are considered, there were 2,325 rooms in 2013, an increase of only 37 rooms from 2001 (MoCTCA, 2014).

According to the World Bank study (2013), Kathmandu's registered standard (starred) accommodation facilities have achieved an average 67% room occupancy in 2012, which is higher than the national average occupancy of 62%, with three night average length of stay. It could have been the reason that with increased bookings for hotel rooms, some of the Kathmandu five-star hotels planned refurbishments, and new extension. Likewise, it has also been argued that Êprojects have been attracting massive investments from both domestic and foreign investors. However, it reveals that still this does not include big projects, mainly four-star and five-star hotels.

At this instant, it has been quite urgent that Nepal's tourism industry needs lots of upgrading and enlargement eyeballing at the global market trend, and needs to learn the best practices from the outstanding progress made by the Asia Pacific

countries together with the neighbouring India and Sri Lanka (Table 3) which have substaintial capacity to hold high-end markets with standard accommodation facilities. It is anticipated that a number of international franchises and chains will be back and some new brands will be expecting their way into Nepal to meet global demand for wealthy and brand loyal travellers for quality tourism.

Table 3: Accommodation facilities available in SASEC Countries 2013

Hotel Category		2013				
		Bangladesh*	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Sri Lanka
5 Star	No. of Hotels	N/A	9	194	8	14
	No. of Rooms	N/A	212	18283	1539	3230
	No. of Beds	N/A	424	N/A	2897	6420
4 Star	No. of Hotels	N/A	8	114	2	18
	No. of Rooms	N/A	196	8250	190	2070
	No. of Beds	N/A	392	N/A	362	3863
3 Star	No. of Hotels	N/A	45	634	15	14
	No. of Rooms	N/A	1064	26463	596	1061
	No. of Beds	N/A	2115	N/A	1107	2142
2 Star	No. of Hotels	N/A	42	122	26	33
	No. of Rooms	N/A	1084	3160	1093	1717
	No. of Beds	N/A	2145	N/A	2169	3381
1 Star	No. of Hotels	N/A	19	86	24	33
	No. of Rooms	N/A	249	2253	483	1325
	No. of Beds	N/A	496	N/A	1252	2627
Non Star	No. of Hotels	N/A	NA	92	482	167
	No. of Rooms	N/A	NA	4526	7934	6898
	No. of Beds	N/A	NA	N/A	15084	15672
Total SASEC	No. of Hotels	N/A	123	1242	557	279
	No. of Rooms	N/A	2805	76858	11835	16301
	No. of Beds	N/A	5572	N/A	22871	34105

Source: SLTDA (2013), GoI (2013), GoN (2013), TCB (2014)

*Data not available

The tourism in Asia Pacific Region has been the challenge for South Asian Region as both the regions are undertaking tourism as a major contributor to the socioeconomic

development. Within South East Asia, Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) comprising China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam have been undertaking the 11 flagship programs, including the tourism sector in its sub-regional development plan (GMS STDP 2011). The region have noticed tourism as one of the potential sector for employment and economic benefits for people across the region ensuring benefits of tourism to distribute equitably especially to the poor; minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the country's culture and natural heritage on the environment and on the society as a whole. To enhance opportunity for economic development and with minimum threats to the communities, GMS countries have integrate ecotourism with mainstream tourism to support economic development of the country practicing CBET focusing more on management and capacity building of local communities in parallel. Moreover, the government of all GMS countries have been strongly supporting initiatives to expand the country's tourism sector and use tourism as a tool for poverty reduction, national socio-economic development and heritage conservation.

According to UNWTO (2014), in 2012, South-East Asia has remained the fastest growing sub region both in the region and in the world in 2013, with an increase of 11% in international tourist arrivals. Thailand has experienced the strong growth of 19%, with 27 million tourists, 4 million more than in 2012. Among other destinations, Myanmar has come up with extensive progress in tourist arrivals in the last few years and recorded an extraordinary 52% increase in 2013. Timor-Leste (up 42%) and Cambodia (up 18%) have also enjoyed high growth rates, together with Vietnam (up 11%), the Philippines (up 10%) and Indonesia (up 9%).

Compared with South-East Asia, South Asia has shown little growth (up 6%). Sri Lanka has been the highest growing country with 27% more tourists followed by Maldives 17% and Bhutan (up 10%). The sub region's largest destination India (7 million arrivals) has been able to sustain only 6% growth. However, during the period, Nepal did experience a decline of 0.7% in arrivals compared to 2012 (UNWTO, 2014; Table 1). North-East Asia, the largest sub region in Asia and the Pacific with over half of all international arrivals in the region, has seen a 4% increase in 2013. Japan has recorded a growth of 24%, reporting over 10 million arrivals for the first time ever. Taiwan (pr. of China) (up 10%) and the Republic of Korea (up 9%) have also experienced robust growth, together with Hong Kong (up 8%) and Macao (up 5%). China, however, the region's top destination, saw a decline of 4% in arrivals compared to 2012.

It is argued that though the "tourist arrival" figures are calculated on a monthly basis in Bangladesh, they are not accepted by many users within the country, because of allegation made on mode of data collection being not often dependable. Despite the Tourism Satellite Accounting System for aggregating the figures of tourist arrivals and earnings in practice, which have been introduced by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), no authentic data is available on Bangladesh since

2011. Cited in various articles published under tourism news events, critic say that in order to make tourism figures more reliable at the national and at the international levels, steps are undertaking by the government to modernize the methods of collecting such statistics.

Similarly, though domestic tourism among these five SASEC Sub-regional countries is equally prevalent, data is officially available only for India (Table 4). However, such tourism activities indicate that the region also generates large domestic tourist markets, whose main purpose is religious pilgrimage and visiting friends and relatives-based travel. It is noted however, that although large in volume, the domestic market has relatively short length of stay (2 to 3 days) and relatively low average daily expenditure, estimated at about one tenth of that of international tourists.

Table 4: Number of Domestic Tourists Visits to all States/UTs in India –2007-13

Year	NO. of Foreign Tourists Visits (In Millions)	Percentage change over the previous Year	NO. of Domestic Tourists Visits (In Millions)	Percentage change over the previous Year
2007	5.0	14.3	526.5	13.9
2008	5.2	4.0	563.0	6.9
2009	5.1	-2.2	668.8	18.8
2010	5.7	11.2	747.7	11.8
2011	6.3	9.2	864.5	15.6
2012	6.5	4.3	1036.3	19.8
2013	6.9	5.9	1145.0	9.6

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2013

Moreover, the regions' international and domestic tourism markets already support a broad range of transportation, accommodation, restaurant, travel and tour operation, tourism shopping, attraction and entertainment facilities and other services. World Travel and Tourism Council (2014) forecast that tourism activity in South Asia accounts for around 6% of regional GDP, 37.2 million jobs, $116.1 billion in total travel and tourism demand and $20.8 billion in foreign exchange earnings. Likewise, WTTC (2014) data show that the domestic market accounts for most of the economic impact in terms of income and employment while the international market accounts for most of the value added to the economy.

Likewise, WTTC (2014) also forecasts that tourism and travel GDP in South Asia will remain increased by 10.3% per annum, employment by 4.3% per annum, overall tourism demand by 10.8% per annum and foreign exchange earnings by 11.2% per annum up to 2019. Individual country forecasts indicate that by 2020, the sub region's countries could potentially attract nearly 15 million international visitor

arrivals as follows: (a) Bangladesh 900,000, (b) Bhutan 125,000, (c) India 8.9 million, (d) Nepal 2 million, and (e) Sri Lanka 3 million. It is stated that most tourists visit destinations within their own region. The large majority of international travel takes place within travellers' own regions, with about four out of five worldwide arrivals originating from the same region (UNWTO, 2014).

As suggested by Echtner and Ritchie, (1991); Cohn (1992); Pearce (1982); and Hunt (1975), the national images do, indeed, influence tourist behaviour and their perception towards the destination. Ultimately, it will have a decisive role in an individual's travel purchase related decision making process.

Challenges for Destination Image Building in SASEC Countries

Nepal

As suggested by various studies, there is no argument in the fact that tourism industry in Nepal is playing a significant role. For sustainable development of the national economy it comprises as one of the key development component. Furthermore, the geographical condition and the physical set up of the country have restrained Nepal to heave tourism as the largest potential industry.

According to the government statistics (2013, 2014a) and WTTC (2014), tourism has included several forms of directly and indirectly productive activity in Nepal, where the possibilities of exporting manufactured goods are limited. Comparing to other developed and developing nations, Nepal also cannot ignore tourism because of its multifaceted effects such as on the balance of payments situation (US$ 429.2 million earnings in 2013)., diversification of the economy (4.9% of the total foreign exchange earnings in 2013), augmentation of revenues, and generation of employment opportunities directly (483,518 jobs) and indirectly (504,000 jobs).

An argument between government and the private entrepreneurs highlights that to achieve significant contribution from tourism and to reap maximum benefits, some changes in the existing tourism related policies of the government has to be urgently envisioned. To boost the national economy, prompt revision on the existing conventional approach of handling tourism industry has been seriously perceived by the industry. Likewise, debates among the industry stakeholders going on to make the existing tourism products more sustainable with changes and modifications, and to open up more areas with adding new products and services.

It has been observed that Nepal is now striving to project its image as a unique tourist destination in the international arena, in terms of quality of tourism products and services. Recent initiatives taken by the government with formulating strategic plan with 5 years action is directing towards diversification of tourism to new areas, addressing issues in the way of tourism promotion, rural community participation, private sector's involvement in tourism development, and exploitation of the linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy. Moreover, it has been trying to

focus more on to promote rural tourism and has encouraged local community to take part in the tourism related activities (MoCTCA 2014).

However, achieving successful integrated tourism development and better management depend on effective use of natural resources and minimisation of the negative impacts on society, culture and environment. Likewise, other factors such as policy development, physical planning and impact control also need careful assessments both at local and central level. The global tourism patterns have changed and have prompted adventure tourists and eco-tourists to visit new areas and spend liberally to new destinations. Change in expenditure patterns of adventure tourists is a positive sign for Nepal, especially to the rural community. It is commendable that, efforts have been taking by the government and the private sectors to open up new areas producing more new tourism products.

As there lie immense scope for tourism development, there is a notion that the full exploitation of the uniqueness the country has not been capitalize. It is also argued that to manage and to promote sustainable tourism, measures such as minimising the impacts on environment, culture and protecting sensitive area bio-diversity have to be followed restrictedly. Similarly, it is suggested to keep efforts on to introduce new tourism products to tourists all over the world with a thrust to promote national image as well.

India

Like in Nepal, tourism has also been one of the major sectors of the economy in India, contributing to a large proportion of the National Income and generating huge employment opportunities. It has become the fastest growing service industry in the country with great potentials for its further expansion and diversification. Literature suggests that the development of tourism started in India in a planned manner only from 1956 together with the Second Five Year Plan. The Sixth Plan marked the beginning of a new era when tourism began to be considered a major instrument for social integration and economic development.

However, it was only after the 80's that tourism activity gained momentum. A National Policy on tourism was announced in 1982. Later in 1988, the National Committee on Tourism formulated a comprehensive plan for achieving a sustainable growth in tourism. In 1992, a National Action Plan was prepared and in 1996 the National Strategy for Promotion of Tourism was drafted. In 1997, the New Tourism Policy recognised the roles of Central and State governments, public sector undertakings and the private sector in the development of tourism (WTTC 2014, 2014a).

According to the Government of India (2013), at present, tourism is the largest service industry, with a contribution of 6.2% to the national GDP and providing 7.7% of the total employment (WTTC, 2014). India has witnessed a 6.97 million foreign tourist and 1145 million domestic tourist arrivals in 2013. The tourism industry in

India has generated about US$18.44 billion in 2013 and that is expected to increase to US$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate (GOI, 2013). The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the development and promotion of tourism and maintains the "Incredible India" campaign.

It is observed that recent initiatives taken by the Government to boost tourism include grant of export house status to the tourism sector and incentives for promoting private investment in the form of Income Tax exemptions, interest subsidy and reduced import duty. The hotel and tourism-related industry has been declared a high priority industry for foreign investment which entails automatic approval of direct investment up to 51 per cent of foreign equity and allowing 100 per cent non-resident Indian investment and simplifying rules regarding the grant of approval to travel agents, tour operators and tourist transport operators.

The major challenges in the development of tourism in India is the non-availability of adequate infrastructure including adequate air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist destinations, accommodation and trained manpower in sufficient number. Poor visitor experience, particularly, due to inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor hygienic conditions and incidents of touting and harassment of tourists in some places are factors that contribute to poor visitor experience.

Bhutan

According to the Tourism Council of Bhutan (2014), the country is practicing "high value, low impact" tourism for a longer period. It is argued that the country is fully aware of the negative impact of tourism, and the country has thus far carefully nurtured the industry. Nevertheless, the sector is now recognized as having considerable potential as a tool for development and as a contributor to national revenue and employment generation. For the first time ever, tourism industry was identified as a substantial socio-economic growth factor from the Ninth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) and has since been positioned as a priority sector. With international visitor arrival increasing every year, the sector is now seen as second only to Hydropower in terms of its potential to generate revenue and has emerged as the highest earner in foreign exchange.

Annual tourism statistics produced by BTC (2014) suggest that the tourism industry has been continuously growing in Bhutan at a steady rate with 116, 209 tourist arrivals in 2013, marking a growth rate of 10.25% over the previous year. The international to regional visitor ratio was at 45:55, with growth rates more significant for the regional segment. Of the total international arrivals, a clear majority of 83.84% were for holidaying and leisure.

It is observed that Bhutan has been considered mainly as a cultural destination. Among total visitors in 2013, 72.0% were for a cultural sightseeing tour followed by 8.0% to experience trekking and multiday hiking. The average length of stay of

international visitors has been recorded only 6.85 days in 2013 due to the increase in top Asian markets that normally visit for shorter durations. Among potential tourists to Bhutan, many of them have combined their holiday with other countries like Nepal (29.10%), India (23.90%), and Thailand (20.0%).

An analysis on visitor perceptions before coming to Bhutan shows that visitors were mainly motivated to experience the 'Unique culture', 'Pristine Nature', 'Gross National Happiness' and the 'Undiscovered specter' (TCB 2014). Favourable weather conditions, holiday timing, and Advice of Agents have been other main factors determining visitation time.

According to the TCB (2014), the results achieved from the departure survey done by the government in 2013 indicate that the challenges faced by Bhutan to build its national image and to sustain tourism growth exist improvements in 'roads', ' 'restroom facilities', 'garbage management', better hotels', etc. Similarly, the regional segment's main concern identified has been with 'online booking facilities' for hotels and Drukair airline service, lack of adequate information on hotels, difficulty to get hotels during peak period etc.

Bangladesh

According to the Government of Bangladesh it has recognized tourism as an important industry with the framing of a National Tourism Policy in 1992. In 1999, tourism was declared a Thrust Sector. However international arrivals have remained at low levels, and recently have declined from the high in 2007 of 397000 visitors. International arrivals to Bangladesh for 2010 totaled 303000, a 24% drop from 2007. Since the arrivals have declined an average of 0.8% per annum for the period 2002 to 2006. The picture improved in 2007 with an estimated 397000 visitor arrivals, an increase of about 200% over 2006. Although visitor numbers and yield from Bangladesh's important Buddhist monuments and ecotourism attractions remain low, there is good potential for generating interest from target source markets with improved marketing, packaging and product development (http://www.parjatan.gov.bd/).

According to the tourism highlights indicated in UNWTO (2012) and ADB (2008) (Table 1), of the 303,000 foreign visitors in 2010 to Bangladesh, about 33% reportedly came for holiday and leisure purposes. About 30% of all foreign arrivals were from India, followed by UK, USA and the PR China. Annual average growth in international arrivals have been in the order of 2% during the period 1999 to 2006, and actually dropped 4% from 2005. International arrivals to Bangladesh have been constrained by perceived access and visa issues, as well as a lack of preparedness of tourism attractions. However arrivals have recovered in 2007 with growth estimated at 200% over 2006.

While the beaches of Cox's Bazar receive the highest volume of domestic and Indian tourist arrivals in Bangladesh, with an estimated over one million visitors

annually, there is growing interest in historic and cultural tours out of Dhaka and to the sites along the "Heritage Highway" through west Bangladesh. The ruins of the important Paharpur Buddhist monastery and the 15th century Shaat Gambus mosque at Bagerhat are both protected as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Among total visitors in these UNESCO World Heritage Sites, less than 10% are estimated to be international visitors. Foreign visitors mainly Buddhist pilgrims visit Paharpur. In the 2005/2006 financial year, the Buddhist site of Mahastangarh received a total of 125,840 visitors. Bagerhat WHS received over 61,000 total visitors in 2006/2007, an increase of 15% over the previous year. Despite the lack of consistent data, the general picture from the sites is not clear though there seems growing demand (ADB, 2008).

Bangladesh is also having potential for ecotourism. Although access is difficult, the superb wildlife and natural attractions of Bangladesh's Sundarbans mangrove forests receive increasing numbers of domestic and international visitors. A journey by Rocket Steamer service from Dhaka (Sadarghat) to Khulna, the gateway to Sundarbans is considered a rewarding experience.

It is perceived that packaging the world heritage sites and other cultural and nature-based attractions that can be linked by the "Heritage Highway" concept could be the way to overcome some of the problems faced by Bangladesh tourism in terms of national image building. With improved access via Bagdogra and Dhaka, enhanced road conditions, visitor interpretation and systematic marketing, there is excellent potential to increase the currently low visitor numbers. In addition to Indian holidaymakers, future target markets are likely to be pre-booked cultural and special interest groups, some Free Individual Tourists (FITs) and expatriates living in South Asia. Wider international and intra-regional pilgrim segments can be eventually be attracted to Bangladesh's important Buddhist archeological sites.

Sri Lanka

According to Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority (2013), Sri Lanka has attracted a record one million tourists to the country for the first time in history in 2012. Tourist arrivals surpassed its target of 950,000 to record 1,005,605 arrivals in 2012, an increase of 17.5 per cent over 2011 figure of 855,975 arrivals. Moreover, the total tourist arrivals in 2013 have recorded 1274,593 an increase of 26.7% over 2012. The new products and refurbishment plans designed by Sri Lankan government have added to the tourism inventory towards achieving such growth. The national tourism strategy for 2011-2016 developed by Sri Lankan government has envisaged more number of arrivals as well as the value-addition to the Sri Lankan tourism industry, concentrating on the right type of tourists that Sri Lanka should have targeted.

The national tourism strategy plan (2011 – 2016) indicates that the Government of Sri Lanka has taken initiatives to make a concerted effort together with the industry towards sustaining the revival and boom in the tourism industry. Objectives set in

the strategy are positioning Sri Lanka as one of the most sought after tourist destinations, including promoting tourism to reach 2.5 million tourist arrivals with annual foreign exchange earnings of US dollars 2.75 billion by 2016 while increasing direct and indirect employment to 500,000 (GoSL, 2010).

Meanwhile, the one-stop unit which has been established at the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has started facilitating for further investment to build more hotel rooms. The 'Home Stay' programme launched to provide more interactive facilities for tourists added 143 units alone in 2011 and has hoped to add more units in the years to come including hotels, boutique hotels, Home Stay units, guest houses and heritage homes.

It is argued that the 'Visit Sri Lanka 2011' programme helped all key attractions to put under 8 unique themes, namely, Heritage, Festive, Scenic, Essence, Thrills, Bliss, Pristine and Wild. MICE Tourism, which included Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conference and Exhibitions, also showed a healthy growth by contributing around 12 per cent in 2011. New locations for product development extended and identified.

To meet the challenges of a fast growing tourism industry and to retain the national tourism image, Sri Lanka has been creating more opportunities for training, and new developments initiation. Various efforts are underway including drafting a new Tourism Act, amalgamating the present four institutions with two institutions, viz Sri Lanka Tourism Authority and Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management. Likewise, tourism sector related infrastructure and services expansion, addition of several international hotel chains and new airline companies, expansion of national carrier Sri Lankan Airlines routes and frequency to cater to the increasing demand from emerging market economies and traditional tourist markets in Europe. Moreover, Sri Lanka has been further initiating to promote lesser known attractions in all provinces in the country to attract potential travelers and investors through various promotional media.

What really impedes for regional promotion

Regardless of an impressive range of attractions, strong market potential, some relatively good tourism growth performances in recent years, and existing policy, planning and institutional arrangements, it is argued that the sub- regional countries have not been able to capitalize the full potential of tourism to contribute to a more environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive pattern of socio-economic development (ADB 2009).

The standards of tourist services and hospitality skills especially on the part of small and medium-sized tourism service providers are still limited. Visitors in these countries feel that the tourist information and site interpretation are generally inadequate and often absent. Likewise, the heritage assets of special interest to tourists such as major Buddhist monuments are in a poor state of conservation as indicated

by their crumbling facades, illegal encroachments, and development of non-conforming structures at the sites or in their vicinity.

Comparing to the other neighboring regions, border facilities are inadequate and immigration procedures are cumbersome. Potential tourists in the source markets widely perceive the sub-region as a "difficult" destination to reach, and to safely and securely travel in. Infrastructure and services especially road, rail, and air connectivity, utilities such as water supply, electricity, sanitation, and solid waste management in destinations, and wayside amenities on access roads are generally in poor condition.

Similarly, the pattern of tourism development in the sub-region remains largely concentrated into a number of main urban destinations leaving many poorer communities (many of whom are located in or adjacent to highly attractive tourism resources) largely excluded from the benefits of tourism. Inadequate participation and investment by the private sector, meager destination marketing budgets and follow-the-leader based marketing approaches, and poor research-based statistical data are key institutional challenges confronting the tourism in the sub-region. Public and private sector tourism institutional capacities for partnering in tourism planning, development, regulation of standards, destination marketing, and tourism impact monitoring and evaluation are generally limited and weak. The infrastructure deficiencies combined with institutional constrains have created an unfavorable climate for private investment, which is vital to robust quality tourism development in the sub-region.

It is blamed that each country in the sub-region has been trying to carve out a niche in the market without harnessing the complementarities, and potential synergies that are available in the sub-region. Until recently, there had been little cooperation among these five countries in the development and promotion of tourism destinations and tour products even though many of them are critically dependent upon each other for market access. The latter has been further constrained by complicated and cumbersome cross-border travel procedures.

Sub regional Cooperation a tool to Sustain National Images

There is widespread enthusiasm for intraregional tourism, particularly in light of recent major fluctuations in inter-regional markets. Tourism development programs of all five South Asian Sub-regional countries should emphasize intra-regional tourism by building on flows from growing regional markets, and through cooperation to improve regional information flows. Increasing the number and status of international border crossings, developing networks to identify best practices, promoting cross-border packages, and linking infrastructure planning with tourism development will contribute to regional image building with expansion of intra-regional tourism.

The widespread concern and impression of the tourist source markets as these five countries are "difficult" destination, needs to be overcome if tourism is to grow in the region. In addition to destination marketing programs promoting these common products to niche markets, other programs should aim at facilitating travel through such means as streamlining and simplifying visa and other border procedures, improving air connectivity, general security and transport safety, and improving public tourism services—such as customs, immigration, and tourist information services.

There is a wider common notion among SASEC countries that the individual tourism industries of these five countries must become more intra-regionally competitive. Concerned government of all countries should work to raise tourism industry standards in the sub region. This can be achieved through human resource development in the industry with other associated public services. Fostering private-public sector cooperation, reforming tourism regulations, and facilitating technology transfer through associations with foreign operators will also help. Encouraging investment including foreign direct investment (FDI) is essential in this regard. Similarly, facilitating dialogue between tourism and other sectors, improving banking and credit card services, and enabling "on line" booking through the Internet are also equally crucial.

The development and cooperation agenda for sub regional tourism development as envisaged in the previous projects funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB) such as SASEC Tourism Development Project (SASEC TDP) and South Asia Tourism Infrastructure Development Project (SATIDP) needs to be sustained and integrated by each country with a number of complementary interventions that will deepen the framework of support for marketing the sub-region as a single tourism destination as well as underpin the investments taking place under such project themes. Within the framework of the sub-regional multi-country circuit vision, the key complementary interventions that need to be integrated into a more comprehensive and coherent sub regional cooperation agenda must include: further streamlining cross border facilitation; destination marketing and promotion to expand tourism in the multi-country circuits; safeguarding heritage sites and enhancing the quality of tourism sites, facilities and services; encouraging private sector's participation; enhancing knowledge and experience sharing and human capacities; and augmenting linkages with broader regional cooperation initiatives in the above areas.
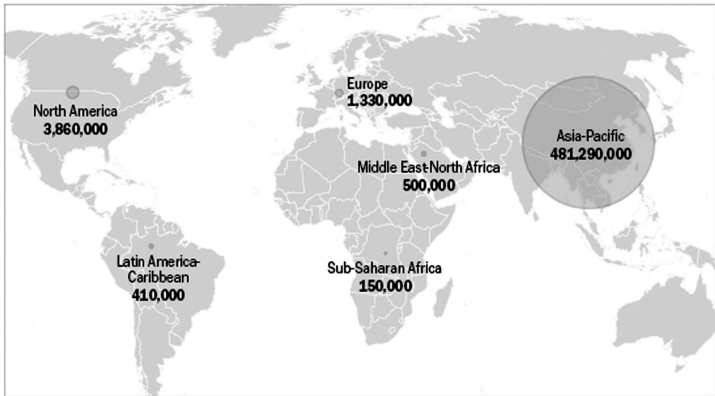
The South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program which began in 2001 with the establishment of a South Asian Growth Quadrangle comprised Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. However, in 2005 Sri Lanka joined with the other four originating countries. The South Asia region and in particular the sub-region comprising Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Indian is endowed with diverse cultural and natural resources. It includes many natural and cultural heritage sites inscribed in the World Heritage List, an ancient cultural heritage

dating back over 5,000 years, and a rich diversity of ethnic groups with distinctive lifestyles. The region is the ancient heartland of Hinduism and Buddhism, and contains a landscape that includes the world's highest mountain Mt. Everest in the Himalayan range, and also some of the world's largest coastal mangrove forests and longest sea beaches, as well as containing internationally recognized biodiversity hotspots.

As indicated by global religious landscape (2012), there are over 488 million Buddhists worldwide representing approximately 7% of the global population of 2010 (Fig. 2). The enormous opportunity for Buddhist pilgrimage travel is now recognized within the sub region. The Footsteps of Lord Buddha sites associated with his life remain the core Buddhist Heartland attractions with potential for growth from pilgrimage and cultural sightseeing segments. Recent trends associated with the search for spiritual wellbeing appeal to broader, general interest visitors, including Westerners. "Living Buddhism" segments are now targeted by India and Sri Lanka, amongst others. With improved access, guiding and interpretation, the history, iconography and art associated with Buddhism in SASEC is a significant, untapped resource. In terms of new markets, there is potential to target higher-value segments from Asian countries with strong Buddhist connections, such as PR China, Japan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Figure 2: Regional Distribution of Buddhist

Regional Distribution of Buddhists
Population by region as of 2010

North America
3,860,000

Europe
1,330,000

Middle East-North Africa
500,000

Asia-Pacific
481,290,000

Latin America-Caribbean
410,000

Sub-Saharan Africa
150,000

Percentage of world Buddhist population in each region as of 2010

SASEC countries are positioned as the "Buddhist Heartland" and feature some of the world's major Buddhist attractions, many of them recognized as World Heritage Sites. According to ADB (2008), Tourism Development Project (TDP) designed for SASEC countries identified the sub-themes of Footsteps of Lord Buddha, Living Buddhism in the Himalaya and Buddhist Art and Archaeology in South Asia . The Footsteps of Lord Buddha circuit in India and Nepal includes places directly associated

with the Buddha's life. In order, these are Lumbini (birthplace), Sravasti, Sarnath (where Buddha gave his first sermon) to Bodh Gaya (where he attained enlightenment) to Rajgir, Nalanda, Vaishali, Kesaria to Kushinagar (where he died).

Many Hindus and Buddhists from all over the world also include visits to the Kathmandu Valley pilgrimage sites of Pashupatinath. Swayambhunath, Changunarayan, Bodhnath, and Namobuddha. Recent trends in the search for spiritual wellbeing (such as religious studies, traditional healing, Himalayan spas, yoga practices and meditation retreats) show up strongly in source markets. The cultural sightseeing markets are attracted by the sub region's historic monuments and religious centers, particularly the Living Buddhism found today in Nepal (Lumbini, Kathmandu Valley and mountain Buddhist centers along the Great Himalaya Trail), Bhutan, India (Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Ladakh, Dharamshala etc.) and Sri Lanka (Ancient Cities, Kandy's Temple of the Tooth and Adam's Peak etc.).

The history, iconography and art associated with Hinduism and Buddhism can be found in important temples, monasteries and archaeological sites throughout the subregion. These include: Bangladesh (Paharpur, Mahasthangarh, Comila, Mainamati and Ramu); India (Madhya Pradesh (Samchi), Maharashtra (Ajanta and Ellora), Sikkim (Rumtek, Tashiding etc.), Ladakh; Orissa (Khandagiri, Udaygiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri), Arunachal Pradesh (Tawang); Tripura (Pilak etc.); in Nepal (Kapilvastu, Tilaurakot, Arorakot, Gotihawa, Kudan, Niglihawa, Sagarhawa, Ramgram and Devdaha); and throughout Sri Lanka (ADB 2008).

Buddhist tourists range across a spectrum from pilgrims on a religious quest, to long-stay visitors pursuing religious and spiritual studies, and more general interest sightseers who may not have a religious motive. In addition to strong domestic and sub-regional pilgrims, arrivals and growth from the higher value international Buddhist tourism to South Asia are convincing. As indicated by Lumbini Development Trust (2013) in GON (2013), the number of visitors in Lumbini is 125,496 in 2013 and large numbers of foreigners are estimated to visit Lumbini (the birth place of Lord Buddha) in future and the famous stupas of Bouddhanath and Swayambhunath in Nepal. In Bhutan, nearly 30% of foreign visitors cite Buddhism as the major attraction. The Footsteps of the Buddha is attracting large number of pilgrims to the entire circuit but many more to individual destinations, mainly pilgrims from countries with high Buddhist populations. Bihar in India reports that 32% of international visitors come to this State in monasteries and dharamshalas. Japan accounts for almost 20% of all visitors to Bodh Gaya. Lumbini's estimated total of 125,498 foreign visitors in 2013 (ADB 2008, GON 2013).

In terms of potential market demand, strong growth is observed not only at Buddhist attractions in South Asia but also in other places in Asia, and mainly from Buddhist source markets. At major Buddhist monuments such as Angkor in Cambodia and Borobudur in Indonesia, massive recent growth is not only threatening the visitor

experience but even said to be destroying the fabric of the building. In 2013, Siem Reap recorded 22,37,286 visitors attracted to Angkor, up from 20,63,336 visitors in 2012. The top three markets to Angkor are Korean, Japanese and Chinese who together accounted for nearly 26% of all visitors in 2013(MOT 2013). Borobudur in Java received 3.2 million visitors in 2012, with major markets including Japan, Netherlands, Germany, British, France, Taiwan, Chinese and South Korea. Out of the total foreign arrivals to Sri Lanka, over 65% visit Kandy, home of the relic of Lord Buddha housed in the Temple of the Tooth. Rumtek Monastery at Gangtok, the seat of the Kagyupa sect, receives an estimated 132,000 visitors annually, 10% of who are foreigners (ADB 2008).

In terms of the countries with the highest proportion of Buddhists, Thailand leads with 95% population. Japan (50% proportion of Buddhists) will remain important with its historical connections and high disposable incomes, as is Vietnam (55%), Macau (45%) and Taiwan (43%). Other countries with high proportions of Buddhists are Cambodia (90%), Myanmar (88%), Bhutan (75%), Sri Lanka (70%), Tibet (65%) and Lao PDR (60%). Focus can be given to promoting to the longer stay and higher yield Buddhist segments.

Conclusion

The sub regional patterns of tourism have remained unpretentious for many years, resulting in perceptions of "tired destinations". Despite strong government commitment to tourism now in all SASEC countries, world-class infrastructure and product development for the sector still remains inadequate. Impediments to travel such as difficulties with access, connectivity, visas, permits, and border procedures remain constraints, as do perceptions of security issues. However, still there is convincing potential for growth in both volume and yield from Hinduism, Buddhism and ecotourism market segments in all SASEC countries. Care needs to be taken to match products with market demand and to provide the high standards of guiding and interpretation that these markets require. Trekking in the Himalaya, ecotourism in the Ganga-Brahmaputra, and adventure in South Asia remain relevant subthemes. With their superb range of natural and cultural attractions, SASEC countries are uniquely well positioned to respond to the high value demand for cultural tourism products from long haul as well as short haul markets.

Given the existing situation, the main opportunities going forward to develop tourism and boost national images as a common agenda of South Asian Sub-regional countries are to:- (i) leverage potential strong market demand by tapping the synergy of complementary and contiguous tourism assets of the region through regional cooperation to create sustainable and socially inclusive sub regional thematic destinations and tour products, (ii) enable scale economies, (iii) expand existing and attract new markets, (iv) increase the size and distribution of the benefits of tourism, (v) harness the management and financial capability of the private sector

in the development of tourism infrastructure and tourist facilities and services (especially community-based tourism development) and tour packages, as well as in the regulation of tourist site and facility and service standards, and in destination marketing, (vi) harness the knowledge and experience of the local communities for nature and culture-based ecotourism and (vii) create a regional destination marketing capability to provide an umbrella-marketing framework within which the countries can operate.

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Social Tourism: An Alternative Tourism in Nepal

Him Lal Ghimire*

Abstract

Tourism, an expanding worldwide phenomenon is one of the largest industries and all countries are keenly interested in promoting tourism, although with different objectives. Social tourism is one of the least unexplored area in Nepal, if implemented promptly, would contribute significantly in economy and employment. The government should have social tourism policy so that it can be implemented and the activities of tourists and host organizations can be monitored. The policy should outline the role and responsibility, accountability, criteria and minimum standard of tourists and host organizations, and visa policy for the social tourists.

Key words: *Dimension, rights, leisure, responsible, ethics, policy, stakeholders.*

Background

Tourism has long been familiar with Nepal. Tourism is an expanding worldwide phenomenon, and it has been observed that by the next century, tourism will be the largest industry in the world. All countries are keenly interested in promoting tourism, although with different objectives. Developing countries take tourism as a means for generating revenue for overall development, while developed countries take it as an essential part of leisure activity. Tourism is an education about sharing by different kinds of people as well as understanding those aspects of history and art which connect not only people living close to each other, but also those coming from a long way. Tourism is an activity generating a number of economic and social benefits to the country with foreign exchange earnings, and creating employment directly and indirectly. Today, tourism is also the subject of great media attention and the media obviously promote tourism. Tourism is a socio-economic phenomenon comprised of the activities and experiences of tourists away from their home environment and serviced by the stakeholders of the host destinations. People started to travel from

* Dr. Ghimire has Ph.D. on "Pilgrimage Tourism Special Focus on Lumbini" from Tribhuvan University, Master of Science in Leadership for Educational Change (MSEd) from Bank Street College of Education, New York, an educationist and a statistician. He has published 100's of articles in international and national journals, newspapers and magazines. Email: himghimire@gmail.com.

one place to another, leaving their dwelling place, with different motives. However, people traveled for pilgrimage and trading purpose in the ancient time. They were impelled by the innate human desire to explore their surroundings, discover the unknown and seek near experiences.

There are various type of tourism such as pilgrimage, mountaineering, sight-seeing, cultural, historical, adventurous, educational, recreational etc. One of the potential sector to achieve social and economic benefit is social tourism. In several European countries (for example France, Belgium, Spain), social tourism (mostly in the form of low-cost and national holidays) is supported by public funding. In Britain and the US, social tourism for low-income groups is a less well-known phenomenon, and rarely supported by government funding. This can be linked to the fact that these are liberal and more "individualized" societies, where without clear research evidence of the benefits of social tourism for society, no public funding can be justified (Minnaert etal., 2009a, 2009b) . Social tourism is the new phenomenon in the context of Nepal. It has not been institutionalized and no specific policy thrust from tourism stakeholders. The prime objective of this paper is to make social tourism an integral part of tourism business in Nepal. This initiative holds a huge potential in Nepal. However, this concept allow people to travel in a cost effective and affordable way. Social tourism leads to social prosperity and attracts more social tourists. This paper brings together the dimensions, prospects, benefits, problems, challenges and developmental strategies of social tourism in Nepal. The multi-faceted aspect of social tourism from different parts of the world, national initiatives and international comparisons make the phenomenon viable and operational.

Methodologically, this research is based on both primary and secondary sources. Several research works obtained from internet search has been reviewed. The author visited and interacted with officials of Social Welfare Council, Ministry of Labour and Department of Immigration, Nepal. The data obtained from those organizations are also included in the paper. Social tourism has been institutionalized phenomena in Europe. However, this concept is less explored, practiced and adopted in Nepal. It could be one of the important category / purpose of Nepalese tourism. This paper is based on policy and operational prospective of social tourism in Nepal. While developing policy, there are several issues related to social tourism to be answered. They are: How does social tourism differ from other type of tourism? What are the dimension of social tourism in Nepal? What are the aspects of social tourism policy? Does it differ with the European concept in the context of Nepal? What are the benefits of social tourism? How to operate it? This paper attempts to address those issues.

Origin of Social Tourism

The concept of social tourism has not emerged simply out of current discourses and concern for individuals and families on low incomes, as the state has taken an interest in these matters since the end of the nineteenth century. Rather it has emerged

from a broader developmental process that has enabled articulation of modern concepts such as social tourism, wellbeing and quality of life which can be used as tools in public policy and revised as a result of changing circumstances and contexts. The trend towards debates around social tourism in public policy is related to the emergence of modernity and the speci?c development of modern capitalism and welfare (Placa & Corlyon, 2014 p 68). Modern tourism only appeared from the 19th century. At that time, it was accessible to a high society elite only since the laws ruling labour did not include holidays for employees, who had to go to work every day.ÊTherefore, possibilities for most of the population to go on holidays were very limited. The actions of social tourism started in 1936, when the International Labour Organization (ILO) agreed on the holiday with Pay Convention (Convention no. 52). The substance of this convention has also been mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, where it is said that "everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay". Consequently, it is said that social tourism was born with an ethical demand. This demand was claimed by activists, who justified their legitimacy with a specific rights. Nevertheless, some historians believe that social tourism was born with the development of holiday camps for underprivileged children and the creation of youth hostels at the beginning of the 20th century (ISTO, 2014). The human right is far from being universally accepted, the subjugation of leisure and tourism to the service of human needs must be vehemently pursued along the trail already blazed by social tourism, whose primary goal has always been access to travel and leisure opportunities for all (BITS, 2006). Social tourism is a form of tourism directly related to the evolution of economic development, the degree of civilization of the people, the establishment of rest days, paid holidays, etc.., stages that prerequisites "democratization of holidays and tourism " (Chauvin, 2002; in Maria, 2012 p. 195). The Britain formed the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Tourism with an informal cross party group of MPs and Lords in 2010. The purpose of the group was to investigate and promote the social and economic benefits of social tourism. The research contacted several organizations for an inquiry. Some organizations were unaware of their work that came under the umbrella of social tourism. Sam Littlechilds of the Youth Hostel Association explained: "For more than 80 years we have tried to give people the opportunity to get involved in social tourism – even though perhaps we did not know that we were. If the new parlance is social tourism, we have done it successfully" (APPG, 2011 p.6). Social tourism could play a very important role in all areas of accessible tourism, industry associations having the purpose of linking partnerships with public and private authorities, trade unions, businesses and so on, in order to enable all segments of the population, especially those with modest incomes to benefit from a holiday (Minnaert etal., 2009a; Maria, 2012 p. 195).

Across the developing world, alternative tourism has surfaced as the flagship concept for new tourism (Rogerson, 2001; in Stoddart, & Rogerson, 2004). Volunteer

tourism, as part of alternative tourism, has so far received only limited attention in terms of tourism scholarship (Stoddart, & Rogerson, 2004). Young (2008; in Wearing, & McGehee, 2013) writes 'volunteer tourism is certainly an expanding sector of the tourism industry in many countries in both the developed and developing world'. Initially, much of the research in volunteer tourism took an advocacy stance, defining the phenomenon and promoting it as an ideal activity with few negative impacts (Broad & Jenkins, 2008; McGehee, 2002; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004; in Wearing, & McGehee, 2013). Volunteer tourism can play a valuable role for the development of community in rural areas. The ability to empower and involve host communities through acknowledging the valuable contribution they make will enable planning for community. The basis of volunteer tourism was developed initially from a need of finding alternative ways to undertake tourism and perhaps channel the altruism inherent in a portion of the tourism market. Volunteers can provide the resource to sustain community projects that are not tourism related and assist communities to maintain other types of development (Wearing & Grabowski, 2011).

Definitions and Interpretations of Social Tourism

Social tourism is interpreted and implemented in various ways across. To incorporate these different perspectives, social tourism is defined as 'tourism with an added moral value, of which the primary aim is to benefit either the host or the visitor in the tourism exchange'. This definition highlights the social benefits of social tourism for the tourist themselves, and the economic benefits for destinations and society more broadly. Hunzicker (1951) describes social tourism as 'the relationships and phenomena in the field of tourism resulting from participation in travel by economically weak or otherwise disadvantaged elements in society'. Hunzicker added a comment regarding the nature of social tourism provision, defining the concept as 'a particular type of tourism characterized by the participation of people with a low income, providing them with special services, recognized as such (Hunzicker, 1957; in Minnaert et al., 2011 p. 404). These two early definitions highlight the complexity of the concept of social tourism.
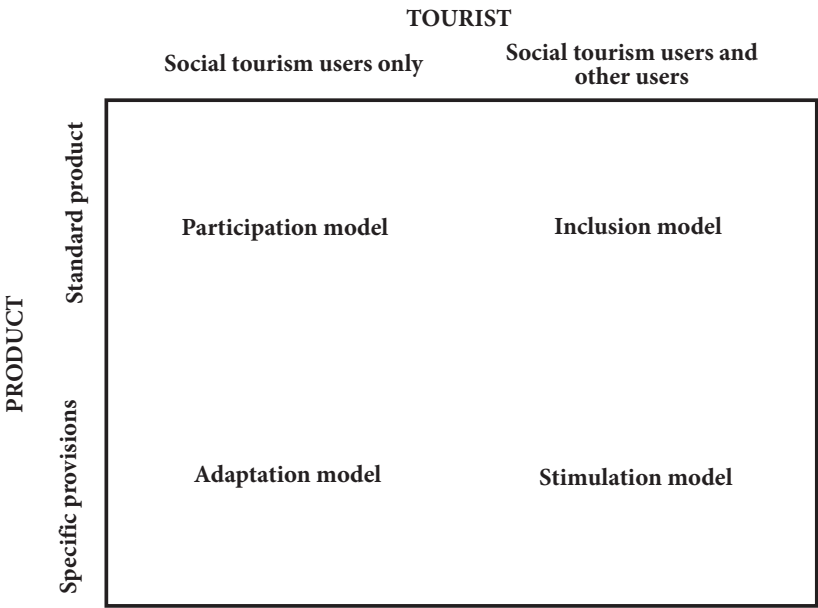
Minnaert et al. (2011) write these two early definitions highlight the complexity of the concept of social tourism, as they allow for four different interpretations that is apparent in social tourism schemes in Europe:

- Social tourism is tourism that specifically encourages the participation in tourism activities of persons who are economically weak or otherwise disadvantaged. Social tourism initiatives in this category aim to offer tourism experiences that are already accessible to a majority of persons to groups who are excluded from them, usually for financial or health reasons. The disadvantaged are especially and actively targeted to encourage participation of children with disabilities or senior citizens with complex health needs. These types of initiatives will be referred to as the participation model.

- *Social tourism is tourism that encourages participation in tourism by all, including persons who are ec*onomically or otherwise disadvantaged. In this category, social tourism initiatives aim to encourage tourism participation for many or most members of the society through subsidized schemes such as holiday vouchers. These types of initiatives will be referred to as the inclusion model.

- Social tourism is tourism that is specifically designed for persons who are economically or otherwise disadvantaged. These social tourism initiatives offer a product that is specifically adapted for social tourism users through the selection of specialist accommodation or the provision of support services. These could include facilities for persons with mobility problems or the organization of specially designed activities to achieve particular social benefits. Participation in this type of social tourism is limited to the targeted users. These types of initiatives will be referred to as the adaptation model.

- Social tourism is tourism that provides economic opportunities via travel and tourism for persons who are economically weak or otherwise disadvantaged. In this interpretation, social tourism initiatives are mainly focused on providing economic benefits for the host community. The target users are seen as any potential client group that can be attracted during the shoulder season and increase sales and employment opportunities in the destinations. A specific social tourism product (such as an all-inclusive group holiday) is proposed to attract participants in these initiatives, but selection criteria for participation are less rigid, as the schemes welcome both those who cannot participate in commercial tourism and those who can, but who opt for social tourism schemes instead. These types of initiatives will be referred to as the stimulation model.

Each of the above interpretations find an expression in social tourism practices today. In the participation model, social tourism is clearly targeted towards socially or otherwise disadvantaged persons in the society, but it is not necessarily characterized by specialized products or services. The inclusion model is also based on tourism products and services that are standard (the same for all participants, disadvantaged or not), but here the programme is not limited to disadvantaged target groups. The adaptation model applies to programmes that offer a product with special provisions for social tourism users, which is thus specifically adapted to the needs of disadvantaged target groups, and where participation is limited to these disadvantaged target groups. The stimulation model differs significantly from the ones described above, as in this model the social benefits created for the destination are a key motivation for provision. The model proposed in this article offers a visual representation of the different types of social tourism models in operation in Europe today, but, of course, the boundaries between different categories can be blurred (Minnaert et al., 2011).

Figure 1: Social tourism schemes (Source: Minnaert et al., 2011, p. 405)

TOURIST

	Social tourism users only	Social tourism users and other users
Standard product	Participation model	Inclusion model
Specific provisions	Adaptation model	Stimulation model

PRODUCT

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has confirmed the mission and objectives of social tourism in its Manila Declaration. UNWTO defined social tourism as: it is the phenomena to make leisure tourism accessible to the majority, including youth, families and elderly people, by providing an exceptional economic opportunity. UNWTO focuses on the developing world regarding this issue, there is also a need to understand social tourism in wealthier countries (BITS, 2006). Social Tourism is the provision of quality holidays at reasonable packages for the benefit of all. It encompasses all traditional benefits of tourism to the social workers involved in various areas such as health, education, awareness, inclusiveness, gender and many more. However, for Nepal it also means the creation of actual holiday packages for specific groups of families, employees, volunteers and individuals who otherwise would not be able to afford such an activity. Currently millions of people worldwide are welcomed by the social tourism that appeals to all budgets and age groups. Such tourism is seen as a promoter of economic growth, offering an exceptional economic opportunity and generating a continuous flow of investment and people, which, in turn, contributes to regional development, encourages the transfer of resources from rich economies to poor countries and promotes national and international wealth. Social tourism is aimed at benefiting the whole community by contributing to the economic and social development of regions and citizens as the whole (Gheorghe et al., 2012).

The universal right to the tourism is supported by criterion of value, which form the ground for development of social tourism:

Table 1. Criterion of Value of Social Tourism

Criterion	Description
A right of majority to use tourism	Number of people, who can currently enjoy their vacations, have significantly arisen due to popularity of tourism in the world. But there are still groups of people, for whom vacations are unavailable due to various reasons: lack of money, lack of attention of authorities for usage of social funds, passive actions of community organizations and nonprofits organizations
A contribution to a social integration	Tourism is an active means of social integration, which allows to open relations with other cultures, to get familiar with places, traditions, to perform cultural exchange, and to spend your leisure time meaningfully. Social tourism can efficiently assist in creation of civil Nepal, i.e. to perform a role of a society creator
Creation of stable tourism structures	Social tourism is supported more by social preconditions than by economic ones, can assist in creation or preservation of touristic areas considering economic, social and environmental stability criteria. Management of various types of tourism is the main factor of stability of touristic areas. In fact, stability is a balance of different aspects of human activity, though in lots of underdeveloped countries, where tourism is considered to be the economic activity able to help them to deal with poverty, social tourism is just a criterion of development
Contribution to employment and economic growth	Whilst developing their activity, companies and organizations, managing travel business, should rely not just upon economic criteria of profit, but also criteria of social welfare: creation of stable, high-quality jobs, solution of seasonality and employment problems, cooperation of public and private partnership
Contribution to the world development	For majority of communities social tourism can provide an opportunity to overcome economic gap, crises and deal with difficulties in activity of various economic sectors. After communities will be able to live on the income received from tourism, local economics will become stronger and social stability will occur. Social tourism can and should be strengthened; it should help to provide equality, justice, democracy and welfare in the whole world, which are to establish conditions for solidary development of all people in the world.

Source: International Bureau of Social Tourism, 2001; in Kinderis, 2010 p.9.

Kinderis (2010 p.9) writes that definition and conception of social tourism remains problematic due to diversity of opinions and different methods (e.g. statement of contents, expected results, aims and ideas) of defining social tourism aims. However, despite of different definitions, essence of social tourism remains the same for everybody, including those, who are at odds, has a right to rest and leisure after work every day and every year. It is the universal right to the tourism, which is provided following principles of solidarity, stability and affordability. Social tourism is distinguished by certain peculiarities and it has some exclusive characteristics: trend, exclusive sources of finance, organized nature and wide popularity, specific product features and instruments for creation and implementation.

Foundation of Ethical Views of Social Tourism

From an ethical point of view, there is possibility of two distinct positions on the duty of the stronger strata in society toward the weaker strata. Some ethical theories agree that every citizen has the same rights in society and is equal before the law. All members of society should have opportunities to develop their life to an acceptable standard; it is even the duty of the state to make sure that they have these opportunities. However, some theories particularly stress how society can be seen as a combination of actors, with each actor shaped by their environment. The duty of society is to bring out the best in every member. If every citizen looks out for their fellow citizens, and the stronger strata support the weaker ones, society automatically reduces the inequality between its members and, it is argued, becomes stronger. Supporting and emancipating the weaker strata can thus be described as an a priori predominant moral principle within this view of society. Alternatively, there are ethical theories that do not support this a priori obligation for the stronger economic strata to support the weaker ones: they mainly stress that the opportunities provided to one person should never limit the opportunities of another. Furthermore, four ethical approaches Christian ethics, Marxist ethics, Kantianism and Utilitarianism, and their links to social tourism have been outlined. (Minnaert ,2007; Minnaert etal., 2006).

In most industries, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards and practices have been developed by the private sector to respond to external pressure. In tourism, however, the use of codes of conduct and certification is not widespread and is not based as yet upon agreed international standards. It is difficult to make generalizations about CSR without first examining the context in which sustainable tourism operates, its demand and also assessing the numerous certification schemes, codes of conduct and best practices within the industry. The definition of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has many similar elements to sustainable tourism in that both focus on how stakeholders should be identified and engaged and that initiatives should be measured to determine their impact on others. Whereas CSR relates to a company's obligation to be accountable to all of its stakeholders in all its operations and activities with the aim of achieving sustainable development not only in the economical dimension but

also in the social and environmental dimensions, sustainable tourism was first seen mainly from an environmental perspective and has only recently incorporated social and community aspects (Dodds & Joppe, 2005 p 9). Social tourism is specifically mentioned in Article 7(3) of Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This Article stresses the role of social tourism as facilitating "widespread access" to tourism, and also emphasizes the responsibility of public authorities to support, encourage and facilitate it. Thus, as a part of the general right to tourism, social tourism works as a "way of putting into practice this universal right to participate in tourism …" (EESC, 2006; in Moufakkir, 2010 p.49).

Social Tourism in Tourism Policy of Nepal

Tourism Policy (2008) has categorized 13 different type of tourism in Nepal. Tourism stakeholders were disappointed when social tourism was not a part of the tourism category in the tourism policy of Nepal. Social tourism is not mentioned in any of the strategies that are currently being developed. Unless this subject is embraced by the government it will be difficult to encourage wider participation. In several European countries (France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy) social tourism is a part of public policy. Implementation forms vary and include voucher schemes, subsidies for the construction of holiday facilities, public-private partnerships and subsidies for targeted disadvantaged groups. In UK, no specific social tourism policy exists, although some organizations provide holiday grants on an individual basis, and public funding is available for respite breaks. It is not crucial that people who are normally excluded from taking a holiday have to do so at peak times. In Spain, this system enables spare capacity in the off-peak accommodation sector to be utilized, thus enabling more employees to stay in work through a longer season (Minnaert etal., 2009a; APPG, 2011).

Tourism master plans and policies are useful tools for identifying areas with tourism potential, determining tourism strategy and structuring the provision of infrastructure, investment promotion and financial and other incentives. Government needs to ensure that master plans, policies and tourism development strategies should address the local economic development goals, the geographic distribution of tourism activities and poverty reduction. Social tourism can be one of the best way to empower and get benefits from tourism development as most of them are involved in wellbeing of the poor and development of nation. Government agencies can promote the empowerment of communities in planning and managing tourism assets by initiating partnership approaches that include poor people.

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and Nepal Tourism Board are the main responsible bodies for policy formulation and tourism development in Nepal. As a tourism entrepreneurs or NGO's/INGO's, their role is also to support government bodies and provide quality service to the tourists. The government of Nepal started a leave tourism policy in 2013 for government employees to promote domestic tourism

(MoCTCA, 2013). It is one of the examples of social tourism in Nepal. In the competitive market place in which they work with limited available resources, every stakeholders are unlikely to have the capacity to develop this sector. There will be greater awareness of the social tourism opportunities amongst some of the commercial operators that specialize in the low-cost holiday package and may have agreements with local authorities for accommodation provision. It therefore indicates that a national initiative to develop a strategy for social tourism is likely to be welcomed.

Dimension of Social Tourism in Nepal

Social tourism in Europe has been basically focused to the employees, elder citizens, disable people and economically poor. However, following dimensions of social tourism has been adopting directly or indirectly with the belief and practices in Nepal:

1. Foreigners working in social organizations and desire to travel: This category includes employees working in social organizations/UN/diplomatic missions/expat community etc. They are not treated as tourists by law/visa category. However, they travel different parts of the country with different touristic purposes such as trekking, rafting, pilgrimage, adventure, mountaineering, sightseeing etc.

2. Foreigners travel as a tourist and desire to do social works: This category includes tourists who travel different parts of the country with various purposes such as trekking, rafting, pilgrimage, adventure, mountaineering, sightseeing etc. When they travel, sometimes they are influenced by various socio-economic, educational, health, conditions in rural area and involve themselves in various social works.

3. Tourism for social cause: This category includes the senior citizens, marginalized/poor/minority group, social workers, national heroes etc. They might have desire to travel but can't afford it. The government and tourism stakeholders need to develop separate economical packages for them.

4. Tourism for employee: This category includes employees working in government, public and private organizations. The employers should give holiday to travel and travel voucher for it. If employees do not travel, they won't be eligible to get it.

5. Volunteer tourism: This category includes volunteers working in various organizations/institutes

Figure 2: Dimension of Social Tourism in Nepal
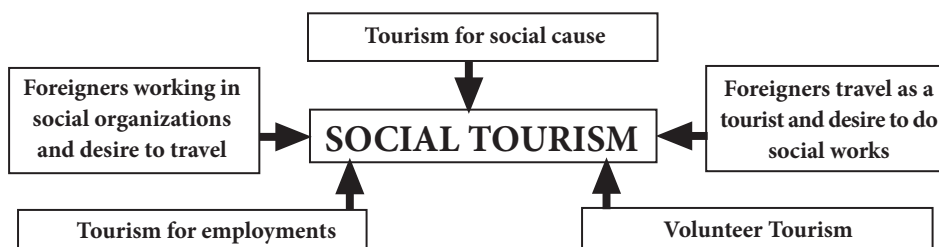
As mentioned above, foreigners working in social organizations and desire to travel and foreigners travel as a tourist and desire to do social works are very prominent dimensions of social tourism in Nepal.

Benefits of Social Tourism

The benefits of social tourism are enormous. The benefits are as follows (ISTO, 2014; APPG, 2011; Maria, 2012; Eusebio etal., 2012):

- Individual (Physical and Psychological) benefits: Social tourism leads to increase in self-esteem, expansion of social networks, skills development, improvements in mental health, physical and mental relaxation, rejuvenation, escape from stress, improvement of quality of life.

- Learning/ evolution benefits: Social tourism develop personality, discover and foster cultural enrichment and self-knowledge.

- Family benefits: Social tourism cultivate closer family ties, changing parenting styles, adaptation to new family structures, better socio-economic condition of host family and earnings from the agricultural products, handicrafts and creative arts.

- Societal benefits: Social tourism can lead to participation in education and paid work, pro-active and positive attitudes towards other forms of social intervention, such as health, marriage counseling, awareness and encouragement to attend school, social interaction/participation, increase of social capacities and could be a fundamental instrument that consider seniors and disables to do touristic trips.

- Socio-cultural benefits: Social tourism promote arts, culture and traditions; respect, preserve and develop traditional culture; improve infrastructures that includes good roads, hotels, restaurants, airports, airlines, efficient communication channels etc., value endogenous products; aware on education, environment, safety, health and sanitation; set up schools and other institutions of learning to equip the locals with the skills needed and gives a platform for interaction/exchange of different cultures between tourists and locals.

- Economic benefits: Social tourism can be the best option during off season and decrease of seasonality in touristic activity, more demand of tourist products,

increase of income by earning foreign currency, increase of employment, increase of company and state revenues, attracts financiers both locally and internationally who offer a variety of products and services.

It is well documented that the benefits of social tourism are huge. Both physically and mentally, a break from the 'normal routine' gives holidaymakers an uplift that can boost general personal wellbeing. The planning, the anticipation, the journey and the memories have positive lasting benefits for all. Social tourism is community based tourism which enables tourists to discover local habitats and wildlife, celebrate, respect traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom. The community will be aware of the commercial and social value placed on their natural and cultural heritage through tourism, and this will encourage community to conserve these resources. Tourist can immerse in the day-to-day lives of local and indigenous people while helping them to preserve their environment and cultural heritage by sharing ideas and knowledge. In return tourist gets opportunities to experience local communities in a low price instead of paying high price for the hotel and resort. Social tourism could benefit the whole community by contributing to the economic and social development of regions and citizens as the whole.

Strategies to Promote Social Tourism

Measurement of the current economic impact of social tourism and analysis of the future opportunities would be an important step in developing a strategy. Understanding the potential market size would help to shape the best way to reach both market participants and social tourist visitors. It is not unreasonable to state that the understanding of the dynamics of social tourism market amongst the majority of tourism businesses is low. It is often an 'afterthought' as the majority of organizations are focused on economic growth and the social tourism sector is perceived as low value. One priority therefore for the promotion of social tourism must be to involve community themselves.

It is recommended that a consistent approach to this sector should be adopted. Social tourism will encourage visitors to undertake an element of travel which is likely to cross local political boundaries and therefore an inconsistent policy and approach could hinder the growth of social tourism. Social tourism function should be valued equally throughout the country by the government bodies, NGO's and INGO's, public and private organizations, and the community as well. The government should have a key role in championing the social tourism agenda. The government should develop a framework that outlines the key principles of social tourism development and support the key research projects. The government should bring together the social, environmental, educational and health services in discussion with the tourism sector to evaluate potential cost savings and incentives that could provide the catalyst for a thriving and rewarding social tourism agenda. The tourism stakeholders are likely to be the major solution provider and needs to be at the heart of these discussions.

Research evidence has shown that social tourism can be a cost-effective form of intervention – to be used independently or supported by other interventions - to tackle a wide range of welfare issues. Social tourism is the concept that builds up a quality relationship between the host and the visiting tourists. It is in fact community based tourism that enables tourists to discover the local habitats and wildlife, preserve traditional arts and cultures. Social tourism provides an opportunity to combine travel with a community-based social cause, which increases community awareness of the commercial and social value placed on their natural and cultural heritage, and it also encourages the community to conserve these resources (Minnaert etal., 2011).

Social tourism serves as a catalyst in the social transformation process. Communities in Nepal suffered with deep-rooted problems such as health, education, gender, cast, discrimination, mass poverty and creating deplorable living conditions. In this case, social tourism can cornerstone in transforming the marginalized community and repositioning them into the mainstream of the development process. With the help of social tourism, communities are introduced to the concept of participatory tourism, where community members actively take part in transformation processes and gain added knowledge, ideas, and motivation from the social tourists. This certainly produces Êa new momentum in the socio-economic transformation of the communities (STDRF, 2014).

The major issue of concern is the proper identification of the true beneficiaries of social tourism and the appropriate distribution of benefits from the process. It is natural to question whether the process focuses mostly on benefiting the hosts, not creating any value for the guests (STDRF, 2014). Every community in Nepal has its own unique feature (touristic or otherwise) that helps make the stay in that community worthwhile and enjoyable to the guests. Consequently, the travelling experience serves the guests' touristic goals as well as their humanitarian and social goals. Therefore, the process optimizes the value of the traveling experience, which would not have been realized through the traditional form of travelling. The experience can in fact become a source of pride to the visiting tourist as he/she becomes a part of the socio-economic transformation of the host community. Following are the possible social tourism activities in Nepal:

- Educational tourism activities
- Conservation and development activities
- Human resource development activities
- Agro tourism activities
- Eco tourism activities
- Welfare tourism activities
- Social work education activities

Designing programs and projects that involve the active participation of the host communities to ensure specific social works. This involvement of the host community is essential for maintaining social work ethical principle of self-determination and the establishment and respect for human relationships between the tourists and the host communities. This approach is important in view of the limited financial resources faced by social services agencies in the developing countries.

Responsible Tourism/Sustainable Tourism

The government intervention is necessary to enhance the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and poverty reduction. One of the principal roles of government is to set policy and legislative frameworks for all kinds of tourism development. Two main reasons why governments should formulate tourism development strategy are:

- tourism can offer major opportunities for economic development, which can enhance the positive effects of tourism on local socio-economic development and poverty reduction. In most of the countries tourism has been identified as one of the major vehicles for generating employment, foreign currency earning and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

- the tourist industry has many negative externalities, in particular negative social and environmental impacts that need to be regulated and managed at national or local levels. The responsible tourism guidelines encourage tourism operators to grow their businesses whilst providing social and economic benefits to local communities and respecting the environment.

Once we are promoting the Êsocial tourism we should not forget to talk about responsible as well as sustainable tourism. Responsible tourism is that creates better places for people to live in, and better places to visit. The concept of responsible tourism can be understood through sustainable tourism, the goal of both being the same – sustainable development. While sustainable tourism points at the obvious need for sustainability, responsible tourism means taking the initiative, understanding actors involved, studying the impacts and benefits and spreading them out equally. In other words, spreading the responsibility for both impacts and benefits thus ensuring the ability of all levels of actors to act accordingly – be government, tour operators, hospitality industry and even individuals such the tourists themselves.

Social tourism has been the pioneer concept in building up a quality relationship between the host and the visiting tourists. It is in fact community based tourism; it enables tourists to discover the local habitats and wildlife along with the celebration of traditional cultures and wisdom. Social tourism provides an opportunity to combine travel with a community-based social cause, which increases community awareness of the commercial and social value placed on their natural and cultural heritage, and it also encourages the community to conserve these resources. Therefore, we say that

travelling for social well-being is social tourism. Also on an organizational level, the term "social tourism" can be used to describe a variety of different initiatives, commercial and non-commercial, governmental and private: these initiatives range from small charities organizing holidays for children from low-income backgrounds, over government plans improving accessibility in hotels, to private hotels offering a package holiday to senior travelers in the shoulder season. Sustainable tourism development is about making all tourism more compatible with the needs and resources of a destination area. Tourism needs to take into account a holistic and comprehensive approach that balances tourism development with other activities yet tourism is made up of many sectors and is very fragmented, therefore effects and monitoring processes through one company or mechanism has been difficult (Dodds & Joppe, 2005 p 10).

The Clients of Social Tourism

The clients of social tourism could be diverse in nature. However, employees of social organizations and INGO's, volunteer, families, young people, senior citizens, disable people. Usually, INGO employees have good earning have a tendency to travel. Large number of foreigners have been involved in various social works as a volunteer either associated with social organizations or individually in Nepal. Family holidays are still an important choice of holidays as they make up for a special moment to revive and strengthen home ties. Young travellers (16-30 years) make up for more than 22.6% of international tourist arrivals in Nepal in 2012. Today, the seniors' tourism makes up for a real market which is however not homogeneous. Seniors (61 and above) make up for more than 13.6% of international tourist arrivals in Nepal in 2012. According to the data from the European Commission, about 70 % of people with disabilities could travel under favorable conditions – after adjustment of tourism infrastructure. Disabled people tourism has become an increasingly consequent market, as it is based on a growing demand due to the number of people with a disability, and therefore the number of potential clients, is huge; disabled people usually travel with a friend, a relative or a social worker, and the number of potential clients can be doubled. The tendency to go on holidays is very often influenced by income more than by any other factor. Social tourism can help them to go on holidays, especially during low season, through implementing programs in partnership with the private sector.

Challenges of Social Tourism

The term 'social tourism' sometimes make policy makers nervous of receiving unwanted and unwarranted criticism for supporting 'holidays for the poor' or disadvantage groups. A proper policy is required to overcome these presentational challenges. A recent EU survey shows that, even in the most developed economies in Europe, about 40% of the population does not go on holidays, mainly for financial reasons. This data concerns any population age group, but more especially numerous young people and students who have a limited purchasing power, families with a

modest income who cannot manage to set aside a consequent enough holiday budget, and also a great proportion of the elderly who have a lot of time, but whose financial resources are sometimes very limited as well (ISTO, 2014). Solidarity is a challenge which, on a national level, requires to allow people in economic, family or physical distress, to be able to exercise concretely their right to holidays and tourism. Although social tourism is not limited to tourism for the poor and the disabled, it must be clear that the policy is not indifferent to the less protected and the most underprivileged social layers. Supervision and monitoring is another important challenge of social tourism. Foreigners with various purposes come to Nepal and work in various organizations. They plan their visit in different part of country and involve in various social sectors as well in their own interest. Now, the question is who supervise/monitor their activities? If we take an example, one foreigner attended mass meeting of a political party and advocated against the Constituent Assembly election 2013 in Nepal. Is he allow to do such? This matter was highly criticized. Likewise, many foreigners are cut red hand because of their involvement in smuggling. Threats to personal security come in many forms these days and travelers need to be hyper-vigilant and prudent. Careful consideration should be given before deciding which areas offer safer options for international service. As with all of our choices, each one comes with risks and rewards. You can stay home, but remember more people die in bed at home than in traveling aboard. The work of peace building is not for the fearful and those unwilling to take risk. Visa policy is another challenge for development of social tourism in Nepal. Social workers come to Nepal with one purpose and their duration of stay is stated in the visa. If those social workers want to travel as a tourist the government should grant them tourist visa. Alternatively, if a tourist wants to do social work, the government should grant them social worker visa.

Lessons from Europe and India for the Development of Social Tourism

Stakeholders from Europe provided extensive evidence of best practice in three countries with contrasting social tourism initiatives. In Spain the government invests €125 million a year in the IMSERSO scheme, but for every €1 invested it receives €1.5 in extra tax revenue and cost savings for the Spanish health service. Up to 80,000 people enjoy employment as a result of its activities. It is one of the most powerful examples of social tourism's economic potential presented to the inquiry. ANCV in France is a public agency that provides holiday vouchers to 3.4 million workers, subsidized in part by employers or social organizations. Vouchers can be used to pay for accommodation, meals, transport, sports and cultural activities. Every year €1.3 billion - worth of vouchers are distributed, and it is estimated that they generate €5 billion for the wider economy. Similar voucher schemes exist in Switzerland, Poland, Cyprus, Italy and Hungary. The Flanders Tourist Board in Belgium runs a Holiday Participation Centre. This provides maintenance and construction grants to accommodation providers who agree to offer reduced rates to low - income and

disadvantaged groups. The center helps 100,000 people a year in this way, as well as maintaining the integrity and accessibility of its accommodation infrastructure. The European Union runs the €3 - million Calypso programme that is investigating the economic and social benefits of social tourism and providing funds for innovative social tourism projects (APPG, 2011 p. 3).

Sikkim Now writes a total 600 senior citizens of Yangyang-Rangang constituency were taken for a day-long pilgrimage tour to four major religious pilgrimage centers of South Sikkim in India. Senior citizens of 60 years and above of the constituency were taken on this free tour which was organized by the Panchayats and SDF party youth leaders of the constituency. More than 70 vehicles were deployed to ferry the senior citizens to the pilgrimage centers and back to their respective places. Likewise, to provide relief to the senior citizens of Uttarakhand, a joint scheme of tourism and transport authority of the state has launched the provision of free pilgrimage visit to Char Dham to people over 65 year of age (Sacred Yatra, 2014). Samachar.com writes Rajasthan government signed an MoU with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Ltd for a scheme which will bear all the expenses for senior citizens to go on select pilgrimages. The duration of the trip is from five to eight days and selected persons can visit any one pilgrimage center out of those designated as part of the scheme. "Special trains will be available at each divisional headquarters to ferry 1,000 people at a time. Medical services along with one attendant will be there in each coach," an IRCTC official said after the signing of the MoU. Arrangements for meals, accommodation and road travel would be made by the IRCTC for those availing the scheme. Puri, Gaya, Rameswaram, Vaishno Devi, Tirupati, Varanasi, Amritsar, Dwarkapuri, Bihar Sharif, Shirdi are among the pilgrim destinations covered under the scheme.

Matter of Discussion: Way Forward and Advocacy of Social Tourism

Social work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources. Primarily, social work is concerned with individual and personal problems however, in a broader sense social workers are involved to address the social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence. Social workers work in a variety of settings: family services agencies, children's aid agencies, general and psychiatric hospitals, schools, correctional institutions, welfare administration agencies, federal and provincial departments. An increasing number of social workers work in private practice as well. The duties performed by social workers vary depending on the settings in which they work. Employment opportunities in Social Work do exist. Most social workers work full-time although it is possible to work part-time. Social workers providing direct services spend most of their time with clients in their offices or in the client's home. They also spend time in consultation with other professionals such as psychologists, teachers,

Tourism has been identified as an effective means to take part in the global economy and reduce poverty. Tourism is a collective phenomenon and can be a key ingredient in the development of any country. Tourism is increasingly a major source of economic growth, employment and revenue for many of the world's developing countries. Tourism would not be just a focus of economic development strategy based on its job creation, revenue, millions of capital investment, but it has a deep impact on the social and cultural life of Nepal (Ghimire, 2013). Through demonstrating the social welfare benefits to individuals and the economic benefits to the Nepalese tourism industry, social tourism could be an ideal sector for social enterprise development. This radically different business model would allow social organizations to utilize social welfare budgets instead of being dependent upon charitable donations. The expanded practice of social tourism would demonstrate its benefits and lead to greater awareness, increasing both the supply and demand of social tourism.

At this stage, the issue is what role should the government/NTB play in the development of social tourism. The government/NTB should work as a facilitator. There are organizations that are willing and able to make social tourism happen in Nepal. The government/NTB should formulate a proper social tourism policy and develop various packages for different target groups. Having the support and commitment of government to this process would help enormously and enable social tourism to move from being a small scale, charitable initiative toward becoming a valuable social enterprise, fit for the current social and economic environment. A network with government, NTB, SWC, INGO's/NGO's, other social organizations and diplomatic missions can formulate social tourism policy, implement and monitor social tourist's activities.

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Book Review

Samjhana K.C.*

Book Title: Heritage Tourism

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Heritage binds us with our history. It constantly leaves our footprints in the world. In this way, heritage belongs to both, our ancestors and us. In the face of fierce competition and the reduced geographical meaning of the globalized world in twenty first century; where neoliberal policies is popular everywhere, heritage provides an equal opportunity for both developing and developed countries to stimulate their economy. Nepal is no exception to that, as its cultural and natural richness is no secret to the world. The demographic and geographic heterogeneity in such a tiny land supports the fact that Nepal has glorious wealth of heritage. This wealth of heritage, if used well, could help bag economic as well as non-economic gains nationally and locally.

In the same light, Hyung Yu Park's book Heritage Tourism enlightens readers from diverse background on how to blend two contradictory ideas of heritage and tourism to boost the economic and intellectual wealth. Park's every stroke of idea helps readers to conceptualize heritage and its importance for both present and future generations. Through a balanced view on heritage and tourism, an idea of promoting heritage tourism for heritage's sake is reflected in her position that, 'This book hopes to contribute diversifying and enriching the critical understanding of the dialectic and discursive relationship between people and places within the context of heritage tourism.'(Pg. 1) She familiarizes readers to the idea of heritage and tourism, politicization of the concept, the management aspect of heritage tourism and relation of heritage with other issues in her well-structured twelve chapters. This is an attempt to present an understanding of Park's subtle idea on heritage tourism, which in a heritage rich country like Nepal, would be an effort to contextualize it. This review is sequenced in four themes: the concept of heritage tourism, politicization of heritage for tourism, management of tourism in context of contemporary technological advancement and contemporary issues in relation to heritage tourism.

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* Samjhana K.C. is ex-student of Masters in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies in Tribhuvan University. Currently she is engaged with a social organization working for children.

From chapter one to three, Park provides the fundamental concepts on heritage and tourism. People's constant search for their roots in the face of dissatisfaction borne out of industrialization and other transformation has employed heritage as one of the medium to keep in constant touch with their history. The heritage as tangible and intangible remnants of past is used to serve as commodity. Ephemeral in nature, heritage mostly reflects the biased presentation of history as it mostly portrays the elite's history and not of the commoners in a nation. Park cites the example of the era of Grand Tour, where only elites used to travel for the sake of knowledge and intellectual enrichment. However, the change to service oriented economy in post-Fordist contributed in the democratization of heritage by recognizing the diversity of culture and landscape.

The debate on use of heritage for the economic purpose is divided into two streams, where on one side, scholars argue that heritage for touristic purpose democratizes heritage and on the other side this would intensify commodification, marginalizing the intrinsic value of heritage. This debate magnifies an important fact that heritage and tourism has a contradictory relation. The relationship between heritage and tourism could be classified as conflict, coexistence and symbiosis, depending upon the context (Budwoski cited in Park, 2014). While heritage requires preservation and promotion, tourism implies development providing economic support for heritage conservation. ÊThere is a need of analysis on the need and expectation of heritage and tourists as the intense commodification of heritage could saturate its supply.

Heritage and tourism when incorporated together, provides distinct opportunity to experience, design and facilitate memorable experiences. The understanding of demographic and psychographic pattern of multifaceted and multidimensional tourists would help in strategizing the heritage tourism industry. It is important to understand the heritage tourists as the 'thoughtful consumers' who seek the value for their money.

The conservation of heritage need to be based on long term planning and efficient heritage management strategy. A balanced approach of government and private stakeholders would make the conservation more effective. She argues that heritage is a value added entity requiring recognition of the interrelation and interdependence of heritage and tourism to conserve heritage through economic focus of the tourism. Heritage interpretation is also an equally important but educational activity which helps to make heritage meaningful. Education and information helps in effective interpretation of the heritage, where education and enjoyment complement each other. The focus need to be shifted from the traditional method of factual information delivery to the visitors. The interpretation aspect of heritage tourism is equally important, where tourist and guides, who are not merely passive consumer and path finders but the way they deliver information has a critical role in constructing a discursive between the tourists and the sites. Similarly, the promotion materials like brochures, guidebooks, signage etc. also play equal critical role. While conceptualizing heritage and tourism, Park suggests that new management strategies for heritage

tourism like controlled number of visitors and encouraging the local participation through a bottom up approach need to be highlighted.

The theme of heritage politicization flow from chapter four to six. The use of heritage in tourism requires its constant recreation. Already ephemeral, the real value of heritage is not what presented rather, is the one enveloped within the hidden aspects. The overemphasis on the supply side marginalizes the recognition of demand of authenticity of the heritage, making it a socially constructed phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, interpretation of tourists along with the sites and motivation of tourists also play an effective role in understanding the authenticity of the heritage. However, commodification creates both conflict and opportunity in maintaining the intrinsic value of heritage. Transferring the heritage sites into consumable goods has helped to recreate the past enhancing tourists' experience, which is also criticized for playing part in it replacing its original value with the commercial one.

Heritage is found to be criticized for being biased and presenting only one sided story by chronicling elites' experience and history. In this sense, heritage used to be highly politicalized and exclusionary. In the similar ways, heritage tourism is also influenced by the power structure representing only one section of society. Many a times, it is even purposefully employed to discard some elements of history like that of slavery heritage, local indigenous heritage etc. Case of Nepal itself is evident to contextualize the fact where, despite the heterogeneity of ethnicity, not everyone's heritage is as popularized and represented like that of Shahs, Ranas, Brahmans, Chhetris etc. However, slowly there is a cry for recognition of the diverse heritages. It is nonetheless not that simple to present the diverse heritage history, along the diversity, it does bring out some complicated issues which need a sensitive focus from heritage marketers and managers. The equal role is played by the tourists who need to be an active rather than passive consumer.

Heritage is embed in the identity of a person. As a material and immaterial remnant of the past, heritage manifests the shared symbolic meaning. However, Park cautions that memory based identity needs sensitive attention as it is biased unlike material heritages. Cultural identity is as ephemeral and dynamic as heritage itself. System of cultural representation is produced as a political entity of a nation based on people's ethnic and identity attribute. Heritage plays an active role in crystalizing the memory. Promoting national heritage in tourism context is a value added work, yet vulnerable to representation and interpretation. Heritage tourism also helps in group cohesion contributing in controlled rapid social change. Individualized interpretation of heritage help in creating the intimate sense of national belonging. Heritage Tourism helps in promoting the national identity by reviving the past history through the ways by meeting the market need. Nationalism is something people experience in everyday life. While nationally heritage tourism helps in creating solidarity, heritage tourism offers diaspora an opportunity to connect to their roots as homeland for which they have special symbolic meaning to them.

The management and marketing of heritage tourism is one of the important themes of the book with extensive discussion from chapter seven to nine. Park writes about the globalization and its impact on heritage tourism. Globalization has brought both opportunity and challenge for heritage tourism. On the one hand, it has facilitated the flow of commodity and on the other authenticity and sustainability of heritage is vulnerable because of the trend of homogenized commodity. The Western and European centric management of heritage is criticized for not fully considering the local context and excessive tourism development has jeopardizing the intrinsic value of heritage. Park cites the example of old town of Vietnam, which after being publicized by Lonely Planet as World Heritage Site, faced the acceleration in the flow of tourist which slowly impeded the authenticity, turning its historic houses into tourism center. World Heritage theory fails to consider the dynamic nature of heritage partially recognizing it as static and unified. The top down approach of enlisting WHS undermines the diverse as well as intangible feature of the heritage. Privatization could fund the expensive restoration and conservation of heritage; however excessive commodification could jeopardize the authenticity and cultural integrity. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and glocalization offers a helping hand to maintain balance between the economic exploitation and non-economic fortification of heritage through heritage tourism.

Burrowing the concepts from management for the marketing of heritage tourism Park highlights the importance of person and process in modern marketing. The fierce competition of the modern markets requires a focus in the destination marketing and branding as an important strategy. Branding is one of the ways to promote by highlighting one the uniqueness of each country. Park also sheds the light on the importance of this process to be inclusive and representative promoting coordination between stakeholders. In terms of branding of intangible heritage a careful approach is needed because of the sensitivity of the issue of indigenous community. Market segmentation approach and heritage marketing approach to identify target market and choose appropriate strategy and develop planning. Emotional branding helps to keep alive the symbolic meaning and values inherent in the tangible as well as intangible heritage. As focused earlier, the controlled flow of visitors is necessary to preserve the sites which could also be done via de-marketing. Despite the threat of losing the intrinsic values of heritage, commodification helps to create synergy between the meaning, perception, consumption and brand loyalty and valuing money of tourist. The modern technology and e-marketing could also stir the market of heritage tourism. Nonetheless, draws the importance of sustainable marketing approach in-order to balance the preservation and tourism development.

Sustainability is mostly understood in relation to the natural and cultural conservation. The concept of sustainability has a complicated application in the field of heritage tourism. The concept of conserving heritage started earlier than the concept of sustainable development. A holistic approach with balanced focus on economic gains and non-economic benefits, mind-full visitors and the participation of local

communities is important to instill the concept of sustainability on heritage tourism. Park states, 'the sustainable cultural heritage management is the management that ensures the present use of the cultural assets without compromising the ability of the future generation to use and benefit from those assets.' (Pg.no)The analysis of multiple stakeholders involved in heritage tourism management is important. It also helps to analyze the multiple actors involved in the management process. However, the diversity of motivation could impede the collaboration. For example of Lumbini is an economic opportunity for locals while a matter of national pride for Nepal. The consensus among the stakeholders is important. As sustainable development is a contextual subject, it is important to overlook the western principle of conservation and aim on the balance between conservation and economic stimulation in the developing nations. Encouraging the local participation through an ideal people centered approach to development is vital for sustainable development of heritage tourism.

The final theme of the book is absorbed in the last three chapters, where Park stresses on the issues related with heritage tourism. Culture, Parke argues, is the foundation on which urban areas could employ their last resort to recover from sluggish economy. Post Fordism led commodification, globalization led homogenization, the western centric top down approach led exclusion of locals in the decision making process and the cultural exploitation in culture cluster has created threat to the aesthetic value of the culture eroding its symbolic meaning. Park cites the example of Shanghai style redevelopment in Liverpool where the intensive focus on commercialization has affected the aesthetic beauty and value of culture center. The newly built skyscraper create imbalance between the original aesthetic value of asset and heavily commercialized construction. This shifts the attention on the balanced consideration to the human and economic dimensions of heritage tourism. The inclusion of the locals increasing their understanding of the local architecture is very necessary. Park argues that use of heritage tourism for urban development could also lead to commercial exploitation and gentrification. Burgeoning of the festivals and special events would also help to portray the positive image of the city.

The evolution of museum from the elite initiated curatorial activities to inclusive hub for all reflects how history becomes a marketable product in tourism. Museums serve both educational and cultural purpose and are complimented by tourism through the increase in tourists from around the globe. Unlike traditional, modern museums are competitive requiring advancement in the management and marketing strategy. Moving beyond the glass display of the museum items, technology could stimulate the marketing and managing strategies with appropriate consideration the aesthetic value of the museum experience.

Park discusses further on the relation between heritage tourism and contemporary issues like intangible heritage, citizenship, virtual heritage, social media, heritage accommodation and climate change. Heritage has become a symbol of cultural

citizenship. With the increase in the human mobility which has created a fluid sense of identity preserving the integrity and authenticity of different and distinctive groups as well as enhancing relationship as a whole. The technology if used well could prove to be advantageous. Similarly, social media like Facebook twitter etc. has facilitated and enhanced the participation of diverse groups. The renovated and the reconstructed houses for accommodation has become favorite accommodation for tourists. However on the grimmer side, climate change has adverse effect on heritage sites as these sites have a long history as such that they are not build with the capacity to resist modern environmental changes, making them vulnerable to damages.

Park is able to provide a succinct understanding of heritage tourism to diverse readers. The well sequenced chapters loaded with questions and extra reference materials put the book at the service of student, marketers as well as scholars alike. ÊA thorough peekaboo in the introduction itself proves it a book worth of our time. However, Park failed to grasp the attention of the reader here and there by citing too much of information and providing her analysis only in the concluding part, confusing them of her original ideas from referenced ones. Nonetheless examples and case studies presented in every chapter helped me to relate with the ideas she discussed. The book proves useful beyond a knowledge seeking person like me to the private and public tourism promoters. In her successful attempt to blend the contradictory concept of heritage and tourism through her scholarly as well as management lens, Park puts forward some striking questions to be answered by the tourism promoters and manager, who are interested to employ heritage at their service. Her careful analysis on tangible and intangible aspect of heritage, commodification and the price attached with it, western and European centric notion of conservation, local participation and the advantage of technology help to weigh the pros and cons of each element in heritage. Very contextual for a country like Nepal, the students and tourism professionals alike are encouraged to invest some time to go through the ideas of Park.

In this review, an understanding on Hyungyu Park's book Heritage Tourism is presented. Contained in twelve chapters, this review divided her book into four themes. The first theme that ran in first three chapters conceptualized heritage tourism. The second theme of the next three chapters reflected on how heritage and heritage tourism is a subject to politicization. The next three chapters on the theme of management of tourism elaborated the context of contemporary technological advancement relating it with heritage tourism. Then finally the last theme highlighted on the contemporary issues in relation to heritage tourism. With a short analysis, this review encourages students, scholars and tourism professional alike to invest a little time in this book.

Salzburg University of Applied Sciences

Salzburg University of Applied Sciences and Technologies (FH Salzburg), is an accredited institution of Austrian higher education, recognized by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. It is one of the most modern universitis for applied sciences in Europe. In its various levels of academic programs, it concentrates on current trends in tourism, product development and e-Business.

FH Salzburg is situated in Salzburg, Austria, one of the most vibrant tourist regions in the world. The city at the Salzach River is the world formous for its summer and winter tourism. Not only does it boast 22 million overnight stays, but its wide variety of tourist attractions and offerings draws guests who come to attend conventions or music festivals as well as those seeking adventure, culture or relaxation.

FH Salzburg aims to offer various programs tailored to the needs of current and future demand of the labor market combined with a sound theoretical underpinning. This is guaranteed by its qualified and highly committed staff from higher educational institutions as well as the industry. It has collaboration with more than 60 partner institutions in Europe, America, Asia, Australia and Nepal in international projects as well as faculty and student exchange.

International School of Tourism and Hotel Mangement

International School ofTourism and Hotel management (IST) was established in the year 2003 with an objective to produce world class human resources to cater to the overwhelming need of the hospitality industry by offering various academic degrees and training packages as per the international standard. It is a center for excellence in hospitality education providing an enterprising and stimulating environment in which students can learn and develop their full potentaial. Hence, IST is also a suffix, which means a person with deep knowledge, practical exporsure and appropriate attitude in the particular discipline. IST aims to add "ist" to its students and prepare professionals to become leading managers in the various tourism and hospitality outlets.

Affiliated to Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (FHS), Austria, IST offers customized and fast track programs to provide students maximum flexibility and opportunity for progression. Various programs offered by IST is approved by Ministry of Education and Sports of Nepal Government.

Since its inception it has established cooperation with numerous universities in Nepal, Singapore, Austria, Australia, Thailand, United Kungdom and United States of America. Likewise, FHS and Tribhuvan University of Nepal have already entered into the bilateral agreement to promote faculty and student exchange, joint research program and accreditation to each other's degree.