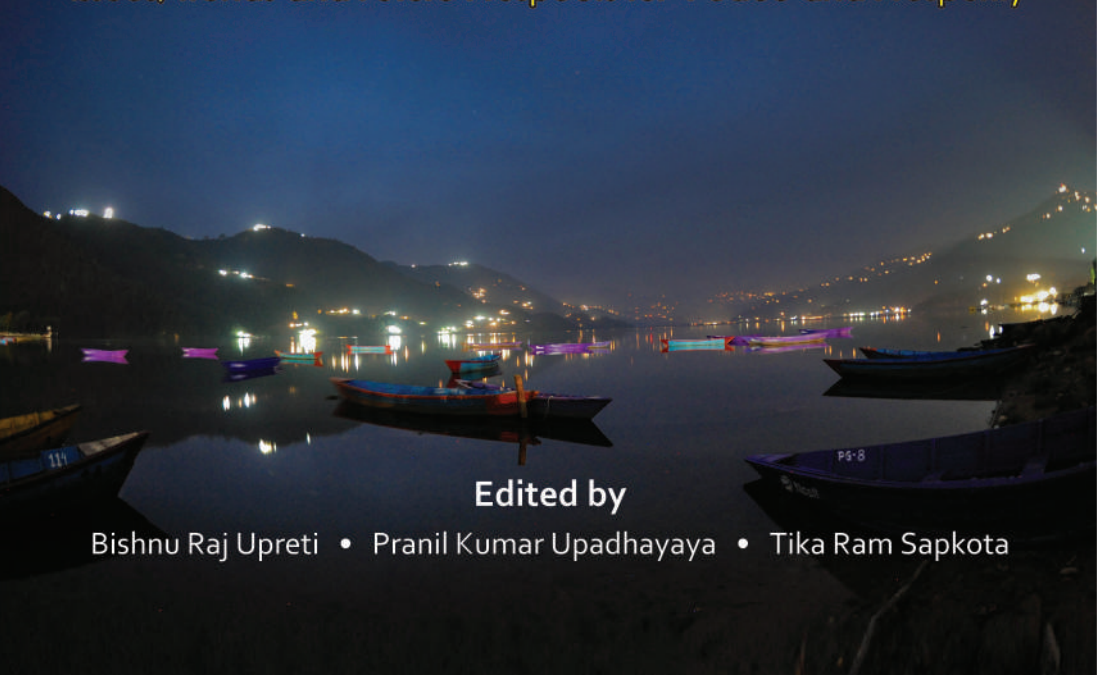




Tourism in Pokhara

Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity



Edited by

Bishnu Raj Upreti • Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya • Tika Ram Sapkota

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Tourists at the outskirts of Pokhara with Mt. Annapurna and Machhapuchhre on back (top) and Fewa Lake (down) by Ashesh Shakya

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Dedication

To the people who contributed to developing Pokhara
as a tourism city and paradise

The editors of the book *Tourism in Pokhara: Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity* acknowledge supports of Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC) and the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the participating institutions.

Acknowledgement

Nepal is a tourist destination with tremendous tourism potentials. Pokhara is one of the ideal potential tourist destinations in Nepal due to some of its specific attributes like unspoiled nature, age-old culture and hospitality attributes of Pokharelis. The centrally located position of Pokhara on the tourism map of Nepal is strategically supportive to position it as an easily accessible and reachable tourist destination in shorter travel duration from the various parts of the country. In nearly last six decades of its opening as a tourist destination for the external world, Pokhara has been gradually able to recognize itself as a favorite tourist destination with some tangible progresses on tourism products, events, amenities, accessibility (air and surface), service standards, products distribution channels and marketing and promotion.

The increase of the volume of tourists without compromising the value (quality and sustainability aspects) has remained the ultimate target in the context of the planned tourism development efforts in Pokhara. This tourism-related target in recent times is also associated with prospect of achieving holistic peace and progress through tourism. In context of these dual targets (both quantitative growth with qualitative tourism development), there are a number of thematic issues sensitively interlinked with the tourism industry of Pokhara. Such issues with their specific trends range from proper planning and management of tourism to its economic impacts in people and places of Pokhara, from growth and standardization of tourism events and services to preservation of cultural and natural heritages, from ethical aspects for the responsible tourism operation to the proper management of Fewa Lake, from envisioning the future with increased tourism products and events to proper marketing and promotion of tourism in Pokhara. A careful look and scrutiny of all these interlinked issues of tourism as discussed in this book can have implications on pragmatic policy and actions for a better tourism future in Pokhara.

The publication of this book is originally linked with a Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes (PAMS) project titled 'Meeting the challenges of

Peace-building in Tourism in Pokhara - Strengthening the Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethical Business Operation'. It was executed jointly by Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC) and the South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South in the years 2012-13. PAMS was a PhD research associated tourism project in the interrelationship between 'tourism, conflict and peace in Nepal' conducted under Kathmandu University. This research had focused for the responsible tourism development in Pokhara at the destination level. This book is the outcome of the collective efforts between tourism practitioners and tourism researchers under the banner of PAMS project. The research and empirical engagements of this publication were conducted within the framework of the Research Project (RP) 6 (Business and Peace) of the third phase under the thematic node 1 (Institutions, Livelihoods, Conflicts with Swiss Peace Foundation as its institutional partners) of NCCR North-South: Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change, co-funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

We anticipate that this book written on the various thematic issues of tourism in Pokhara with conceptual, theoretical and empirical observations and some pertinent case studies will serve in promoting tourism in Pokhara and in strengthening the image of paradise Pokhara. Though list of issues offered in this book is not complete in itself, which are needed and related with overall tourism sector in Pokhara, we hope that the book with a total of 13 chapters on 13 different thematic issues is the first of its kind in the tourism sector of Pokhara. It is hoped that it will fulfill the knowledge gap and also help build new knowledge on all those important issues covered in this book.

Our sincere gratitude goes to all who helped us during the course of preparing this volume. We are especially indebted to the following people and organizations for their respective supports.

- Steering committee members of PAMS project namely Surya Bahadur Bhujel, Tikaram Sapkota, Bachhu Ram Tiwari, Basanta Raj Dawadi, Chirajibi Pokharel and Ramu Gautam (Treasurer of PTC) and Santhosh Pokharel (Secretary of PTC) at PTC for their praiseworthy coordination and untiring support in the process of collection of various relevant information and publication of this book. Out thanks go to all executive members of PTC for the support and encouragement in the process of the production of

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Finally, we look forward to receiving comments and suggestions from readers of this volume. The comments and suggestions would be valuable for future excellence in such work in spiraling the brand of Pokhara as a true tourism paradise.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACA	= Annapurna Conservation Area
ACAP	= Annapurna Conservation Area Project
AI	= Aggregate Investment
BC	= Before Christ
CAAN	= Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal
CAMC	= Conservation Area Management Committee
CAPT	= Culture, Adventure and Pleasure Tourism
CBOs	= Communities based Organizations
CBRT	= Community Based Responsible Tourism
CoC	= Codes of Conduct
DDCs	= District Development Committees
DNC	= Destination Nepal Campaign
DTDC	= District Tourism Development Committee
EFT	= Earnings from Tourism
EXP	= Export
FA	= Foreign Aid
FAM Trips	= Familiarization Trips
FIDU	= Female Injecting Drug Users
FNCCI	= Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce & Industries
GCET	= Global Code of Ethics in Tourism
GDP	= Gross Domestic Product
GIS	= Geographical Information System
HDF	= Hookah, Drinks and Food
IMP	= Import
ITDG	= Intermediate Technology Development Group
NGO	= Non Government Organizations
INGO	= International Non Government Organizations
KU	= Kathmandu University

LPG	= Liquefied Petroleum Gas
M	= Meter
MMT	= Machhapuchhre Model Trek
Mt.	= Mountain
MTDC	= Machhapuchhre Tourism Development Committee
NAA	= Nepal Air Sports Association
NATTA	= Nepal Association of Tour & Travel Agents
NCCR	= National Centre of Competence in Research
NMA	= Nepal Mountaineering Association
NPR	= Nepalese Rupees
NTB	= Nepal Tourism Board
NTY	= Nepal Tourism Year
PATA	= Pacific Asian Travel Association
PCCI	= Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industries
PHA	= Paschimanchal Hotel Association
PoP	= population of Nepal
PPP	= public-private-partnership
PSMC	= Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City
PHAP	= Paschimanchal Hotel Association Pokhara
PN Campus	= Prithvi Narayan Campus
PTA	= Pokhara Tourism Authority
PTC	= Pokhara Tourism Council
PTO	= Pokhara Tourism Office
REBAN-Pokhara	= Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal-Pokhara
SMEs	= Small Medium Enterprises
TAAN	= Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal
THR	= Trade, Hotels and Restaurants
TI	= Total Investment
TNoB	= Total Number of Business
TTA	= Total Tourist Arrival
TV	= Television
US\$	= United States Dollar
U.S. A	= United States of America
UCO	= Unit Conservation Office
UK	= United Kingdom

UNESCO	= United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNITRAV	= Union of Trekking Travel Rafting and Airlines Workers
UNWTO	= United Nation World Tourism Organization
USAID	= United States Agency for International Development
VC	= Victoria Cross
VLY	= Visit Lumbini Year
VNY	= Visit Nepal Year
VPY	= Visit Pokhara Year
WECD	= World Commission on Environment and Development
WTM	= World Tourism Mart
WTTC	= World Travel and Tourism Council

Tourism in Pokhara: Nepal's pride and means for peace and prosperity

Bishnu Raj Upreti¹

Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya²

1.1 The context and reflections: Paradise Pokhara

Nepal undoubtedly deserves its identity for an ideal mountain tourist destination as it has successfully conducted the mixture of myriad tourism activities like soft walking, mountain sightseeing, trekking, mountaineering, community based tourism, rural/village home-stay tourism, eco tourism, adventure-sports tourism, etc. Amidst various prime tourist locations of Nepal, Pokhara in central Nepal is cosmically blessed and naturally gifted. Consequently, it has become one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations with the perfect blending of the unparalleled prettiness of the nature and mystery of culture. From touristic perspective, Pokhara with the area of 123 sq km, certainly remains full of unlimited natural attractions, cultural beauties, biological diversities and ultimately has become a proud-worthy spot of Nepal. The spectacular views of scenic Annapurna Himalaya range, the shortest distance of snow capped mountains (Mt. Fishtail on just 28 km away), the harmony of exotic mountains, eye catching lakes and the mystical form of Machhapuchhre mountain reflected into Fewa Lake, are the praise worthy features of Pokhara that have made to fascinate thousands of tourists, especially from abroad.

Situated at an altitude of 827 meter, Pokhara possesses climatic varieties, contrast vegetations, various scenic Lakes, attractive gorge of Seti river and ranges of snow-capped mountains. A number of authors, interpreters, critics (Adhikari and Seddon 2004; Bezruchka and Lyons 2011; Bhadgaonle 2006; Khatiwada 2004; Kshetry 2012; Raj 1993; Tripathi 2008; Tripathi

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and Singh 1996; Fort 2010; Paudel and Kazunori 2000; Herzog 1952) have highlighted about numerous attributes of Pokhara ranging from trekking and travel to histogenesis and geomorphologic dimensions along with other social and functional characters. Pokhara Valley and its surroundings are not only equipped with unique natural phenomena like nine lakes (e.g. Begnastal, Nyureni, Gunde, Khashte, Rupa, Maidi, Dipang and Fewalake) and world's three highest mountains [Annapurna I (8091m), Dhaulagiri (8167m), Manaslu (8164m)] but also various extraordinary and unlimited cosmic vibration like mild temperature (ranging from 2 degree Celsius in the winter to 35 degree in summer), the highest precipitation in Nepal (rainfall with 5600 mm/year or 222 inches/year), Seti-Gandaki river-system, strange caves (e.g. Gupteshwar Mahadeve cave, Mahendra cave, etc.) and amazing falls (e.g. Davis fall) along with thrilling deep Seti Gorge with more than 500 meter underground flow.

The huge socio-cultural diversity is another inevitable mysterious attraction of tourism in Pokhara. The overall population of Pokhara has been emerged out of numerous ethnic groups³, a number of classes and creeds along with hetero-lingual, who follow different cultures, celebrate distinct festivals, perform a number of rites and rituals and ultimately reflect the collective traditional lifestyles. These ethnic communities have their rich demographic, cultural and religious features which are institutionalized through the spiritual institutions of faith centers like Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples.

The physiographic uniqueness of Pokhara is not only limited with the motive of how to attract tourists, it rather explores opportunities for policy makers and planners to take necessary precautions and preventive measures from the possible natural disaster analyzing related risks and their effects (UNDP 2008).

Pokhara is not untouched from the Nepal's stormy transition. It is obvious that this Himalayan kingdom has been passed through massive structural changes like the transition of monarchy to democratic republic, high public expectation to high frustration, armed insurgency to relative peace (negative peace), close and narrow circle of stakeholders to multiple stakeholders with diverse and often contradict positions and expectations. The constitution, the President and the government all are in transition.

³ According to the census of 2001, there were 70 different groups which consisted of 27 from hills, 35 from Terai, 4 from Mountain and 4 from mixed and unidentified categories. See Parajuli (2004) for more information.

Further political decision makers are largely failed to manage political transition.⁴ However, all these transformations are not only weakness of its own. They are not only undertaking the myriad of challenges, but also providing great opportunities. Therefore, national concern is laying on addressing these challenges and grasping some possible opportunities. Coming out from the domain of these challenges and succeeding in these areas at national level will obviously affect the tourist destination of Pokhara in both ways, directly and indirectly.

The remarkable growth of tourism both at international and national levels and its induced potential positive benefits in economic, socio-cultural and environmental domains have created growing attention and look at tourism with a passion for peace. Tourism as a force for peace has been a popular positive message relayed by the academicians, consultants and industry in recent years (Upadhyaya 2011; Upreti et al. 2013). There was a phase when Pokhara was only a mountain tourist destination, but now it is rapidly growing its popularity on its own various attributes and there are increasing numbers of tourists' arrivals. Consequently, we have come up with such highly researchable expedition with this book *Tourism in Pokhara: Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity*.

Different chapters of the book have amply demonstrated different aspects of tourism with an effort to bridge the linkage of tourism with peace and prosperity in Pokhara. The past, present and future trends of various tourism related issues as discussed in this book are largely affected by the patterns of political-economy, governance, local tourism entrepreneurs' commitment, practice of inclusion and exclusion, structural patters of tourism authorities, etc. In this context, chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the state of tourism in the past and present and possible way-outs for prosperity and peace of Pokhara in future through tourism. Methodologically, the knowledge and information of this chapter are acquired through both secondary and primary information. The secondary information is acquired through the review of published and unpublished literatures. The primary information is based on multiple sources of societal learning like field visits in course of doing researches (PhD and senior level), observation of various sites, focus on group discussions, interactive seminars and a number of interactions and interviews with the experts of tourism sector in Pokhara.

⁴ Its few glaring examples are: failure of the Constituent Assembly (CA) to write constitution even after the several time extension of the term, lack of common understanding for the basis of the federal restructuring of the country, failure to fill up the positions of the constitutional bodies like the Commission of the Investigation of the Abuse of Authorities vacant since 6 years, etc.

1.2 The past

Tourism in Pokhara is the recently developed phenomenon which is nearly six decade old. Pokhara was identified as a destination of natural beauty and the departure point of rugged mountains and mountain expeditions at the earlier time. The brief description of the state of tourism of this exotic land in the past is discussed below.

History of tourism in Pokhara

Initially, Pokhara was explored as a transit point for mountaineers around 1950 and 1960. It was explored by a few thousand tourists in 1962. The first historic ascend of Mt. Annapurna I (8091 m) on 3 June, 1950 by a French national Maurice Herzog and a team of mountaineers was the historic pioneer step in exposing Pokhara as a mountainous tourist destination in the World. The starting of the first commercial trekking tourism operation by British Colonel Jimmy Roberts in association with globally pioneer package tourism inventor, Thomas Cook (United Kingdom) in 1966 remained another early milestone for the exposition of Pokhara and its surrounding areas from the perspective of tourism. Pokhara has also remained a favorite destination for Western Hippies during 1960s and 70s. These hippies, in other words are the adventure-seekers, who were the first explorers and to some extent risk takers to visit around the new places of Annapurna region. Their contribution is still remembered in the sense that they popularized those places through photography. The professional tourism development in Pokhara was started at the end of the 1970. In fact, there are series of chronological historical trends and activities which have brought Pokhara to the present stage of wide popularity.

Table 1.1 A chronological list of major tourism development trends/ events in past in Pokhara

S.N.	Date	Activities/events
1.	1889	Arrival, exploration and appreciation of Pokhara by Japanese Buddhist monk Ekai Kawaguchi in course of his visit to Tibet. Kawaguchi appreciates the enchanting beauty of Pokhara in his book titled 'Three years in Tibet'
2.	1950	First ascend of Mt. Annapurna I by Maurice Herzong in 1950. Global media coverage and publicity of Pokhara and Nepal as a beautiful mountainous tourism destination.
3.	1950	Dr. Tony Hagen, the Swiss Geographer visited Pokhara in 1950, appreciated it as an extraordinary place in his book entitled 'Nepal: The Himalayan Kingdom'
4.	1952	Construction of Sunauli-Pokhara highway
5.	1961	Establishment of tourist information center
6.	1960s and 70s	Starting of Hippi era with their arrivals in Pokhara and Annapurna region via Pokhara
7.	1966	The first commercial trekking tourism started by Colonel Jimmy Roberts
8.	1974	Formulation of the sketch of the physical development plan of Pokhara
9.	1976	Construction of Prithvi highway to connect Pokhara with Kathmandu
10.	1980	Popularization of Pokhara as for the gateway to Royal Trek starting from Kalikasthan ridge in Begnas Lake area. Prince Charles of Wales was the pioneer to popularize it
11.	1980 onward	Name and fame of Pokhara as the gateway for various other popular treks like round Annapurna Circuit trek, Annapurna Sanctuary trek, Ghandruk-Ghorepani, Mardi Himal trek, Jomsom-Muktinath, Nar- Phoo, Dhaulagiri round and Dolpa treks.
12.	1992	Up-scaling of the popularity of Pokhara with the opening of the restricted area of upper Mustang trek
13.	1986	Starting of Annapurna Conservation Area Project in the areas north of Pokhara under the integrated conservation and development program and position of Pokhara as an entry and exist point
14.	2007 onwards	Added positioning and popularity of Pokhara with the organization of mega event Visit Pokhara Year 2007 as an entry and exist point to newly explored trekking routes like Machhapuchhre Model trek, Millennium trek, Mardi Himal Trek, etc.
15.	Present	Pokhara as destination not only to view but also to get involved in a number of annual scheduled events/activities like rice planting festival, New Year Festival, Street festival, international paragliding championship, winter trekking camp, triathlon championship, etc.

Source: Compiled by authors

Historically, Pokhara in the 18th and 20th century was a trade route between the India and China. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf (1978) exploring the historical trans-Himalayan trading dimensions has highlighted that Pokhara was a trade route between India and Tibet. The Newar people from Bhaktapur and Bandipur moved to Pokhara for the trading in the 18th century and established businesses in the old town of Pokhara. The establishment of the British Recruitment Camp in the 20th century further enhanced the accumulation of the Gurung and Magar community.

Chhetri (1990), examining the adaptation process of Tibetan Refugees in Pokhara, highlighted that 4 of the 12 Tibetan refugee camps (Jampaling, Paljorling, Tashi Ling, and Tashi Palkhiel) were installed in Pokhara to accommodate the massive flow of refugees coming from Tibet in 1950s and 60s. Between 1959 and 1962, about 3 hundred thousand Tibetan exiles came to Nepal and some of them were staying in Pokhara. They built Buddhist monasteries and began to establish their culture, which now has become the attraction of Pokhara, especially in Tibetan Refugee Camps. In a study of Frechette (2002) shows that since 1989 every year about 2500 Tibetans illegally enter Nepal and they used Pokhara as a transit to India.

The establishment of tourism information centre in 1961 and the formulation of the sketch of the physical development plan became milestones in course of the development of tourism in Pokhara. Completion of the Siddhartha Highway in 1968 had connected Pokhara with outer world and as a consequence flows of tourists started to increase gradually in Pokhara.

Pokhara has passed through a number of interventions for its development from the perspective of tourism. Nepal's first and the only tourism master plan 1972 which had mentioned the importance of tourism, highlighted about the traditional designs, materials and height limits of buildings in Pokhara and recommended about its strategic position with the regional concept. Tourism was looked as a potential sector for the socio-economic development of Pokhara from the very beginning. Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Development Authority was one of the pioneer international organizations which had recommended developing Pokhara as the first and foremost Himalayan adventure destination. In 1988, it emphasized for the development of Fewa Lake side area. The PATA's intervention was also concerned for protecting the natural setting and conservation of old architect and heritage of building in Pokhara. Such significance were reflected in its technical report entitled "Pokhara Historic Resources Study and Proposal for a Conservation District

Pokhara" produced in 1990. In 1993, Asia Development Bank was involved in building some infrastructure related development work. Because of the concentration of tourism in the surrounding areas of Phewa Lake, the lakeside area was developed and emerged as the centre of Pokhara. Until Panchayat era, the tourists have to invest 20 \$ a day and they had to show the receipt of the exchange of money to extend visa and stay furthermore in Pokhara.

The past of Pokhara is also associated with some renowned personalities who were true guides for the identification and exposition of exotic natural and cultural beauties of Pokhara and gradually positioning it as a favorable tourist destination. Amidst these legendary fellows, the names of Eka Kawaguchi (1899), Maurice Herzog (1950), Tony Hagen (1955), Colonel Jimmy Roberts (1957), M.S. Kohli (1961), several Western Hippies (1960s & 70s), Dr. Harka Gurung (1970s & 80s), Jhalak Thapa (1980), Dr. Chandra Gurung (1990) are amendable (NTB 2011). The names of Ekai Kawaguchi in 1899 and Tony Hagen in 1950 are well known from international perspective who had heartily appreciated about the eye catching natural beauties of Pokhara during their personal trips. Likewise, there are equally important contributions of some renowned national personalities like Dr. Harka Gurung, Dr. Chandra Gurung and Jhalak Thapa who played supportive roles in promoting and glorifying Pokhara. Dr. Harka Gurung was the first person representing from Lamjung district of Western Nepal who became the first tourism minister and also the vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission (1968-1975).

1.3 Present state of tourism

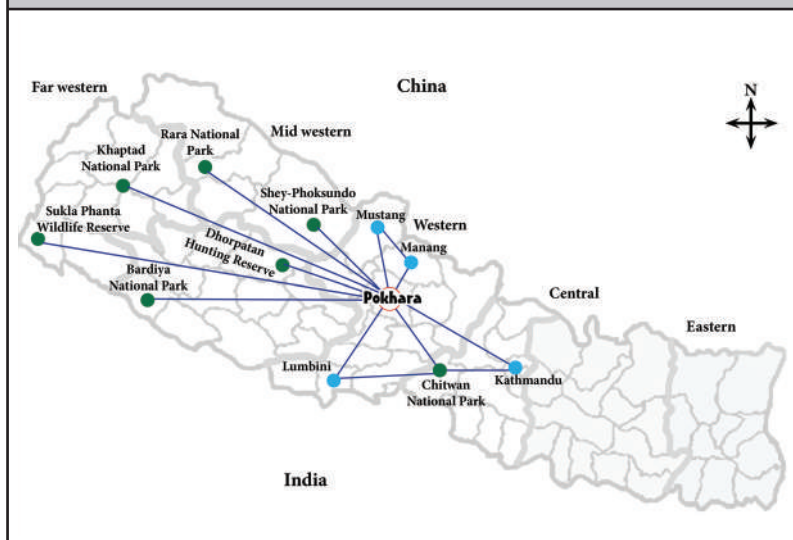
At present, Pokhara is largely known as a city tourism orientation due to the unlimited natural beauty, cultural attractions, social cohesion, harmony and mutual respect. It is also famous for hospitality and adventure tourism. It is categorically specialized as a famous major tourist destination for adventure tourism and the departure point for the globally known trek route for Annapurna circuit.

Pokhara is also the meeting point of migrating Mongoloids and Aryans from Himalaya mountains and Terai regions of Nepal whose presence have made Pokhara valley attractive from cultural point of view. The mosaic of caste and ethnicity, religion and identity where different ethnic groups like Newar, Kshetri, Brahmin, Gurung, Majhi and Muslim are major communities who have been staying with harmony and cooperation for longer time.

1.3.1 Strategic position of Pokhara from the perspective of tourism

Pokhara holds a strategic position due to its central location in the map of Nepal. This location of Pokhara with some specific infrastructures related facilities (airport, road network, all kinds of vehicle service, hotels, motels, restaurants, power supply, drainage system, sewage system, etc.) have offered it with soaring scope to position it as a hub for the departure to various touristically attractive national parks, hunting reserve, wildlife reserves, etc. in western, mid-western and far western development regions of Nepal.

Figure 1.1 Strategic and central position of Pokhara in connection with other tourist destinations



Source: Developed by authors

Pokhara is not only geographically located in central part of Nepal but also popular as the headquarter of the Western development region from the perspective of the national planning scheme to divide the entire nation into a total of five development regions. As shown in figure 1.1, Pokhara is looked upon the central location for three important tourism triangles. Pokhara-Kathmandu-Chitwan is considered as golden triangle, Pokhara-Chitwan-Lumbini is considered as silver triangle and Pokhara-Manang-Mustang is looked upon as adventure triangle from the prospect of tourism by keeping Pokhara as an important bridge for all these

tourism triangles (NTB 2011). Thus, Pokhara constitutes its position as a regional hub in Western Nepal. A total of 230,799 international tourists who visited Pokhara in 2010 that constitutes 38.28 percent of the total tourists' arrivals of 602,867 in Nepal in this year (MoTCA 2012). In this context, Tourism is highly operational in Pokhara as the centre of mountain economy, not only for Greater Pokhara, but also beyond Pokhara valley. This is due to the enormous natural and cultural attractions for tourism and the strategic position of Pokhara as the entry and exit points for trekking and other adventure activities (e.g. paragliding, ultra light aircraft, mountain expedition, sky diving, rock climbing, river rafting, zip-line, etc.) in Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountain areas in the Western Development region (NTB 2008; Thapa 2010).

Pokhara offers unique attractions that combine modern characteristics as reflected in the places like Chipledhunga, New Road and Mahendrapul; historical richness reflected in cluster of various famous temples (e.g. Barahi temple, Bindhyabasini, Bhadrakali, Sitaldevi, Gita Mandir, Bhimsen temple, etc.); panoramic views (specially from the Sarangkot, the World Peace Pagoda, etc.); museums as knowledge centre of nature, culture and people (e.g. International Mountain museum, Pokhara Regional museum, Ethnographic museum, Gurkha museum and Annapurna Natural History museum).

The fast pace of urbanization of Pokhara has attracted expansion of the tourist services, manufacturing industries, agriculture sectors, supplies industries and the remittances from the migrants abroad.

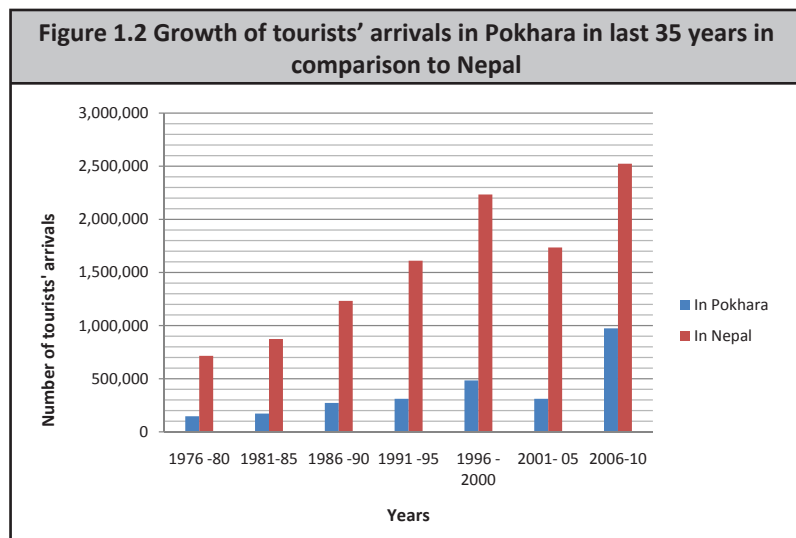
Pokhara offers tourists a number of activities with joyful events which are based on nature, culture, tradition, heritage, ceremony, adventure, and sports (NTB 2011). Today, it is the main entry and exit points for trekking to Annapurna Conservation Area, Mt. Annapurna Base Camp, Mt. Machhapuchhre Base Camp, and post-trekking resting and relaxation point (NCCR and TAAN WRC 2010; Tripathi 2008). It is also an extra ordinary destination for all sorts of tourists. Many hills and villages can be easily accessed and enjoyed while visiting and staying in Pokhara. The names of such famous peaks and spots are Sarngkot, Kaskikot, Naudanda, Dhikurpokhari, Kahun Hill, Kalikastha, Sundari danda, Armala kot, Hemja, Austrian camp, Dhampus-Astham, Mattikhan hill, Nirmal Pokhari, Bharat Pokhari, Kristi, etc. These hills along with other destination like Sirubari, Gahlegaun, Bhujung, Tanahsur, Damauli, Nuwakot, etc. are superb village tourism destinations lie on the periphery of Pokhara which can be explored as the importante parts of Pokhara to know and experience people and their culture.

A number of short trail trekking is available in surrounding areas of Pokhara. Such short trekking are Royal trek (1720m), Ridgeline trek (Bharatpokhari-

Kristi) (1114 m), Millennium trek (1279m), Mardi Himal trek (4100m), and Machhapuchhre model trek (3682m). Furthermore, there are a number of other major trekking routes like Annapurna Sanctuary (4200m), Jomsom-Muktinath (3800m), Ghorepani-Poonhill (3120m), Siklis (1989m), Upper Mustang (3950m), Nyagi (3210m), Manang area (3450m), Manaslu circuit (5100m), Dhaulagiri circuit (5710m), Dolpa (5115m) and Dhorpan (3940m) where tourists can spend one to four weeks duration of time in lodges, camping and home-stays. The diversities of these activities offer a perfect ground for all kinds of visitors, tourists and researchers to explore the very Pokhara in detail and its surrounding exotic parts.

1.3.2 Volume and characteristics

Pokhara has witnessed steady growth on international tourists' arrivals since 1970 when commercial tourism operation began in Pokhara. The statistics of international tourists' arrivals in last 35 years shows growing trends. Such trends with comparative figure of five years from 1976 are reflected in figure 1.2.



Source: MoTCA (2012); PTO (2011)

As shown in figure 1.2, a total of 10,139,470 international tourists visited Nepal in last 35 years during 1976 to 2010. Pokhara had received 2,671,045 tourists which is 26.34% in the total volume. However, this ration is found to be increased in recent years as there were 38.61 percent tourists in

Nepal who visited Pokhara during the years 2006-2010 (MoTCA 2012). There is lack of data recording system of domestic tourists' travelers who travel Pokhara by air and surface transport. It is estimated that there could be around 250,000 domestic tourists coming to Pokhara on annual basis (Pokharel 2012, p8). According to the hotel entrepreneurs of Pokhara, more than 550,000 tourists visit Pokhara annually, of which around 300,000 are foreigners and remaining figure is domestic travelers (Pokharel 2012, p 8). With these arrivals, Pokhara is the second biggest tourist hub for both domestic and international tourists in Nepal. Pokhara also as being the main gateway for tourists visiting Annapurna Conservation Area, a review of trend of tourists in last 10 years (2001-2010) shows that there has been almost 50% of tourists coming Pokhara are diverted towards the ACA. This trend is reflected in table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Trend of tourists visiting Annapurna region via Pokhara

Date	Tourist international arrivals in Pokhara	Tourist international arrivals in Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA)	% of ACA in total arrivals in Pokhara
2001	77,853	65,313	84
2002	68,056	38,642	57
2003	85,529	40,668	47
2004	87,693	42,347	48
2005	74,012	36,224	49
2006	94,799	37,901	40
2007	165,177	60,274	36
2008	186,643	72,175	39
2009	203,527	79896	39
2010	230,799	90161	39
Total	12,74, 088	563,601	44.23%

Source: ACAP (2012); PTO (2011)

The Annapurna Conservation area is offered with nearly 1,000 lodges, teashops and hundreds of other subsidiary services (home-stays, cyber café, money changer, etc.) made it popular to cater the accommodation and services to the thousands of trekkers, pilgrims and their support staff. The rich biodiversity, protect ecosystem, diversified landscapes (e.g. forests, agriculture and, shrubland, grassland, baren-land, snow cover, glacier, rivers, lake ponds, streams, etc.) flora, fauna coincided

with successful management of conservation efforts under the model of integrated community based conservation and development program in 57 VDCs of five districts in 7,629 sq. km are key features to attract tourists to visit Annapurna Conservation area (Bajracharya et al. 2007 as in Upadhayaya 2011b; Holden and Sparrowhawk 2002).

1.3.3 Tourism infrastructures

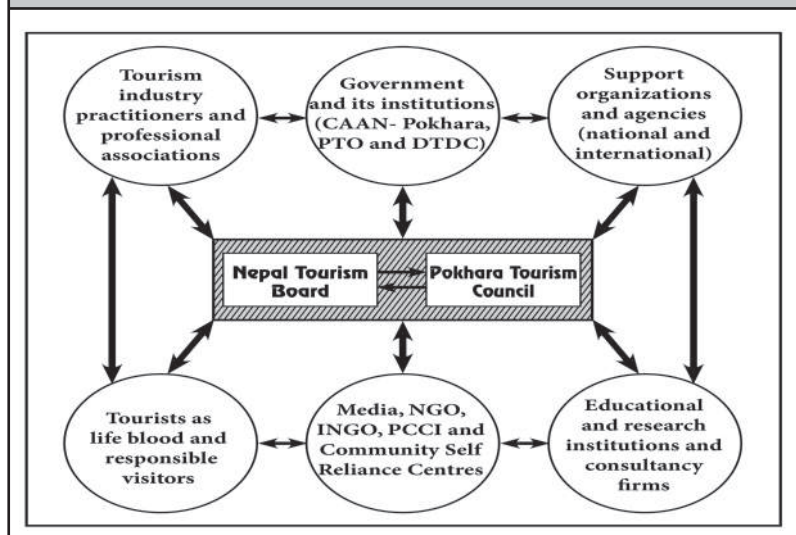
To cater the service of tourists, there are 1 domestic airport, 1 tourist bus parks, 16 tourist buses, 1900 taxis, 573 hotels (two 5-star, five 3-star, fifteen 2-star), 21 tourist restaurants, 116 travel agencies, 81 trekking agencies, 124 tourist restaurant and bars, 11 dance bar and night clubs, and 18 paragliding companies. Additionally, there are a number of trekking equipments and garments shops, green parks and gardens, and transport service (which manages bus, taxi, luxury car), trekking equipments and garments shops, boat club, book stalls, money changers and others, etc. in the tourism industry of Pokhara at present (Adhikari 2011; Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012). There is a total of 375 km of paved road network in and around Pokhara. Such infrastructures are supportive to offer the specialized services of all incoming tourists in Pokhara.

This growing trend of varied tourism related entrepreneurs has been making a broad, composite and a multifaceted industry. The continuous growth of tourists has also induced sustainability challenges of tourism in Pokhara. Such challenge ranges from cultural influences to the exploitation of natural resource, from the problems of wastage deposition to traffic noise, and from the lack of social security to socio-cultural degradation, etc (Upadhayaya and Kahtiwada 2012).

1.3.4 Tourism authorities, actors and institutions

Tourism industry in Pokhara comprises of the separate but functionally interdependent multiple sub-sectors and their actors and occupational institutions to develop, operate and manage this industry. Figure 1.3 depicts the structure of such sub-sectors with the interconnection with each other both directly and indirectly.

Figure 1.3 Institutions and actors involved in tourism industry in Pokhara



Source: Developed by authors

Legends:

CAAN = Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, Pokhara, PTO = Pokhara Tourism Office, DTDC = District Tourism Development Committee, NGO = Non Government Organizations, INGO = International Non Government Organizations, PCCI = Pokhara chamber of Commerce and Industry

As shown in figure 1.3, all actors and institutions of tourism industry of Pokhara can be divided into 8 major components. Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Pokhara regional center and Pokhara Tourism Council (as the umbrella organization of all major tourism associations) hold the central coordinating position and act in close coordination with each other. NTB as a public private entity is responsible for tourism products and services development and their marketing and promotions. Pokhara Tourism Council acts as a pressure group on behalf of all member tourism associations to provide visionary suggestions and valuable ideas to the government to assist in formulating sound plans and policies for the sustainable development of tourism in Pokhara. It also coordinates with Government, foreign agencies, tourism associations, and local government bodies in promoting and conserving the tourism industry in Pokhara. There are following tourism related organizations and associations (table 1.3 below) which are functional in interrelationship with each other as shown in above figure 1.3.

Table 1.3 List of organizations/associations as related with tourism in Pokhara

S. No.	Names of commercial tourism associations (formal and informal)	Number of affiliates	Remark
Name of nonprofit making promotional organizations			
1.	Pokhara Tourism Council	11 tourism related professional organizations/ association s	As an umbrella organization
2.	Nepal Tourism Board	Formal and informal relations with	Pokhara branch
2.	Lekhanath Tourism Promotion Committee		
3.	Ganesh Laxmi Trust		Member of PTC
Names of commercial tourism associations (formal and informal)			
1.	Paschimanchal Hotel Association	410	Member of PTC
2.	Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, Western Regional Association	75	Member of PTC
3.	Nepal Association of Tour & Travel Agents, Regional Association Pokhara	109	Member of PTC
4.	Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal Pokhara Chapter	72	Member of PTC
5.	Taxi Association of Pokhara	4500 taxi and 54 microbuses	Member of PTC
6.	Pokhara Bus Entrepreneurs Association	251	Member of PTC
7.	Trekking Equipment Shops' Association, Pokhara	59	Member of PTC
8.	Embroidery and Garment Association, Pokhara	75	Member of PTC
9.	Nepal Air Sports Association	18	Member of PTC
10.	Nepal Mountaineering Association, Annapurna Chapter Pokhara	33	-
11.	City Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal (CITY REBAN) Pokhara	42	-
12.	Fewa Boat Entrepreneurs Association, Pokhara	750	-
13.	Prithvi Hotel Entrepreneurs Association	112	-
14.	Lekhanath Hotel and Restaurant Association	10	Located in Lekhnath municipality in Pokhara valley
15.	Money Changer Association	52	-
16.	Pokhara Cyber Association	62	-

Names of tourism workers' associations			
1.	All Nepal Tourism Workers Union – Kaski	500	-
2.	Union of Trekking-Travels-Rafting and Airlines Workers' Nepal	500	-
3.	All Nepal Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union -Kaski	1500	-
4.	Hotel Representative Society, Pokhara	45	-
Tourism related educational institution			
1.	Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College	NA	Offering +2 and bachelor program in hotel management
Media			
1.	Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), Kaski district chapter	260 journalists	-

Source: Compilation by authors

All of above tourism related organizations and associations are directly and/or interrelated with each other in course of excellence of tourism in Pokhara.

1.4 The future

With full of unlimited natural attractions, cultural beauties, biological diversities, scenic Lakes, attractive gorge of Seti River and ranges of snow capped mountains; Pokhara offers tremendous potential for the planned development of tourism in future. Pokhara is undeniably a tourist destination with competitive and comparative advantages. Such advantages are supported and favored by unspoiled nature and age old culture which are limited not only in greater Pokhara valley but also beyond it in surrounding peri-urban and rural areas. This is why Pokhara is also acclaimed as a hanging paradise on the earth (NTB 2011; Shakya 1995, 2012). The unique mountain ranges (e.g. Annapurna south, Fishtail, Lamjung, Gangapurna, Dhaulagiri, Lamjung and Manaslu, etc.) distinctive Seti river, magnificent Fewa Lake, surrounding pristine environment coincided with multi-ethnic composition (e.g. Gurung, Magar, Newar, Thakali, Damai, Kami, Gaine, Brahmin, Chhetri, etc.) of the local people and wide range and standards of existing tourists services are suitably enough for varied categories of tourism like 'pleasure tourism', 'adventure sports tourism', 'eco-tourism', 'ethical tourism', 'green tourism', 'community based village tourism', 'MICE tourism', 'responsible tourism', 'environmental tourism' and other 'special interest tourism'.

A well balance of quantitative and qualitative aspects largely matter here in developing and managing these varied categories of tourism. In quantitative aspect, there should be an envision to focus on multiplying numbers of visitors; extending the average length of the stay of tourists and their per day expenses. It could then contribute for increasing local employment and income generations.

For qualitative growth and expansion of tourism, there is need to concentrate on improvement the infrastructures, upgrading of existing amenities, improving occupational skills and hospitality services of service providers, and improving surface and air accessibility from and to Pokhara to tourist generating destinations. Furthermore, linking tourism with rural areas, strengthening local supply linkage, generating cordial relationship between tourism and non tourism sectors, and enhancing absorptive capacity are other extremely important prerequisites for the qualitative development of tourism in Pokhara. Similarly, promoting domestic tourism is the pressing need for the sustainability of tourism (Kunwar 2010; Paudyal 2012). In many rich countries, domestic tourism is the prime base for the sustainability of tourism and contributing more than the international tourists. The lack of prioritization of domestic tourism both from policy and practices are bottleneck to strengthen the peace potential of tourism on sustainable basis. The Tourism Act 1978 does not value domestic visitors under the category of the definition of tourists. Nepal in general and Pokhara in particular must learn from such successful examples of the value of domestic tourists from around the world and also from some earlier experience of its own in past. Moreover, it is essential to make tourism sector and tourism enterprises to be more inclusive, participatory, gender-friendly, environmentally sensitive, and responsive to local community (culturally sensitive). Quality of hospitality service is a precondition and the tourism entrepreneurs must realize this.

Exploration and promotion of historical and archeological places (for example the archeological site and palace of Lomanthang of Mustang), pristine natural sites, traditional festivals, dresses, and cultural heritages are equally important not only for quantitative but also qualitative development of tourism in future. Similarly, effective marketing and publicity of Pokhara and its surrounding rural areas in package plans are equally important. For this, there should be the mobilization of big international media, Nepali diplomatic missions operating in different countries, well wishers of Nepal from foreign countries and ex-travelers to Nepal. Furthermore, the invitation to celebrities from different countries,

use of international forums such as global submits, organization of familiarization trips of media writers, travel writers for low cost publicity can be additional effective strategies which can support for better marketing and promotion of Pokhara in future.

Balancing qualitative and quantitative aspects in coordinated industry-wide action are not that easy but not also impossible. However, the openness, frequent communications, flexibility and trust building with each others in bilateral and multilateral basis among the key tourism actors are the precondition for it. For both quantitative and qualitative tourism, a conducive environment can be made through the provision of suitable policy, facilitating regulatory provisions, responsive institutional arrangements, appropriate and skilled human resource provision (e.g. trained guides, hospitality service providers, etc.) and application of ethical behavior in working environment. For institutional arrangements, a rethink on much debated and discussed issue of establishing Pokhara Tourism Authority (PTA) and reaching on a concrete conclusion is yet due and important. (Paudyal 2009; PTC 2009). PTA was envisioned in the year 2009 as a highly authoritative single window permanent mechanism which could not only lead the development of tourism in proper coordination with all stakeholders on self sustainable approach but also supportive to diminish the centralized pattern of policy and practice of the development of tourism of Pokhara from Kathmandu as practiced on the top down approach till date. The effective executions of existing rules and regulations as well as application of code of conducts are must for the responsible, qualitative and sustainable management of tourism at destination level in Pokhara.

Furthermore, Pokhara needs to expand its tourism related events and activities with the concept of regional scope. It means it requires to cover the wide range of thematic and geographical areas (e.g. Mardi Himal, Lwangghalel, Ghandruk, Ghorepani, Manang, Jomsom, Muktinath, Upper Mustang, Dolpa, Nar Pho region, Sikles, and beyond like Dhorpatan Hunting reserve and a number of national parks in Western and far western Nepal). Pokhara must be developed as gateway to all these places for tourist visit. Consequently, Pokhara needs to explore and develop more trekking routes (which are also historic, cultural, religious and trade routes in past) to connect these areas.

Finally, taking care on following elements could be additionally supportive and advantageous for the quantitative, qualitative, and responsible development of tourism that will in turn validate and support the brand of Pokhara as a hanging paradise on earth on long run.

- Priority to develop tourism in future by the balanced combination of natural and cultural heritage. This can establish Pokhara a zone of high class destination,
- Validating Pokhara as a special tourist zone for not only limiting to present issues but also by addressing all unforeseen challenges in future
- Requirement of Proper planning, investors, commitment for which a tourism master plan is urgent. ,
- Need of a step forward to move beyond mass tourism,
- Need of well defined responsibility and authority
- Multiplier use of capacity (carrying capacity), no seasonality (all round tourism),
- Facilitating role of state to maintain minimum standard
- Increased capacity building for trained human resources and entrepreneurs for the up-scaling of their knowledge and skills
- Prioritization to Voluntarism and philanthropic tourism
- Building a state of art facilitated international airport and linking Pokhara with Kathmandu and Indian boarder points like Sunauli and Birgunj with double lane highways.

It is undeniable that tourism in Pokhara will not free from various challenges in materializing its balanced quantitative and qualitative tourism development. With quantitative growth target, the inter-sector (networks of hotels, trekking agencies, tours and travels including bus and taxi operators, restaurants and bars, air sports, trade unions) mistrusts, sporadic conflicts and tensions may affect negatively all of them in future. Hence, the joint initiatives are must there to generate mutual understanding, boosting concerted actions, lessening conflict, increasing cooperation among each other, creating win-win situation to all of them and thereby supporting to build peace. Therefore, if the different sectors of tourism and business in Pokhara want to get benefits from tourism, they must work together; develop trust, mutual respect and complementarities.

1.5 Organization of the chapters

There are a total of 13 chapters in this book. These chapters not only offer the potency of tourism in relation to various thematic issues and

their trends, but also aware of various challenges ahead. Basically, the perspectives of authors, who are coming from the mixture of practitioners and academicians, are presented. All these chapters intend to present the conceptual and practical streams in the book.

In chapter 1, Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti and Dr. Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya offer the context and reflections of Pokhara as a paradise from the prospect of tourism. They offer various past and present issues of tourism. Finally, they come up with some valid arguments on the future prospect of tourism in Pokhara for its potential contribution for lasting peace and prosperity.

In Chapter 2, Dr. Gehendra Man Udas offers a historical review of the cultural and natural heritages of Pokhara. He reviews the history of Pokhara and highlights the major natural and cultural heritages of Pokhara. Based on the blending of both unlimited natural and cultural attractions in Pokhara, he argues the position of Pokhara as not only as one of the most favorable tourist destinations but also as a 'Hanging Paradise on Earth' on the earth.

Kashiraj Bhandari in Chapter 3, critically examines the issues related to tourism planning, development and management in Pokhara and envisions the future of tourism in Pokhara. His article has attempted to scrutinize the past efforts for the planning and chronological development of tourism in Pokhara and has discussed it. It finally comes out with some concrete future envisioning for the sensible planned development of tourism sector in Pokhara.

The effects of tourism development in Pokhara city are present in chapter 4 by Dr. Om Sharma. Employing both time series and secondary data for comparative study, he analyzes the growth pattern of tourism and effects of tourism on economic development process of Pokhara city. Furthermore, he suggests some policy measures for the better planning for tourism development in Pokhara.

In chapter 5, Tikaram Sapkota vehemently argues that Pokhara is an ideal destination because of its distinctiveness such as multiple seasonality, tourist segments, and availability of other unique activities. Sapkota, with his inner zeal, further highlights the trends and issues of tourism marketing in Pokhara. Providing the brief scenario of touristic Pokhara, he discusses efforts made in the past in marketing Pokhara and finally comes out with various strategic plan to strengthen the marketing and promotional aspect of Pokhara in future.

Ramji Sharma explores and analyzes the impacts and implications of tourism development over the socio-cultural domains of host communities with special reference to Fewa Lake catchments (east & north-east) of Pokhara in Chapter 6. He has minutely devised and tested thirteen important variables like family structure, indigenous profession, dining pattern, emotion, attitude and behavior, lifestyle and fashion, labor division, traditions, values and norms, arts, crafts, curios and music, language, crime, alcoholism, drug abuse and sex. His analysis reflects the bitter reality and makes beware of such practices which lead to social and cultural contamination.

In chapter 7, Sharmila Acharya brings very important dimension of tourism i.e., women's engagement in tourism in Pokhara, which is not yet received proper attention in the mainstream debate. Ms Acharya succinctly analyzes the constraints and opportunities for women's engagement in tourism sector in general and in Pokhara and western Nepal in specific. It is the genuine issue in the sense that most of the abroad tourists in their feedback forms have pointed out about the necessity of women participation.

Lekha Nath Bhandari explores the mutual relationships between tourism and environment in chapter 8. He argues that tourism and environment are integral and tourist friendly environment is a fundamental infrastructure for any destination around the world. He critically analyses the past practices, discusses problems and identifies indicative strategies to control pollution for environment friendly tourism in Pokhara. His work reveals various environmental degrading factors that have made negative impacts on the sustainability of tourism in Pokhara. In this context, he recommends some damage preventing appropriate plan of actions to related stakeholders for a pollution free, eco-friendly and responsible tourism destination of Pokhara.

The main focus on chapter 9 is to discuss about the state of the art of the tourism related current events and services in Pokhara. In this chapter, Shreekanta S. Khatiwada (a local tourism expert) highlights about future potential of tourism events and services in Pokhara. He finally puts forward some suggestions not only to strengthen the existing events and services but also to materialize the newly potential events and services for a potential tourism sector in Pokhara.

In Chapter 10, Dr. Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya, a well mix of scholar and practitioner, sincerely devoted in promoting tourism in Pokhara, examines moral and ethical aspects as the foundation for responsible

tourism management in Pokhara. His sense of 'natural modesty' and zeal to implement it in tourism maintains the spirit of brotherhood and mutual cooperation, as the basic element of modern tourism, which also helps strengthening humanity based on sincerity and honesty. Based on his extensive research in Pokhara for doctoral study, he has highlighted the role of ethics for responsible tourism. In his view, the institutionalization of responsible tourism awareness and practices apart of the increasing the number of tourists and their average stays are must to lead the sustainable development of tourism at destination level in elsewhere including Pokhara. Dr. Upadhayaya's argument is based on the premise that the tourism backstopped by tourism ethical operation codes of conduct could be a peace building and peace-sensitive tourism strategy in Pokhara and in Nepal. He finally highlights about the recent collaborative approach of tourism practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders in organizing itself to introduce and strengthen the ethical aspects of tourism at destination level in Pokhara.

In Chapter 11, Basanta Raj Dawadi (a pragmatist and dreamer tourism entrepreneur) and Dr. Pranil Kumar Upadhayaya, as based on some conceptual premise of the urban-rural integration in tourism, uplifts the practitioners' perspective on trekking and adventure tourism and vehemently argue for the need of urban-rural tourism integration in Pokhara. Their integrated vision is on the basis of their practical experiences while developing the Machhapuchhre Model trek by TAAN, in which they offered an important perspective on rural-urban integration of tourism, which is admired and accepted as an important pathway for Nepal's future tourism development.

The next issue is about the interrelationship between Fewa Lake and tourism in Pokhara by Mahendra Shrestha and Dr. Pranil Kumar Upadhayaya in Chapter 12. Fewa Lake is the nucleus ornament of Pokhara which is also the second biggest Lake in Nepal. It has remained a central tourist destination not only due to its catchy attraction but also with the concentration of the greatest number of tourism entrepreneurs and workers as the source of their income, employment and livelihoods in Pokhara. However, there have been increased debates, discussions and dissatisfactions on the efforts of proper management to avoid the challenges of Fewa Lake, which is closely related with the very tourism of Pokhara. Both authors have combined attempt to fulfill the rift by knowledge and understanding and also address the historical aspects, geographic features, demographic elements, vegetations and various

attributes (flora and fauna) of Fewa Lake. Finally, they come up with concrete recommendations for strengthening the prospective of a pollution free and properly managed Fewa Lake in promoting tourism in sustainable manner in Pokhara.

Finally, Tek Bahadur Gurung, in Chapter 13 poured experiences of Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), a relatively successful model for integrating conservation, development and livelihood of local people. He highlights the catalytic role of ACAP in bridging the two distinct tourism destinations- Annapurna and Pokhara. This chapter reminds how ACAP in the past played a vital role and still playing a dynamic role in the development of tourism in Pokhara supporting through various commercial and professional tourism associations in implementing their tourism related programs in Pokhara. By presenting the contents which are based on the interviews, interactions and group discussions participated by the experts, locals and other related tourism entrepreneurs; Mr. Gurung puts forward some recommendations to National Trust for Nature Conservation and ACAP to carry out the better management of tourism in Annapurna Conservation Area.

1.6 Concluding remarks

Pokhara can be made as an ideal and one of the most preferred destinations because of its unique characteristics- combination of both nature and culture. On one side it possesses the paragon of natural beauty, on the other it has preserved the complex assimilation of rich cultural diversities. The greatest touristic aspect of Pokhara is the availability of the multiple seasons throughout the year for all types of tourists.

It is only through the integrated effort which can transform the great potential of tourism in Pokhara for socio-economic transformation, development and thereby the achievement of peace, prosperity and societal stability. So far, Pokhara has not yet been able to draw enough attention from the state and the other main sectors of society to maximize its tourism potentials that ultimately enhance the economic growth and contribute to socio-political stability and peace. However, to achieve such highly ambitious dream, it requires proper tourism planning, right development intervention, adequate resource allocation, building an independent, authoritative and responsive institutional framework, laying down conducive policy, facilitating regulatory provisions and application of voluntary and disciplinary commitment through indigenous codes of

conduct.

Doubling the number of visitors in overall, increasing the flow of tourist in shoulder and lean seasons (e.g. monsoon and winter), increasing the average length of stay of tourists, spreading tourism flow to the surrounding area, increasing the per day expenses of tourists, re-spending the tourism based revenue in proper way and mainstreaming Pokhara in the pathway of responsible tourism in an integrated approach are undeniably the prioritize elements for the future of tourism in Pokhara. The collective efforts of all stakeholders like the political decision makers, planners, investors, government, tourism entrepreneurs, local people and researchers are vital at this stage to develop Pokhara as a prime tourism region, maximize the benefits and make tourism inclusive for all people and places.

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* * * * *

Historical review of natural and cultural heritage of paradise Pokhara

Gehendra Man Udas "Pokhareli"¹

2.1 Introduction

Pokhara valley is located in the central part of Nepal. Its elevation ranges from less than 600 meters (as the lowest) at Bhimad to 1,300 meters (as the highest) at Kharapani. The valley slopes from North-West to South-East. Consequently, all the water drains out through Seti river stream towards South-East. Regarding the formation of Pokhara valley on the basis of the "Plate Tectonic Theory," it is accepted that by 180 million years ago, lava came up between the plates pushing them apart. "Pangaea" first split into northern part (Gondana) with "Tethys Sea" in between. The two land masses continued to split forming the present continents. Of these drifting continents, the Indian plate moved towards the Asian Plate. As per public display of Annapurna Historical Museum located in Prithvi Narayan Campus in Pokhara the Himalayas were formed in this way.

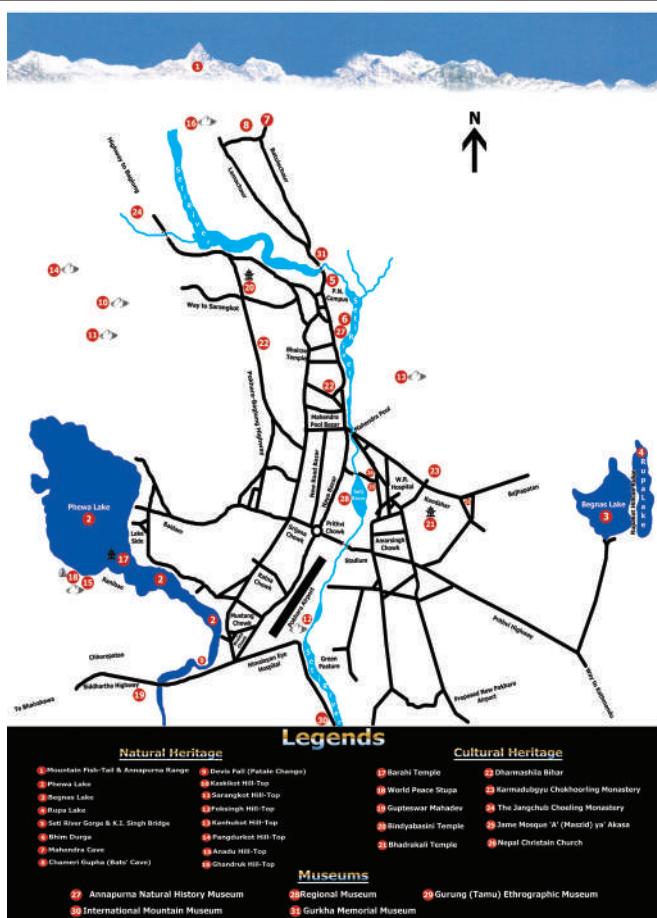
Gurung (1969), referring to the work of Swiss geologist Tony Hagen, mentions that the valley is formed after the upheaval of Mahabharata Range as a form of the tectonic depression and later filled by materials downward by surface outflow of surrounding mountains. Gurung (1969-70) further reveals that the central part of the valley floor was filled by glacio-fluvial deposits of Late Pleistocene glaciations over the former tectonic depression. The adjacent tributaries of trunk channel were dammed by Seti valley Train, and numerous lakes were originated' (Gurung 1969 as cited in Paudel 1988, p 92).

The nature of Pokhara has exposed the unique panoramic view of snow-clad mountains, lakes, gorges of Seti River, caves, green hills, and waterfalls, which make the visitors quite fascinated. Similarly, from historical, religious and cultural points of view, Pokhara is enriched with temples

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and monuments, monasteries and stupas along with other interesting and important spots which provide both knowledge and recreation. The unlimited blending of both natural and cultural attractions in Pokhara has made this place one of the most favorable tourist destinations, which is often admired as the paradise in the earth. From the natural aesthetic perspective, Pokhara is known as 'Hanging Paradise on Earth' (Shakya 1995, p 1). Its glimpse can be viewed in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 A sketch with various natural and cultural heritages in Pokhara



Source: Developed by author

Besides the enormous potentials of natural and cultural heritages as marked in figure 2.1, the vicinity of Pokhara valley offers visitors both short trekking and longer trekking to Mustang, Manang, Baglung, Myagdi and Annapurna Base camp in the hilly and the Himalayan regions. These trekkings, no doubt, are enjoyable, romantic and recreational while watching and snapping the enchanting views of natural boon and cultural vividness. However, the principal focus of this chapter is to shade light on the natural and cultural heritages in Pokhara and its historical context. All information of this chapter is derived from the review of literature and the first hand observation of the author who is himself the native of Pokhara.

2.2 Natural heritage of Pokhara

Pokhara occupies the overall pretty heritage of nature, which is the clue of prime attraction for tourists from all over the world. Table 2.1 offers the list of such natural heritages with their key features at a glance.

Table 2.1 Key natural heritage as the center of attraction for tourist in Pokhara

List of the Panoramic Nature	Location	Tourist attractions as viewable and enjoyable
Mount Fish- Tail and Annapurna range	North from Pokhara	Gorgeous view from Pokhara, sun-rising and sun- setting.
Fewa Lake	Lake- side, Baidam towards the Southern Flank of Pokhara Valley	Boating, Kayaking, strolling, swimming, shopping, hiking, viewing Mount Fish- Tail's and Annapurna's wonderful reflection from dam site in Fewa Lake
Begnas Lake	About 15 km away from the Mahendra-pool town to the east	Birds watching, swimming, fishing, hiking, horse riding, boating etc.
Rupa Lake	About 15 km away from the Mahendra-pool town, to the east	Hiking, swimming, fishing, horse riding, boating, birds watching, etc.
Seti river gorge	To the north of Mahendrapool and 1 km away from the bazaar.	Amazing view of Seti river flowing down below. Old and real K.I. Singh bridge can be sighted on the left adjacent to it. It is the first cement-concrete bridge in Pokhara, built in 2014 B.S.

Bhim Dhunga	To the north of Mahendrapool town, in the premises of Prithvi Narayan Campus, Bagar.	Giant and amazing igneous and granite mixed rock- shaped round like a huge glove. There is Annapurna Natural History Museum at hand
Mahendra cave	Batulechaur, Pokhara-16, to the north on 6 km away from Mahendrapool bazar.	Adventurous and curious walking in the cave.
Bat's cave	In the vicinity of Mahendra cave- about 5 minutes walk from the Mahendra cave towards right.	Scaring and frightening but adventurous experience inside.
Patale Chhango (Devi's- Fall)	12 km from Mahendrapool city and 2 km from Lake side. Gupteswar cave is very near in a walking distance.	Lovely rain-bow can be seen in the water vapour rising from the water-fall, exciting, romantic and ever enjoying feeling.
Kaski- Kot (Kaski-Fort) Hill- Top	Situated on the north west side of Pokhara valley.	Historical place. Many snow clad mountains can be viewed, Pokhara valley can be sighted to a close distance.
Sarang-kot Hill-Top	Situated on the north west of Pokhara valley	Historical place, Many snow clad mountains can be viewed, Pokhara valley can be sighted to a close distance. Paragliding, hiking.
Foksingh Hill- Top	4-5 km south of Airport	can be viewed Fewa Lake, Pokhara valley, snow-clad mountains, landing and taking off of plains
Kahun Hot-Hill-Top	Situated on the North east side of Mahendra-pool town	Forked summit of Machhapuchhre and other Himals can be seen. Mahendrapool town can be viewed closely.
Pangdurkot Hill-Top	About 30 km west from Pokhara	An idyllic spot with green forest for birds watching, hiking. Mainly a historical place that gives knowledge related to Kaski Principality.

Source: Compilation by author

The natural heritage of Pokhara with their historical appraisal are highlighted in following paragraphs.

a. Mount Fish-Tail and Annapurna

One can view Fish- Tail and Annapurna Mountains to the north –west from different spots of Pokhara. Annapurna Mountain (Himalaya) range stretches west-East and is divided into Annapurna (1) 8091, (2) 7937

(3) 7575 (4) 7535 meters. Machhapuchhre (Fish tail Mountain) is in the middle of the range with the elevation 6998 meter from sea level (NTNC 2012). Machhapuchhre is a glorious natural heritage of Pokhara. Its local name is Machhapuchhre because of its forked summit looks like the tail of a fish. One can view this fish-tail shape from Sarangkot, peace stupa and other points too. It is still a virgin Mountain.

If you are flying to Pokhara, Machhapuhhre welcomes you with broad chest and gorgeous look to you the moment you step down at Pokhara Air Port. If you are travelling on a bus or by car along the Prithvi Highway from Kathmandu, you can see it after passing Damauli. It's an eye opening picturesque view to look at Machhapuhhre from a distance. The feeling is as if Machhapuchhre is watching you raising its head high in the sky. When you look at Machhapuhhre's image within the Fewa Lake, it becomes a unique experience of romance for you. At the moment of sunrise and sunset it looks like gold and other time silver, especially in moonlight.

b. Fewa Lake

Fewa Lake is the biggest lake in Pokhara. The picturesque image of Machhapuchhre Himal and Annapurna range can be seen reflected in the Fewa Lake, which is very unique.



Photo 2.1 Fewa Lake as one of the unique natural heritages in Pokhara, Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara

The surface area of the lake is about 4.43 km². The maximum depth is 12.30m and the average depth 11.71m (Lamichhane and Upadhyay 2006). The lake has about 51.9 million cubic meters average volume of water (Lamichhane 1998 as in Lamichhane and Upadhyay 2006, p 49). The shape of the lake is elongated North-West to east south with irregular width at different points. There is a tiny island in the middle of the lake where Barahi (the Hindu Goddess) temple is located. On the Southern side there is a luxurious green forest where one can reach by boat. Boats are available at the bank of Barahi Baidam. Similarly, on the north-east side of the lake there is Baidam Bazar, now called lake-side. It is a tourist market where tourists from different countries can buy souvenirs including antiques.

c. Begnas Lake

This is the second biggest lake in Pokhara valley. It is about 30 km east from Fewa Lake and about 15 km from Mahendrapool bazaar (city). Unlike Phewa Lake its shape is almost round. It is surrounded by hillocks and greeneries except to the south which is the entrance to the lake. Its area is 3.73 sq km (Lamichhane et al. 2009). There are lodges, hotels and restaurants for the visitors and small local bazaar for shopping of local souvenirs and essential goods. The spot is an idyllic place for peace and tranquility.

d. Rupa Lake

There is a long hillock ridge called Rupakot extending from south to north-east. On the northern side of the ridge, there is Begnas lake and on the southern side of it, Rupa lake. From a few spots, one can see both lakes at the same time standing on the ridge. Rupa is extended from east to west with narrow width. Its total area is 1.15 sq km. The shape looks like a serpent. It is said that this lake looks like a lizard changing its color from red, blue, green to different colors. People say that there are many medicinal plants in the vicinity (Shakya 2012).

e. Seti River Gorge and K.I. Singh Bridge

Seti River is fed by snow of Muchhapuchhre and Annapurna Himal. Seti (means white) river is elusively strange. Somewhere it flows through unseen channels, somewhere open and somewhere creating very deep gorges. It gives exciting feeling to anyone when he/she look down to the gorge from the top of the cliff. There are many deep gorges made by Seti River, such as gorge below K.I. Singh Bridge², gorge below Mahendrapool,

² K.I. Singh Bridge was built in 1957 AD and named after K.I. Singh who was the then prime-minister. He gave donation to construct the Bridge. That is why it was named after his name.

gorge below Chinese Bridge, gorge below Chor Sangu near Air Port. Among them the gorge of Seti river which is quite visible just below the K.I. Sing Bridge, looks exciting and adventurous to watch. One can look down the turbulent river flowing very clearly while watching from the bridge about 300 feet below. On the left side, while crossing the new bridge towards Gurkha Memorial Museum, there is the old K. I. Sing Bridge made of cement concrete. It is the first concrete bridge constructed in Pokhara.

f. Bhim Dhunga

There is a graniteingnious, huge black rock like a big globe about eight meters high and with circumference of 26 meters³. The stone lies in P.N. Campus complex, in Pokhara. This rounded rock is called locally Bhim Dhunga. This is the biggest rock in Pokhara valley. Bhim is one of the brothers of Pancha-pandav mentioned in Hindu legend belonging about 1500 B.C. The local people narrate a myth that the rock was thrown by physically mightiest Bhim. So it has its name as Bhim Dhunga. Dhunga in Nepali means rock or stone. Local people have established a deity called 'Kali' on the spot. So it is also called 'Bhim kali'. Actually, the geographical legacy is that this huge rock had been carried down from the Vicinity Mountains during glacial period by moving glacier. Such igneous stones are found in other places also, such as Chiple Dhunga, lying on the road side of Mahendrapool bazaar and other places too. Mr. Krishna Prasad Poudel, a geographer, observes that the very Bhim Dhunga with rounded shape, near P.N. Campus office at Pokhara also might have been rolled down by catastrophic outburst (Paudel 1988).

g. Mahendra Cave

Before the visit of late king Mahendra in the year 1960 AD, this cave was just a bats' cave because the bats used to flutter around the cave. But after the visit of the king, local people named it as Mahendra cave, thinking that the king would donate more money to develop the park. But it didn't turn into reality.

This place is located in the north of Pokhara sub-metropolitan city which comes under the ward no 16. It is 6 km north from Mahendrapool bazaar and connected with city bus service as well as accessible by bicycle along the black-topped road. It is exciting to view the nature's creation. Apart from, Gupteswor Cave, there are many other small caves in several other places of Pokhara where some of the tourists visit.

³ Personal communication with Dr. Bishwa Shrestha, Geography teacher in P.N. campus, Pokhara

The caves are generally found in limestone region, for instance, Mahendra Cave. Before this cave was physically disturbed, one could enjoy the different shapes of lime stone, some projecting downward from the ceilings and some upward from the ground. It gives a strange and exciting feeling while you watch it. The writer has experienced such shapes while visiting the cave. But now-a-days, it has been disturbed by people. After entering through the big mouth-like opening of the cave, then walking ahead about 50 feet to the left, a little hole appears from where the light can be seen just entering through it, which remains more exciting. Through the hole one can scroll out slowly. On the right, the tunnel of the cave continues ahead about 100 meters. Actually, the trip gives adventurous experience and enjoyment.

h. Bat's Cave

With its name as *Chamero Gupha* in Nepali, Bats' Cave is the popular name in English. This cave is in Batulechaur which is about half kilometer walk from Mahendra cave. It is still a popular and adventurous cave to get into. The natural phenomenon of this cave has attracted thousands of bats as they feel no disturbances inside.



Photo 2.2 Unlimited bats in Bat's Cave at Batulechaur, Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara

People with the sense of adventure usually enter inside with torchlight. The visitors must be cautious, since the cave is not yet equipped with electricity, and that path is also full of sharp stones. The water dripping from the ceiling makes the path damp and slippery. When one is very near to the mouth of the cave, he/she can hear haunted sound inside the cave.

The area of the Bat's Cave is 10 meters depth and six meters height along with its 135 meters length. There is a small stream flowing deep under the rock. At the far end of the cave there is a small narrow hole. However, the cave at its center is amazingly spacious. There are large boulders cut out of solid rock. Standing on the boulder you can look round the cave. In the middle of it you can see hundreds of bats hanging from the ceiling. Walking through the darkness, lighting a torch light and finding the exit is indeed toughest but adventurous. If one is not courageous enough, they had better not enter the cave (Thapa 2010).

i. Devi's Fall

It is a nature-made hole in Chhorepatan, very near about 2 km away from the Fewa Lake and Lakeside area. Actually, the over-flowed or excess water of Fewa Lake is drained out through this hole and water runs underground to a distance of about one km away from Chhorepatan. Eventually, it mingles with the small rivulet called Phusrekola downwards the site. The hole is about 20 feet in diameter and 50 feet deep. A big flow of water speedily flowing down into the mouth of the cave exposes lovely rainbows flickering unsteady into the water vapor. Then the big mass of water flows invisibly and vanishes below the hole which provides extremely exciting and pleasant feelings.

Its local name is *Patale chhango*. The very name *Patale chhango* in Nepali has become popular among the tourists and tourism operators as Davis fall. The word "Patale" certainly derived from the Nepali word 'Patalo' means shallow or it can be named from the religious word "Patal" means beneath the world. "*Chango*" is the Nepali word for a water fall. But after the miserable death of a tourist by slipping into the water fall, its name has become popular as 'Devi's Fall'. The story of her death goes as following:

In 1961, a Swiss couple were having bath just to the side above the waterfall with their dog. Around 2 pm, when the watergates of the Fewa dam were opened as usual, the overflow of the rushing lake water approached them. It is believed that their dog saw the rushing flood from the distance and barked loudly. However, the couple couldn't pay

any attention to the mere sound of the dog. In the twinkling of eyes the rushing water approached them and swept away the lady down into the hole. However, her husband survived (Shakya 2012).

j. Hill – Tops

The contrast land setting with the plains, small hills and hillocks on the shadow of towering mighty Himalaya range is the great virtue of natural heritage in Pokhara. The beautiful vision of the Himalayan range is the prime attraction of these hill tops. Each of these hill tops is accessible up to the peaks by surface transport or two to five hours of trekking or pony trek.



Photo 2.3 A typical hilltop area surrounding Pokhara often hovered by tourists, Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara.

Some of these hilltop destinations are full of agro (farming) and cultural activities. There is availability of home-stay tourism with rural tourism activities in the surrounding villages of these hilltops. Some of the major hill-tops are highlighted in succeeding paragraphs.

k. Kaskikot

There are many hill tops from where enchanting and romantic views of Pokhara valley, green forest, gorgeous and sky- scraper snow clad mountains and beautiful lakes can be seen. Kaskikot hill top is one of them. Kaski is the name of the place and 'Kot' means 'Fort' in Nepali language. About the derivation of the name 'Kaski' there are two versions. According to one version, 'Kaski' is the name of a costume which is worn by Tamu (Gurung) indigenous people, from the waist to the knee, now known as '*kaccha*' by distortion. It is associated with a Petty king or chieftain who belonged to Tamu aborigine at the start of the settlement in Kaski. This gives the historical fact or source of the name Kaski. Another version is from Hindu legend or fiction. According to the fiction, a sage called Kashyap had meditated in that place. So the name Kaski is given to this Hill Top (Subedi 2004, p 27). There is a saying 'Ghale Mari Shahi Rajaya' still in the tongue of the local people, which means killing Ghale (We) chose Shahi (Shaha). This is the political and historical information about the Kaskikot Hill-Top (ibid). By the name of Kaskikot, the whole place is named with the word Kaski (Niraula 1986). Kaski is the ancestral state of the Shaha kings of Nepal whose capital was Kaskikot about 1650 years ago.

There is black – topped road up to Sarankot and fair weather road from Sarankot to Kaski Hill-Top (Kaskikot). On the other side, via Hyanja to Naudanda, there is another pitch – road and then fair- weather road to reach to Kaski Hill-Top. From Bindavasini Archal Bot via Sarankot, it is a good trekking to to reach upto Kaski Hill- Top. It can be done in one day. There are hotels and restaurants to rest in Kaski kot Hill-Top.

From Kaski – Hill Top, the visitors can enjoy the panoramic views of Machhapuchhre, Annapurna and Dhawalagiri Himals as well as Pokhara Valley, far and wide. It is most beautiful to watch especially in a clear full-moon night. At the time of rising sun in the morning the entire Himalaya range looks bright in golden color. The visitors realize the direct existence of divinity while watching the beauty of nature.

l. Sarangkot

About the name of Saranagkot, there are two historical sources. "Sarang" is a traditional dance related to fighting and war. Men dance with swords in their hand by beating a drum. In Sarangkot (Sarangkot – fort), military guards lived during the period of Shaha kings who had palace in Kaskikot (Niraula 1986). Those militaries who stayed in Kaskikot used to visit

Sarangkot everyday dancing 'Sarang' and returned to Kaskikot every morning (Subedi 2004). Thus the Hill – Top's name is Sarangkot. Another historical source of the name 'Sarang' means high station according to the Kirat (Rai- Limbu) language. Kirats are the indigenous people of Nepal and speak Tibeto-Burman language still today. Thus the place became Sarangkot (Bista 1983, pp 12-14).

Sarangkot is a very interesting and beautiful spot. It's very windy place which provides cool and exciting experience. From Sarangkot Hill-Top, one can watch the panoramic view of Machhapuhhre, Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and Ganesh Himals along with other tourist spots like Panchase, Swargadwari and even the historical palace called Shreenagar of Palpa. Since the Hill-Top lies on the North – west direction of Fewa Lake, from where the lake starts, one can have the full view of the whole lake and almost all the valley of Pokhara.

From Sarangkot one can make a trekking trip to Kaskikot and then to Naudanda and back to Pokhara by bus. It is a lovely place to watch sunrise and enjoy the early sun shine on Himal turning into golden color. Now days, it has become very popular as para-gliding center with the 5000 feet elevation. It has been an international para-port.

m. Foksing

It is a hill station about 4-5 km south of Pokhara Airport which lies in Nirmal Pokhari VDC. It is a beautiful ridge, especially rich from topographical point of view. From here, the view of whole Pokhara valley can be viewed together with the Fewa Lake and surroundings. One can also enjoy the fantastic view of the sunrise and full moon-light especially from here. In the moon-light the shining of snow-clad mountains and dazzling Pokhara valley with lights is the most alluring and pleasing to the visitors. Watching the landing and taking off of the planes in the airport from Foksing is another most pleasant scene. The Foksing is also a place for one-day short trekking.

n. Kahunkot

It is not a fort (kot) for military purpose or station. It was a fort for animal sacrifice in festivals like *Chaita Dashain* and *Bada Dashain*.⁴ Sacrifice of male animals like buffalo, sheep, goat and also the birds like pigeon, duck,

⁴ *Chaita Dashain* and *Bada Dashain* are traditional and most respected festivals of Hindus in Nepal. *Chaita Dashain* falls in March- April where as *Bada Dashain* falls in September-October.

rooster, to goddess *Durga Bhagwati* is supposed to be a way to make her pleased.

From the point of view of tourism, Kahunkot is a joyful spot to have panoramic view of the snow capped mountains, hills and evergreen natural forests. One can see the forked summit of Machhapuchhre and other Himals, from the peak. It is very near to Mahendrapool bazaar. From Kahunkot most part of south- Western valley and almost all part of northern valley of Pokhara can be seen. From the peak, Mahendrapool bazaar area and its vicinity sights seems very close. In Kahunkot there is a tower constructed to have a good view of the surrounding areas. It is also a spot for short trekking. The tower and its summit can be viewed clearly from Mahendrapool bazaar also.

o. Pangdurkot

The historical meaning of Pangdurkot is not only interesting, but also associated with natural beauty. The indigenous people like Gurung, Magar, Rai- Limbus, Newar, Tamang, etc. who are the Mangolian origin speak Tibeto- Burman language as their mother tongue. Thus according to Tibeto- Burman language 'Pang' means 'House' and 'Ding' means 'Sun' or 'Sunlight'. From pangdur hill- top, the sunrise view can be watched clearly. So its name at the beginning was 'Pangding'. Later, it has become Pangdur kot (Bista 1983, pp 12-14).

Pangdur is 30 km west from Pokhara valley. This kot can give historical information of the time before the political and geographical unification of Nepal. In other words, it gives the information of the time when there were 24 and 22 states in western Nepal. There are still the remains of a fort made of stone wall on the top of the hillock. It has 200 meter circumference about 3 meter (8 feet) height and 1 meter (3 feet) wide, during the period of 22 and 24 states Parbat, one of the 24 states, used to attack the adjacent state Kaski. Because of this reason Pangdur was a fort (kot) of which remains are still available in Pangdur hill- top.

p. Anadu

Anadu Hill- Top is situated in the western part of Pokhara valley and South- western side of Fewa Lake. Its height is 1,100 m from the sea level. In summer season this place remains the most cooling spot for the visitors who feel too hot around the lakeside area. In winter, it has direct sun-shining for the whole day and visitors can enjoy the warm sun with fantastic views of vivid sights.

The visitors can view many more snow-capped mountains from the hill-top of Anadu than any other hill-top stations of Pokhara. The different parts of locally named Himalayas like Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, Machhapuchhre, Himchuli, Himal and *Hati Sunde* (elephant trunk shaped), Rakanoyar, Glacier Dome, Manapathi, etc. can be recognized from Anadu hill-top. In clear weather, Larke and Ganesh Himal also appear to the view. Fewa lake with the small Barahi temple (island) can be viewed like a over-looking bird from very near. Besides, almost all sights of Pokhara valley and green landscape of hills and hillocks can be overlooked from the Hill-Top like a hanging Paradise below the visitors' eyes. There is a peace stupa constructed in memory of the Lord Gautam Buddha, the peace preacher of the world. One can enjoy peace having inspiration from the peace stupa and viewing the natural gift around.

This Hill-Top is more than 12 kms away from Mahendrapool city. There are 4 routes to reach to the hill-top. One can reach to Chhorepatan, near Devi's- Fall by city bus and then walk gently up-hill. While walking, one can enjoy a real village life and its culture as well. The second route is the most exciting one. One can hire a boat from Barahi Fewa bank and reach to other (opposite) side of it, enjoy with boating. Then walk up-hill which takes less than an hour inside the forest. This walk is refreshing and recreational too. The third route is from just below Fewa dam and above Devis-Fall. There is a very short suspension bridge at the bottom of the Ranivan. From there starts a very gentle uphill walking. While walking starts through the Ranivan forest, one can hear the melodies of different birds. It takes about two hours walk to reach the top. The fourth route starts from Kalimati of Pumdi- Bhumdi village Development committee. It is the shortest route to walk to Anadu Hill- top enjoying the sceneries of village green fields.

q. Ghandruk

Ghandruk Hill-Top is about 6500 feet above sea level, and it is the last boundary of Pokhara valley in the north- western direction. The specialty of this hill-top is that one can see the other side or back side of Machhapuchhre Mountain very closely. Another specialty is that tourists can have hospitable and homely enjoyment at Home stay hotel in Ghandruk. Down the hill- top one can view the terraced landscape with greeneries and foot hills. The visitor can also enjoy the sight of the beautiful, gorgeous flow of Mordi River. If one has never seen a mountain stage of a river, then it would be an ever-lasting memory in his life.

2.3 Cultural heritage of Pokhara

As like natural heritage, Pokhara is also a tourist destination which is full of cultural heritage. These heritages are added attractions over natural heritage and can offer memorable experience for tourists in Pokhara. There are religious sites as well as ethnic and ethnic group-based cultural heritages in Pokhara.

2.3.1 Religious sites based cultural heritage

Table 2.2 below offers a quick look of the various religious sites based cultural heritage in Pokhara. This would be followed by their detailed description in the succeeding paragraphs.

Table 2.2 Key cultural heritages of tourist attractions

Name of the Shrines	Name of the locality	Distance from Mahendra Pool town approximately	Related Religions
Tal Barahi	Baidam- Lakeside	5 km.	Hindu
World Peace Stupa	Anadu hill	about 10 km. There is boat service from Fewa lake, lakeside	Buddhist
Gupteswar Mahadev	Chhorepatan very near from Devis fall	About 12 km	Hindu
Bindyabasini	Moharia Tol, Var patan	2 km	Hindu
Bhadra- Kali	Kundohar- Matepani	2.5 km	Hindu
Bhairav Temple	Bhairav – Tol (bazaar)	1 km	Hindu
Dharmasheela Buddha vihar	Nadipur, ward No. 3	5 km	Budhist
Karmadubgya Chokhorling Monastery	Jyakot Danda Matepani	2.5 km	Lama Buddhist
The Jangchub Choeling Monastery	Hyanja Tibetan Refugee camp	12 km	Tibetan Buddhist
Jame Mosque 'A' (Maszid) ya Aksa	Miya- Patan, Kundahar	2.5 km	Muslim
Nepal Christian Church	Ramghat – Ranipauwa	1.5 km	Christian

Source: Compiled by author

Details descriptions of the site based cultural heritages are highlighted below.

a. Tal- Barahi Temple

'Tal' means lake and 'Barahi' is one of the names of an imaginary goddess name which is named after the Hindu god 'Baraha'. It is located on the tiny island of about 1.5 ropanis (763km²) in the middle of the Fewa Lake. It is 3 km from the Mahendra-pool city and lies to the southern end of Pokhara valley.

There is a fantastic story about the origin of the lake and Barahi goddess. One evening, an old woman came to settlement to pass the night. She went on begging shelter, but nobody gave her shelter, instead the wicked people of the settlement let their dogs chase the woman away. At last she came to the end of the settlement, where poor and old couple lived in a thatched hut. The couple gave her a shelter to pass the night and also offered half of their millet bread (a kind of pan- cake) which was cooked for their evening meal.

Early in the morning just before the day break, the guest woke up the couple and asked to go away from the settlement, saying that the settlement will change into a big lake. She gave them a parcel which looked like a bundle and also asked them to leave their hut immediately. Following her advice, the couple walked away to the hill to the south of the settlement. When they reached to the top of the hill, it was quite a bright day. From the top, as the couple looked to their settlement, it was already changed into a big lake and there was only their hut remaining on the lake. I remember this story told by my grandparents and remember the thatched hut when I visited in my childhood about 50 years ago. It may not be the same thatched hut, but there was a very small about 10'×10' sized hut made of stone and mud. I also remember the goddess Barahi was not a carved statue, but only a small stone raised like a nose.

There is a similar type of fantastic story, but told in a little different way. Shakya (1995, p 73) has said that goddess Barahi in an old woman's form visited the village begging alms from door to door. People who gave her alms were told by her that a few days later, a flood would sweep away the village and that place would turn into a huge lake. People who took her prediction seriously, moved to another place for safety. Certainly, the situation turned into as she had said. It rained heavily for over a week and the village was swept away by the flood. At the same time a part of a hill, where at present the Fish-Tail Lodge is located slipped down and blocked the river. Thus the Lake Fewa came into being.

Whatever may be the fantastic story, the geographical reality was that there was a very big and deep depression on the ground which was filled gradually by rain, flood, and spring water and in course of time this changed into a lake especially around Barahi Temple and its north side where the rivulets like Harpan *Khola* (river) and Andheri *Khola* (river) in the north deposited water in the lake. These two rivulets drained all the water in Fewa Lake which was brought by seasonal streams like Beran *Khola* during rainy season.

Later, Pokhara started to be an attractive place for tourists from abroad and other parts of Nepal because of the development of fast-growing means of transportation and communication. People of Pokhara constructed pagoda style temple on the spot of old, Barahi Shrine. As a cultural heritage, Tal- Barahi is very auspicious and important shrine for Hindus and unique for foreigners too, especially in observing the people who gather and worship the goddess. The uniqueness for the tourists is the sacrifice of animals and birds in the shrine of the goddess. People make lots of sacrifices during the festivals like Chaitya Dasain and Bada Dasain. On other days also people come to worship and sacrifice animals and birds to please the goddess. They believe that the deity fulfills their wishes. There occurs a great fair in the full moon day just after the Bada Dasain festival.

b. World peace stupa

Peace stupa is situated on the plain land of 21.5 *Ropanies*, on the apex of Anadu Hill-Top, Just above Fewa Lake on the southern side of it. Its height is 1100 m from the sea level. Before the construction of the peace stupa, the land was covered with forest and greeneries.

The history of the peace stupa starts from Japan, the country that suffered the Atom- Bomb blast in the Second World War. The preacher of Buddhism and peace, Nichidatsu Fuji, the chairman of Nipponazam Myhaji of Japan, began constructing the World Peace stupa in the year 2030 B.S. (1973 A.D.) But the government authorities of Kaski District demolished it using military in 2031 B.S. (1975 A.D.).

However, after the successful people's revolution in the year 2046 B.S. (1989 A.D.), which was against the despotic *Panchayat* (party less) system, the reconstruction of stupa was considered. The new government of multi-party system gave permission to rebuild it in the year 2046 B.S. (1990 A.D.). Accordingly, the Peace stupa was erected having 115 feet

high and 344 feet circumference. Hidico Moriyaka Sony of Nipponzan Myohoji has contributed from the beginning until the accomplishment of stupa. The stupa is painted white to symbolize peace and tranquility.



Photo 2.4 The enchanting peace pagoda in Pokhara, Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara

The existence of this symbolic peace on this beautiful place of Pokhara spreads fragrance of perpetual peace, pronounced by Gautam Buddha. This is the first- ever made Vishwa Shanti stupa (World Peace stupa) in Nepal of such kind. The prayer hall is named after Nipponzan Myohoji. According to the brochure Published by The World Peace Pagoda (stupa) committee in Pokhara, there are two storied guest house and Bihar to provide rest to the Bhikshhus and pilgrims.

This is a holy and pious place for Buddhists as well as all peace loving people. Four majestic statues of Buddha are placed at four directions. The eastern and front side of the stupa is occupied by majestic, splendid statue of Buddha's, wheel of Dhamma from Japan. In the western side the meditative statue of Buddha is erected from Sri-Lanka; the northern side has 6 feet tall grand statue made of metal from Thailand, and in the southern side has the metal statue reflecting the birth of Siddhartha Gautam Buddha. There is golden pinnacle of 20 feet high with 13 segments and at the apex a crystal stone from Sri-Lanka is placed.

Sitting at the lap of the World Peace stupa and viewing scenes of mind-blowing mountains as Dhawalagiri, Machhapuchchre, Annapurna etc,

seem so close as if the mountains are personally whispering some words to us. At the same time, thinking of the images of Buddha, one can realize peace and tranquility in his mind. Many people on Buddha's birthday come to the stupa to worship Buddha and enjoy the scenic mountains, forest, and Fewa Lake. So, peace stupa has presented itself as both natural and cultural Heritage of Pokhara.

c. Gupteswar Mahadev

Gupteswar Mahadev Shrine lies just below, underneath the *Patale Chhango* (Devi's Fall) in Chorepatan. Actually it is a huge, round shaped cave, perhaps made by the waterfall. The water vanishes in the cave, perhaps made by the waterfall, Devi's Fall. The water vanishes in the cave through a natural tunnel and merges in a rivulet called Phushre Khola about a kilometer away from the site. The huge cave inside is made of enormous blocks of rocks only. The visitors can see the awe-inspiring Devi's Fall falling down into the cave with a roaring sound. The cave is dark even in the day time and slippery too. So the Managing Committee of Gupteshwar Mahadev has managed railings, flights of stairs and light for the convenience and safety of the visitors. During monsoon from July to September, because of heavy rainfall, the cave or Gupteswar Shrine is unsafe to visit.

In the year 2049 B.S. (1952 A.D.), some courageous local young people dared to enter into the cave and uprooted the wild bushes of its entrance. While going into the virgin cave, they found rocks shaped like *Shivaling*, a symbol of God Shiva. Later they placed Shiva's statues in the cave. Since then the name Gupteswar Mahadev or Shiva became very popular. In the very festivals like Shiva Ratri, Ganesh pooja, Balachaturdasi, people rush to the cave to worship the deity.

d. Bindyabasini Temple

This temple is in Moharia Tol, the old bazaar side of Pokhara. Perhaps, it is the most popular Temple in Pokhara after Barahi Temple of the Fewa Lake. It is situated on a flat ground of about 5 Ropani areas on top of the mountain shaped mound. There is grove of big trees which provides quite sacred environment of spiritual feeling while having rest over there. This temple looks of Shikhar style architecture which is traditionally and locally popular in Pokhara.

Bindhyabasini goddess has eight arms holding different weapons in each hand. She is regarded as the Hindu goddess Bhagawati. Every year in

Chaite Dashain and *Bada Dashain* there is crowd of people who come to worship by sacrificing innocent animals and birds on the name of holy work. Besides *Dashain*, on other occasions also people come to worship for sacrificing animals and birds. The devotees put *Tika* (red mark) of blood of the sacrificed animals on their fore- head and pray to fulfill their inner wishes. They believe that the goddess fulfills their wishes. Besides, people come to celebrate wedding also, especially in wedding seasons. So visitors can enjoy the scenes of wedding ceremony and worshipping rituals.

Nobody knows who and when the goddess was established on the top of the mound. People creating its history think that there lived some type of indigenous people. In their social development stage, they believed in some super-natural power and worshipped it which continued in the time to come. Later Kulamandan Shaha (Jagati Khan) ruled in Kaski as a state, defeating the aborigine Ghale (Gurung) Chieftain. "Ghale Mari Shaha Rajayo" ("killing Ghale Shaha reigned"), a local saying, gives the sources (Subedi 2004, pp 25-77). Since then the Shaha Kings ruled in Pokhara valley till the Last King of Kaski state Siddhinarayan Shaha, the 9th generation of Kulamandan Shaha was conquered by the politically and geographically unified Nepal during the regencies of Rajendra Laxmi (the Regent) of her child King, Rana Bahadur Shaha, the 13 generation of Kulmandan Shaha (see Annex 2.1) in 1842 B.S. (1786 A.D.). However the story of Bindhyabasini Statue of today is related to the last king of Kaski Siddhinarayan Shaha. The story goes as follows:

According to the legend, King Siddhinarayan dreamt that a female deity of Bindhyachal Parbat (mountain) in India, asked him to take her and place it on a fine, raised rock somewhere in his state, from where Snowcapped Mountain could be seen. Believing his dream, he went with his attendants to fetch the deity. So he brought the present statue made of fine rock. The attendants and porters who carried the statue had a rest on the place where Bindhyabasini temple lies now. After the short rest, they tried to carry the image, but they could not lift it even an inch. According to another source, king Siddhinarayan asked some masons to make the statue (Subedi 2004, p 30). Thus, the statue was established over there and worshipped by many religious people, especially Hindus coming from India as well. It is locally said that the statue was brought from Bindhyachal Parbat (Mountain), because of which the name is Bindhyabasini. Besides Bindhyabasini, there are other images of Hindu deities which give a complete religious environment.

e. Bhadrakali Temple

This temple is situated on the top of very small, hillock. This hillock was also formed by natural power at the same age when Talbarahi island and Bidhyabasini hillock were formed. The temple is constructed at the height of about 250 feet. There are flights of stairs to reach to the temple. It's a fine visit through a thick forest.

Bhadrakali is also the goddess Bhagawati. So people sacrifice animals and birds to please the goddess Bhadrakali and expect that the goddess will fulfill their wishes. There is Ganesh Temple as well. So these two deities are worshipped by the Hindus. Many people come to this place for wedding ceremony as well. They believe that the blessings of Ganesh and Bhadrakali bring happy and long conjugal life.

f. Bhairav Temple

The shrine where the 12 masks of twelve deities are kept and worshipped is in the Bhairav Tol (locality), a part of old bazaar of Pokhara sub-metropolitan city. It is called temple, but does not look like a temple; rather it is a house. The identity of this temple is that twelve male persons wear different traditional dresses and put 12 different kinds of mask on their faces and dance with beating of Mridanga (a traditional musical instrument which looks like giant Madal). In Newari language, it is called 'Khin'.

The shrine and deities have historical value. It is related to the indigenous people, Newars of Kathmandu valley, especially Bhaktapur district. Some Newars from Bhaktapur came to Pokhara more than 200 years ago as traders. They settled in Pokhara permanently and continued to worship the 12 deities regularly as their ancestral deities from Bhaktapur. They perform the dance, popularly known as Bhairav Dance. The dance is performed with Newari ritual songs playing Mridanga. The dancers do not feel tense or exhausted, even if they dance for a long time.

The Bhairav Dance used to be publicly performed once in every twelve years. Now, it is performed after each six years. This dance is publicly performed at the beginning of winter season usually in the month of December or January and continues for four months. The specialty of the performance is that it commences in the evening, lasts whole night and ends next day morning. People enjoy a lot watching and worshipping the deities dancing, item by item and moving in a procession along the road while going to the inviting house and back from the house to its own

shrine in Bhairav Tol. It is a very pleasant moment to watch the dance and procession, as it is the heritage of the Newari Culture.

g. Dharmsheela Buddha Vihar

This Vihar lies in the center of Pokhara sub-metropolitan city. From Mahendra pool bazaar, it takes a 15 minute walk to the north-west. The vihar is the first Buddhist institution ever established in Pokhara. Actually, the vihar and its ritual and cultural environment are simple, based on real life with humanitarian philosophy. Actually, Mahayan and Bajrayan Buddhist sects are familiar over here than Therabad Buddhism which is based on reality and humanity.

The vihar's name is after the name of Anagarika Dharma Sheela who struggled for the freedom and equality against the totalitarian rule of former Hindu governments who ruled this nation according to the caste system and cultural discrimination. It seems that the vihar was established around 1996 B.S. (1939 A.D.) in an area of about 1.5 Ropanis. The vihar is enriched with very fine metallic images and also terracotta images of Gautam Buddha. There is a gorgeous statue of Buddha given by Thailand, which is really appealing.

Now the vihar is attracting many visitors and tourists day by day and earning popularity among the populace of Pokhara.

h. Karmadubgyu Chokhorling Monastery

It is situated on a hillock called jaykot Danda (hill) in Kahunkot Village Development committee, east-ward of Mahendrapool bazaar (city). It is five kilometers far from the city.

Visitors can drive to the Monastery or one can walk from the bottom of the hillock through the winding and fair weather road to the monastery or reach by climbing the stairs passing through the green trees.

The Monastery was started to construct from 1954 and completed in 1961. The area is about 10 Ropanis. The walls of the Monastery are painted with Buddha's symbols in Tibetan art. A huge statue of Buddha in meditating posture flanked by Guru (teacher) Rimpoche and Karmapa is really an awesome sight. About a hundred students and Lama Guru reside there for learning and teaching Lamaism, the Mahayan Buddhism (Subedi 2004).



*Photo 2.5 Karmadubgyu Chokhorling Monastery as the centre of Buddhist faith,
Source: Shreekanta S. Khatiwada, Pokhara*

i. The Jangchub Choeling Monastery

After the occupation of Tibet by China in 1951, thousands of Tibetans fled from Tibet following their religious leader, Dalai Lama, the ruler of Tibet. Many of them took shelter in Nepal as refugees. A group of them settled in Hyanja, the northern end of Pokhara valley. It is about 12 km from Mahendra Pool town on the Highway to Baglung (Pokhara- Baglung Highway). They established this Monastery to perform Tibetan Buddhist rituals, ceremonies and spiritual rites. Dalai Lama, their holy King who is still residing with his followers in India named the Monastery as "Jangchub Choeling".

It is another eye-catching spot for the visitors and an auspicious icon for Tibetan refugees to watch and pray the seven-feet tall metal statue plated by gold. Hundreds of other small statues of Buddha are placed on either side of the big statues. Similarly, the walls are decorated with paintings related to Buddhist ceremonies, rituals and culture. It is very attractive, fascinating and heart-moving scene which creates the peaceful environment around the Monastery as it is surrounded with natural forest

with the enchanting views of Machhapuchhre and Annapurna Himalaya. Here, one can learn the Tibetan Buddhism and its culture as well as Tibetan life style without visiting Tibet. Besides, this Monastery (Gumba), there is another Tibetan refugee monastery in Chhore-Patan, Called "Tashilling Monastery."

j. Jame Mosque 'A' (masjid) ya

According to a gentleman, Abdul Kuran of Miyan- Patan, who claims to have studied Kuran and heard about Muslims in Nepal and settlement of Muslims in Pokhara, this Mosque is the oldest in Pokhara. But he does not know the date of establishment of the mosque. He says, what he heard from his forefathers and elderly people is there was a thatched house at first representing a mosque at the place where a two storeyed *pakka building* (Mosque) has been constructed now. Muslims of Miyan-Patan used to pray (recite) Namaj in the thatched house. Later, they built stone and mud house as mosque in place of thatched house. Now, in the modern time, they erected the fine, colorful two strayed Mosque. Now a days, there are two other prominent mosques in Chipledhunga and Nayan bazaar, very near, about ½ km from Mahendra – pool bazaar.

The biggest and holiest performance in Mohammadaism is reciting *Namaj* (pray) which is held every day, five times, between 12.30 – 1.30 P.M. On Friday it is done with more participants. This Jame Mosque reflects the Muslim life and culture. An imam is the highest authority of the Mosque. No Muslim can do anything without the permission of Imam. Muslims of Miyan- Patan used to play Hidas (a performance) in a procession of gathering, holding swords and *Lathis* (long and thick stick and other weapons) from the Jame Mosque which ends in Ramghat. This no longer exists in practice for some decades.

So far I studied in history of Gorkhali King, Prithvi Narayan Shaha, at the start of his campaign for unifying Nepal politically and geographically into one state, he had brought 3 Muslims from Banaras to manufacture weapons and to train the soldiers. The 3 Muslims were Shokha Jabar, Bekha Sing and Mohammad Taqui (KC 1992). My logic is that the Muslims of Miyan- Patan are from the generation of those 3 Muslims brought by Prithivi Narayan Shaha. The base of this logic is the Muslims of Miyan-Patan are called "Churauta" derived from the Nepali word "Chura" which means wrist bangle. From my very childhood I had seen both male and female Muslims selling and putting Chura on women's wrists as their traditional profession. The name chureta was not applied to

other Muslims whose ancestors were the Kasmiri Muslims who entered Nepal for the first time for trade in 13th century. Hence the Churauta is the particular name in western Nepal given to the Muslims of Miyan-Patan. Another base of the logic is that Gorkha was much nearer from Pokhara than Kathmandu on foot. Pokhara's climate is not as cold as Kathmandu. It is rather more pleasing than Kathmandu. So the Muslims of Gorkha were more attracted to Pokhara than Kathmandu. According to Mr. Abdul Karim, their forefathers had got land as Birta ((land given by the government as Contribution) in Kundahar and Ramghat. The Birta was called Karbala in Muslim language. All these bases logically show that the Muslims of Miyan- Patan have their ancestor in Gorkhali Muslims.

k. Nepal Christian Church

The seed of Christianity was shown in Pokhara in 1952 with the opening of the Missionary Hospital in a vast open ground, called Miruwa (Bagar) Tundikhel. Now it lies in Pokhara sub-Metropolitan city, ward No 1. This hospital was locally popular as 'Shining Hospital'. Nepal Christian Church at Ramghat is the oldest Church established in 1969 B.S. (1913 A.D.) very near to Western Regional Hospital, Pokhara. It has already celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. There are two other main Churches. They are Nayan Gaun Nadipur Church and Lamachaur Church. In addition to these, several Churches have come into existence in almost all wards of the sub-metropolitan city and other places of Pokhara.

After the popular movement of 2062- 063 B.S. (2006-2007 A.D.), Nepal has been declared a secular country. Since then Nepal has not been a Hindu Kingdom or Hindu Nation. Because of the declaration of Hindu Nation in the 2047 B.S. (1991 A.D.) constitution or before the popular people's movement Hindu religion had suppressed other religions. Even the Buddhist religion which had already spread before the introduction of Hindu religion in Nepal and is believed to be in religious tolerance with Hinduism was dominated and discouraged by the Hindu conservative society and the government. So we can guess what might have happened to Mohammadaism and Christianity. But after the declaration of secularism, all the religions in Nepal got emancipation from the rule of suppression and oppression of Hindu religion. Thus, Christians also enjoyed freedom of religion as the other religions. One encouraging example for Christianity is that, even Nepal government has accepted to give equal rights and even donation to all Christians in Nepal. The point number 4 of the historical agreement signed between Federation of National Christian, Nepal and

Nepal Government on 2068/1/18 (May 1, 2011) reveals about this similar status to Christians like other religious communities (Parajuli 2012). So the number or population of Nepali Christians is growing in leaps and bounds.

The attraction of Christian religion is that it does not believe in social discrimination such as caste system, untouchability and gender inequality, which are the fundamentals of Hindu religion. Praying in front of the God's son, Jesus Christ is the most important culture of Christianity.

2.3.2 Ethnic communities based cultural heritage

At first, Pokhara was inhabited by Mongol aborigines like Gurung (Tamu), Magar, etc who spoke Tibeto- Burman languages. They settled in hills like Kaski- Kot, Sarang- Kot, Pangdur- Kot, Arghaun- Kot, etc. around the vicinity of Pokhara valley. They had their own culture and tradition, and language and history. But they were either lost or modified because of Hinduisation during the Hindu rule of 22 and 24 petty state rulers in western Nepal. The Chhetri Kings and their followers (Brahmins), who were Hindus, had come to Nepal seeking shelter during the Mugal rule in India. There are proofs of the existence of the aborigines, Ghale (Gurung) Chieftains, as they were dignified in their social development.

These aborigines followed Buddhism together with their nature worshipping religion since Buddhism was the first religion to enter throughout the country. The history says Gautam Buddha with his disciples had come to Nepal to introduce Buddhism.

After the political and geographical unification of Nepal by the then Shah Kings of Hindu origin of Gorkha state, Newars from Kathmandu valley came to Pokhara to trade and settle down especially in the plain area of the bazaar of Pokhara valley. Since then, Newari culture and traditions mingled with those of Hindus and spread in Pokhara. By that time, the Muslims whose ancestors were brought from Banaras (India) by the King Prithvi Narayan Shaha had also settled in Pokhara, especially in a small area known as Miyan- Patan. Since then, Muslim culture and tradition also came into existence in Pokhara simultaneously.

In 1952 a hospital was run by Christian Missionary in old Tundikhel, now Pokhara Sub- Metropolitan city, ward No.1. Consequently, Christians also started to settle in Pokhara. So, Pokhara has been a cradle of the four religious people and their culture at present. Parajuli (2004, p 27) authenticates the mixture of the ethnic groups in Pokhara as 'the population of Pokhara is made up of numerous ethnic and caste groups, a

number of classes and creeds as well as linguistic heterogeneity.' Yet the important and remarkable point is that there was no confrontation in the name of religion so far. General people of Pokhara, irrespective of their religions, are more social in their social life. Although their culture, such as festivals, ceremonies and rituals are different, they willingly take part in each other's ceremonies and functions, except by those who are very conservative. Such conservatives are very few in number. People think their social life is very important and more valuable than their religious traditions.

Other important aspects are their customs (dresses), eating things, and eating habits. There are not only people of different religions but also of different races and castes. They have their own social, cultural aspect which they regard as more important for their social life than their religious practices. They are very hospitable towards their guests, friendly towards their fellow people and respectful to the visitors. These are some of the examples of social culture and social habits of the people of Pokhara.

Regarding their dresses and ceremonies, we can say, it is a colorful rainbow. Different races have different dresses and way of celebrating their festival and rituals. To enjoy these colorful occasions, one has to visit different localities in different times or seasons. There are many ethnic groups. Among them, the following are more prominent and impressive in Pokhara valley.

a. Gurung (Tamu)

Gurungs migrated from surrounding hills into Pokhara valley in earlier period. Now there are a lot of Gurung settlements in Pokhara bazaar. By birth they are Buddhists. They have their own *Pachchu* (Lama priest) (who is a Buddhist). But because of both pressure and attraction of Hinduism, many of them follow Hindu religious festivals and traditions like Dashain, Teej and married women use vermilion powder on forehead. They also celebrate Buddhist rituals as well as their own festivals like Lhosar (New Year) and T'hoten. Gurungs are popular as brave soldiers by the name of 'Gurkhas' in British and Indian armies. Many of them still join Gurkha army in the foreign countries.

b. Brahmin and Chhetry

Brahmins and Chhetris are originally Aryan and Hindus who entered Nepal from India. They left India because of the Muslim Mugal's invasion in India. Pokhara is inhabited by large number of Brahmins and Chhetris who have their own cultural festivals.



*Photo 2.6 Brahmin and Chhetri women during teej festival celebrations,
Source: Ashesh Shrestha, Pokhara*

c. Magars

Gurungs, Magars, Sherpas, Rai-Limbu, Newars, etc are indigenous ethnic groups originated from Mangolian ancestors who speak Tibeto- Burman language in one or other way. Magars, although originally Buddhist, follow Hindu tradition after coming in contact with Hindus. Along with Buddhist and Hindu tradition, they have their own culture and tradition, developed in course of their social shaping.

d. Newars

Newars migrated to Pokhara valley from Kathmandu valley as traders after the political and geographical unification of Nepal. Some of them are Hindus and some Buddhists. Accordingly, they follow the culture of Hinduism and Buddhism. By profession, they are traders. Earlier Pokhara city was mostly populated by Newars. In other words, Newars established the Pokhara city. They also established their own ethnic culture and tradition, which were brought from Kathmandu valley with them.



*Photo 2.7 Newar community of Pokhara with cultural festival,
Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara*

Among various cultural ceremonies, Tayamacha dance, Bhairav dance Gaijatra, Bagjatra, etc. are colorful and enchanting when performed.

e. Thakalis

Thakalis came down to Pokhara from Thakkhola, the northern mountain region, especially from Kaligandaki River base. At first they were seasonal traders, because of which some of them settled down in Pokhara bazaar. Now there are lots of Thakalis who have good houses and buildings in Pokhara bazaar. Their profession is mostly trading. They are Buddhist by birth and follow Buddhist tradition and rituals with their own tradition like Toronlho, Festival of archery, etc.

f. Rai- Limbus (Khambus)

Although in history, there is mention of Rai- Limbus in Pokhara in earliest period, dating back to political and geographical unification of Nepal, they were not pre-known in Pokhara as settlers. But now, after the construction of the Highways, Rai- Limbus also came to Pokhara in search of jobs. Some of them have settled permanently in Pokhara valley. Although they follow their Mundhum religion and traditions, they are very close to Buddhism.

Now days, Pokhara valley has become a melting pot of other ethnic groups and people from Tarai region, and even from India who have come to do jobs.

g. Gaine (Gayak) community

Gaine means one who sings in Nepali terminology. Now days, they like to be called as Gayak. Either Gains or Gayaks are the traditional professional singers. Their native locality is in Pokhara 16, Batulechaur, next to the Maternity Child Community Friendship Polyclinic (Pokhara-Komegane), on the way to Mahendra cave. They entertain the travelers, singing songs about the history, social events and incidents which reveal the story of joys and sorrows of the people. They play music on the local musical instrument called Sarangi which produces heart moving melodious music. Very often, the visitors can encounter them with smile and singing songs along with the Sarangi in tourists' destinations like lake side, Sarangkot hill top, Airport, and Mahendrapool bazaar.

2.3.3 Cultural festivals and ceremonies

A number of varied ethnic communities have their own various cultural festivals which they celebrate at certain time with differential ways. Table 2.3 offers a comprehensive list of such festivals with their names, celebration times, celebrating ethnic groups and their actual ways of celebrations.

Table 2.3 List of cultural and religious festivals as added attractions for tourism in Pokhara

Name of the festival and celebrations	Approximate date of celebration	Who celebrates	How celebrated
Nepali New Year Day	First day of Nepali month Baisakh (Middle of April)	Almost all of the populace	People put on new clothes, eat delicious food and wish prosperous life to each other.
Mother's Day	Middle of April	Almost all of the populace	Offer good food to mothers and beg blessings. Persons whose mothers have already died pay homage to them.

Buddha Jayanti	Full-moon day April-May	Almost all people of Pokhara, especially the Buddhists	Grand procession goes round the city with banners, slogan for perpetual peace, carrying Buddha's statue and picture on a chariot.
Asar Pandhra	During last week of June	Almost all people, especially the farmers.	Celebrated planting paddy, playing with mud and eating <i>Dahi-cheura</i> (yogurt and dried rice)
Rakchhya Bandhan	Full moon Day. August	All people celebrate generally	Brahmins and Chhetris wear sacred cotton string especially made for that purpose. Other people celebrate eating <i>Quanti</i> (mixed food with different cereals).
Gai-Jatra	From next day of Rakchhya bandhan up to Krishnastami	Mostly Newars, sometimes other ethnic groups also	Decorated cows with Tayamacha dances are taken around the Pokhara town praying eternal happiness to the departed souls of the family members.
Naga Panchami	July-Aug	Hindu families celebrate	The sacred image of Naga (snakes) are stuck on the doors and worshipped with a belief that there would be no harm to the family.
Krishnastami	August	Mostly Hindus and some other religious people.	Grand procession goes around the city acclaiming god Krishna and singing his songs, carry krishna's images on a chariot.
Father's Day	August, September	Almost all people	Offer good food to father and get blessing. Persons whose fathers are already dead pay tribute to them.
Teej	September	Mainly the Hindu women	Women wear new red saris and perform dances in groups publicly wishing and praying their husbands' long life.
Bada Dashain	October, continues for 10 days	All the Hindus of Pokhara	Animal sacrifice to goddess Durga (Bhagavati) is the most prominent. Every yard of the temple of Durga can be seen offering blood of animals. People get tika and blessing from their elders and eat meat and enjoy.
Kojagrat Purnima	Full moon-day October	Almost all people come to celebrate in Barahi Temple, Fewa lake.	There occurs a great fair in Fewa lake side. People enjoy different kinds of swings and watch boating competition.

Tihar	October- November continues for 3 days	All people celebrate	This festival goes on for three days. At the evening all houses are lighted with lamps and candles. People worship the goddess Laxmi for prosperity and wealth. They celebrate <i>Mhapuja</i> (especially Newar) and Bhaipuja
Tamu Lhosar	Last week of December	Gurung (Tamu) people celebrate as the New year's day.	There occurs a great fair in Lakesides especially for the foreigners or tourists.
International New Year Day	1 st January	Everybody celebrate especially the youths and hotels in Lakeside. There occurs a great fair in Lake side especially for the foreigners (tourists)	Gurungs celebrate it with great enthusiasm and express best wishes to all. Conduct a grand procession which goes around Pokhara Bazaar.
Maghe Sankranti	First day of the month of Magha (middle of January)	All people celebrate	People eat seasonal fruits especially yam, ghee and molasses. <i>Khichadi</i> (rice cooked with pulse and a little ghee) is the especial meal of that day.
Basanta (Shree) Panchami	Last week of Jan-First week Feb.	Although a Hindu festival, almost all people celebrate	People visit the Saraswati temple (worship the goddess of wisdom); especially students worship for success in exam. From this day summer starts and spring ends; also called Basanta Panchami.
Shiva Ratri	February- March	Hindus gather at shrine of Shiva and celebrate	In different communities, people make bonfire in the evening. In every shrine of Shiva, people offer puja to Lord Shiva.
Holi	March Full- moon day	All people except Muslims and Christians.	This celebration is very colorful, different kinds of colorful powders are blown in the air and also smeared on the faces singing holy songs.
Chaita Dashain	Last week of March or First week April	Only few Hindus especially Brahmins and Chhetris celebrate as their culture.	Eat delicious food; some people do sacrifice at the Bhagawati Temple as they do in Bada Dashain.

Source: Compiled by author

2.4 Museums as heritages of natural and cultural importance

There are a total of five museums in Pokhara. Two of them have the collections of natural and cultural heritages, whereas the rest three house collection of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups of Pokhara. Table 2.4 offers the highlights of these museums.

Table 2.4 List of museum with their key information

Names of the Museums	Location	Distance	Days of opening	Contact telephone number
Annapurna Natural History Museum	Bagar, inside then Prithvi Narayan Campus Premises	1.5 Km. from Mahendra-pool bazaar	All days except Saturday and Public Holidays 10 a.m.-5 p.m.	061-431102
Western Regional Museum	Naya Bazaar Down Town from Mahendra-pool	About 15 minutes walk from Mahendra pool	Daily except Tuesday 10am-4pm	061-520413
Gurkha Memorial Museum	Deep, near K.I. Sing bridge. Towards North from Mahendra-pool.	About 2km from Mahendra-pool and 15 minute walk from Prithvi Narayan Campus.	7 days a week 8 am.-4:30 pm.	061-441762
Gurung Ethnographic Museum	Ramghat (Sakti ghat) on the bank of Seti river,	Downtown from Mahendra-pool, 1km. away across the bridge on Seti river and some steps up the hill road, then down towards the left.	All days 9am.-5pm.	525406
International Mountain Museum	Ratopahiro, Gharipatan	About 1.5 km South from Pokhara Airport, Gharipatan.	Everyday 9 am. - 4:30pm.	061-460472

Source: Compiled by author from various sources

The succeeding paragraphs are provided with details descriptions of these museums from historical perspectives.

a. Annapurna Natural History Museum

This Museum is the ever first established museum in Pokhara. It was established by a lady, An American Peace Corp volunteer named late Dorothy Mierow in 1965 A.D. It is in Prithivi Narayan Campus Complex.

Table 2.5 Annapurna Natural History Museum, Source: Shreekantha Khatiwada, Pokhara



Mierow's long stay in Pokhara helped this Museum grow continuously. She had an interest to promote wildlife like insects, plants, birds and butterflies found in Nepal to provide learning opportunity to visitors. She was also encouraged by the collection of large varieties of butterflies collected and presented by a British Entomologist named Colin Smith.

A collection of almost all of Nepal's 640 species of butterflies is demonstrated in the Nepal collection. Besides butterflies, there are collections of interesting dragonflies and varieties of plants, birds, animals and information of culture of the people of the western region, especially hill and mountain region.

A total of about 70 plants and 150 birds of the regions are stuck on plywood strips and charts on the wall. According to the Annapurna Natural History Museum, there are 56 birds skin to study for the students of ornithology which were donated by Dr. Bab Fleming Sr. Some of the rarest birds like vulture, Kande Bhyakur (Indigenous bird of Nepal), etc. are kept here. Butterflies as well as moths which are found around the Annapurna ranges are collected. However, the collection of butterflies of different kinds such as banded afol, sesabita, Medobya, etc. are dominating in the

exhibition. So, the Museum is also named by visitors as Butterfly Museum. About 90 animals' life-sized pictures on plywood and cement reliefs are depicted. Since 1988 A.D. (Thapa 2010) Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) has handled and monitored the Museum.

There is very good Western Regional Library next door to it. There is a room allocated to ACAP in which the tectonic block theory of moving continent and rising mountains like Mahabharat including Himals and formation of valleys like Pokhara are explained to visitors. In this room, there are many samples of different rocks and fossils like 'Saligram' a kind of igneous rock, and many other minerals. Some of these are donated by the Geology Department of Colorado College.

The museum is worthwhile to visit and learn about Nature's creation. This Museum lies in the locality 'Bagar, in Prithvi Narayan Campus compound, 3 km. from the Mahendra Pool town. There are eye-catching, beautiful painted, 10 pillars which represent a man and a woman from mountain or Himalayan region, Tarai region, and Newar farmers from Kathmandu Valley (Hill region), Brahmins of hills and Tibetans at the entrance of the Museum building. Such images welcome you with their fashionable cultural costumes, when you step up to the entrance of the Museum building.

b. Regional Museum

This Museum stands as the second oldest museum after the Annapurna Natural History Museum in Pokhara Valley. It is in Naya bazaar, an old bazaar of Pokhara, and main walking route to Tarai. It lies about 15 minutes walk from the city centre of Mahendra-pool bazar. It was inaugurated on 15 February 1985 by late King Birendra. Now it is looked after by Nepal Government. It has 23 ropanis area surrounded by stone cemented wall.

According to the authority of the Museum, the government of that time planned to establish Regional Museum in each 5 Development Regions. Accordingly, 3 Regional Museums were established in Dhanakuta, Surkhet and Pokhara, the Regional Headquarters.

Pokhara Regional Museum instituted to represent the Western Region composed of 3 zones and 16 districts. Thus, the Museum is thought to be the storehouse of all artifacts related to art, architecture, science culture, history and archaeology which carry an academic value. It represents geographically all those 16 districts, which include the following features:

- a. Historical, anthropological and social identities of different ethnic groups.
- b. Artifacts used by those ethnic groups.
- c. Rituals, practices, objects and procedure.
- d. Their ethnic practices and professions which are not practiced now, such as *Ghumauro Ghar* (round house), *bamboo Hukka* (Hubblable) and *bamboo Kokro* (cradle for babies).

The displayed objects are traditional metallic and wooden utensils and dishes; gold, silver and brass jewelries; agricultural and fishery tools; clothes, traditional hunting weapons etc. It displays large collection of ethnic costumes, musical instruments, manuscripts and coins. There are two dummies- one depicting a Hindu wedding practice and another is a dead body, preparing for funeral ceremony. Both are worthwhile for the visitors. Besides these, there are other dummies which represent the life style and culture of different races and castes like Thakali, Tharus, Newars, Brahmins, Gurungs, Magars, Damai (tailor), Kamis (black smiths) and Gaires (singers).

There are photos and pictures of dances such as Sorathi dance belonging to Gurung (Tamu) race, Bhairav dance belonging to Newar, Teej dance belonging to Brahmin and Chhhetri, etc. In this way, the Western Regional Museum of Pokhara has become a vivid source of information and knowledge for the visitors, scholars and sociological researchers. "The Regional Museum, yet has to expand more", say the authority of the Museum, "to fulfill the objectives of it, and they are under the planning."

c. Gurung (Tamu) Ethno-graphic Museum

This Museum stands on the third position for being established in the chronology of the history of museum in Pokhara. It was established on the bank of Seti River in the year 1990 A.D. by the effort of Tamu Pay Lhu Sangha (association). The objective of the establishment of the Museum is to preserve and develop Tamu (Gurung) history, language, culture and customs as well as Bonism, which has been followed by the indigenous people, Tamus, as their own ancestral religion. In this context, the Museum has been a great work to make anyone learn about the Tamu people's life style and history.

Inside the building, a visitor comes across a dummy of a Tamu lady weaving a piece of cloth on a unique, traditional handloom. It is so attractive and

fascinating that one does not like to turn his eyes away from the sight. Weaving cloths in such typical handloom is a traditional occupation of Tamu ladies. There are various exhibitions to present the Tamu lifestyle in paintings, posters, dummies and collection of costumes, ornaments of gold and silver such as Dhungri and Naugedi. There are dummies of Lamas (the priest of Tamu society) performing different rituals during birth, wedding, death etc. Besides, there are the display of bows, arrows and quivers which were used by their forefathers in hunting and for defending themselves in their settlement from the attack of the enemies. The most valuable collection is the manuscript written in special paper made by them using chemicals.

Thus, apart from the native or domestic tourists, the Museum welcomes a great number of foreign visitors. The museum is also invaluable for the researches as well as visitors who like to enjoy the different life style and culture of Tamu Communities. The Fascinating attraction of the environment around the Museum is the turbulent flow of Seti River through a vast open sandy area and the mouth of the gorge where the river enters and disappears.

d. International Mountain Museum

The International Mountain Museum (IMM) is the largest and most sophisticated modern type of Museum. It is unique of its type in the world. It was initiated in 1996 A.D. by Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) (Khatiwada and Kshetry 2004).



Photo 2.8 IMM with frontal view



Photo 2.9 IMM with interiors view

Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara

The beautiful architecture in the huge complex exhibits the perfect landscape. There is a grand Museum Hall. The total area of the IMM is six

hectares. Actually, the idea to establish IMM in Pokhara was the inspiration of all those mountains of Pokhara that attract the people of the world. The great attraction are the skyscraper snow-capped mountains and maundering, evergreen coniferous forest, hills and hillocks covered with dense forest and varieties of biodiversities which suit to enjoy days and weeks' long tracking in those areas. These are the motivations to open the IMM where the visitors can get information about all these objects and know how to visit those spots, where to visit and when to visit the areas in Pokhara. From the Museum premises one can view the panoramic mountain peaks of Dhaulagiri, Manaslu and Annapurna.

Thus the aim of International Mountain Museum is to provide enjoyment along with the knowledge of wonderful natural heritage and cradle of cultural heritage of Nepal especially Western Region. There are exhibitions of mountaineering history and its methods as well as entertainment and knowledge of mountain geography, ecology and culture of people living in the regions. They are displayed in splendid photos, pictures and charts. The management committee has also managed a documentary show for the visitors. So the IMM in Pokhara is an especial tribute to mountains and people living in mountain and hilly regions. It also provides knowledge to the visitors who wish to go for adventurous trekking in those areas, who want to study and explore something about mountains (ibid 2004).

The main Museum has the following halls where things are displayed artistically and beautifully so that the visitors can enjoy both researchable knowledge and information.

- **The Hall of the Himalaya**

The geography of Himalayas, their peaks, flora and fauna, indigenous ethnic diversity and life style has been displayed in this Hall.

- **The Hall of International Mountains**

This Hall is allotted to display the planning of the knowledge and information about the mountains and the peaks of the world.

- **The Hall of Expedition**

There are the displays of the history of mountaineering expedition together with the equipment and development of mountaineering techniques that are used.

- **The Hall of Fame**

This Hall exhibits the tributes to famous Mountaineers who performed record breaking events with courage, energy and willpower. There are also the displays of famous discoveries, researches and explorations.

e. Gurkha Memorial Museum

"Gurkha" is the term for Gurkhali warriors since the start of political and geographical unification of Nepal, which was launched in the year 1801 B.S.(1745 A.D.) by Prithvi Narayan Shah. Internationally the word 'Gurkha' becomes popular for the first time, for the bravery, courage and undying spirit of war and dedication to their duty during Anglo-Nepalese War 1814 to 1816 A.D. Latter, British Government started recruiting Nepalese youth with the name of 'Gurkha' and sent them to fight in the First and Second World Wars. Since then, Gurkha became popular in every nook and corner of the world for their bravery, courage and sense of responsibility. Gurkha Memorial Museum represents glimpses in detail in different medium to the satisfaction of the visitors.

Its short history stars from Lainchaur, in Kathmandu. Gurkha Memorial Trust (committees) decided to establish Gurkha Memorial Museum. So, the Working Committee decided to manage the Museum in 1996 A.D. in Lainchaur under the Chairmanship of Capt. Eknarayan Gurung. Latter in the year 2001 A.D., the Museum was shifted to Pardi, Pokhara, in the complex of the Hotel Nature Land hiring a house there. The motive to move the Museum to Pokhara must be that the largest numbers of Gurkhas belong to Pokhara and its vicinity. On 9th July 2005, this Museum again moved to its own building in Deep, Pokhara sub-metropolitan city ward no. 16, in the north of K.I. Singh bridge, in the complex of British Camp.

The Museum lies in one hour's walking distance from Mahendra Pool city centre and about 10 km. from lake-side. There is a regular city bus service from Lake-side to Gurkha Memorial Museum. From its vicinity one can enjoy watching the deep gorge of turbulent Seti River about 300 feet below the new bridge. There is old K.I. Singh Bridge on the left when you are crossing the new bridge towards the Museum. The Museum's doors are open for 7 days from 8 am to 4:30 pm.

The aim of the Museum is to maintain the ever-lasting history and memories of Gurkha with their bravery medals such as Victoria Cross (VC), the highest award for exceptional bravery in the battle field. Thirteen Gurkhas have received this glorious medal.

There are five galleries which contain the displays of the following;

- **Historical Gallery in Ground Floor**

It contains the photo-display of the history of the Gorkhas from Anglo-Nepalese war in the year 1814-1916 AD to present days. Together with it, there are the displays of different war and fighting sounds, managed in different color of light. It is very interesting to watch and hear them.

- **Gorkha Infantry Regiments Galley in First Floor**

It has the display of historical photos of the old and new British Gorkha Regiments, platoons divided after the independence of India and formations of the infantries since then.

- **Gorkha Specialist Corp Unit Gallery in Second Floor**

It has the displays of the history of platoons working in British Singapore and the detailed information of warning times and normal situation till today. It also contains the communication devices used in military as well as the sounds of military march pass.

- **VC Room in the Second Floor**

There is a 29 inch big Television (TV) screen on which the documentaries about Gurkhas are shown. This show is managed only for those visitors who come in group.

- **Other displays and Library in the Second Floor**

There is a library in the second floor. Different models of *Khukuries* (traditional Nepali knife) which the Gorkha had used are displayed together with the souvenir items along with the names of the contributors and photographs who helped and donated money to establish the Museum.

To summarize the display, there are displays with realistic sound in background, military uniforms with medals, hundreds of photographs of individual Gorkha regimental history, souvenir shop, genuine Gorkha *Khukuries*, Nepali ornaments and books on Gorkhas. There a documentary film is shown on T.V. which is especially designed for a large number of school children. Beautiful mountain top views from the top of the floor of the building, a unique venue of seminar etc. can be interesting, informative and enjoyable for the visitors.

2.5 Conclusions

Pokhara is one of the most pleasing and scenic destinations due to both natural and cultural beauties. The whole range of description the historical review of natural and cultural heritage of Pokhara as mentioned in this chapter above provides enough realization about Pokhara as a hanging paradise. Paradise is the place which is unique, uncommon and has the most alluring objects to observe, feel and realize. Although nobody has seen or been to paradise, but people talk about it as a divine place where one can enjoy eternal life with all sorts of happiness. Same kinds of happiness with divine feeling are offered to the visitors by the natural boons in Pokhara.

Pokhara owns natural beauty and creation. The turbulent flow of Seti River, somewhere vanishing underground and somewhere running in a very narrow gorge is breath- taking to watch. Similarly, water- falls jumping down from an amazing height, beautiful rainbows, fast flowing streams through mountain steps, luxuriant green forests with varieties of birds and their fascinating maledicts, crystal clear lakes with glittering waves, magnificent and panoramic Himalaya and their skyscraper summits, all of them offer the most lovely sceneries to the visitors. While taking bird's eye view from the mountain flight, one can realize these blessings of Nature in Pokhara simultaneously.

The ranges of descriptions throw some important light on the historical background of cultural heritage in Pokhara. There are temples belonging to Hindu religion, stupas and monasteries belonging to Buddhist religion, mosques signifying Muslim religion and Churches belonging to Christian religion. Pokhara is the configuration of varied ethnic groups from Mountain and Terai regions of Nepal. There are multi religious, multi traditional and multi cultural human beings who represent all ways of life. Nevertheless, all religions and their people live in harmony and observe religious tolerance.

No doubt, the blending of the best of nature, culture and people make Pokhara a hanging paradise on the earth.

Annex 2.1

Chronology of Shaha Kings of Kaski, Lamjung, Gorkha principalities and politically, and geographically unified Nepal.

S.N.	Kaski	Lamjung	Gorkha	Politically and Geographically unified Nepal
1.	Kulmandan Shaha (Jagati Khan) →	Ashobrahma Shaha (Youngest son of Kulmandan Shaha) →	Drabya Shaha (Youngest son of Ashobrahma Shaha) →	Prithivinarayan Shaha
2.	Jalal Shaha			Pratap Sing Shaha
3.	Raj Shah	Narahari Shaha	Purandar Shaha	Rana Bahadur Shaha
4.	Naraya Shahi		Chhatra Shaha	Girban Yuddha Bikram Shaha
5.	Nara Shahi		Rama Shaha	Rajendra Bikram Shaha dev
6.	Shiva Shahi		Dalanmandan Shaha (Dambar Shaha)	Surendra Bir Bikram Shaha Dev
7.	Jidal Shahi		Krishna Shaha	Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shahdev
8.	Pratap Shahi (Jasmat Shahadev)		Rudra Shaha	Mahendra Bir Bikram Shahdev
9.			Prithvipati Shaha	Birendra Bir Bikram Shahdev
10.	Siddhinarayan Shai		Narabhupal Shaha	
			Prithivinarayan Shaha	Deependra Bir Bikram Shahdev
				Gyandendra Bir Bikram Shahdev
				Nepal Became Republic in 2007

Source: Subedi 2004

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Tourism planning, development, management and envisioning future of Pokhara

Kashiraj Bhandari¹

'A tourist destination if fails to plan, plans to fail. All planning is intervention in the present with the aim of building a better future' (Ashworht 1991, p. 1).

3.1 Introduction

When Maurice Herzog and his team of mountaineers scaled the top of Annapurna I in 1950, they probably did not realize that they were not only the trailblazers of mountaineering but also the milestone setters in the tourism development of Nepal (especially in Pokhara and its surrounding areas). The spree of mountain climbing then became so intense that by the end of 1950s all the eight-thousanders in Nepal were conquered. Lately, Colonel Jimmy Roberts, who was assigned to recruit the young boys of the region in the British Army, enunciated "trekking" as a favorite activity for himself, his colleagues and for his guests. That initiative has evolved in the form of an industry, offering the trekkers some of the best trekking trails of the World.

Today tourism in Pokhara has been experienced with various ups and downs, yet it still offers a very promising outlook in terms of economic benefits. Pokhara has become a gateway to the popular trekking routes towards Annapurna and Dhaulagiri regions and a hub for other satellite towns and villages in the surroundings. The first and only one Tourism Master Plan of Nepal was drafted in 1972, which gave a direction to the policy makers as well as to the entrepreneurs of Nepal for future development. The Plan clearly indicates that Pokhara contains more potentiality after Kathmandu and the development of tourism should be implemented with this fact on mind. Subsequent to the Plan, the Pacific Asia Development Authority was asked in 1975 by the then Department of Tourism to study the Pokhara Valley and also to advise how the development of this area could be best handled so as to exert the potential outlined in the Tourism Master Plan

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of 1972. In this context, this article attempts to discuss the past efforts for the planning and chronological development of tourism in Pokhara. Finally, it comes out with some concrete future visions for the sensible planned development of tourism sector in Pokhara. From methodological point of view, this chapter is based on the review of already published critical researches in the same subject.

3.2 Periodic planned development of tourism in Pokhara: A bird- eye observation

Since the very early days of tourism development in Nepal, Pokhara has secured, developed and maintained an image of a successful and most pleasant tourist destination among the holiday makers. Many studies on tourism have clearly pointed towards the huge tourism potentiality of Pokhara for further tourism development. The government of Nepal since the very beginning has emphasized the development of tourism sector in a planned way. The paragraphs below offer information and also discuss these scenarios.

3.2.1 Development of tourism as per periodic national plans

There are a total of twelve different national plan documents prepared in Nepal since 1956, where tourism has got its space in each of these plans at national level. The first Five-Year Plan (1956-60) attempted to increase the foreign exchange earnings from tourism by establishing Tourism Development Board in 1957 and appending it to the Department of Tourism in 1959. The other subsequent eleven periodic plans have also recognized tourism as a promising economic sector and offered due emphasis on development of tourism facilities, capacity buildings, international tourism promotions, institutional arrangements and also the development of aviation sector. Table 3.1 offers some milestones at a glance in terms of formulations of these plans for the systematic development of tourism in Pokhara.

Table 3.1 Major milestones in the course of the planned development of tourism in Pokhara

Dates	Tourism development plans	Intervened by
1972	Recommendations with regional concept and resort development around the Fewa Lake with special focuses to traditional designs, materials and height limits of buildings	Government of Nepal in association with the Federal Republic of Germany through Tourism Master Plan 1972
1974-75	Development of Pokhara valley by allocating Baidam and Fewa lakeside in the east as the main areas of tourism but prohibiting the settlement of construction towards the south-west area of Fewa Lake	Department of Housing and Physical Planning
1975	With immense potentials, Pokhara to be developed primarily for Himalayan adventure instead of lake destination	The Pacific Asia Travel Association Development Authority
1981	Master plan of Pokhara by stipulating height limit and distance location from the road and Fewa Lake	Town Planning Committee of Pokhara and Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning
1988	Greater emphasis on the Fewa Lake area for tourism development	Pacific Asia Travel Association
2001	Clear indication to challenges faced and might be faced amidst the armed conflict regarding tourism development in the future	Nepal Rastra Bank, Pokhara Branch

Source: Compiled from various sources of the Government of Nepal, Pacific Asia Travel Association, Nepal Rastra Bank and Pokhara Tourism Council

Pokhara was declared the headquarters of Western Development Region in 1972 during the fourth five year plan, and it emerged as a centre for economic activities of the western region. Consequently, the Department of Housing and Physical Planning drafted a development plan of Pokhara valley in 1974-75. It had allocated Baidam and Fewa Lakeside as the main area for tourism, declared the bank of Fewa Lake "Green Belt Area" and prohibited any type of construction around this site. The settlement on the south-west of Fewa Lake was evacuated for conservation and the present "Raniban", a dense forest emerged just above the southwest of the lake.

In 1981, the Town Development Committee of Pokhara and Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning formulated Master Plan of Pokhara Municipality. It stipulated height limit, prescribed the distance of buildings from the road and the Fewa Lake (Poudel 1996). However, owing to

the political changes and interventions, the proposed programs could not be implemented and, as a result, Pokhara, especially Baidam, has emerged into a site of haphazardly built concrete structures that blocked the mountain views from the Lakeside area. Similarly, The Fewa Lake is increasingly being polluted due to the sewage from the septic tanks of the hotels. Besides such alarming situation, the lake itself has shrunk approximately one third since 1940 due to siltation, landslides, floods and human encroachment (Lamichhane et al. 2009).

Unfortunately, contrary to the expectations of the public, after the first People's Movement of 1990, more violations of the norms and standards as mentioned in the Master Plan of Pokhara have been noted. Housing and Urban Development Committee in 1990, and a task force of the Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning in 1992 attempted to follow the norms of 1981 Master Plan of Pokhara. However, they also remained effective only in papers and meetings (Poudel 1996) and could not reach a proper implementation.

3.2.2 Development of tourism from the perspective of Tourism Master Plan 1972

The Tourism Master Plan of 1972 was the first and only one of this kind and also was the result of joint efforts of the then Government of Nepal and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Over a period of ten months, the master plan study team collected and analyzed data and information in the relevant fields in order to formulate the plan with long-term perspective, and to set a detailed action oriented programs for the period up to 1980 with a phase-wise development concept (HMG 1972).

The Tourism Master Plan had come up with various propositions; regional concept of tourism, tourism facility plans, institutional development programs and marketing programs. In connection with tourism in Pokhara, the Master Plan anticipated

- a. A decentralized pattern of tourism development in the future. While in the initial phase, facilities in the Kathmandu area would expand, priority would gradually be given to develop Pokhara,
- b. That Pokhara will develop into a major resort centre once its recreational potential and the proximity of the Himalayas are improved.

Pokhara and surroundings hold many natural attractions and recreational resources suited for resort development owing to its lakes and proximity

to the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountains. The Plan duly recognized the potential and proposed various interventions. Machhapuchhre, "the fist-tail" peak with the bold pyramidal shape, one of the most beautiful peaks in the world, stands close to the town. Similarly, to preserve the local architectures of Pokhara, the government was advised to design buildings that could set an example of the use of traditional design, materials and height limit, particularly around the lake. The Master Plan had recommended Pokhara as the most suitable place for resort development and suggested setting the lake area (Fewa Lake) aside for the purpose and to direct urban expansion of Pokhara towards the south. The hotels in future better to be developed along the north shores as the southern shore are especially attractive as they provide a good view of the Annapurna massif. Basic infrastructural investments are necessary to open up in the resort area and to encourage private investment. To succeed, the most important current tasks are: to prepare a development plan for the area, to design the buildings using local materials, and to build the low rise buildings on the pattern of the existing lodges. The Master Plan further recommended for landscaping of the lake area and conducting bio-chemical analysis of the lake and its suitability for swimming and other activities. Recreational facilities would include possibilities for boating, fishing and swimming. Sports facilities would include a small golf course and two tennis courts. Excursion to scenic spots in the valley and its surroundings was to be promoted. The local supply would be distinctively different from that of Kathmandu, featuring a more rural setting of facilities, open air activities and amenities for nature lovers (HMG 1972).

The Master Plan has also suggested an outline for resort development in Pokhara. A development plan was to be prepared for the entire area to include urban expansion of Pokhara Bazaar. The plan should consider an initial land of 20 hectares area along the northern, eastern and southern shores of the lake. The first stage of development would include an estimated public expenditure of NPR 3 millions for site development, land acquisition, provision and extension of power and water supply lines, construction of approach roads, as well as landscaping. Reforestation is recommended at the upper Phurse Khola to avoid further siltation of the lake. Public funds should be considered for the development of recreational amenities such as golf courses and tennis courts. For the second stage of resort development expenditures a budget totaling NPR 2 millions was estimated to include extension of the site, public utilities and roads as well as land acquisition and landscaping. In terms of accessibility, this has been highly emphasized for the development of tourism in Pokhara. The Master

Plan has recommended that the construction costs for Pokhara Airport would greatly increase requiring additional expenditures allocation of NPR 20 millions on top of whatever amount had been already earmarked.

With its lakes and nearness to the proposed National Park (Annapurna Conservation Area), Pokhara possesses developable recreational resources. However, the cultural attractions are very few in comparison to Kathmandu or other areas of Nepal. Yet the magnificent scenery compensates more than the lack of other sightseeing opportunities. The potential demand includes, in the sequence of importance, the following three types

- sightseeing visitors along the proposed tour routing
- vacation tourism from India
- trekking tourism

Although many of the recommendations put forth by the Master Plan are yet to be implemented, the Plan deemed to set a perspective in terms of long-term tourism development in the country. However, so far as the land use for the planning in Pokhara is concerned, the propositions outlined in the Tourism Master Plan of 1972 had been superseded by the subsequent comprehensive Physical Development Plan of Pokhara developed by the Department of Housing and Physical Planning. As a consequence, the southern shores of Fewa Lake which were recommended in the Tourism Master Plan for the main tourism development activity sites have now been zoned for lakeside preservation. Further, an area of the valley, between Pardi and the Seti River and the immediate south of the existing Pokhara airport was zoned instead for tourism development. This is a major change from the situation described in the Tourism Master Plan and one which negates a number of its recommendations regarding Pokhara.

3.2.3 'Pokhara, Nepal, Development of a Secondary Destination Area' by Pacific Area Travel Association Development Authority (1975)

The Pacific Area Travel Association Development Authority was asked by the Department of Tourism of Nepal to study the Pokhara valley and to advise how the development of this area could be the best handled so as to fulfill the potential outlined in the Tourism Master Plan of 1972.

As tourism development in Pokhara since 1972 had not produced the desired results, the Department of Tourism sought to determine whether the development could indeed help to;

- a. Extend the stay of tourists in Nepal from three to five days,
- b. Take some of the tourist pressure off Kathmandu,
- c. Improve the ability of the area to fill the gap of economic growth between itself and that of the Kathmandu valley or the more favored parts of the Terai (PATA 1975).

In this context, the study of PATA was conducted exclusively for Pokhara. In 1975 PATA published the report "Pokhara- Nepal, Development of a Secondary Destination," presenting a series of observations and recommendations for tourism development. It had forwarded its findings and recommendations as follows;

- a. Pokhara has tremendous amount of possibilities to evolve as a secondary tourist destination after Kathmandu.
- b. The reasons for tourists coming to Pokhara (motivation to travel) were the Himalayas and trekking, so the marketing of Pokhara should be primarily for Himalayas not for the Lakes. Once they are in Pokhara, the reasons and motivations for staying longer in Pokhara are the people, the town, the rural scene, the lakes and the climate.
- c. Gorkha Museum and Mountaineering Museum should be established, a walkers' guide for Pokhara should be developed and the tourism development should be towards bazaar area and the slopes of Sarangkot above the Bindhasini Temple.
- d. The Tourism Master Plan of 1972 and PATA's findings differed in the following aspects;
 - The lakes: The Tourism Master Plan emphasized the lakes but the evaluation of PATA study team reduced their significance as a tourist attraction. It was because of the lakeside preservation zoning decision and also because they do not share with Annapurna the uniqueness that would bring tourists from far afield to Pokhara. They were basically the sorts of attractions that could keep tourists happy once they arrived.
 - The town: The appeal of Pokhara was that it could offer the attractive urban and village architecture in a very pleasant setting that was different from and yet complementary to the temples of Kathmandu. The attractiveness of the town was a significant asset and it maintained that future tourism development would

benefit from proximity to the Bazaar as opposed to being located in the Pardi area.

- Recreation: Pokhara is the first and the foremost sightseeing area and should develop this potential before it started to become the resort area recommended in the Tourism Master Plan. In such an isolated location, there was inevitably a question about the success of the resort approach; in any case, it should not be considered until Pokhara became a more mature destination with well-developed facilities for sightseeing and shopping and larger visitor base.
- e. For further development, the packages of Nepal can be combined with the beach packages of Sri Lanka. Since most European tourists want to include beach holidays in their package, Nepal should work towards creating triangular flights, for instance; Frankfurt-Kathmandu-Colombo-Frankfurt. This would increase the inflow of tourists to Nepal and eventually to Pokhara as the fares would be more competitive and the package would be more diverse.
- f. Additionally, the area should be promoted as a greater Pokhara giving more options to the tourists.
- g. The Indian honeymoon travel segment mostly concentrates in the July-August period when Pokhara faces the shoulder season due to the monsoon rain. Similarly the Indian tourists prefer hill stations and religious sites to beach resorts and historical cities during their vacation.
- h. Since Pokhara receives a lot of rainfall, some indoor activities such as indoor games, theater to watch movies and opera should be developed to make them stay longer during monsoon. French, Italian, Spanish and Dutch travelers were found visiting Pokhara during the monsoon.
- i. The Department of Tourism should keep a daily record of the hours when the mountains are visible and of the hours when it is raining.
- j. Diversifying the sightseeing options; for example including Begnas and Rupa Lake or developing hiking trails along the ridge that divides the two lakes.

- k. Activities like walking, riding, swimming, fishing and evening entertainment (military parade by ex-Gorkhas, changing of guards, etc.) are highly recommended for Pokhara.

There are several other recommendations for the development of tourism in Pokhara. Some of the recommendations have been implemented (e.g. Mountain Museum, Gorkha Museum, etc.). Some have become obsolete now and some are still valid but seem increasingly difficult to execute.

3.2.4 'Pokhara 1988' by Pacific Asia Travel Association

At the request of the Department of Tourism and of the PATA Nepal Chapter, a team of four members including three from the original task force of 1975 went again to Pokhara at the end of January 1988 to assess what had happened since 1975. The team of PATA prepared a report titled "Pokhara 1988" that included several references to the conservation of Pokhara and the Pokhara valley and presented a number of recommendations. Some points having major significance for future tourism development in Pokhara are outlined as follows (PATA 1988);

- a. Many of the findings of the 1975 PATA report on Pokhara had not yet been implemented. The 1988 PATA team found, however, that in by far the majority of cases, they were still valid.
- b. In order to turn this situation around and to move Pokhara forward towards its tourism potential, a strong commitment on the part of the government and an enthusiastic involvement on the part of the private sector were required.
- c. In the report of 1975, PATA recommended that Pokhara hotels would have to 'concentrate on providing the tourists with the primary items, cleanliness, safe food and drinking water and a comfortable bed in a well ventilated room with an efficiently functioning shower and toilet.' Whereas the investment in the accommodation facilities apparently exceeded the demand, yet meeting even the basic facilities, for instance, water supply, was full of challenges. That the hotels and lodges situated in the Baidam area still pumped water from the Fewa Lake was a clear evidence of the pathetic situation of water supply in the area.
- d. The report also mentioned that there had been an extensive development of the small hotel and guest house properties

located in the Baidam area. The then estimate was of 600 to 700 rooms as the dominant element in Pokhara accommodation. The proliferation of these properties led to deep price cutting with the result that room rates could be uneconomic and as low as 10/15 NPR per night.

- e. Trekking had grown to a great degree since 1975. The impact of this on tourist operations in the Pokhara valley did not appear to have been as great as expected.
- f. The modern construction in some of the rural parts of Pokhara deteriorated their charms. It had tended to make Fewa Lake a more important element in Pokhara visitors' experience than it was considered to be by the 1975 Task Force. After reviewing the 1988 situation, the placement of a greater emphasis on the Lake area for tourism development was recommended.

After various observations, the team recommended the establishment of the basis for further growth by addressing the following key problem areas and adopting an action plan;

- (1) Improvement of road access and air services: The question of a new airport was also one that would have to be addressed. The construction of such facilities normally took 5 to 10 years. If tourism remained an important element in national planning, a new airport was essential in Pokhara. Not only would the development of a new airport enable the introduction of medium jet service to open up new quality markets overseas, it would also provide an important alternative to the airport in Kathmandu should weather conditions necessitate diversions. The Pokhara airport could develop as a hub for air services into West Nepal and could siphon off some of the operational congestion which might otherwise begin to develop in Kathmandu. Interestingly, some of the Indian tour operators indicated that there could be considerable amount of demand for Delhi-Pokhara-Kathmandu-Delhi service and special interest chartered flights to Pokhara.
- (2) Quality Control: Pokhara suffered because the supply exceeded demand leading to an unhealthy competition in price and negligence in the quality of services to the tourists. Pokhara could develop into a quality oriented destination rather than a price-oriented one.

- (3) **Conservations:** The team found that the initial charm observed in 1975 had been deteriorating and that this important asset was being used up, but neither preserved nor revived.
- (4) The following actions were recommended by the 'Pokhara 1988' team of PATA:
 - a. The licensing of hotels, guesthouses, trekking agencies and trekking lodges should be regulated in such a way that the number and standard of individual units are subject to control.
 - b. A self-regulating body within the industry or perhaps supported by government, for example; a hotel association, a trekking association or a Pokhara tourism association would establish certain standards and grant its stamp of approval only to those enterprises that met the standards.
 - c. The planning capability was found to be in place but the implementing commitment was missing and the planned activities were not translated into action.
 - d. Part of the regulations that could be introduced would be a height limit on construction, particularly around the lake, in Pokhara town and in the more attractive villages. As recommended in the 1975 report, it would be helpful if future government buildings could set an example of the use of traditional design and materials.
 - e. It was strongly recommended that the northern shore of Fewa Lake should be kept open for public access. The standard often used in lakeside planning was for all private structures to be set back at least 200 feet from the lakeshore and no private ownership was encouraged to extend all the way down to the water. It would be possible to construct a path around the lakeshore to facilitate public access for walking and perhaps cycling.
 - f. As recommended in 1975, it was still important to maintain a consistently accurate statistics of the visitors to Pokhara. For planning purpose, it would be equally important to keep records each day, from the meteorological station, of the hours of mountains' visibility and the incidence of rainfall.
 - g. The report 'Pokhara, 1988' included several references to the conservation of tourism resources in Pokhara valley. One specific recommendation was on the need to conserve the

historic building located on the Ram Krishan Tole, a historically important by the trodden way of the salt route to Tibet. This study prepared an inventory of 310 buildings in Ram Krishna Tole, Ganesh Tole, Bhimsen Tole, Bhairav Tole and Moharia Tole after an extensive survey. All the buildings were photographed, encoded, categorized, evaluated for their tourism and cultural potential and recommendations were outlined for conservation of these resources. The summary conclusion of the report was that the long row of buildings on Ram Krishna Tole that related to the salt trade traffic was a marvelous string of important traditional buildings. The buildings were intact, though baldly neglected. They could be restored to become wonderful community and tourism assets. This could be a lively shopping street again (PATA 1988).

3.2.5 'Pokhara: Historic Resources Study and Proposal for a Conservation District Pokhara, Nepal' by PATA

As PATA took initiatives and came out with a report titled 'Pokhara Historic Resources Study and Proposal for a Conservation District Pokhara', which was published in 1990. The report sets out criteria on which judgments can be made regarding a building's relative importance in natural settings of Pokhara. The report also makes recommendations regarding the implementation of a conservation program for the continued preservation of buildings in Pokhara. Besides, policies are also proposed to designate and protect those buildings which are deemed significant in the evaluation process.

3.2.6 'Tourism Business in Pokhara- Problems, Challenges and Outcomes 2057- A Special Study' by Nepal Rastra Bank, Pokhara Branch

Banking Development and Research Unit, Pokhara Branch of Nepal Rastra Bank, conducted a special study in 2057 B.S. (2000 AD) to assess the economic importance of tourism in Pokhara and its contribution to the overall tourism economy of Nepal. It also scrutinized the challenges Pokhara was facing and it might face in the future regarding tourism development. The major findings of the report were as follows (NRB 2001);

- a. In average, each hotel employed 32 persons. A star hotel employed 85 and a nonstar 13. The travel and trekking agency

in average employed 9 persons. The occupancy rate of the hotels was 30 percent, and 58.49 percent hotels used domestic production for tourism consumption,

- b. The average length of stay in Pokhara was 2.25 but average including trekking in the surrounding region was 8 days. Some 21 percent of the visitors to Nepal went to Pokhara and 50 percent of them were trekkers,
- c. Some 32 percent tourists to Pokhara were repeat visitors, 18.87 percent tourists thought Pokhara was cheaply priced and 75.47 thought it a moderately priced.
- d. The majority of the tourism entrepreneurs thought that efforts to promote Pokhara were not enough; the business culture was yet to be developed, quality of tourist services needed upgrade so that the tourists would be encouraged to spend rather than save.
- e. The conflicting provisions in the Tourism Act and Transportation Act in defining tourists created confusion, which resulted in increasing harassment of the domestic tourists traveling to Pokhara by tourist buses.
- f. Majority of the entrepreneurs in Pokhara and visitors to Pokhara perceived people in Pokhara as helpful and friendly but not well-educated. Further, they thought there was lack of tourism infrastructure and international/regional airport for convenient air passage.
- g. The survey revealed that the purposes of visit to Pokhara included: 64 percent for trekking, 24 percent for recreation and 12 percent for others,
- h. The source of information involved: 41 percent recommended by friends and relatives, 26 percent by their own sources, 23 percent by group traveling and 10 percent-others
- i. Majority of the residents of Pokhara felt proud that they were living in Pokhara and they had highly positive attitude towards tourists and tourism.
- j. Some of the hotels in Lakeside area had been found using lake water or water from Seti canal which was not hygienic and it did not give positive impression to the visitors.

3.3 Tourism today in Pokhara

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has reported that one billion people crossed their borders for tourism purpose in 2012. This huge movement of people was expected to create one job in every 10 jobs and generate income of 2 billion each day. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC), tourism sector contributed 4 percent in value addition to the national GDP, created 412,000 direct jobs, and occupied 24.5 percent of total exports in case of Nepal in 2011.

The tourism potential of Pokhara, undoubtedly, is being underutilized. Although this is not different than most of the other tourism destinations in Nepal, Pokhara by far has more chances of translating the prospects into reality. In terms of tourism facilities, investment in tourism, tourist stay, movement of domestic tourists, accessibility and in so many other parameters, Pokhara is far ahead of other tourism destinations in Nepal. As pointed out in so many documents and books, the close proximity to the mountains and the pleasant weather are two major ingredients which make up the unique tourism recipe, so many other destinations inside and outside Nepal find it enviable. It is no wonder that in terms of trekkers' preferences and numbers, Annapurna Region, to which Pokhara serves as a gateway, surpasses the Everest Region and in average 22 percent of tourists visiting Nepal visit Pokhara (MoTCA 2011).

Although the number of tourists to Pokhara over the years seems substantial and is growing, it is firmly believed that the number could have been far greater had the proper mechanism to collect arrival data been in place. Moreover, data of Indian tourists and domestic tourists traveling to Pokhara are not yet accounted for. This lack of proper tourist data seriously abbreviates the size of tourism economy of Pokhara.

3.4 Tourism planning in Pokhara

The PATA study team in 1975 had clearly pointed out that the suggestions for tourism development in Pokhara had been challenged from the very beginning as Pokhara failed to comply with the recommendations of Tourism Master Plan 1972. As a consequence, the Fewa Lake has been heavily polluted and endangered of premature extinction, the charm of old bazaar is vanished and Baidam, the hotspot of tourism activities, might soon be changed into a tasteless assortment of concrete buildings. Not only that, degrading tourism-scape observed in Pokhara coupled with unhealthy competition among the service providers has decreased the

price and quality of services and reduced the return on investment. All these adverse effects evidently can be witnessed in the form of negative physical, human, marketing, organizational and environmental impacts in Pokhara, which, if not addressed with a proper planning, will eventually shy away the quality tourists to other destinations.

A close review of the tourism plans of the past revealed that implementing the plans could be more challenging than merely drafting a good plan. However, this article suggests that an integrated tourism management plan of Pokhara can still reduce the negative consequences of the unplanned development. To ensure the implementation of the suggestions by the concerned agencies, roles and responsibilities of the diverse stakeholders should be clearly chalked out in the initial phase. Another crucial aspect of good tourism planning is to create a sense of ownership among the stakeholders so that they do not feel forced or regulated when it comes to implementing the actions. In this context, the need of the formulation and application of self-governed, voluntary and disciplinary codes of conduct have been felt important for the planned development of tourism with the vision of responsible and sustainable tourism criteria in Pokhara.

There is high emphasis for responsible tourism development through the application of the codes of conduct on integrated approach in this joint effort in Pokhara. A joint research and a small scale responsible tourism development interventions by Pokhara Tourism Council, the Swiss National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South and Kathmandu University highlight this aspect (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012; NCCR 2013). Codes of conduct manual and corporate social responsibility general guidelines for tourism sector in Pokhara have been published in association with Nepal Tourism Board in 2013. These guidelines have been relevant in the context of the deteriorating state of natural and cultural heritages and poor management of touristic areas in Pokhara in the past.

3.5 Future outlooks

Because of the wide ranging effects of tourism on a destination, it is vital that development be undertaken within a framework of a plan. Tourism planning basically suggests the best course of action among various alternatives for the future of tourism. Only tourism planning cannot be a panacea and does not guarantee success in tourism. However, it is an essential activity in today's rapidly changing business environment.

Although it is true that some tourism destinations have flourished without any conscious planning, many have suffered serious consequences for not carefully considering future events and their impacts on destination (Mill and Morrison 2002).

While formulating tourism plan for Pokhara and surrounding areas, apart from the involvement of experts from the field of planning, it is imperative that technical experts in conservation, environment, physical planning, economics and culture are also consulted. It will ensure smooth synthesis of divergent perspectives to the tourism plan and enhance the chances of successful implementation.

3.6 Envisioning tourism plan of Pokhara

Mill and Morrison (2002) suggested that Tourism Planning can be initiated at a variety of levels in tourism destinations. For instance, in case of Nepal, Tourism Master Plan of 1972 was drafted at the national level. Although there are no examples of regional or zonal planning in Nepal, instances of tourism plan at the district level and site-specific plans are plenty. Steps or process of formulating tourism plans may vary from destination to destination depending upon the nature of tourism destination and stakeholders' participation. Pragmatic approach adopted by the tourism administration and approach suggested by academicians was also found to differ substantially. Therefore, the following steps are suggested in case of Pokhara to incorporate the practical approaches followed by tourism practitioners and theoretical framework suggested by the academicians.

3.6.1 Assessment of tourism resources

Pokhara has already secured a place of one of the most preferred destinations in Nepal. However, an assessment of existing government policies, objectives and programs should be carefully done before initiating new tourism plan as the national tourism policy and plans affect the future tourism development and its pace. Review of past tourism plans and programs should be carried out to measure the impact, success and failure of such plans. Assessment of current situation of the tourism attractions and events, tourism facilities and infrastructure, carrying capacity, and human resources should be made before suggesting any future plan of actions. Profiles and characteristics of the current and past visitors should be reviewed in order to assess the existing demand of tourism in Pokhara and surrounding areas. Analysis of major tourism strengths, weaknesses, major problems and pertinent issues pertaining

to Pokhara helps determine the potential of future tourism development and community attitudes towards realizing the potential. Another way of assessing the background and current situation is to conduct tourism resources analysis, tourism activity analysis, tourism market and its segment analysis and analyzing what and how other competing destinations of Pokhara are performing.

3.6.2 Envisioning

The assessment and analysis of the tourism resources and markets is followed by determining and envisioning of the desired future situation for Pokhara in the light of where Pokhara would like to be in the long run. The vision basically incorporates the following aspects:

- a. Desired development and physical changes in Pokhara and surrounding areas including tourism attractions, facilities, infrastructure and superstructure, transportation, communication, banking, and health facilities in the planned period.
- b. Support services and activities: Establishing benchmark of desired hospitality and services, signage, tourism information system in and around Pokhara.
- c. Marketing and promotion: New marketing strategies and positioning approaches for Pokhara, packaging of tours and trekking, desired role of private sector travel trade in promotion of their private business as well as promotion of Pokhara as a destination.
- d. Institutional arrangement: Desired changes to the structure of government agencies and coordination among the major players, changes in role and structure of Nepal Tourism Board and commitment required from the private sector travel trade.
- e. Community awareness of tourism in Pokhara: Desired level of participation from the communities of Pokhara and surrounding areas in tourism activities and benefits.

The tourism envisioning in Pokhara is expressed in terms of the above statements and tourism plan should provide the bridge between the present tourism situation and the desired future situation. It is highly recommended that to set long term tourism vision of Pokhara, a series of participatory workshops are organized among the concerned government

and semi-government agencies, private sector travel trade, communities and other tourism stakeholders.

3.6.3 Setting tourism goal, tourism strategy and objectives

On the basis of the assessment and analysis of the background of tourism and setting the long term vision, the tourism plan of Pokhara should set goal, strategies and objectives in line with the desired future situation in Pokhara. Further, the goal and strategies must be complementary to the tourism policy of the country. For example, the major goal for Pokhara could be generating employment, income and economic development through tourism. Apart from the economic goal, Pokhara should also adopt a policy of sustainable tourism development as the pressure on the natural and cultural resources in Pokhara is at the alarming level, especially on Fewa Lake and Annapurna Conservation Area. Once we set the goal for Pokhara, various tourism strategies may be formulated, selected and implemented, depending upon the need of the area. For instance, Fewa Lake may need sustainable tourism strategies and attract high end tourists, whereas surrounding areas may need economy-oriented strategies to increase the flow the visitors. Once the goal and strategies are selected, it is easier to set the short term objectives. Some of the objectives of the tourism plan for Pokhara could be;

- Doubling the number of visitors in the plan period,
- Increasing the flow of tourists in shoulder and lean seasons (monsoon and winter),
- Spreading tourism flow to the surrounding areas
- Mainstreaming Pokhara in the pathway of responsible tourism

3.6.4 Development of tourism plan

The most crucial phase in the tourism planning process is synthesizing the previous elements into an action plan which details the programs and activities, timeline, roles and responsibilities of the main executing agency and supporting agencies, existing and possible sources of funding, desired outcome of the plan, performance indicators and priority of the planned activities. The tourism plan may also contain the technical designs and specifications of particular sites, tourist maps with spatial information and description of tourism sites. Nowadays, Geographical Information System (GIS) is used to provide static as well as interactive spatial information and description of the tourism sites. In fact, a GIS based interactive map

of Pokhara and Lekhnath has been developed and posted online by Nepal Tourism Board. It facilitates the flow of information to the end-use tourists in real time. The tourism plan of Pokhara may also draw from the technical reports prepared by PATA published with the title 'Pokhara: Historic Resources Study and Proposal for a Conservation District Pokhara, Nepal' in 1990 and various other reports on Fewa Lake conservation, and Annapurna Conservation Area Project at different dates.

In terms of tourism activities, Pokhara by far is ahead of any other destination in Nepal. Besides trekking and sightseeing, Pokhara has innovated new tourism products like ultra light aircraft flight, paragliding, jeep liner and differentiates itself as an interesting destination for the visitors. Therefore, new tourism plan of Pokhara should suggest new activities to attract incremental visitors as well as to lengthen their average stay. Some of the activities suggested in the previous plans; e.g., developing walking trails in and around Pokhara, Gorkha Parade, cycling routes, cultural tours in the old Pokhara bazaar, are still applicable and could be interesting to the visitors.

Drafting a tourism plan may not be as challenging as implementing it, owing to the diverse range of players and stakeholders in tourism who play key role in implementing the programs. To ensure that the tourism plan is accepted and executed, a sharing workshop among the stakeholders of Pokhara and surrounding areas may be organized to present the draft plan for review and revision before presenting it to the public.

3.6.5 Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the tourism plan

The review of past tourism plans of Nepal and Pokhara has shown loud and clear that tourism plans are prepared but never or only partially implemented, not giving the desired outcome as laid out in the plans. One reason of failure could be vagueness or duplication in allocating the roles, responsibilities and objectives to specific organizations or associations. Another reason could be lack of funds to execute the planned programs and activities. In case of Pokhara, it has been observed that utter lack of coordination among the government agencies, different perspective of development and political pressure have badly affected the implementation. The conflicting recommendations put forth by the Tourism Master Plan 1972, and Physical Plan developed by the Department of Physical Planning in 1975 illustrate the vivid picture. Similarly, encroachment of the shores of Fewa Lake by the local residents

is another example of lackadaisical attitude among the government agencies due to the political opprobrium.

To support the implementation of the tourism plan, it is mandatory to suggest a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Most of the responsibilities of executing programs and activities are endowed upon Pokhara Office of Nepal Tourism Board and the private sector travel trade in Pokhara. They should also ensure that the planned activities are implemented and progress is achieved as was originally planned, as per the schedule and in accordance with the priority placed. Similarly, changes should be made to the plan if it is required by the circumstances. Another way to monitor is through the District Administration Office in Pokhara. Evaluation of tourism plan takes place once the period of the plan expires. The evaluation determines whether the desired outcome, objectives and goals outlined in the tourism plan are achieved. If the plan fails to achieve the desired output, the reasons for non-performance are analyzed. However, for the impartial evaluation of the tourism plan, an independent evaluator may be hired.

3.7 Conclusions

The visual symphony of the mountains, the relaxing air of Pokhara Valley, the par excellence cultural and natural montage attracted mountaineers and explorers from different parts of the world in the past. Pokhara has gradually become the most important tourist destination in Nepal after Kathmandu. On the basis of these unique selling points, various efforts have been made to develop tourism in Pokhara in a planned way but the recommendations outlined in those plans were hardly implemented. However, it was not only the implementations of the recommendations of the various plans that remained weak in the past, but also the lack of consistency in the thrust of different plans. For example, the Master Plan of 1972 recommended the direct urban expansion including hotels towards the southern area of Pokhara whereas the development plan of Pokhara valley in 1974-75 prohibited the settlement of construction in the south-west of Fewa lake. Likewise, there were diverging perspectives between the government in its Tourism Master Plan 1972 and PATA in its planned development advice in 1975 on the issue of the importance of the architectural beauty of the town. This trend had caused the lack of focus for the strong implementation of plan, which ultimately resulted in low achievement of the plan's ambitions. Tourism planning may

seem a cumbersome process and even more challenging to execute the suggestions. Tourist destination like Pokhara should not stay oblivious as the benefits from the tourism plan outweigh the hard work. The cost of good tourism planning can save the heavenly tourism-scape of Pokhara and surrounding areas from irreversible social, economic, cultural and environmental damages.

To ensure that the suggestions of tourism plan be executed, an integrated approach in tourism planning issues should be adopted which helps linking tourism with national, regional and local development policy and programme. The plan and determination to the application of responsible and sustainable tourism policy and practices are also equally important which can enhance the understanding of the stakeholders about the prospects of benefits from tourism along with their own roles and responsibilities.

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* * * * *

4.1 Introduction

Tourism is recognized as one of 'the largest industrial complexes and items of consumption in modern western economies' (Britton 1981, p. 169). The magical change in technology, transportation, and communication in the latter half of the twentieth century led to enormous expansion of tourism, primarily in the advanced industrialized countries. Presently, tourism has become a part of lifestyle. It has been proclaimed that in the Middle Ages, people were tourists because of their religion, whereas now they are tourists because tourism is their religion (Observation Post, 1988). In fact, a human being, by nature cannot confine himself/herself and therefore relinquishes his/her habit of travelling to satisfy his/her temptation of tasting different exotic societies. The congregation of the crucial factors such as increased real personal income, technological improvements and increase in leisure time, education, fall in international air fares, improvement in communications and so forth, obviously espoused the growth of travel and tourism (Eadington and Smith 1994). However, there has been considerable discussion about the role of tourism as 'a force for economic change' (Sinclair and Stabler 1992, pp. 235-253) both in developed as well as developing countries, 'the success of tourism in restructuring the mature economies' (Agarwal 1977, pp. 137-58) and a consensus as to tourism's 'catalyst role in the process of economic development in developing countries' (Shaw and Williams 1994, p. 221). This encourages accepting tourism as a multifaceted industry.

For the measurement of economic effects of tourism development in national perspective, GDP at current price has been considered one of the development indices. In case of independent variables, along with tourism earning, total tourist arrival and the income generated by trade,

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hotels and restaurants have also been introduced to evaluate the impact. At mid-century, tourism was simply not a factor in government-led, urban economic development (Law 1994). Today all large cities have elaborate economic development programmes, and many list tourism as one of their most important economic sectors (Judd 1995; Levere 1996). Along with business, services and technology, tourism is considered a significant contributor to a city's prosperity and image (Pagano and Bowman 1995). The degree of reliance of a local economy on tourism does have a statistically significant impact on the level of capital outlays, transportation, police protection, fire protection, parks and recreation, financial administration, and general government administration expenditures (Wong 1996).

The economic activities associated with tourism improve the quality of life. As such, much of the analysis of this industry has focused on the positive impact of employment, income, tax revenue and economic growth and development generally (Wong 1996). Tourism is not an isolated industry in and of itself, but is a bundle of complementary services. Martin (1987) broadly defines a tourist as any visitor in a community who comes to spend money and consumes local services. So, the travel and tourism industry represents a major segment of the national economy and is a significant economic sector in many state and local economies (Wong 1996). Once confined to a small number of tourist attractions and few hotels and tour operators, tourism has become a major economic force, demanding the attention of political and economic elites as well as the economic development community that serves them (Fainstein and Stokes 1995; Randall and Warf 1996).

The economic effect of tourism is created when purchases made by visitors infuse new dollars into the economy through the sale of goods and services, which induce new employment opportunities, and broaden the local tax base (Wong 1996). The same logic may be applied finally at the national level. According to Young (1973), there is a saturation level for tourism, and if that level is exceeded, the cost of tourism begins to outweigh the benefits. These saturation levels are dictated primarily by constraints on land (McIntosh 1977), labour supply (Kaiser and Helber 1978), and local citizen tolerance, which lead to negative externalities being imposed upon local residents. However, the case of Nepal completely differs in accordance with the above argument and it is believed still far below the saturation level for tourism. Kumar (1996) states that the economic development of any state or region is determined in a number of ways, where 'tourism' acts as an independent variable in terms of tourists' flow,

earning of foreign exchange from tourists and share of trade, hotels and restaurants having its role in the economic development of Himachal Pradesh, whereas economic development as a whole is treated as a dependent variable based on the indices of per capita income, state domestic product and tax revenue along with total revenue.

Concerning the role of income from tourism for the growth of gross domestic product of the country, it is expected that the investment by public as well as the private sector along with the implementation of foreign projects in a variety of sectors that produce goods and services. In fact, some significant portion of tourism earning in conformity with foreign capital is invested. It is expected that tourism earning will have a strong association with gross domestic product. Since economic impact is often measured on GDP. So whether its total growth rates or the per capita income (Khadka 1997), the objective of this exercise is to examine how far tourism earning is a contributory factor. However, this may also only partially explain the relationship.

Nepal is blessed with an incredible diversity of natural beauty and a consequent grandness of incomparable and prosperous cultural heritage. The exquisite architecture and artistic embellishment of the Nepalese pagodas that enshrine the bronze and stone images of great beauty and, more often than not, treat antiquity, constitute a unique feature of Nepal. The temples and *stupas* are rich repositories of woodcarving, metal work, terracotta and stone sculpture (Nepal Embassy Switzerland Geneva 2010). Nepal is an exotic and peerless destination which abuts highest mountains in the world, trek in the scenic countryside with the icy top or jungle safari, unbeatable combination of natural beauty and cultural riches, the virgin tracks, and white-water rafting that might be an experience of a lifetime. The forests of rhododendron, isolated small mountain villages, birds, animals, temples, monasteries and breathtaking landscapes, and friendly people of different cultures offer fascinating glimpses of traditions.

The objectives of this chapter are: a) to analyze the growth pattern of tourism in Pokhara city, b) to examine the effects of tourism on economic development process of Pokhara city, and c) to suggest effective and reliable policy for better planning for tourism development.

In this study both the time series along with the secondary data have been employed for comparative study as well as to arrive at the effects of tourism development in Pokhara city. The time series data in relation to the national context cover the period of thirty six years (1974- 2010).

Concerning the city of Pokhara the data as used are based on the period of five years from 2007 to 2011. The data related with macro variables of Nepal's economy and the tourism sector were compiled from various issues of the Economic Survey, Ministry of Finance, and the Tourism Statistics, Ministry of Tourism. Furthermore, some data are collected from Tourism Office, Pokhara Municipality, Mahendra Cave and Devi's Fall Management Committee and web sites. The secondary data about income, investment, employment relating to retail trade, travel business and food and lodging are surveyed from different unpublished sources for the period from 2002 to 2011.

Before empirical tests are carried out, it is plausible to explain the data problems associated with the estimation of the effect of tourism either in regional and municipality level or in national development perspective. On account of the lack of reliable data of the national level, and the absence of those in the regional and town levels, there arise serious problems for measurement. However, in this study, the ordinary least squares have been applied to the simple linear, log-linear under the single and multiple equations system as well as the weighted, two-stage least-squares and auto-regressive models. The discussion about the impact analysis led further to apply linear, compound and exponential trend functions.

Owing to data limitation and unavailability of the appropriate economic indicators of development performance, gross domestic product has been considered the main indicator, which is composed of all the final goods and services produced in the economy over a year's period in terms of monetary value (current). It is considered the main indicator of an economy's process of economic development in the national perspective.

The trend functions as applied in the aforementioned forms may be stated as:

$$Y=a+bX..... (1.1a)$$

$$Y=aB^x (1.1b)$$

$$\log Y = \log a + x \log B..... (1.1c)$$

Where, X and Y refer time and the respective variables, 'a' is the constant term and 'b' the co-efficient.

To find out the impact of tourism at national perspective, the following multiple linear regression has been applied for the period from 1974 to 2010. The variables considered are Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Total

Tourists Arrival (TTA), Trade-Hotel and Restaurant (THR), Foreign Aid (FA), Aggregate Investment (AI), Population (POP), Export (EXP), Import (IMP), and Time (T).

To find out the impact of tourism at national perspective, the following multiple linear regressions have been applied for the period from 1974 to 2010.

$$GDP_t = \alpha + \alpha_1 TTA + \alpha_2 THR + \alpha_3 FA + \alpha_4 AI + \alpha_5 POP + \alpha_6 EXP + \alpha_7 IMP + \alpha_8 T \quad \dots\dots\dots (1.2)$$

Where, parameters are expected to be greater than zero, i.e., $\alpha_1 > 0$, $\alpha_2 > 0$, $\alpha_3 > 0$, $\alpha_4 > 0$, $\alpha_5 > 0$, $\alpha_6 > 0$, $\alpha_7 > 0$, and $\alpha_8 > 0$.

With regard to the case of Pokhara city, linear, log-linear, multiple, weighted and two-stage least squares as well as auto-regressive models are applied to find the effects on the economic activities. The elasticity models are stated below.

$$\ln TE = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \ln TIp + \beta_3 \ln TNOB$$

$$\text{Where, } \beta_1 > 0, \beta_2 > 0$$

$$\ln AR_p = \alpha + \alpha_1 \ln TIp + \alpha_2 \ln TNOB$$

$$\text{where } \alpha_1 > 0, \alpha_2 > 0$$

$$GDP_t = \alpha X_{t1}, \alpha X_{t2}, \dots\dots\dots \alpha X_{tn}, T$$

4.2 Tourist Attraction in Pokhara

Pokhara is an alluring city nestled in a restful valley known as a gateway to the world of adventure. Its natural ambience, which allows enjoying lakeside tranquillity and breathtaking views of magnificent Fish Tail peak, has transformed Pokhara into a Paradise of Earth. Col. Jimmy Roberts, a veteran paratrooper of the Burma Campaign, and more famously known as the father of international recreational trekking and adventure vacationing in the Himalayas writes, "No other mountain view in the world is equal to the 'Fishtail', with Annapurna, hanging there in the sky above the green Pokhara plain" (Amatya 1970, p 15). Pokhara leads the way to the Chitwan National Park, Lumbini in the southwest while the northern routes lead to the Tibetan Plateau via Kagbeni. Marpha, Mukti Nath, Jomsom, Manang, Mustang, Thorung-La, the Annapurna Circuit, the Annapurna Sanctuary and the Kali-Gandaki Gorge, the deepest in the

world. Adventures like mountain flight, Ultra-light aircraft, and paragliding have almost added further attraction in Pokhara – a new way of life.

The glamorous Pokhara is one of the seven must-see places in the world, if tourism is the present day religion of modern people. The snow-capped lofty Annapurna Mountain range and the virginity of Fish- tail to which lapse the most attractive Fewa lake, the gorges of whitey river that flows as moving Dragon underneath and above the Pokhara city, the greenery belt around the valley, gorgeous weather, the wonderful caves as if ancestors made for living together, all have shaped the people into clean like mountains, peaceful like lake and roaring like the river. A calm city like Fewa Lake that always insists for adventurous trekking and a paradise for relaxation after trekking the famous circuit of Ghandruk, Ghodepani, Annapurna and Machhapuchre, well accommodates more than 8000 visitors a day. The city that has 6000 tourism entrepreneurs at the foot of Annapurna Massif is the gateway to Annapurna round Trekking route, and peerless beauty. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist scholar was the first foreigner who visited to the 'forgotten land' during his clandestine trip to Tibet in 1889, and remarked that 'in all my travels in Himalayas, I saw no scenery so enchanting as that which enraptured me at Pokhara' (Amatya 1970, p 15).

Among three major resources to build up the economy of Nepal, tourism is the key industry which can effortlessly be established, promoted and developed with minimum investment and can be made an important foundation for national income by generating a number of economic and social benefits through backward and forward linkages with other sectors, such as agriculture, industry and other service sectors. Entrepreneurs still prefer easy money to laying down extensive facilities for visitors. If they change this approach and offer new packages and programs, the city will witness rise in the number of tourist arrival (Pokhrel 2010).

Most developing countries have assets of enormous value of the tourism industry, art and culture, natural landscapes, wild-life, white water rafting, bunjii, Himalayan honey hunting, world heritage sites, and travelling by tourist generate income and employment for communities and helping in the conservation of cultural and natural assets. As a more diverse industry, tourism has the potential to support by providing part time jobs and generating income from the local supply of goods and services (Sharma 2011). Tourism services are consumed at the point of production and so local people are in better off situation by selling the products and services

directly to visitors (ibid: 4). Toni Hagen, a Swiss geologist, who travelled extensively in Nepal, had written: "Pokhara area shows the greatest contrast in landscape. Nowhere in the world can the highest mountains reaching 8000 meters level can be admired from such small distance and from the tropical low land without any intermediate mountain ranges. Pokhara is certainly one of the most extraordinary and beautiful places in the world" (Thapa 1995 as cited in Sharma 2011) where tourism business began only after 1960 in a systematic way; however the literature shows that it was popular among the visitors since before the century.

4.3 Analysis and Discussion

4.3.1 Tourism trend

An exercise of finding the goodness of fit of the model to annual data led to apply either the compound or the exponential functions due to the reliability in results. The trend functions like linear, quadratic, cubic, growth etc. could not reveal significant degrees of association. Although the degree of freedom has varied considerably between the variables even if in the same variable, the applicability of exponential form of the function has envisaged consistent character of tourist arrivals at Pokhara as a whole and in other different tourist attracting places of Pokhara such as Devi's Fall and Mahendra Cave.

Table 4.1 Annual data tourist trend in Pokhara city

Trend Functions	Dependent	Constant	Time	R ²	²	SEE	F-value	DF
1.1 Exponential	TTAp	24326.61	0.054(T) (15.6)***	0.88	0.87	0.20	242.5	33
1.2 Compound	TTA _p	5.43E-174	(1.219982) ^T (3.83)**	0.83	0.77	0.16	14.1	5
1.3 Compound	TTA _{DF}	9.7E-59	(1.07328) ^T (86.3)***	0.92	0.90	0.04	37.3	5
1.4 Exponential	TTA _{MC}	7.5680-168	0.192137(T) (35.4)***	0.85	0.83	0.26	46.3	9

*significant at 10% level, ** significant at 5% level, ***significant at 1% level. R²: the degree of explanation, ²=Adjusted R², SEE: Standard error of estimates, F: Statistics for the significance of all the coefficients, DF: Degree of Freedom. The number in () refer t-values.

The results of the tourism trends as summed up in equation 1.1 vividly express that total tourist arrivals in Pokhara (TTAp) increase at 5.4 percent per annum during the survey period of 1976 to 2010. The most important fact to be noted is the rate that tourists grow at 19.8 percent (equ.1.2), when the period of 5 years from 2007 to 2011 is considered. With regard to the tourism spot, Devi's Fall and Mahendra Cave, when separately analyzed, the growth rates traced are 7.0 and 19.2 percent, respectively. In all the functions t-values are significant at 1 percent level of significance, the explained percent of variation (R^2) and adjusted R^2 varies within the acceptable range of 83 to 92 percent. Less standard error of the estimates along with significant F-values further justifies the reliability of the applied trend functions which may help to estimate the future statistics of tourists in Pokhara and its surroundings with the help of which the supply aspect can be restructured and more facilities to the tourist could be provided so as to raise tourists' expenditure. Unless considered more vital factors for the purpose as stated above, the application of trend functions only to tourist arrivals exhibits incomplete picture of the tourism scenario of Pokhara. Therefore, the variables like income from tourists to Devi's Fall management committee (YDF), income earned by Mahendra cave (YMC), and income of Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan (YPSM) are further considered for trend analysis. The results as depicted in Table 4.2 well illustrate the rate growth of the aforesaid factors per annum for the period from 2007 to 2011.

Table 4.2 Annual data of income and population trend in Pokhara (2007-2011)

Trend Functions	Dependent	Constant	Time	R^2	2	SEE	F-value	DF
1.5 Compound	YPSM	5.05-151	(1.185698) ^T (10.72)***	0.53	0.37	0.39	3.34	5
1.6 Compound	YMC	9.7-243	(1.318648) ^T (12.97)***	0.81	0.75	0.24	12.89	5
1.7 Compound	YDF	2.93E-75	(1.094473) ^T (151.5)***	0.98	0.97	0.02	187.1	5
1.8 Compound	POP _p	1.29E-51	(1.064684) ^T 196.7***	0.98	0.97	0.02	152.0	5

Note: Figures in parentheses and asterisks confer the same meaning as in Table 4.1.

Source: Calculated by the author

As one comes across the results of the compound functions (1.5 - 1.8), there remains no room for doubt about the appropriate performance of the models, which have exhibited acceptable degree of the explained percent of variations except the equation 1.5, where R^2 is only 53 percent. However it may be stated reliable because of the income that the Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan (YPSM) generates depending largely on grants by the government on development and regular expenditure, local taxes, services and fees. As all the necessary statistics are significant, the equation 1.5 should be taken as a grain of salt which estimates 17 percent (in 1.85698) growth per annum. The estimated growth rates of the income earned by Mahendra cave (YMC) and Devi's Fall are 27.6 and 9.0 percent, respectively, which set a remarkable scenario. There would be certainly a difference, no doubt, in the growth rates when more preceding years are added. As a result of incorporating the preceding years up to 2002, the growth rate of the income of Mahendra cave has come down to 23.89 percent.² The compound function as applied for the income earned by Devi'sfall estimates that the income increases at 9 per cent per annum. Since all the necessary statistics R^2 , F-value, and t-statistics seem to be significant, it can be deduced that the rate of growth of income received from tourists has grown at a satisfactory, exponential rate. To this extent, most importantly it is to say that Pokhara municipality hitherto has not levied any tax to the existing 19 paragliding companies, whose gross income is estimated a minimum of 200 million rupees per annum. These companies pay US\$ 1200 for getting operational certificate and thereafter a renewal charge of US\$ 250 per annum. Besides, 0.1 million rupees per company pay annually to Sarangkot Village Development Committee. Most pilots are foreigners who charge US\$ 50 plus 13 percent vat per 15 days as remuneration. The owners of the companies pay only business tax which goes to the government revenue.

4.3.2 Effects of tourism at national perspective

At the outset, it becomes integral to make an overview of Nepal's economy and tourism's role in the economic development process. Indeed, it would be meaningful to search the impact of tourism on national perspective. Having assumed GDP as a dependent variable, a number of independent variables such as total tourist arrival (TTA), earnings from tourism (EFT), earnings of trade, hotels and restaurants (THR), aggregate investment (AI), export (EXP), import (IMP), foreign aid (FA), population of Nepal (POP),

² YMC=5.99-209(1.269935)^T

and time (TIME) are regressed applying the multiple linear, weighted least squares, two-stage least squares and auto-regressive models. Although, per capita income, tax revenue, non-tax revenue, agricultural GDP, non-agricultural GDP etc., may also be taken into consideration as development indices (Sharma 2012), only GDP at current price is considered a prime development index for giving bird's eye view to the national economy. Therefore, the results of the multiple linear regression illustrate that the coefficients of trade, hotels and restaurant (THR), export (EXP) and aggregate investment (AI) are significant at 1 percent level of significance, whereas foreign aid and import are significant only at 10 percent level. The other variables, population (POP) of Nepal, total tourist arrival (TTA) and time have shown their coefficients as insignificant. With regard to the weighted least squares, there exists high degree correlation between total tourist arrival (TTA) in Nepal and the earnings from tourism (EFT) and so EFT is dropped from the model. Assuming population of Nepal as a weight variable, THR, EXP, and AI subsequently, have been found significant at 1 percent level of significance and import at 10 percent. The two-stage least square model too justifies the validity of the contribution of trade, hotels and restaurants (THR) to the current price GDP of the country. Total tourist arrival (TTA), however, seems to be significant but only at 10 percent level of significance. Further, the above discussed significant variables, particularly THR, AI, export, foreign aid and import are shown to the Cochrane-Orcutt auto-regressive model, which explicitly proved the determinant capacity of all the regressors except import. Comparing all the results of the models, the earning of trade, hotels and restaurants (THR), generally tourism-based variable, is justified as a prime factor. Overall, THR, EXP, AI, are found as the vital factors to determine the growth of the GDP at current prices of Nepal (Annex-4.1).

4.3.3 Effects of Tourism in Pokhara

Coming to the case of Pokhara sub-metropolitan city, unavailability of the necessary time series data for long period, as well as the lacking of the necessary data concerning the development indices and the complete macro-economic variables that influence the dependents, originated problems for the scientific measurement. Even then the trouble is mitigated by the small scale survey for time series and the secondary source of cross sectional data related with total investment in tourism (TITp), total employment generated in tourism sector of Pokhara (TETp) and total number of businesses related with the tourism sector of Pokhara

(TNBTp). Regarding the analysis of the effects of tourism, unavailability of the aggregate data further led to study separately for some tourist generating places. The income generated by Devi'sfall is assumed as dependent, and tourist arrival, employment over there and the time factors as independent. Since employment has remained constant throughout the period 2007-2011, and high degree of correlation ($r^2 = 0.97$) between time and TA_{DF} , employment and time have been dropped from the regression model 1.13.

$$Y_{DF} = -693165 + 13.17 TA_{DF} \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.1.13}$$

(2.36)
5.58**

$$R^2=0.91, \bar{R}^2=0.88, \text{SEE}=157526.5, F=31.1, D-W=1.77, DF=4$$

The single equation regression (equ.1.13) explains that the model as a whole is well fitted. All the necessary statistics are satisfactory with no persistence of auto-correlation. The 91 percent of explained percent of variation and t- significant at 5 percent level of significance justify that the income of Devi'sfall increases by Rs. 13 per tourists. About 2 to 2.3 million rupees is provided by the committee to the development of the Chorepatan Higher Secondary School and around 1.3 to 1.4 million rupees expended for the management of Devi'sfall. To this extent, for the evaluation of the degree of elasticity, the regression equation 1.13 is further tested by transferring the data into the natural log form.

$$\ln Y_{DF} = -0.069 + 1.194 \ln TA_{DF} \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ.1.14}$$

(0.368)
6.36***

$$R^2=0.93, \bar{R}^2=0.90, \text{SEE}=0.0456, F=40.48, D-W=1.746, DF=4$$

The absence of auto-correlation, 93 explained percent of variation, significant F-value, less standard error of the estimate and 1 percent level of significance of the t-value have proved the reliability and the validity of the model and reveal elasticity coefficient greater than one. This at means that a slight increase in the number of tourist arrivals in Devi's Fall assists to increase the income at large. Furthermore, the linear and log-linear regression models are applied for the income generated and tourist arrivals in Mahendra cave remaining indifferent between international and domestic tourists.

Table 4.3 Annual data of linear and log-linear regressions (2002-2011)

Equs.	Dependent	Constant	Coefficients	R ²	²	SEE	F	D-W	DF
Equ.1.15	Y _{MC}	-258056	9.92 TA _{MC} (1.94) 5.1***	0.77	0.74	498096.8	26.1	1.17	9
Equ.1.16	lnY _{MC}	1.513	1.04TA _{MC} (1.99) 5.25***	0.78	0.75	0.375	27.6	1.49	9

Note: Figures in parentheses and asterisks confer the same meaning as in Table 4.1.

Source: Calculated by author

The equations 1.15 and 1.16 both, however, have explicitly shown the good performance due to the fulfillment of all the necessary statistics. The income generated by the tourism spot, Mahendra Cave, is increased by tourist arrivals in that locality by around Rs. 10 per tourist. In fact, foreigners are charged Rs.20, Nepali nationals Rs. 10 and students Rs.5. But only a fixed number of persons (4) are employed, some portion of the earned money is provided to the development programs for Vindhyabasini Higher Secondary School. The application of the regression model in the natural log form envisages the more elastic character of the income received by Mahendra Cave. Accordingly, the income is highly responsive to a change in the incoming tourists to the Cave.

It would be highly imperative to disclose the fact that at present about 19 paragliding companies are operating from Sarangkot village and these companies earn more than 200 million rupees a year. During registration of Paragliding Company, an amount of US\$ 1200; and US\$ 250 was annually charged for renewal by the Ministry. Besides, each Paragliding company pays 0.1 million rupees to Sarangkot Village Development Committee. If 5 percent of the income could be charged, an amount of 10 million rupees could be collected. But due to the shaky policies of the Pokhara Municipality, till now, it has not implemented a policy for collecting any more fees from Devi's Fall and Mahendra Cave. Around 0.0329 and 0.027 million tourists visit annually to Devi's Fall and Mahendra Cave and generates 3.8 and 2.9 million rupees per annum.

The application of the linear and log-linear regression models by assuming annual income earned and total employment generated as dependents, and total investment (TI) in tourism related business institutions, and the total number of business enterprises as independents, has shown reliable

statistics (Annex: 4.2). The explained percent of variation ranges between 96 to 99 percent and the adjusted R^2 remains at the range of 96 to 98 percent of variation. Quite less standard error of the estimates and high significant F-values along with significant t -values at 1 percent level of significance, justify the goodness of the fit of the models. Therefore, it is confirmed that if investment made by the enterprises is doubled, it contributes to raise the income by 15 million rupees a year. In a similar fashion, a 100 percent increase in the number of businesses, raises annual income by 7 percent. Contrary to this, equation 1.18 reveals that investment and the business enterprises are the most promising factors to raise total employment in the tourism sector of Pokhara. In fact, there is the possibility of increase in employment by 28.6 percent and 309 percent respectively by doubling the investment and opening up of new business enterprises. In contrast to this, the log linear models have exhibited inelastic coefficients of the independents, total investment (TI) and the total number of business (TNOB). Therefore, the convincing results of the linear models should be taken as granted and new investment on tourism supply side is to be made. The inelastic responses of the determination factors like total investment and the total number of business enterprises related to the tourism sector further led to apply the auto-regressive and weighted-least squares into the cross-sectional data. The results are shown as in Annex 4.3. Both the log-linear models are transformed into the auto-regressive forms (1.21 & 1.22) and the final parameters have confidently proclaimed less responsive coefficients of the total investment (TI) and total number of businesses (TNOB). The fact is that total investment assists the annual income of retail, travel, food and lodging businesses by 87 percent and only 13 percent by the total number of businesses (TNOB). Similarly, the employment is increased by 74 percent, if a hundred percent growth in the number of businesses is realized. Pondering with the necessary statistics in the aforementioned auto-regressive models, the confirmation about the significant level of the coefficients, 97 percent of the degree of explanation and the absence of auto-correlation ($d_u < d < 4-d_u$ or, $1.538 < 2.1 < 2.462$) have proved the reliability of the models. The most eventful journey to the application of the models is the result of the weighted least squares (Equ.1.24) which entails the impact that the investment makes annual income increase by 16.5 percent, but the employment would increase at 82 percent and 238 percent, respectively, if investment and the total number of businesses were increased at 100 percent.

Regardless of the positive results of the effects of tourism on income, employment and investment due to the growth of tourists in Pokhara city, bottlenecks still prevail in transportation, electricity, accommodation, trekking, sight-seeing, paragliding, supplying the efficient and moral manpower. Price variation in trekking equipments, copying of international trade mark, lack of electricity and irregular water supply, absence of direct flight abroad, throat-cutting policies adopted by hotels, bad roads, absence of public toilets, inefficient manpower in the tourism sector are the major problems explicitly expressed by various tourism related associations of Pokhara (Upadhyaya and Khatiwada 2012). All the enlisted threats to tourism may be regarded due to the airy-fairy policies of the government authority.

4.4 Conclusions

The results of the trend function reveal that total tourist arrivals in Pokhara (TTAp) increased at 5.4 percent per annum during the survey period of 1976 to 2010. The most important fact to be noted is the rate at which tourists grow, 19.8 percent, when the period of 5 years from 2007 to 2011 is considered. With regard to Devi's Fall and Mahendra Cave, when separately analyzed, the growth rates traced are 7.0 and 19.2 percent, respectively. The reliability of the applied trend functions may help to estimate the future statistics of tourists in Pokhara and its surroundings with the help of which supply aspect can be restructured and more facilities to the tourist could be provided so as to raise tourists' expenditure.

However, the income that the Pokhara sub-metropolitan (YPSM) generates largely depends on grants by the government on development and regular expenditure, local taxes, services and fees. The compound function estimates 17 percent growth per annum. The estimated growth rates of the income earned by Mahendra Cave and Devi's Fall (27.6% and 9%) set a remarkable scenario. Differences in the growth rates were perceived as more preceding years added up to 2002, and the rate of growth of income of Mahendra cave has come down to 23.89 percent.

Pokhara municipality hitherto has not levied any tax to the existing 19 paragliding companies, whose gross income is estimated a minimum of 200 million rupees per annum. The owners of the companies pay only business tax which goes to the account of the Ministry.

Comparing the multiple linear, weighted least squares, two-stage least squares as well as the auto-regressive models, the determining capacity

of all the regressors, i.e., earnings of trade, hotels and restaurants, generally a tourism-based variable, export, aggregate investment, have explicitly been proved as the vital factors for the growth of the GDP at current prices in Nepal.

The income generated by the tourism spot, Mahendra Cave, is increased by tourist arrivals in that locality by around Rs. 10 per tourist. Nevertheless, only a fixed number of persons are employed, and some portion of the earned money is provided to the development programs for Vindhyabasini Higher Secondary School. The income earned is highly responsive to a change in the incoming tourists. A slight increase in the entry fee only for foreigners may yield some extra money.

It is imperative to disclose that at present about 19 paragliding companies are operating from Sarangkot village and these companies earn more than 200 million rupees a year. If a 5 percent of the income could be charged by Pokhara municipality, an amount of 10 million rupees could be collected.

Interestingly the shaky policies of the Pokhara municipality have so far deterred the collection of more fees from Devi's Fall and Mahendra Cave. Around 0.0329 and 0.027 million tourists visit annually to the aforementioned spots which generate 3.8 and 2.9 million rupees per annum and imposing of 5 percent of the income would gain for 0.48 millions of rupees to the Municipality.

Investment and the business enterprises are the most promising factors to raise total employment in the tourism sector in Pokhara. In fact, there is the possibility of an increase in employment by 28.6 percent and 309 percent respectively by doubling the investment and opening up of new business enterprises. Therefore, the convincing results of the linear models should be taken as granted and new investment on tourism supply side is to be made. The final parameters of auto-regressive models have confidently proclaimed, however less responsive coefficients. Investment assists the annual income of retail trade, travel, food and lodging business by 87 percent and 13 percent by the number of businesses (TNOB). Similarly, the employment is increased by 74 percent by the number of businesses and has proved the reliability. The most eventful journey to the models is the result of the weighted least squares that the investment makes annual income to increase by 16.5 percent but the employment increases at 82 percent and 238 percent, respectively.

Nepal is a synthesis of a rich natural beauty and the environmental friendly culture and an emerging modern society. Nepal's government

does not seem to be in line with meeting the aspirations of common people for various limitations. Consequently, most governments in Nepal have been unsuccessful to provide basic needs to the excluded and the marginal class. Still the economy could not reach to a take-off stage and lag behind even to set up the preconditions for economic development. In this context, tourism could be thought as a blessing to some cities and remote areas but more attractive places of Nepal. In fact, as culture for India, sun-sand and sea for SriLanka, the composite form of culture, adventure and pleasure tourism (CAPT) may be the tourism booster in Nepal. Therefore, for efficient implementing the commitment let the talk be translated into action.

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Annex 4.1 Annual data on results of regression models (1974-2010)

Dependent Variable (GDP)	Multiple Linear	Weighted Least Squares	Two stage Least Squares	Auto- Regressive
	Equ. 1.9	Equ. 1.10	Equ. 1.11	Equ.1.12
Constant	1067658.1	-1322390.7	6989476.8	10951.6
TTA	0.03 (0.06) 0.48	0.045 (0.54) 0.091	0.36(0.190) 1.89*	
EFT	-----	-----	3.44 (3.29) 1.04	
THR	2.1 (0.38) 5.5***	2.07 (0.327) 6.32***	5.52 (0.470) 11.74***	2.1 (0.04) 8.8***
AI	7.5 (2.02) 3.7***	7.57 (1.49) 5.06***		7.84 (1.47) 5.31***
EXP	1.7 (0.37) 4.7***	1.91 (0.295) 6.48***		1.99 (0.288) 6.9***
FA	2.6 (1.5) 1.7*	2.88 (1.20) 2.39*		4.08 (0.83) 4.9***
IMP	2.6 (1.5) 1.7*	0.162 (0.166) 0.976		0.045 (0.163) 0.27
POP	4579.1 (9330) 0.49			
TIME	-568 (3479.8) -1.16	673.4 (640.1) 1.05	-3548.8 (2139.7) -1.66	
R ²	0.998	0.998	0.9929	0.9987
²	0.994	0.996	0.9920	0.9984
SEE	95805.0	404.4	2149.3	9735.0
F-value	2825.0	3605.5	1062.8	
D-W	1.87	-----	-----	2.0
DF	33	34	34	32
		LLF= 358		

Note: Figures in parentheses and asterisks confer the same meaning as in Table 4.1.

Source: Calculated by the author

Annex 4.2 Results of linear & log-linear regression models

Equs.	Depen- Dent	Cons- tant	Coefficients of Independent Variables		R ²	2	SEE	F- value	DF
			TI	TNOB					
Linear 1.17	AYp		(0.01) 152.6***	(0.021) 3.4***		0.98			21
Linear 1.18	TE	7.42	0.286 (0.014) 21.17***	3.09 (0.285) 10.85***	0.985	0.983	135.4	609.1	21
Log linear 1.19	ln AY	-1.245	0.836 (0.064) 13.14***	0.152 (0.104) 1.46	0.965	0.961	0.383	262.4	21
Log linear 1.20	lnTE	-1.494	0.26 (0.043) 5.98***	0.70 (0.070) 10.03***	0.969	0.966	0.258	294.9	21

Note: Figures in parentheses and asterisks confer the same meaning as in Table 4.1.

Source: Calculated by the author

Annex 4.3 Results of auto-regressive & weighted least square models

Eqas.	Dep-enent	Con- stant	Coefficients of Independent Variables		R ²	SEE	F- value	DW	DF
			TI	TOB					
Auto-regressive 1.21	In AY	-1.32 (0.065)	0.87 13.26***	0.13 (0.107) 1.24***	0.977	0.382		2.1	19
1.22	InTE	-1.51	0.22 (0.03) 7.3***	0.74 0.049 14.9***	0.975	0.224		2.1	19
Weighted least Squares 1.23 Weighted by (TE)	AY (Log-Likelihood Func- tion) =63.34	-0.024	0.165 (0.009) 18.1***	0.094 (0.051) 1.83***	0.955	0.041	202.6		21
Weighted by (AY) 1.24	TE (Log-Likelihood Function= -103.82	4.07	0.82 (0.206) 3.98***	2.38 (0.171) 13.88***	0.95	3.2	180.9		21
Two-stage Least Square	AY	4.75	0.156 TI (0.002) 66.37***		0.995	16.21	4405.0		21

Note: TE is total employment generated, AY is annual income generated in the Pokhara city.

Source: Calculated by the author

* * * * *

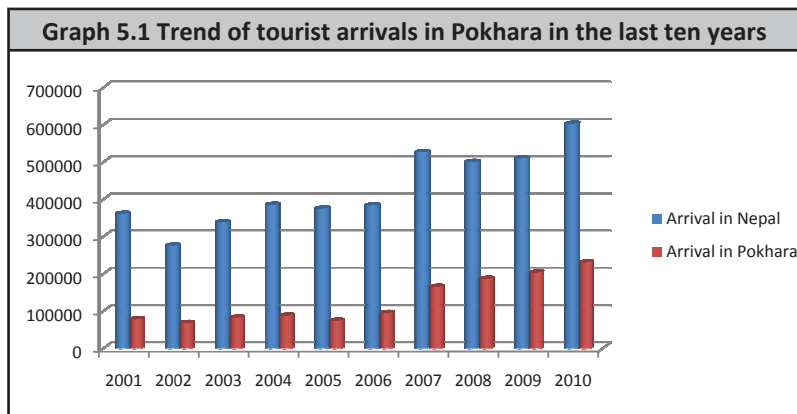
5.1 Introduction

Tourism, in the context of the present world has become one of the leading sectors for the socio-economic transformation in many countries. As a lucrative industry, tourism is growing rapidly in many developing countries including Nepal. In this context, Nepal, which is known as naturally gifted Himalayan kingdom, has unlimited potentiality for the development of tourism as it has miraculous assimilation between unique natural and enriched cultural assets. Consequently, tourism has become one of the main sources of earning foreign exchange for the nation and also earning livelihood to ordinary citizens as employment generation. Comparatively, Nepal has become a hotspot destination for adventurous activities like mountaineering and trekking not only to the westerners, but also to the Asian tourists. The Hindu and Buddhist religious heritages, and the favorable weather conditions throughout the year have generated the spontaneous flow towards the touristic attractions. In the tourism global market, Nepal is popularly known as a country of Mount Everest (the highest mountain in the world) and also the birth place of Lord Buddha (the apostle of peace, love and symbol of non-violence). Besides Everest and Lumbini (the birth place of Buddha), Nepal has become the preserver of the most sacred and ancient shrines and monuments which are known as the holiest and reverent destinations for the spiritually and culturally aware people of the world. In analyzing the increment of the number of tourists during the few decades of the past and their contentment, mentioned in the feedback report, it will not be exaggeration to say that Nepal has become the very synonym of tourism.

Pokhara, one of the most beautiful cities of Nepal, is established as a unique tourist destination of the world because of its aesthetic potentiality

¹ a member of Nepal Tourism Board Executive Committee. He is the immediate past president of Pokhara Tourism Council and Past President of TAAN Western Regional Association Pokhara.; sapkotatr@yahoo.com

generated basically from natural and topographical perspectives. The graph below reflects the growing number of tourists visiting Nepal and their arrival in Pokhara spontaneously.



Source: MoTCA (2012); Pokhara Tourism Office (2011)

An analysis of tourists' arrivals in Nepal reveals that Pokhara has received 28.46% of tourists visiting Nepal in the last ten years from 2001 to 2010. However, the numbers of total tourists' arrival of Nepal are found fluctuated between 21.55 percent in 2001 to 38.28 percent in 2010 (MoTCA 2012). In this regard, the two elements, marketing and promotion, remain a vital component for targeting more tourists' market segments and also the development of tourism in Pokhara. In this context, this chapter attempts to discuss the trends and issues of tourism marketing in Pokhara. It reviews various efforts made in the past about marketing Pokhara and finally comes out with various strategic plans to strengthen the marketing and promotion of Pokhara in future. The information for this chapter is collected through the reviews of secondary publications and interviews with key stakeholders of tourism in Pokhara, to whom this researcher has chosen through his professional knowledge and experience while working in Pokhara Tourism Council.

5.2 Marketing concept in tourism

Tourism is the sum total of activities arisen from the travel and stay of people from out of their usual environment (Bhatia 2004). However, a tourist cannot decide to travel places until and unless he or she knows and remains updated about the tourist destinations. In this regard,

here comes the vital role of marketing and promotion. Marketing is also advertising which constitutes one of the 6As as six major tools like attractions, accessibility, amenities, accommodations, activities and advertisement. These factors are prerequisites for the development of a tourist destination.

Among these factors, advertisement is one of the very effective tools of tourism marketing and promotion. For instance, even if a destination has all of the six factors except advertisement, it remains really challenging to promote tourism and attract tourists' visitations. Tourism is a complex industry because of the amalgam of various sub-sectors which are not only separate but also complete, and sometimes even independent on their own. Such examples can be taken with the enterprises like lodging and transport (Shrestha 2000). It is also complex because of the combination of the multifaceted elements like sustainable tourism products, responsible tourism activities by guests and hosts, and responsible marketing (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012). Its complexity furthermore lies in the fact that tourism promotion in its various forms has to be directed at large number of people in various lands of different socio-economic structures, having different needs, tastes, attitudes, expectations and behavioral patterns. It is only the efficient marketing strategy, which not only allows the potential clients for their easy access on general travel related decisions, but also helps to understand marketers of tourist destinations to understand people's tastes and preferences for travel. Thus, marketing is conceptually vital and important in tourism industry (Godahehwa 2011).

Marketing of tourist products has certain peculiar characteristics like intangibility of tourist products, inseparability of guests and hosts including production and consumption of tourists' services, instability of the demands of tourist products, dominance of the intermediaries on selling products, etc (Paudyal 2012).

In fact, market research, product formulation and development, market segmentation of target markets, distribution network and product promotions are the main marketing functions in tourism. Those functions are materialized amidst the seven core variables of marketing mix up such as product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence and process (Bhatia 2004).

Globalization and the increased competition in tourism markets after the 1980s have changed the progressive and competitive landscape of tourism, driving enterprises, communities, nations and government to

rethink their tourism strategies, policy, planning, management, and also allow them to restructure, operate and promote destination successfully in a boundary-less world. Globalization has required a continuous improvement in marketing efforts to the needs and wants of the demand factors, international and domestic tourists and local people (Sharma 2006).

5.3 Pokhara as a unique selling destination

In Chinese there is a proverb, "*bu dao changcheng fei hao han*" (if one has not reached the Great Wall, he can't be a good man) Similarly "You have not seen Nepal if you have not been to Pokhara," in the sense that the beauty of Pokhara is the crux in the tourism of Nepal. That is why the Pokhara valley is recognized as the hanging garden of the earth. The tourists themselves have admired the beauty of Pokhara as "one of the paradises on the earth" (Shakya 1995, p. 1). This popular statement about Pokhara reveals that it has become one of the most popular tourist destinations of Nepal. It is not only the abundance of natural and cultural heritages, but also the mild weather conditions (neither too hot nor too cold) throughout the year which have made Pokhara a favorable tourist destination for the tourists from all over the world. People's hospitality is the additional attribute for the touristic attractions in Pokhara (NTB 2011).

From Pokhara, one can easily see the top 3 mountains (Dhaulagiri, Annapurna 1st and Manaslu), which are more than 8 thousand meters high peaks often visible from Pokhara in a very close distance. They are not only inseparable from Pokhara, rather they identify this city as the paradise on earth. Likewise, Tilicho, the lake situated on the high altitude in the world, Kali Gandaki, the deepest gorge in the world also lie in the periphery of Pokhara. Moreover there are several lakes, caves, flora and fauna, birds, wild animals, very fascinating landscapes and the traditional cultures in and around Pokhara. It has not only the natural attractions, but also some other man-made tourist attractions. Some of these are International Mountain Museum, World Peace Pagoda, Gorkha Museum, Buddhist monasteries and stupas, and Hindu temples. Apart from these attractions, Pokhara is the gateway of Muktinath and Damodar Kunda pilgrimage tour. Every year thousands of Hindu pilgrims, especially from

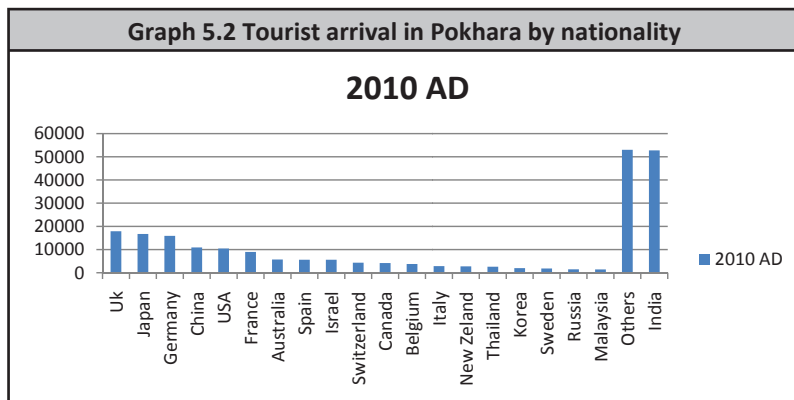
India visit this area. Trekking, Paragliding, Mountaineering, rafting, Ultra light flight, Jeep liner, Hiking, Cycling, Boating, Sight Seeing etc. are some major activities for tourists. Trekking on Annapurna circuit and paragliding from Sarangkot hill are very popular in the world. Mt. Fishtail is said to be one of the only fishtail-shaped twin peaks in the universe, which lies only 28 KM north from Pokhara. The attractive reflection of this mountain on the Fewa Lake is the topographical uniqueness of Pokhara. To observe this special natural phehomena, every year thousands of tourists visit here and those who have already come once, yet plan to revisit. Nearly 40 percent of total tourists, who have already travelled to Pokhara, are repeated visitors (personal communication through interviews with tourism entrepreneurs of Pokhara).

5.4 Tourist markets of Pokhara

Pokhara has the unique characteristics of becoming all-the-year-round-destination. The terminologies like 'tourist season' and 'off season' in fact are not really applicable for Pokhara due to the quite favorable weather and pleasing environment throughout the year. In this context, the very cosmic power has blessed Pokhara in the sense of comfortable climatic elements like rain, snow, temperature, etc. Consequently, Pokhara has become the destination for multiple seasons.

Pokhara's tourism is largely known for a tourist destination for soft and hard adventures. It is the gateway to the world renowned Annapurna trekking area. Especially, the trekking season begins from the month of September and it goes up to March. Of course, the tourists who visit from April to July have sufficient activities to the countryside and sightseeing around the city and suburb areas. However, tourists are found enjoying in trekking throughout the year. Many tourists are usually involveed in different activities like research on nature, culture, ethnic and sports associating them under the tourism sector.

The following graph shows the exact record of the international tourists' arrival to Pokhara from different countries in wide range.



Source: PTO (2011)

The types of tourists visiting Pokhara vary according to the seasons. The tourists segment visiting Pokhara can be divided into two major segments; Value tourists and volume tourists.

5.4.1 The value markets

The value markets consist of those tourists who hail from long haul tourist generating countries like U.S.A, UK, Japan, Netherlands, Canada, etc. The tourists from these long haul tourists have the tendency of spending more and also have longer length of staying. They mainly indulge themselves into hard adventurous activities like long trekking, hiking, rock climbing, etc.

5.4.2 The volume markets

The visitors from the neighboring countries like India and China hold the major segments of these arrivals. The majority of tourism industry actors in Pokhara depend upon such segment. This segment of tourist markets consists of tourists coming in large numbers. Mass tourism is considered very important for the tourism of Nepal. This segment of tourists is important in the sense that their flow doesn't limit to certain period of time but is continued all the year round. Thus, this segment gives an end to the concept of "Low or Off Season" in the country. The boom in the economy and the increase in per capita income of the Indians and Chinese have led the increase in their arrivals to Nepal. The easy access from these nations to Nepal with competitive airfares is another reason for their rise (NTB 2010).

Where the Chinese love soft to medium adventure holidaying, Indians are mostly attracted into pleasure, relaxing and shopping. Pokhara caters to all these requirements with limitless opportunities and options. Air and surface are two major modes of tourists' arrivals in Pokhara for all kinds of tourists including India and Chinese. Table 5.1 provides such trends of last five years.

Table 5.1 Tourists arrivals in Pokhara by different mode of transport

Mode of Transport	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Surface Transfer	67736	125568	137576	162284	184552
Air	27063	39609	49067	41243	46247
Total	94799	165177	186643	203527	230799

Source: Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, Pokhara, (2013); PTO (2011)

5.4.3 Specified seasons in marketing Pokhara

There are following trends of tourists' flock to Pokhara based on various seasons in the year.

September-April: This is the main trekking season for all tourists due to appropriate climate, clear visibility of the mountains and no rains.

End of January - Mid of February: This is the main season for Chinese tourists as they have 15 days national holiday for their spring festival which is widely known as Chinese New Year.

May-August: The summer vacation period for Indian tourists who flock in both by air and road transfers. Pokhara is a popular hideaway destination for Indians at this time to beat and avoid the extreme heat and summer in their country.

5.5 How Pokhara is being marketed?

The history of tourism in Pokhara began with the trekking by British Gorkha officers during 1950s. Pokhara and its surrounding areas became popular among the mountaineers and trekkers after the successful climbing of Annapurna 1st on 3rd of June 1950 by Maurice Herzog and his team of mountaineers. Since this successful ascend, Mr. Herzog wrote a book entitled "Annapurna" which did not become popular, but it reached to the record breaking sales with nearly 11 million copies by the year 2000.² Thus, Pokhara got its global name and fame in the world due to

² See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Herzog for detail.

its topographical and natural connection with Mt. Annapurna. Initially, Pokhara was automatically marketed without any systematic way. It was marketed not really by domestic tourists but mainly by international tourists through their verbal words. Moreover hippies during 1960s and 70s were crucial to promote Pokhara and Annapurna region through their verbal words (Shakya 2008). Today, Pokhara is marketed by various ways. The major highlights are described in succeeding paragraphs.

5.5.1 Role of promotional guide books

There are important roles played by promotional guide books to promote Pokhara from 1980s and thereafter.

a. Pokhara in Lonely Planet

Lonely Planet is one of the popular travel guide books. It is published as a book and it has a website too. Several independent travelers use this guide book and decide to travel at various destinations mentioned in it. So the book is also an important destination promotional tool. In one of these books, Pokhara is described as follows:

Imagine a perfect triangular mountain, capped by snow and buffeted by the icy winds of the Himalaya. Imagine a millpond calm lake, perfectly reflecting the snowy peaks. Now imagine a village on the lakeshore, thronged by travelers and reverberating to the sound of 'om mani padme hum' from a hundred shops selling prayer flags, carpets, masks, singing bowls and CDs of Buddhist mantras. That's Pokhara.

Nepal's second city, at least in tourist terms, Pokhara is the end point for the famous Annapurna Circuit trek and the starting point for a dozen more treks through the mountains of the Annapurna Range, including the perennially popular Jomsom Trek and the equally dramatic (but less busy) trek to the Annapurna Sanctuary. It's unashamedly touristy, in the Thamel mould, but the setting is spectacular - the perfect pyramid of Mt Machhapuchhare looms high above Pokhara, reflected in the placid waters of Phewa Tal.

For many travelers, Pokhara represents a last chance to stock up on creature comforts before hitting the mountain trails. For others, it's a place to enjoy a steak dinner and cold beer after weeks of daal bhaat in the hills. Even if you aren't a dedicated trekker, there's plenty here to keep you busy. Pokhara has numerous museums and there are some fascinating caves, waterfalls and Tibetan villages in the surrounding hills" (Lonely planet 2013).

There are following more descriptions from the perspective of marketing Pokhara.

"Why Go?

Pokhara: Peaceful Pokhara has a prime position beside a deep green lake, nestling among forested hills with a picture, postcard backdrop of gleaming Himalayan peaks.

But Pokhara has two personalities. Behind lakeside Pokhara, the one most tourist see, is a sprawling trade centre bustling with all the trappings of modern commerce but with pockets of old Newari architecture. Meanwhile, back at lakeside Pokhara the scene is chilled out version of Thamel where traffic fumes have been swapped for fresh mountain air and the racing motorbikes for paddle boats” (Lonely planet Nepal 2012, p. 191).

b. Pokhara in Rough Guide

This is another guide book for travelers. It has also described Pokhara as follows:

The Himalayas make the greatest rise from sub-tropical valley floor to icy summit of any mountain range on earth and the contrast is stunningly apparent at Pokhara. Basking beside verdant lakeshore, on clear mornings it boasts a nearly unobstructed views of the 8000 meters plus Annapurna and Manaslu ranges, looming almost touchily 25 KM to the north” (McConnachie et al. 2012, p. 204).

5.5.2 Role of internet marketing and blog sites

Internet marketing and blog sites are other means to promote Pokhara. There are a number of blog sites created by tourists who have already travelled Pokhara. They share their experiences and reflections on such blog sites which are interesting to know Pokhara for other readers. Trip advisor, Lonely Planet, Yatra.com, Makemytrip.com are some of the examples which have brought revolution in the online business of tourism all over the world. These days the travellers are internet-friendly and they make it a point to refer these sites before planning any trips. Thus, it is a very important need of the hour to publicize tourism products through these channels. Pokhara has been well-marked by individual companies in these sites.

Pokhara is now being marketed by various concerned agencies, organizations and stakeholders. They have played a vital role for the promotion of these regions. Some of their efforts regarding the marketing and promotion are given below.

5.5.3 Role of Nepal Tourism Board

Nepal Tourism Board, the National Tourism Organization of Nepal, holds the sole responsibility of marketing campaigns of Nepal internationally with the brand name "Naturally Nepal-Once is not enough." In this

sense, Nepal still follows the conventional strategy of marketing in which the whole destination is generally included in a single package. Pokhara is included as a major tourist destination of Nepal in this package. Thus, the concept of individual destination marketing has been rarely applied in Nepal's tourism marketing (personal communication with Shradhha Shrestha, Station In charge, NTB, Pokhara). There are following regular marketing and promotional activities of NTB at the destination level in international tourist markets where Pokhara generally gets some space in combination with some other tourist destinations of Nepal.

- Participations in the major tourism fairs around the World such as World Tourism Mart (WTM), ITB Berlin, Vakentiebeurs-Netherlands, MITT Russia, BIT-Italy, Fitur-Spain, ATM Dubai, CITM/COTOM-China, JATA-Japan, KOFTA-Korea, TTAA-Thailand, MATKA-Finland, TTF/SATTE/OTM-India etc. Apart from participation in the major fairs around the world, NTB jointly with the private sector and tourism associations organizes Sales Missions and Road shows abroad. These programs usually consist of Press briefings and Business to Business sessions.
- Organization of media and tour operators' familiarization trips (FAM) trips Campaigning through advertisements, advertorials, print and electronic publicity e-marketing through website and e-newsletter Market specific promotional collaterals through producing travelers' information in different languages Promotion of Pokhara as the ultimate adventure destination in context of the development of air sports (e.g. ultra light aircraft, paragliding, jeep flyer, sky diving, etc.
- Branding Nepal into 3 sub-brands namely lifetime journeys, ultimate adventure and weekend holidays. First two brands are target to European and American markets whereas the third brand is for neighboring markets like China and India.

5.5.4 Visit Pokhara Year 2007 as a joint initiative

Visit Pokhara Year (VPY) 2007 was the first promotional campaign in the regional level outside Kathmandu. It was organized by NTB in partnership with various tourism-related organizations like PTC and several travel trade associations functioning in Pokhara. A total of five million rupees was allocated for this campaign and the same amount was contributed by the travel trade as the matching fund. The main objectives of this campaign were as follow:

- With focus to Pokhara, promote Lumbini, Palpa, Gorkha, Chitwan, Syanja, Tanahun, Annapurna area and surroundings as important tourist destinations with the advent of New Year and new political development of the nation in the post-conflict scenario.
- Help in energizing and involving all players and stakeholders for their active participation in reestablishing the tourism destination image of Pokhara and the surrounding.
- Help in conserving and promoting major tourism destinations like Phewa Lake, Begnas Lake, Buddhist circuit, etc.
- Identify the areas in improving human resources in enhancing the service to the tourists.
- Highlight and promote unique and emerging products of Pokhara such as paragliding, Para trekking and ultra light flights.
- Explore more tourist products or areas and create their profiles.
- This campaign was the most important promotional campaign for Pokhara. With this campaign, Pokhara was able to receive 165,177 tourists in 2007 which was 74 percent more than the total tourists' arrivals in 2006. In this occasion, various marketing and promotional materials were published which included items like Danglors, stickers, brochures, posters, audio visual, CD, DVD etc. In this special year, Pokhara was also focused on its international travel fairs and road shows.

5.5.5 Pokhara in all major promotional campaigns

Pokhara had been promoted in all major promotional campaigns like Visit Nepal Year 1998, Destination Nepal Campaign 2002-2004, International Year of Mountains 2002, Mt. Everest Golden Jubilee Celebration 2003, Dhaulagiri Golden Jubilee Celebration 2010, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, Visit Lumbini Year 2012 and ongoing promotional focuses of Tourism Vision 2020. There were joint roles of various organizations like Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, NTB and other travel trade related private associations and entrepreneurs.

5.5.6 Role of various tourism organizations

The various tourism-related associations working in Pokhara play important roles in promoting the Pokhara region both domestically and internationally. The roles of such organizations are highlighted below.

a. Pokhara Tourism Council

As an umbrella tourism organization, Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC) prominently works to guide and mutually lead several member tourism associations in achieving together the common goal of tourism marketing and promotion of Pokhara region. Some major contributions of PTC are follows.

- Coordination of Pokhara trade industry and its leadership to participants from various national and international trade fairs, seminars and conferences like National Tourism Fair, South Asia Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE), and PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart in past.



Figure 5.1 Marketing and promotion at SATTE travel fair, Delhi in 2012, Source: PTC 2012

- Publication of promotional magazine “Tourism Mirror” which provides detailed information on all the existing tourism destinations and products of Pokhara.
- Publication of the promotional booklet “Paradise Pokhara” to offer the insights of the tourist attractions and publicizes Pokhara.

- Play a leading role in organizing World Tourism Day celebration on 27 September each year. The core activities include special welcome to first arriving three guests at Pokhara Airport and Tourist bus-park. Such guests are also offered with complimentary hotels, hiking and trekking.
- Promotion of the theme “Pokhara for All Seasons” through organizing the annual event *Asare Ropain Mahotsav* (rice planning festival) to interlink and strengthen the reciprocal relationships between agriculture and tourism. This festival is widely organized, participated, enjoyed and advertized by both domestic and international tourists. Formulation of manual on tourism ethical operation code of conducts and corporate social responsibility guidelines in association with the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South and Department of Development Studies, Kathmandu University at the destination level in 2013 in Pokhara (Upadhyaya & Khatiwada, 2012). The applications of these guidelines are supposed to enhance the image of Pokhara as a responsible destination in the world.
- Apart from PTC individual associations also work independently towards the development and promotion of tourism of Pokhara. They are as follows.

b. Paschimanchal Hotel Association Pokhara

The major national and international marketing campaigns of Paschimanchal Hotel Association Pokhara (PHAP) are as follows;

- “Jaun Hai Pokhara”: Jaun Hai Pokhara is the campaign launched by PHAP to promote Pokhara among the local Nepali people and thus boost domestic tourism. PHAP has created various promotional materials like CD, brochures, posters, and leaflets, introduced various packages on discounted rates on hotels for Nepalese and conducted road shows to promote Pokhara in various parts of Nepal under this campaign. There are positive results of such campaigns with the increase in the domestic tourist arrivals to Pokhara.
- “Chaliye Pokhara”: Chaliye Pokhara is a modified campaign of the popular Jaun Hai Pokhara campaign. This is specially designed to promote Pokhara in the Indian market. The major promotion of

this campaign was done in 2012 when PHAP jointly with Nepal Tourism Board organized a Border Town Roadshow in border cities of India like Gorakhpur, Kanpur and Lucknow. Presentations of the tourism products of Pokhara are the major highlights of this program with special launching of customized packages for Indians.

- "Pokhara Pure & Perfect": This is another campaign of PHAP to promote Pokhara internationally, especially in China, other Asian countries and the Western European countries. Many promotional materials like attractive posters, DVDs, brochures, t-shirts, caps, etc. have been produced under this theme and distributed widely. This campaign has been launched successfully in many countries like China, Thailand during PHAP's independent events. This campaign's successes can be credited today as 'Pure & Perfect' has become a brand to be associated with Pokhara.

c. Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, Western Regional Association, Pokhara

TAAN has undertaken the major responsibility of developing and promoting adventure tourism in the country. TAAN, Pokhara, was involved for long in organizing the international paragliding championships from its first to tenth series which it later handed over to Nepal Air sports Association. TAAN Pokhara annually promotes home-stay and village tourism promotional campaigns on the World Tourism Day through organizing FAM trips and winter camps. This association has published several brochures, maps and signage of some trekking routes of this region.

The execution of Trekkers Information Management System (TIMS) by TAAN, Pokhara, helps to collect and maintain the proper data of the trekkers, which is supportive for the marketing and promotional strategy of tourism.

d. Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents, Regional Association, Pokhara

NATTA promotional tour is a major marketing activity of Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA) Pokhara. NATTA Pokhara, has organized 4 tours in Nepal, 2 tours in India, and one tour each in Malaysia and Singapore is South East Asia till date. NATTA publishes brochures, posters, CDs depicting the products of Pokhara and distributes the same during the promotional tour. Apart from the promotional tour, NATTA

Pokhara also conducts various tour operators' and media writers' FAM trips in Pokhara, participates in various international travel trade fairs and conferences which are supportive to enhance the destination image of Pokhara.

e. Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal Pokhara Chapter

Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal (REBAN) Pokhara Chapter annually organizes Pokhara Street Festival. This event is becoming popular every year and witnesses visitors' increase by leaps and bounds. The event starts from 28 of December every year and ends on 1st of January. As the name states, the festival is massively observed on the stretch of 3 km in the Lakeside area. Prior to this occasion, the members of REBAN organize the promotional tour including press meets to various cities of Nepal and India. This helps to promote Pokhara.

5.5.7 Role of various tourism associations as the organizers of several activities

There are a number of tourism associations in tourism sector of Pokhara, which are actively engaged in organizing marketing and promotion related activities.

Table 5.2 Role of other tourism organizations in marketing and promotion of Pokhara

S.N.	Name of organizations	Marketing focuses
1.	Nepal Air sports Association	Promotion of Pokhara through organizing annual international paragliding championships participated by national and international paragliders
2.	NMA Annapurna Chapter in association with NTB	Golden Jubilee celebrations of the first ascend of Mt. Dhaulagiri in 2010. Instrumental in establishing International Mountain Museum (IMM) in Pokhara which is one of the prominent attractions for visitors. Promotion of the mountain people, their activities, mountain history, mountain-related scientific information of the origination of the world mountain system and various mountain activities through IMM
3.	Trekking Equipment Shops' Association	Promotion of Pokhara through the brand name of Annapurna, Everest, Lumbini, etc. in trekking equipments
4.	Embroidery and Garment Association	Promotion of tourism activities like trekking, rafting, jungle safari, paragliding, religious symbols, tourist destinations, etc. through embroidery costume.

Source: compiled by author from various publications

5.5.8 Role of media

Media contributes immensely towards achieving the stronger destination positioning, branding and attracting new tourists. In this context, Mr. Francesco Frangialli, the former UNWTO Secretary-General once rightly expressed the view that modern day tourism is highly dependent on media reporting. He said so because today a vast majority of travel decisions are made by people who have never seen their intended destinations first-hand for themselves (UNWTO 2007). Many people are making their travel decisions and are also travelling on their own by using information from multiple sources of media which include televisions, radios, newspapers, books, magazines, movies, and Internet.

In Nepalese context, the decreasing trends of tourist arrival during a decade long armed conflict and the increasing trends of tourist arrival after the peace process agreement proves that media plays a vital role for the development of tourism. In spite of the negative and totally sensitive incident of the 2001 royal massacre, people from all over the world still visited Nepal recognizing the worth of visiting Nepal for its natural and cultural fascinations. To some extent, it is the crucial role and support of media. Even in the armed conflict period, tourists realized that they were safe in Nepal and thus there were still large number of tourists, who continuously arrived Nepal (Upadhayaya 2012). By realizing the role of Media, the NTB and other various organizations have established a media centre. The NTB regularly invites media people in Nepal to discuss the burning and sensitive issues about tourism and implement them for further promotion of tourism. Such a vital role of media and its influence are observed in national level either immediately after the royal massacre or during the armed conflict and post-conflict periods. Finally, media is found active in printing and broadcasting the appropriate image of Pokhara.

5.5.9 Role of non-tourist organizations

Pokhara has of several non-tourism related areas of social, commercial and even non- profitable organizations, which work on their own capacity for the overall development of tourism in Pokhara through its marketing and promotion. Their names and areas are presented in the table below.

Table 5.3 Role of non-tourism organizations in marketing and promotion of Pokhara

S.N.	Name of organizations	Marketing focuses
1.	Annapurna Conservation Area Project	Promotion of the image of Annapurna area as an eco-tourism destination
2.	Empowering the Women of Nepal	Promotion of Pokhara and Annapurna mountain region through the organization of Nepalese Women Annapurna Expedition – 2011. It has made the new history of mountaineering with first successful ascend of Mt. Annapurna–IV by four Nepalese women on 31 st of May 2011.
3.	Pokhara Sub Metropolitan City	Publication of Pokhara city map,. Establishment of friendly relationship between Pokhara and Komegane city of Japan and promotion of Pokhara in Japan; Distribution of promotional brochures of Pokhara in foreign countries and their representatives visiting Pokhara.
4.	International Mountain Museum	Promotion of the image of mountain region along (with Annapurna and Dhaulagiri as mountain tourist destination
5.	Annapurna Daughters' Club (ADC)	It organized with an expedition trip with 15 daughters of Pokhara from Pokhara to Annauprna Base Camp in 2010. It was a tourism promotional expedition and the declaration of the formation of the ADC. The ADC has been promoting Pokhara through documentary and brochures since 2010.
6.	Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACA)	The ACAP has been playing a significant role to strengthen the eco tourism in Pokhara and the Annapurna region
7.	Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry(PCCI)	Multiple activities and focuses as described below

Source: Compiled by author from various sources

Among the organizations as in table 3, PCCI has following large-scale marketing focuses.

Publication of Kaski Tourism Directory

- Promotion of Armala Village in Kaski as a model village and and its international publicity
- Constant promotion of Pokhara and Nepal during international exposure visits conducted by FNCCI.
- Annual organizations of the National Industrial and Trade Fair in Pokhara.

- Coordination and organizations of familiarization trips for international and national members of various chambers and assistance to create awareness of Pokhara

5.5.10 Role of individual tourism entrepreneurs

Apart from tourism associations, there are significant involvements of various individual tourism entrepreneurs in marketing and promoting Pokhara. There are 573 hotels and guest houses, 116 travel agencies, 81 trekking companies, 21 tourist standard restaurants and 15 paragliding companies and hundreds of handicraft centers, books shops, cyber cafes, money changers (PTO 2011). Every year several individual companies have been participating in the travel and tourism fairs organized in the domestic and international markets. Most of them have their own promotional materials like brochures, posters, stickers, CDs, DVDs, websites, etc in which they reflect and grab attentions towards Pokhara as an exotic tourist destination. The travel trade companies have played significant roles for promoting destination (personal communication with travel trade people of Pokhara).

5.6 Discussion and recommendations

Tourism marketing and promotion is an important element of the overall development of tourism. This is particularly important for a growing tourist destination like Nepal and Pokhara in specific. In the initial phase, tourism of Pokhara had been promoted and developed automatically by mountaineers, words of mouth of visitors, the recommendations of friends, and appealing message of the travelogue writers. In that period, this destination was also largely promoted by hippies and backpackers. Now a days, Pokhara is marketed and promoted with advertising, sales promotion, internet marketing, travel fairs, road shows, etc. Almost every respondent during the collection of feedback of this chapter argued that word of mouth and friends' recommendations are very effective marketing tools for Pokhara. Apart from these, internet has also become other prominent tool in marketing Pokhara. Guide books and travel blogs are also important tools for the promotion of overall destination promotion of this region. Travel agents are found important mainly for packaged programs of tourists. The average duration of stay of the incoming international tourists in Pokhara is very low. It is claimed that average period of staying is only for 2 nights. But tourists visiting for adventure purposes have generally longer period of staying than those who come for other purposes.

The majority of tourism entrepreneurs in Pokhara claim that Pokhara is not promoted and marketed properly in the tourism market. There have not been sufficient promotional campaigns and programs for Pokhara. The current state of tourism marketing and promotion is not that much encouraging, effective and commendable. It may be the consequences of the overall minimum priority and investment by the state in tourism sector till now. However, NTB, tourism entrepreneurs and other tourism related organizations have been conducting relevant activities and campaigns. In this context, several institutions have given different forms of brands and also applied different marketing strategies coincided with the destination appeal and image of Pokhara while promoting their tourism products and services.

There is a lack of comprehensive scientific and authentic statistics on tourists with the various patterns related with their behaviors and activities in Pokhara. There is no application of any proper data collection, processing and analysis strategy. Without the sufficient data, the market segment of Pokhara could not be classified. In absence of the proper data, it is nearly impossible to draft marketing plan and take correct decisions to form proper strategy.

Most of the tourism entrepreneurs of Pokhara are not so efficient and competitive in marketing and promotion strategy in comparison to such entrepreneurs in Kathmandu. Majority of the entrepreneurs do not have wide knowledge in e-commerce. There is a lack of the skilled manpower, especially the people of cross-cultural and multi-lingual communications except English. Not many entrepreneurs have direct contact with foreign travel operators except few prominent entrepreneurs. It is high time Pokhara competed with other tourism cities of Nepal. We have also observed unhealthy competition with the trends of price reduction in the tourism market of Pokhara. The government has no proper attention on visionary policy formulation and effective regulation regarding the promotion of domestic tourism. Pokhara holds the capacity to attract tourists for all seasons. Although there are many events in the local level, these cannot easily come up as effective for tourism promotion. After all, Pokhara has some challenges like making tourists stay longer, encouraging shopping and setting expenditures and additional fascinating sports with extra activities.

It is recommended that a 10 years master plan urgently needs to be formulated through the coordination between government and tourism stakeholders. This will not only help in addressing the demands and

future vision of tourism, but also help on branding and overall package development of tourism in the long run. There is no particular concept and plan regarding the future sustainability of tourism. It is necessary to establish the lasting positive image of Pokhara as a responsible and sustainable tourist destination under mainstream global tourism trend. In order to accomplish such wish, the currently formulated Code of Conduct manual and Corporate Social Responsibility guideline at destination level should be strongly implemented.

For the marketing approach, even one brand can help in a more effective way than diversified approaches. The theme "Pokhara for all seasons" has the strength of appeal for Pokhara. Since Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan have been established as golden triangles for tourists' movements in Nepal, there are further needs to develop Pokhara, Chitwan and Lumbini as silver triangles and Pokhara, Jomsom and Manang as adventurous triangles.

As the repeated visitors and the adventure lovers are potential tourists in Pokhara, the government and concerned agencies should come up with special policy to encourage such types of tourist market segments, which could allow additional activities and offer more attractions to these visitors.

Tourism of Pokhara is still suffering from the tendency of centralized policy formulation by the government. It is high time Pokhara itself participated in the formulation of overall tourism policy which covers both marketing and promotional aspects. The need of the decentralization on the authority to formulate such policies is also linked with the local authority to issue permits of the mountain peaks and some restricted trekking trails from Pokhara.

Since Pokhara is a major tourist destination of Nepal, where nearly one-third of total international tourists visit, the regional office of NTB in Pokhara should be upgraded with more rights and authorities. It should be restructured with enough financial, human and technical resources. There must be adequate share of budgetary allocation for the promotion and marketing of tourism in Pokhara. The upgrading with higher capacity and resources could have following positive implications in marketing and promotion of Pokhara and its surrounding areas:

To increase the period of tourists' stay and their expenditures, Pokhara could be developed as the tourist hub. From tourism hub of Pokhara, side trips could be organized to surrounding villages. To properly identify

the tourism market segments of Pokhara according to numbers of their arrivals and the trends of their per day spending. To fulfill the vital needs of the production and publications of tourism statistics associated with Pokhara and Annapurna region. The lack of complete picture of various trends of international tourists' statistics is the preliminary barrier to strategically and effectively plan and implement tourism marketing and promotion. Moreover data of Indian tourist and domestic travelers to Pokhara are also not accounted for. There are urgent needs of complete package of statistics on the following variables.

Table 5.4 Recommendations for tourist statistics publications

Statistics on tourists' arrivals number wise	
For international tourists with other variables	For domestic tourists with other variables
Nationality-wise	Nationality-wise
Purpose of visit	By purpose of visit
By age	By age
By mode of entry (by surface/By air/ through trekking) in Pokhara	By mode of entry (by surface/by air/through trekking) in Pokhara
Season-wise	Season-wise
Average length of stay	Average length of stay
Per day spending in US\$	Per day spending in NPR
Packaged or independent Travelers	Packaged or independent travelers
Portion of repeat visitors	Portion of repeat visitors

Source: Designed by author

The regional office of NTB in Pokhara itself can act as a centre of collecting, processing, analyzing and producing complete statistical report on scheduled basis. With its restructuring, the regional office of NTB in Pokhara should work in close association with PTC, Civil Aviation Authority of Pokhara, Pokhara tourism office, ACAP, and several tourism associations, for the production of statistics.

- To execute tourism marketing and promotional campaign through single door approach. NTB regional office, Pokhara, in association with PTC could act upon it.
- To facilitate and capacitate Pokhara to focus on boarders' city promotional campaign and domestic tourists on its own.

- To make tourism entrepreneurs effective and skillful in marketing.
- To be able to establish a media centre and an effective crisis management team to handle any unforeseen crisis in tourism industry in Pokhara.
- To produce a tourism master plan of Pokhara. There is the lack of proper conservation of natural and cultural heritages. There is a big challenge in the sustainability of the tourism industry in Pokhara without a proper master plan.

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6.1 Background

Nature and life puzzled many philosophers for thousands of years and they ultimately realized that human life must have emanated from the supernatural power. When a mid-nineteenth century natural scientist, Charles Darwin, propounded his theory of evolution in his famous work *The Origin of Species* (in 1859), the paradigm of thought about the origin of species shifted away from conventional notion to evolutionary theory. He expounded the theory that neither the intelligent nor the strongest, but only the fittest can survive. He claimed that transformation was essential for the continuity of life. He established transformation as a pervasive force for both living and non-living phenomena. Later on, Herbert Spencer, a social Darwinist (Dickens 2000), linked it with society and politics with the assumptions that conflict between groups in society leads to social progress as superior groups outwit inferior ones. This notion advocates that the strongest or fittest should survive, but weak and unfit ultimately move away from the circle of life. Eventually, Social Darwinists began to claim that the rich and powerful cultures have right to survive. In the same context of argument, Rao (2002) writes that every society and culture, no matter how traditional and conservative, is constantly undergoing change and ultimately society changes in ceaseless flux. For Rao, society cannot be a static hypothesis. Similarly, Hunt and Colander (2012) advocate that cultural diffusion and assimilation are major attributes of modern society and thus a major portion of any contemporary culture today has been derived from other cultures.

In social transformation process, ascribed status will be altered by achieving status (Foladare 1969). It is a shift in collective consciousness of a society - local, state, national or global, so that reality is refined by

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consensus (Akman 2008). This may happen internally and intentionally or through external stimulus. Tourism has been analyzed in this paper as a powerful external agent as advocated by Social Darwinists.

The objective of this study is to explore, differentiate, analyze and synthesize the impacts and implications of tourism development over the socio-cultural domains of host communities with special reference to Fewa Lake catchments (east & north-east) of Pokhara, Nepal. The triangulation method (Smith 1995) of exploratory qual-quant approach is chosen for this work. Pre-tested questionnaires are used to collect the primary information. There is a significant role of personal observation as well as individual conversation with local stakeholders such as the police and non-entrepreneurs.

The work is basically based on the detailed research conducted in 2005 (verification survey in 2012 for this article) by using proportionate random sampling with 58 informants from six homogeneous strata - restaurateurs, hoteliers, tours operators, trekking agents, curios/souvenir shops and non-entrepreneur households. The relationship of the selected variables with the growth and development of tourism were hypothesized and tested by using students' T-test at 5 percent level of confidence. Values obtained by standard deviation (σ) and correlation coefficient (r) were also considered significantly. The obtained value of t-test (t_o) for all variables exceeded the table value (t_v) and thus the null hypotheses of having no relation of these variables with tourism development had reached to the acceptance level. Manual processing and analysis was also done in addition to SPSS results to interpret and decode the qualitative attributes of the information.

6.2 The context

Tourism acts as an agent (Madleod 2009) to induce socio-cultural values and norms of a society into dynamism, which begets ranges of change and modification in society and culture. Tourism, a smoke-less industry, is a global social event which is essentially taste-driven (Page et al. 2001). Fridgen (1996, p 77) writes that tourism is a group endeavor in which social and cross-cultural contacts, encounters and interactions are inherent aspects; and cross-cultural exchange (Foladare 1969; Britton 1982; Cohen 1984; Nash 1995; Hofstede 2001) is exactly what makes tourism existing. Nash further narrates that travel experiences often are among the most outstanding memories in the traveler's life (Goeldner and Ritchie 2006). Human beings are innately curious and also concerning

the world in which we live and the curiosity made people travel to explore their surroundings, discover the unknown and seek new experiences (McKercher 1998). Gautam Buddha's travel for the quest of knowledge might be a relevant instance though his attainment is something like a quest rather than mere journey.

Society is a web of social relationships (Rao 2002). Culture is a complex set of learned beliefs, customs, skills, habits, traditions and knowledge shared by members of the society (Greenwood 1982; Landis 1986; Allan 1992; Nash 1995) that hold them together in a community. For Page et al. (2001), this set is a 'cultural baggage' (p. 277). However, Neo-Marxists are rather skeptical in tourism perhaps due to its imperialistic demeanor of unequal exchange with host communities as losers (Smith 1980; Greenwood 2004; Sharma 2007; UNEP 2012). Putting views in the same line, Wearing et al. (2010) writes that the majority of tourists are from the western industrialized nations and these tourists consume the people, places, cultures and resources of the visited place (p. 53). For MacCannell (1992) it is a cultural cannibalism. But for Allan (1992), this phenomenon is cultural conflation. Similarly, Roday et al. (2011) assume that cultural shock and cultural arrogance are often the reasons for causing conflict between the tourists and the host.

Some impacts of tourism over the host society appear relatively quickly while others tend to manifest slowly and gradually (Greenwood 1982; Dann 1996; Fridgen 1996; Wang 2000; Archer and Cooper 2001; Page, Brunt, Busby and Connell 2001; Gmelch 2004; Sharpley 2010) and over time, those implications transform (Macleod 2010) into socio-cultural changes with enduring solid foundation. But it is also a fact that every society feels the need for some degree of stability (Gmelch 2004). If change occurs very rapidly, it may create new problems with periodic chaos and crises that give people a sense of uncertainty and insecurity for which people are unprepared. This might be the case of host-guest conflict (Mercer 2001; Swinglehurst 2001; Wearing, Stevenson and Young 2010; Hashimoto 2010). Whatsoever, for Wearing et al. (2010) these impacts are always seen as objective and measurable – and hence potentially controllable.

UNEP (2012) describes that tourism's implications are ambiguous and perceptive (Reisinger and Turner 2004); the same objectively described impacts are seen as beneficial by some and are perceived as negative by other stakeholders. The socio-cultural impacts of tourism are numerous and varied (Cohen 1984). Fisher (2004) also observed a perceptible

influence of westernization on Sherpas in Khumbu region of Nepal in clothing styles such as the use of down jackets and climbing boots, recognition and use of foreign languages, replacement of Tibetan 'salt-butter-tea' by 'sugar-tea' and admiration of western ways of life. Thus, tourism is under the microscope (Goeldner and Ritchie 2006, p 465) to test its behavior. Due to this reason, sustainability has become a buzzword in tourism academia now. The main remit of sustainable tourism is to strike a balance between the host, the guest and the environment (Page et al. 2001, p 312).

6.3 The “FIDELL TALCADS” model for impact assessment

For this chapter, altogether thirteen variables having socio-cultural domain were selected for impact assessment and analysis. The “FIDELL TALCADS” model, an acronym of thirteen important variables of this study, was devised and tested here. The variables were:

- Family structure / Social composition
- Indigenous profession
- Dining pattern
- Emotion, Attitude and Behavior
- Lifestyle and Fashion
- Labor division
- Traditions, values and norms
- Arts, crafts, curios and music
- Language
- Crime
- Alcoholism / Smoking
- Drug abuse
- Sex

6.3.1 Family structure and social composition

The research shows that the effects of tourism can be measured in various social issues. Almost 64 percent informants of Lakeside kept hold of the assessment that tourism weakens the traditional family structures. The

individualistic behavior indoctrinated by materialism among the people of this community is gradually driving people towards the nuclear family and the trend, as per them, is already prevalent at Baidam – the eastern catchment area of Fewa Lake. The notable expression made by the respondents (87.93 %) is that tourism has eliminated the feeling of caste-ism in these communities, which has supported intercultural and international marital relationship² mostly with foreigners. Young females of former fisherman and tailor family are highly prone to have cross country marriage mostly with western tourists. However, the cases of a young male marrying a foreign female are relatively less. Thus, the families are unknowingly emerging as multicultural and multinational families and this has the impact on social composition. Almost every service is commercialized hospitality unlike the Nepalese traditional culture of “*Atithi debõ vawa*” i.e. ‘guest is god’ concept. In other words, such change in indigenous people is purely the impact of tourism, which is similar to the meaning of westernization. Such change in indigenous people is purely the impact of tourism, which is similar to the meaning of westernization.

6.3.2 Indigenous profession

With the emphasis of tourism for economic derivatives, it is also important to be aware of the wider corollaries and ramifications of tourism development. Snowball effects of tourism are very difficult to ascribe and assess. A significant number of respondents (79.31 %) in Lakeside Pokhara agreed that tourism is the only means of bread and butter for the people living in this community. A few somehow maintained their ancestral professions till now have also reached to the verge of termination. The over-emphasis and dependency on tourism sending-off all other professions has progressively boosted a parasitical mass in Lakeside catchments losing their self-reliance and professional identity – the situation which is distressing when tourism slumps. The other unpleasant implication of tourism in this settlement as per 77.6 percent of respondents is the displacement (though fixed authentic data unavailable) of poor indigenous local families of *Damais* (Tailor) and *Majhis* (Fisherman) from their ancestral land mainly because of two reasons: one is the Government encroachment to develop tourism infrastructure in Fewa Lake catchments and the other the pushing effect of the growth and expansion of tourism by creating pressure to sell their property to tourism entrepreneurs.

² In a field survey (2012), 57 cases of females marrying foreign males and 14 cases of males marrying foreign females were revealed in the western catchments of Fewa-Lake – not covered in this chapter.

6.3.3 Dining pattern and menu priority

It is believed that foods and drinks are among the most important cultural expressions and identities which sometimes can be the reasons of travel for some travelers. Ethnographically, Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world with 125 ethnic groups and 123 spoken languages (CBS 2012). Different communities have different styles to begin the day with. The most popular style which has now become the habit for many Nepalese people is to wake up with a cup of tea. But this common habit was only found in 25.86 percent respondents in Lakeside. And 74.14 percent respondents articulated their preference for the light break-fast in the morning with a cup of tea or coffee. The breakfast choices for them are omelet/egg, egg pouch, curry-*chappati*, butter/jam toast, cornflakes with milk or porridge and not one of them is the common item of breakfast in the traditional Nepali cuisine. Interestingly, around 40 percent respondents have already acquired the habit of brunch – the combined meal of breakfast and lunch taken together.

Tourists enjoy native foods, particularly items of a local or ethnic nature. Everyone loves trying out local dishes as a part of fun or travel memories (Goeldner and Ritchie 2006). The most interesting part of the Nepali *dal-bhat-tarkari-dhindo* is the portion (recipe) and pattern to be mixed while eating – perhaps the reason for using fingers while eating. The right combination of *dal* (pulse gravy), *bhat* (rice), *tarkari* (curry) and *achar* (pickles) determines the deliciousness of the meal. Therefore, the gastronomy of Nepali cuisine not only requires appropriate recipe while cooking, but also requires adequate technique while eating.

Despite its exceptionality, only 67.24 percent respondents of Lakeside kept the Nepali cuisine in the list of first priority. Very interestingly, the first choice among 8.62 percent respondents is oriental (Chinese, Japanese, Thai etc.), among 3.45 percent continental and for 1.72 percent American menu. In the same line, 18.97 percent respondents selected Indian cuisine as their favorite food category. The fact clearly reveals that the dining habit of the people of Lakeside has been changing slowly and the craze towards the foreign food is growing gradually.

6.3.4 Emotion, attitude and behavior

The Oxford dictionary writes that emotion is a strong feeling such as love, fear or anger; the part of a person's character. Attitudes are somewhat like intellectual, emotional and behavioral responses to events, things, or persons. Tourism creates wide socio-cultural implications for the reason that tourists bring their distinct cultural baggage when they visit

different places. The most striking feature of tourism is interaction and intermingling between hosts and guests that slowly penetrates and infuses a large number of small effects, which individually appear insignificant but together become a bandwagon.

The materialistic behavior and commercialized hospitality endorsed by 94.82 percent and 89.66 percent respondents respectively in Lakeside catchments highlight a perceptible impact of tourism on attitude and behavior of hosts in Pokhara. Majority of respondents (89.66 %) readily admit that the people of Baidam (Lakeside) present differently in front of foreign tourists, perhaps with special attention and priority, with perceptible discrimination to the domestic visitors. Correspondingly, the people of these communities are positive in behavior and attitudes like tolerant, polite, co-operative, emotionally calm and open-minded. Yet, the selfish attitude (58.62 % responses) has crept into them.

6.3.5 Lifestyle and fashion

Akin to the cultural variation in hospitality, tourism has multifarious implications on various aspects of human life. However, the intensity and mode may vary depending on the frequency of interactions, cultural distance and age groups that come into contact with tourists of different cultural values and lifestyle. Of them, the young generation seems to be highly influenced by tourism. Most of the youngsters feel modern when they copy, follow or imitate the styles of tourists (mostly western) – also called *the demonstration effect* (Page et al. 2001, p 278) in tourism. The popularity of multicolored shaggy hair, hair raise, hip-hop outfits, bra-less transparent tops, color tattoos, piercing in various parts like ear, nose, eyebrows, tongue, cheek, temple, nipple and navel are some of the noticeable demonstration effects in these communities. Astonishingly, piercing and tattoos artists in Lakeside Pokhara admitted that the number of female clients making tattoos on breast and lower belly and those piercing nipple and clitoris as a part of fashion is growing significantly this year. Their gestures were towards the professional sex workers.

For 86.21 percent respondents, life is awfully busy even during two biggest festivals - Dashain and Tihar – which fall around October and November for the likely financial opportunity of peak season at the cost of social relation with family, friends and relatives which, as they felt, has enfeebled the social cohesion and weakened the traditional social fabric. Besides, they (65.51%) learned to be punctual when they worked for and with tourists.

There is a significant influence of tourists flow on the lives of the waifs and strays of the street. The destitute children (*khates*) stroll around until they find kind tourists. Then they swarm around the tourists begging for money, chocolate or sometimes ask them to take to restaurants for dining. The children (and sometime seniors too) often dressed in tattered clothes, dirty, and with forlorn faces prey upon the sympathies of the tourist passersby who give them something, which eventually made them professional beggars. Begging has become the best *modus operandi* for them for easy living in spite of the clear written instructions given to the visitors not to give anything to the beggars so as to discourage begging practice.

6.3.6 Labor division

Tourism as a hospitality industry is labor intensive. The humans' treatment and smile are factors which constitute the quality of tourism service. Tourism generates jobs for differently skilled people of both genders. According to Page et al. (2001), tourism business creates three different employment opportunities – *direct*, *indirect* and *induced* jobs (p 265). People of different sectors in the host community depend on tourism one way or the other. The increasing economic dependence of local community on tourism has altered the traditional job structure and roles in the destination. Almost all standard kitchens of hotels and restaurants have male chefs in Lakeside, Pokhara, whereas marketing and front desk jobs are taken up by women in contrary to the traditional "male out, female in" job division.

However, almost half of the respondents stated regrettably that many of these jobs are menial and underpaid since the jobs requiring only minimal skill and knowledge typified by low pay and little reward are given to locals. The destination still seems to have dearth of skilled and qualified manpower as endorsed by 77.59 percent informants, and the opportunities of corporate level managerial jobs only for outsiders have eventually promoted frustration and resentment among the junior and middle level young employees.

6.3.7 Traditions, values and norms

Tourism has many faces and so has the society. Each unit of the society has a complete set of culture maintaining its own tradition, value system, beliefs, ideas, attitudes, perceptions and habits. The growth of tourism may produce both problems and opportunities in a vast scale

for societies, and its main impacts might be on economy, society, culture and environment. According to the respondents (almost 80 %), tourism does have implications on social relations. They strongly supported that tourism depersonalizes the relationship putting more emphasis on commercial relations, thereby ignoring the oriental social values of seniority and respect for senior citizens. Similarly, the concept of living together (without formal marriage), easy divorce, and marriage as optional institution are some of the attributes perceived by almost two-third of the respondents.

Grand celebration targeting English New Year and X-mass, probably the best street carnivals in Pokhara (westernization effect) and perceptible void of festivity during Nepali New Year and Dashain/Tihar, signify the neo-imperialistic repositioning of tourism in Fewa Lake catchments (Baidam area). Regardless of this, respondents added that tourism has inculcated the broader outlook through knowledge and awareness, which are not only desirable but also necessary to improve the quality life of people in particular, and the society in general.

6.3.8 Art, craft curios and music

Some artistic creations and cultural expressions like art, painting, music, dance, architecture and many other areas of activity have tourist appeal (Goeldner and Ritchie 2006). Perhaps due to this reason, there is a practice which now has become a necessity in resorts and standard hotels to display local art, curios and souvenir objects for sale. Tourists generally prefer locally produced hand-crafted gift or souvenir items. Tourists seek originality and authenticity.

However, these artistic expressions and creations are not free from tourism's influence. Almost two-third of the informants among the shop-owners in Lakeside believed that the authenticity, spirituality and originality of the artistic expressions have declined now. They opine that the commercialized instant mass production of cheap and artless machine products - also called fake "airport art" (Graburn 1983) of these creative expressions, arts and curios has trivialized the authenticity and spirituality as in the case of "*Thanka*" and "*Mandala*" flex print which in the past used to be a single art of various artists started with a formal spiritual pray and worship. It is also the cause of trinketization according to them. They agree that any connoisseur of art can easily notice the imitative inkling in art, beads and curio items sold in this area. It is obvious that when art, culture and tradition become trading commodities, they deceptively lose their aesthetic qualities.

Similarly, indigenous musical creations and ethnic dances hold strong appeal for tourists. Tourism has very supportive role to promote the ethnic and indigenous music, dance and songs in Pokhara. Respondents have noticed a sizable thriving of *Rodhi* culture, *Dohari*, *Ghantu*, *Sorathi*, *Chhyandu* and *Jhyaure* in Lakeside Pokhara because of tourism.

However, around 10 percent respondents gave different opinions. They view that tourism has promoted local music and musical creations at the cost of their quality and originality. Today's folk music presented in restaurants and dance clubs of Pokhara are not folk and ethnic in real sense. They are the hybrids and thus a fusion of traditional and imported arts today. Respondents admit that globalization is the main cause of acculturation and assimilation of musical creations in Pokhara. However, the role of tourism in this connection is positive in Pokhara.

6.3.9 Language

Language, being a social vehicle of communication, is a key indicator of acculturation. The dominant language always put pressure on the weaker language. In case of tourist- host interactions, the language of tourists always has an effect on the local language. Locals who have knowledge of the visitors' language always have likelihood for beneficial affinity in the commercial transaction. Almost all respondents realized that the knowledge of different languages, at least the main incoming tourist language if not more, is an asset, which determines the effectiveness of business dealings. This, as they felt, is a favorable impact of tourism on the local people and is also a determinant of their personality and status in contrary to the critical expression that tourism defiles the local language. Almost 76 percent respondents in Lakeside Pokhara claimed that they can also speak popular common words in French, Japanese, Korean, Dutch, Spanish and Chinese languages besides their command over English and Hindi.

6.3.10 Crime and theft

Most of the entrepreneurs view that tourism controls crime in the destination. Nonetheless, there are a number of instances to have criminal activities in tourist areas. Tourists are defenseless and normally do not have knowledge of dangerous areas. Additionally, they are readily identified and carry valuable things and money with them. So, they can be easy targets. In contrast, there are a number of instances of tourists engaging in crime and illicit activities such as violent and drunken

behavior, drug smuggling and sex in some destinations. These activities undoubtedly encourage violent and criminal activities in the destination. Criminal activities create a negative image in the minds of prospective visitors. According to Page et al. (2001, p 283), certain areas of the world like Jamaica and Florida have a bad image for posing threats to tourist well-being due to the high profile cases of tourists attack in the late 80s and early 90s.

Stealing is a common criminal activity in tourism spots. Police office at Baidam (Lakeside) has a number of registered petitions from tourists against the hotel room burglaries. In these cases, hotel or restaurant employees by profession are mostly found culprit not only for the lost accessories from the room, but also for the snatching of wallets and jewelry in the jungle of Raniban when visitors go up for hiking to the Peace Stupa. According to the police records, seasonal unemployment, minimal salary, frustrations, temptation of tourist lifestyle and luxury are some of the reasons to encourage minimum salaried employees or unemployed peoples in Lakeside for burglary, theft, pick pocketing, smuggling and even pimping.

6.3.11 Alcoholism, smoking and gambling

It is difficult to make precise judgment of the extent to which tourism causes social and cultural influence because it is just one of the forces of change in the host society. Almost 75.86 percent people of Lakeside Pokhara agreed that tourism creates an ambiance which induces people to consume alcohol. Smoking and gambling often accompany alcoholism. Gambling has higher priority of economic gain than the well-being and integrity of local people and is a popular form of recreation for well-off tourists. It is said that Nevada, a notorious gambling zone, has made tourism the leading industry in the United States.

The fact is that the well-to-do people enjoy gambling as an entertainment and the places for gambling like casinos provide varieties of drinks as complementary. Pokhara also has two casinos. It is alleged that casinos are not only the best place for gambling, smoking and drug peddling, but the favorite safe place for elite groups (including female) to quench their sexual thirst. Chandra Bahadur, ex-bouncer of a casino in Pokhara, claims that smoking and drinking are two indispensable events in casinos.

Another interesting subculture growing rapidly in Lakeside Pokhara is Shisha culture – a new form of traditional Hookah smoking. The main

theme of Shisha lounge or Hookah bar as per the entrepreneur is to feature a full-service lounge with hookah, drinks and food (HDF) with a highlight of hookah smoking.

6.3.12 Drug abuse / smuggling

Tourism is not as simplistic and naïve as the term might seem to connote. It's like a floating iceberg with a big chunk sinking under the water. A survey report prepared jointly by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Nepal, and United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (MoHA and UNODC 2011) says that there are crosscutting issues between drug and sex and the use of drug can drive women to sex work and vice versa. The report says 44.4 percent female injecting drug users (FIDU) in Pokhara involve in commercial sex to support drug use. The report further reveals that 20.8 percent of them, who involve in commercial sex, work in cabin restaurants, disco bars and massage parlors. Of them, 71.3 percent have opined that they have involved in drug peddling and pick pocketing also. They further spoke out that their priority clients for sex work and drug peddling are foreigners. The report further reveals that *Buprenorphine* is used by 30.5 percent users whereas 50.9 percent users use *Dextropropoxyphene cum Buprenorphine*. A Police personnel at Baidam Police Office agrees that Pokhara has become a hotbed of drug smuggling owing to increasing numbers of drug abusers and tourist-cum-clients. Another report published by USAID Nepal and ASHA (2011) reveals that 55 percent of injecting drug users (IDUs) are below 25 years and 4.6 percent of them already have HIV. The favorite place for them to hang out is Lakeside.

About 64 percent respondents perceived tourism as a good camouflage for the drug peddling. Some 62 percent informants in Lakeside asserted that some street children are being used by tourists for the dealings of drugs and marijuana/hashish (*Ganja*). They also suspect that some tourists use street children for pedophilia in this belt. Nonetheless, about 33 percent respondents opined that tourism helps society to be aware of drug abuse. Some informants shared their experience saying that the school-going students of scheduled caste group in Sarangkot area still go for collecting *Ganja* in the villages to sell to the tourists and, in some cases, their guardians themselves silently play the supportive role, perhaps for financial reasons.

6.3.13 Sex and prostitution

Tourism has become a supermarket of illusions, exotic lands promising to satisfy secret desires (McLaren 2004). Visitors feel relaxed when they

are away from their home and desire something new and unavailable in their locality. Ghosh (2002, p 176) writes that the tourists often want entertainment in the evening and 'entertainment' in the western sense is impossible without gambling and flesh trade. In the past two decades, 4S_s i.e. Sun, Sea, Sand and Sex have been utilized to sell a destination. As a result, travelers going abroad for sex have drastically increased; perhaps the sex-experience has become a motivator for some tourists of both genders – mostly sole travelers. Jamaica has been the most popular sex destination for western females where as Bangkok, Manila and Amsterdam are favorite hotspots for male tourists. Sosúa, a beach town on the north coast of the Dominican Republic, is a newly emerged top sex destination for white European male tourists who wish to experience sex with Afro-Caribbean women (Brennan 2004, p 303).

Governments of some countries are encouraging sex-tourism (Richter 2001; Kunwar and Pathania 2010) as an easy means of getting foreign exchange, though some destinations like Bangkok, Manila and Cambodia have reached an alarming level. Ghosh (2002, p 174) writes that brothels are flourishing in the guise of massage parlors, sex-shows, yoga bars, health clubs, cocktail lounges – all set up with the sole purpose of meeting sexual needs of visitors.

Sex-tourism is not a major component of tourism in Nepal. Yet it is growing under various guises. Tourists who have once visited the live sex shows, sex museums and sex parlor of 'red light zones' in Amsterdam, Bangkok or Sosúa have similar mind-set and thus expect the availability of sex-parlors in other tourist-destinations, too. For Israeli tourists, the reasons of visiting Nepal are nature and night life (2Ns). Around 67 percent young Indian tourists between 25 to 35 age group opined as informants that the motivation to come to Nepal is to experience sex with girls with Tibetan looks (Perhaps they meant Mongolian girls). Very interestingly, almost 43 percent informants from western male tourists category revealed that they have to ask for 'massage and sässáge' in Lakeside Pokhara if they want something more after massage. Here, '*sässáge*' is a code language used in massage parlor for sex. In the same line, almost one-third of the respondents admitted that Nightclub Cabarets, Shower and Bikini Dances - hotspots for erotic dances - in some restaurants/bars are supporting prostitution in Pokhara.

In spite of its illegality, sex business in Thamel-Kathmandu and Lakeside-Pokhara is growing like a husk fire. Naya Bus Park (also called Baglung Bus Park) has emerged as an undeclared red light zone for low profile

clients, but it is found that the venue is popular for Indian tourists, too. One of the Police personnel at Baidam Ward Police Office informed that they have captured tourist-vans with girls (sex workers) a couple of times, hired by Indian tourists from Naya Bus Park to take them to their lodging hotels at Lakeside (Baidam). Sharma (2012) writes for *Nepal* - a popular periodical - that some deviant behaviors like group sex and sex parties are getting popularity among youngsters in Pokhara. Though tourists are not the part of such behaviors, yet the ambience of dance bars in Lakeside seems supportive for such deviances.

6.4 Conclusions

Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of natural beauty, bio-diversity, cultural multiplicity and adventurous activity. Nepalese tourism industry thrives around them. Nature-based tourism in the spectacular milieu of cultural mosaic is the core competence of Nepalese tourism industry. But nature and culture both by their virtue are very fragile and cannot remain in isolation from tourism. The above analysis shows that tourist cultures always dominate the host culture and in many cases hosts are the losers in spite of the financial leverage they get. Coming very close to the Social Darwinists and Neo-Marxists, the analysis has shown that tourism is a strong agent of socio-cultural diffusion, infusion, acculturation and assimilation with an anthology of a complex synthesis of various interconnected socio-cultural, environmental and economic influences, though tourism primarily turns up as an economic enterprise.

Further, socio-cultural influences and implications are not always apparent as economic impacts. Such impacts are indirect, qualitative and perceptual. Therefore, they are hard to identify, difficult to measure and depend on value orientation. They are also ambiguous. Same impacts seen beneficial by some groups are perceived as having negative aspects by other stakeholders. Thus, we can come to the conclusion that the impacts and implications of tourism on host society are more latent, slow but penetrating and lasting; and the impact individually appears to be almost insignificant, but together they vibrate and weaken socio-cultural system and superstructure.

It is revealed that tourism in many cases appears as an exploitative envoy, rather than economic panacea, from various perspectives till the destination remains 'pleasure periphery' of the developed world and the

traveler becomes a tourist not a 'social activist.' Therefore, the proposition which might be appropriate for tourism development in developing destination like Pokhara is the Community Based Responsible Tourism (CBRT) to have a balance among tourism growth, ecological conservation, economic prosperity and socio-cultural sustainability.

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7.1 Introduction

In the last few decades, the tourism industry has undergone a period of massive growth. As a labor intensive industry, there has been continuous development of tourism and consequent job creations at rapid pace. Tourism development can bring about a positive outcome for the economic prosperity of the people in many underdeveloped countries like Nepal, who suffer rampant poverty, increased unemployment, subsistence agriculture and inaccessible geo-structure. In Nepal, tourism has been considered an important sector for its potential contribution to strengthen national economy, gender inclusion, improvement of the quality of lives and poverty alleviations by generating employment opportunities and foreign exchange earnings.

Tourism is basically a labor-oriented service industry where the work of skilled and efficient labor (work force) has a positive effect upon its promotion and development. Hospitality attribute is a factor that matters for the efficiency of labor output. Due to the inseparable nature of guests and hosts in tourism service management, good hospitality attributes of the service providers are prerequisites for the successful tourism businesses and their sustainable operations and management. This rational state of affairs in one way or another is also linked with the optimum satisfactions of tourists as guests and is a dependable source of income (economic independency) of labor forces who are engaged in tourism industry as hosts. In this context, various hospitality attributes like aptitudes, mannerisms, softness, listening abilities, and responsible habits which women workforce naturally possess, can be additional advantages for tourism industry. However, these roles, characters and contributions

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of women are incontestably associated with their inclusion, meaningful participations and decision making abilities in tourism and hospitality industry.

The available literature (Acharya, Thapalia and Bhattachan 2001; Acharya and Wannet 1981; Hemmati 2000; UNWTO and UNIFEM 2011; Upadhayaya and Upreti 2008; Vidya 2008) reveals about two major aspects of women in tourism. One is about the lack of complete information on their status in tourism industry. The other is about the gloomy picture of women from the perspective of gender in tourism.

The vertical typical "gender pyramid" is prevalent in the tourism sector where lower levels and occupations with the few career development opportunities are dominated by women and key managerial positions are held by men (Hemmati 2000, pp.17-20).

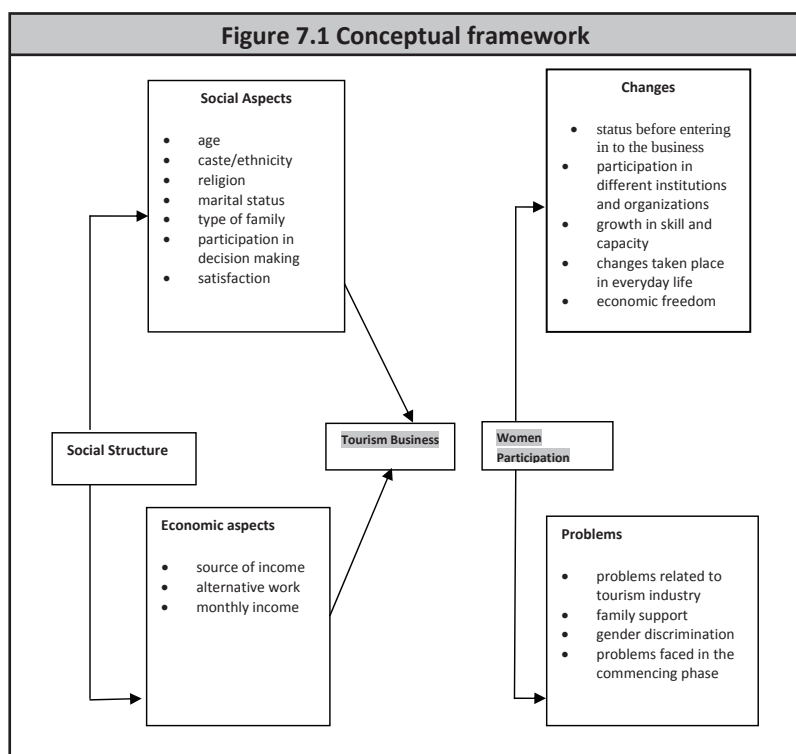
As a hospitality industry, the involvement of women in tourism industry in Pokhara can be important for industry as well as for the women workers and entrepreneurs. However, gender inequality prevailed largely in the tourism industry of Pokhara as it was mostly dominated by males (Acharya 2001; Khanal 2005 as cited in Pahari 2008; Khatiwada 2009; Pahari 2008). The entry of women in the tourism industry of Pokhara is a recent phenomenon which started only from 1988. At that time women had to struggle hard for their entrepreneurship in tourism, which was mostly captured by males.

Since tourism is an ever-changing and never-ending phenomenon (Shakya 2008), it is assumed that the state of women participation can also not remain static forever. The possibility and potential of any recent changes on women involvement in this industry of Pokhara cannot be neglected. Nonetheless, there is a knowledge gap on the dynamics of any recent changes on women's involvement. In this context, this chapter focuses on the following questions from the perspective of women's participation in the tourism industry of Pokhara:

- a. Are there any exciting changes on the women's participation at present?
- b. Have the working women experienced a considerable growth in their skill and capacity-related opportunities?
- c. Along with the opportunities, what challenges are women facing for their dignified participations?

7.2 Conceptual framework on women's participation in tourism

Tourism is considerably developing as one of the important industries in global economy. The involvement of women is considered to create sustainability in tourism. Social aspects and economic aspects as well as changes and problems shape the overall participation of women in tourism. Besides, women involved in this sector are affected more by additional aspects such as work place, participation in decision making, gender discrimination, etc. These diverse aspects are presented through the conceptual framework below.



Source: Adapted from Acharya (2010)

Age, religion, caste, ethnicity, marital status, education, family structure, monthly income, and economic freedom are some of the affecting factors. Young women, for instance, can contribute more to the productive sector than older women can. Highly educated women can play a more important

role in promoting their business than women with poor education can. Women who make higher income have stronger social and economic influence than those who have lower income. In decision making process of her business, a woman entrepreneur's education plays a crucial role.

Important factors for determining the socio-economic condition of women in tourism business include income, family support, training, professional satisfaction, growth in skill and capacity, changes taken place in every day affairs, problems related to the business, problems faced in the commencing phase, difficulty in language and gender inequalities.

However, it requires good coordination among old and new women tourism entrepreneurs to increase the participations of women in tourism and to exchange their ideas and experience. Equality in right and opportunity rather than reservation matters for women empowerment in tourism (NTB 2009).

7.3 Trends of women participations in tourism

Women's participations in tourism of Nepal began as early as 1920s and 1930s in mountain tourism as porters, cooks, trekking guides and group leaders (Upadhyaya and Upreti 2008). Since then, women have shown great hospitality to tourists through cooking, conducting cultural performances and producing handicrafts. While males benefited from the direct employment, women were mostly associated with indirect employments that included farming, handicraft producing and selling, cooking etc. They felt largely hesitant to come openly to this business because it could then be labeled as an unnatural and inappropriate job for them. Due to the social and cultural norms and taboos, the number of participation of women was absolutely low. However, a number of aspiring women have started to be involved in tourism and other hospitality industries both as entrepreneurs as well as workers in the present changing context.

A report published by NATHM (2012) reveals that a total of 30,609 people had taken various academic courses and skill trainings² during 1972 – 2011 at Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management. The number of women participations in those courses was only 4,723 (15.43%). Despite the fact that women's participation is still very small in terms of

² Such courses include various subjects related to hotel management, travel and tourism management, food preparation and control, housekeeping, tour guides, trek guides, travel agency and ticketing, mobile outreach training, hospitality and so on. See NATHM (2012) for more information.

quantity, they have reached a stage today where female trek leaders are leading solo women tourist trekkers, working as team leaders in mountain expeditions and operating hotels, lodges, restaurants, trekking and travel agencies from the top management positions.

According to a holistic survey report in Pokhara in the year 2002, only 2.1 percent women were reported to have been involved in whole tourism industry in Pokhara in which 6.5 Percent were in travel agency and 7.5 percent in hotel business (Khatiwada 2009). According to a former study conducted on hotel tourism in Pokhara in 1998, this sub-sector was on the highest position in generating employment opportunities. Altogether 3,397 persons were employed in hotel business at that time in which women were only 19 percent. Among the women participants of the same survey, 57.5 percent were involved as cleaners and kitchen assistants, whereas only 14.2 percent women were reported to have been working at reception and management sector (Khatiwada 2009). Hence, a very less number of women are shown to be involved in tourism business. Among them most workers were unskilled and were limited to lower jobs.

Shrestha (2002) had analyzed women's socio-economic condition in travel agency in tourism industry of Nepal. His study clarifies that nowadays more women workers are educated and are drawing a handsome remuneration. Women, as the study claims, have received a favorable and encouraging support from their family and are found to be more satisfied with their professions than men are.

A survey conducted by Nepal Rastra Bank has presented a comprehensive data which reveals that only 20.6 percent women are involved in tourism and other industries related to it (Acharya 2010). Pahari (2008) has made a study on the socio-economic status of women who are participatory in tourism. This study reports that most women workers are under 10+2 level in education, married, and involved in limited familial trade. It discloses the dissatisfactions of women in tourism business due to low income, work burden and longer working hours. Women in this sector have to confront the economic and language problem besides their occasional suffering from the crimes like murder, theft and robbery. They also have to undergo problems related to gender discrimination.

Acharya (2010) conducted a study entitled 'Women Participation in Tourism Business' in 2010. This study, however, finds positive changes with some exciting pictures. Women in travel, tour and trekking sub-sectors in Pokhara are found satisfied with this business because they

have become economically independent. Similarly, it also mentions that there is a significant growth in their skill and capacity after joining this business. They have had significant roles in decision making process regarding the household activities. Despite the fact that the society in the past had a negative attitude toward women involved in tourism business, most of the women have now realized that there have been visible changes as regards the society's attitude to them. Among the women as employed in the tourism sector of Pokhara, most of them are local as well as the inhabitants of neighboring villages of Pokhara. There is the highest number of women engagement in tourism, who are aged from 20 to 30. In this age group, unmarried women are found attracted more than married women. While analyzing the family condition, more women from single families are employed in tourism.

The number of Hindu women working in tourism business of Pokhara is higher than those of any other religious groups. In addition, women from other ethnic and indigenous communities are also involved. In this way, women from all classes and communities of society have been benefitted from the tourism promotion of Pokhara. In other words, a situation of ethnic harmony can be observed in the tourism sector. Trekking agency sub-sector is found as the interesting refuge for the employment of those women who are divorced. Tourism has appeared as a new potential sector for employment generation in Pokhara. Greater numbers of women workers have been involved as porters in seasonal basis in trekking companies and as housekeepers and cooks at hotels and restaurants. At present, women have also joined a new tourism sector called paragliding.

7.4 Challenges and opportunities

Like any other sector, tourism is mainly dominated by men in decision making and controlling resources. Although many women have actively contributed to the family with financial support, they still lack access to decision making process. The top positions in the tourism industry are mainly occupied by men, especially in travel agencies, mountaineering, trekking, rafting companies, airlines, accommodations and communication services, with better remuneration and involving more than frequent travel outside the village. Women are often found in the lower positions. They are often neglected stakeholders of tourism development because of the different gender obstacles that exist for a visible participation in tourism (Sherpa 2012). Inequality in wage, harassment, insults, males' dominating tendency and sexual abuse are some of the major gender-related problems frequently seen in this business.

They study of KC (2013) highlights women's choices in picking roles and challenges encountered on such roles in few villages of Annapurna Conservation area in Western Nepal. Her study reveals that women's roles and outputs are determined by factors such as education, family background, physical condition to bear works, holistic work environment, language, and the ability to set one's own criteria.

7.4.1 Socio-economic status of women

Women are made economically and socially dependent. They have very low access to the decision making process in economic matters in both within household and outside.

7.4.1.1 Dual responsibility status of working women in general

Women lack access to capital assets and family resources in their own rights. Gender bias has played a key role for women's low involvement in income oriented outside-home affairs. Many employers of the business sector think that women cannot continue the job due to their social and biological reproductive responsibilities. Such attitude of the employers about women may be due to the discriminatory nature of the patriarchal system of the society. As women, to a greater extent, have been confined in the unproductive work of the household such as cooking, cleaning and rearing children, they are prevented from realizing their full potential and have the least exposure to the work beyond the household.

Though limited numbers of educated and trained women have got opportunities for employment and income in local tourism industry in the changing context, still majority of them are forced to act as double-career women in general. They also have to perform all the household activities alongside. Such women have to work as a bridge between the household and office (Pahari 2008). On the one hand, they have to perform all the household affairs and on the other they keep continuing their career outside home. Till now male counterparts have not developed a culture of assisting women in household works.

7.4.1.2 Inequality as the structural reality in tourism

Tourism is a socio-economic sector which is naturally embedded with the potential for various economic opportunities. However, inequality has remained the structural reality of Nepalese tourism where males have commanded strong hold over and decisive roles. In the tourism industry of the country, males have a dominant and leading position.

This is also owing to the fundamental structure of Nepalese society which is basically patriarchal, where women have been suffering from gender exploitation, oppression and discrimination since time immemorial. Sometimes negative attitudes of the society and family members and also the patriarchy system harass women involved in tourism activity (Acharya 2012). At present, some women have reached the higher managerial levels of hotel, lodge, restaurant, and trekking and travel agency. Yet, the majority of women involved in this sector are at the lower posts. Due to lack of mobility and exposure to tourism-related activities, women also lack confidence. Less exposure, mobility constraints, and less confidence keep the women behind in markets transactions for inputs and outputs. They have very little access to the highest level i.e. policy making, planning, and managerial level.

7.4.1.3 Unfavorable social setting, unbalanced participation and poor work environment

Poor education and superstition in the present patriarchal society are the roots for unfavorable mindset that has generally enforced women to the fragile and vulnerable state. Women are supposed to be inferior in the capacities to handle both household work and business at a time. This is one of the main reasons for the limited presence of women in the tourism sector. In the study entitled "Tourism and Employment", (Khanal 2005 as cited in Pahari 2008) reveals this state in the scenario of gender discrimination in the employment generated by tourism industry. Khanal has depicted women's participation in the employment opportunities generated by five-star hotels. Women, according to this research, were found to be less in both the number and status than their male counterparts.

In this male dominated business, women had confronted economic problem in the beginning. Once women join this industry, they are found facing other discriminatory problems which are prevailing in the business and work environment. For example, male workers are found dominating, teasing and insulting the female workers. Women are sometimes accused of having a misleading character and are also the victims of sexual abuse committed by hotel owners and tourists. Women working in dance bars and massage centers are sexually exploited. Thus, women in tourism are still facing different kinds of difficulties and hardships (based on an interview with hotel entrepreneurs in December 2012).

7.4.1.4 Prejudiced appraisal to women

Women are regarded physically weak or vulnerable who cannot contribute to tourism, especially adventure tourism. In tourism industry, women are placed on the basis of gender roles. They have been victimized by gender biasness. While males hold the highest posts and decisive roles in this industry, women are given lower positions as cleaners, waitresses and assistants. Due to various social, cultural and religious superstitions, a fully conducive environment has not yet been created for women's participations and their roles in tourism. The lack of proper education, superstitious culture, familial obstruction, and lack of women's self-confidence are some of the major hindrances for women's respectable presence in the tourism sector.

7.4.1.5 Weak social status of women

Most of the women have joined this business owing to poor economic status of the family and problem of unemployment. It is observed elsewhere women's entry to this business has been looked down by the society. It was found that in the beginning of working in hotel, lodge and restaurants, women were insulted and their job was labeled as lower status job. Some women were also found to have been questioned upon their character. Some women kept their work in restaurant secret for preventing social and familial harassments and negative views (based on an interview with working women in lodge and restaurant in December 2012).

7.4.1.6 Lack of capacity building related interventions and empowerment

Language problem is another obstacle women have been facing. It was also found that women found it very difficult to continue this business because of the lack of trainings. Women lack access to capital assets and family resources in their own rights. So they take the activities that require low investment and that produce low returns. Due to less access to education, inappropriate and inadequate skills and training related to tourism, women have less confidence to take timely decision and lack risk-taking capacity. Thus, owing to the lack of related skill and knowledge, only a very few of women are involved in this industry.

7.4.2 Opportunities in changing context

In spite of a number of challenges, some positive signs of changes have been observed with increase in women's knowledge, awareness, working

skills, sensitization, increasing job opportunities as described below. Chettri (2009) expresses her wonderful experience on the gradual positive changes with some increment on the number of women participations in tourism sector. The paragraphs below offer these aspects from the perspectives of entrepreneurs and workers in tourism industry.

7.4.2.1 Positive aspects of women entrepreneurs in tourism

This author's interviews with working women in tourism business show some encouraging positive results. Some women have also adopted the alternative professions like teaching, trade and farming. The income of most women has supported their livelihoods. They are satisfied with tourism business for being independent. Majority of women are found to have spent their tourism-based income in household work and education. Some women are satisfied for being able to give technical education to their children. After getting involved in this business, they have not only enriched their skill and talent but also received honors and rewards from different national and international organizations for their activities and commitment to this business.

7.4.2.2 Positive features of working women

Tourism has remained influential in global market day by day. And women are also being attracted to it. Ghimire (2009) reveals the increasing attraction of women to tourism business in the present context in her article titled "Attraction of Women to Tourism Business". This trend shows both women and men as equally active in tourism businesses. According to a survey conducted by 3 Sister Trekking Agency in Pokhara in 2011, the participation of the number of women entrepreneurs has increased by 40 percent in comparison to the previous years' condition. Women are observed with active participations in big hotels, casinos, travel agencies and trekking agencies.

In Nepal tourism has potential to uplift women's socio-economic status and to enhance their sustainable empowerment. In his article 'Trekking Guide from Porter Turned Hotelier', Sharma (2009) has described how women who started their career in tourism sector as porters, turned tourist guides and finally hoteliers. Women, according to him, are attracted to this profession because of much income as well as getting opportunities of extending their social horizons.

Tourism has become the main source of income of many women working in this sector. Women have started to realize some slow but steady

changes taking place in the society regarding people's attitude toward female entrepreneurs and workers.



*Photo 7.1 A cheerful female trekking guide with female tourist near Pokhara,
Source: Chhija Gurung, Pokhara, 2012*

Most of the women involved in tourism have also been associated with different organizations. The recent entry of women as birds guides in Annapurna conservation area in Kaski is the other milestone on the participations of women in tourism. There are seven trekking guides who have entered this profession through forming Himalayan Daughters' Birds club (Sharma 2013). Regardless of their struggles in the past and at present, there have been considerable changes in their living standards, conducts and life styles. A higher number of women in this business have realized economic independence.

7.5 Policy perspectives

The new tourism policy 2009 was drafted after the success of Second People's Movement in 2006. It has raised issues related to women's participation in tourism (MoTCA 2009). It aims at developing the infrastructures that guarantee the community's access to the benefits obtained from tourism, especially promoting rural tourism with the involvement of women in it. This policy reveals about various tourism development policies. One of

such policies mentions that a mechanism with the help of cooperative to allocate the benefits of tourism to disadvantaged people. A woman is considered one of such disadvantageous groups amidst Madhesi, Adibasi, Ethnic groups, etc. It has further aimed to promote touristic activities conducted by women organizations and groups as well as under women leadership with special incentive packages. Such activities are targeted to benefit directly to women by extending the touristic activities to every nook and corner of remote villages which have potential from tourism perspectives. The thrust of this policy to organize various short-term and mid-term trainings is the additional focus to capacitate women in tourism sector (Joshi and Joshi 2010). However, the government has not yet been able to put this into effect. As a result, the present time involvement of women in tourism industry is not very encouraging at the national level. Nepalese women have not yet got access to tourism planning, policy making and managerial level in real sense. They are still confined in only the management and operation level of commercial tourism industry like hotels, restaurants, travels and tours, trekking agencies, etc.

7.6 Interventions for the inclusion and empowerment of women in tourism

There are some limited interventions made by Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and governments to include and empower women in tourism. The paragraphs below highlight such interventions.

7.6.1 Role of the Government

Women's considerable participation in tourism industry of Nepal can undoubtedly play a remarkable role in women's empowerment. Various conferences and programs have been conducted regarding the issues related to women in tourism industry. In this regard, an interaction program on "Women Mainstreaming in Tourism" was organized by Nepal government in Pokhara on 18 February 2009 so as to discuss the role of women in the tourism industry of Nepal commemorating the forthcoming Women's Day. Women from different walks of life as well as different districts including Kaski, Gorkha and Lumjung actively participated in the interaction and sought their role in tourism in the changing context (NTB 2009).

Recognizing the soaring importance of the role of women in tourism, the then Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation asserted that the role

of women in tourism should be redefined since women are the base of this industry. 'Involvement of women in tourism will create sustainability in tourism and there should be good coordination among old and new women tourism entrepreneurs to increase the participation of women in tourism and exchange their idea and experiences' said the Minister. In the same interaction, a senior woman tourism entrepreneur and managing director of Hotel Dwarika's mentioned that women must not ask for reservation but for equal right and opportunity. Sharing her four decade long experience in tourism, she said women have now become successful in many areas, and encouraged all participants to be the employers of the tourism business, not employees.

7.6.2 Roles of Non-Government Organizations (NGO)

Some roles and involvements are gradually observed for the inclusion and empowerment of women in tourism in Pokhara.

7.6.2.1 Role of Empowering Women of Nepal

Founded in 1999, Empowering Women of Nepal is the other NGO which has been conducting programs to enhance learning, skill and capacity of the women of disadvantaged communities. The organization has aimed at making women economically independent, increasing their decision making role, enriching their self-confidence, identifying their hidden capacity, forwarding them in adventure tourism, empowering them through skill and learning and more importantly by teaching them life skills. Since its inception, the organization has been conducting training programs for women related to trekking guide, rock climbing, mountain climbing, hospitality, lodge management, cooking, eco-tourism, tour guide, ice climbing and fundamental tourism. Nearly 2000 women have benefited from the various trainings related to tourism. It has developed a norm that women can strongly involve in tourism if their capacity is enriched by means of learning skills and knowledge. It has been providing training with a high priority to women from Dolpa, Mugu, Humla, Kalikot, Jumla and other remote areas. By providing training for adventure tourism and trekking guide trainings, the organization has played a remarkable role in increasing women's participation in tourism. The majority of women, who have acquired trainings from EWN and professionally involved in trekking tourism, belong to lower castes from remote and Himali region (Khatiwada 2009).

7.6.2.2 Role of Annapurna Daughter's Club

Annapurna Daughter's Club is a non-profit NGO under the Ganesh Laxmi Charitable Trust. It was founded in 2010 with a view of developing, publicizing and promoting Pokhara and Annapurna region as well-managed tourist destinations.



Photo 7.2 Declaration event of Annapurna Daughters' Club at Annapurna Base Camp, Source: Mahendra Shrestha, Pokhara, 2013.

It has been working to popularize Annapurna region in the world through documentary. With an objective of preparing women manpower for tourism business of Pokhara, it had provided a two-day training on "Design the Future" and "Role and Necessity of Women in Tourism", in which altogether 25 women were the participants. Based on the goal to promote women in tourism, this organization believes that Pokhara and its surroundings can get recognition only through women's pleasant tone, calm nature and good behavior. The organization has been conducting awareness programs and welcome ceremonies to tourists every year on tourism day. It has also managed home stay for foreign female tourists. It had privately managed a children's program named "Small World" for two and half years and a residential care center for 9 orphan children so that skilled women human resources would be produced in the tourist sector in future (ADC 2013).

7.7 Conclusions

Tourism is one of the rapidly growing economic activities in the world that open doors equally for both women and men. As tourism industry is mainly based on hospitality attributes, women's active participation in it is substantially valuable. However, women holding up half the sky have showed their very limited presence in tourism. In this scenario, it is necessary to pay much attention to women's participations.

The study and analysis of women's participation in tourism industry of Pokhara showed that the history of their participation is just one and half decade old. Since then, there have been growing participations, awareness and decision making capacities of women than earlier. However, their overall positions are far behind their male counterparts. Hotel sub-sector holds the first position for involving the highest number of women workers, which is followed by trekking sub-sector as the second highest jobs creating sub-sector. It is found that women involved in trekking sub-sector of tourism have not only become independent, but also able to financially support their family members with their income. However, they still lacked the access to household as well as business decision making process.

A majority of women, who are involved as tourism entrepreneurs, were found to be satisfied in their businesses. This is because they experienced that it helped them to participate in economic activities with their ownerships. From the perspective of the inclusion of women in tourism industry in Pokhara, it is largely dominated by males in spite of the reality that women's involvement can be equally more important for the excellence of hospitality services. This chapter brought attention that the sustainable growth of tourism business and women's inclusive participation are reciprocal for each other's benefits. Tourism businesses' respective inclusions of women can up-scale the hospitality levels in working environment which can ultimately benefit the industry both immediately and in the long run. This, however, needs the considerable growth in the knowledge, skills and capacity buildings of women in tourism. With the capacity building endeavors, women can also observe a lot professional satisfactions through positive changes on their life styles, economic independencies, habits, and manners. It can be instrumental for not only their awareness building but also promoting tourism in Pokhara and also Nepal.

This chapter pointed out various challenges for women involved in tourist business of Pokhara. The patriarchal ideology, with a belief that women cannot handle work and duties as swiftly and skillfully as men can, has still

prevailed in tourism in Pokhara. However, in spite of the negative attitude of the society (both family relationships and work environment) toward women in tourism, the honest, diligent and hardworking women have started to experience a significant development in their skill, capability and positions. Additionally, some women have realized a gradual change in the society's attitude from negative to positive toward their involvement and potentials in tourism in Pokhara.

There is a great concern for gender equality in tourism where adequate, dignified, balanced and respectful presence of women can be developed in a sustainable manner. All stakeholders like professional tourism associations, tourism entrepreneurs (practitioners), government, Nepal Tourism Board, researchers and academicians and women (both as workers and entrepreneurs) themselves need to sit together to identify the most pressing issues and addressing them jointly. The government should play constructive roles to offer equal right, opportunity and capacity building related interventions for women.

Furthermore, the following recommendations should be considered for releasing women from various problems they face:

- Existing patriarchal mind set in tourism is a barrier to women to enhance their role in hospitality conduct, which needs to be changed with proper sensitization, advocacy and awareness campaigns. It also must convince, encourage and build their confidence for the better opportunity for them in tourism industry;
- Public awareness regarding the positive aspects of tourism should be increased.
- Very few women are involved in tourism. Therefore, women's contribution to tourism should be appreciated;
- Women can grasp better opportunity if they have learned skills and taken training before joining this industry;
- The law against sexual abuse should be implemented effectively (Also the formulation and implementation of code of conduct are desirable.);
- In view of limited involvement of women in tourism, equal opportunity should be created for women's proportionate participation; and

- The negative attitude of the society toward women's career in tourism should be changed.

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8.1 Understanding environment and tourism

For any holiday planner, the environment of interested tourist destination becomes a matter of basic concern. At the beginning, a traveler gathers information about the physical environment [climate, altitude and geographical location] of his holiday destination. Then, he or she will be engaged on searching and making analysis of corporate, social, and political environment -whether the region is peaceful or is a conflict zone. That is why tourism and environment are closely associated with one another. Various research articles, journals, magazines, books and newspaper reports are published with different views concerning the requirement of appropriate environment in the tourist destination.

In this age of globalization, attractive destinations deserve universal significance for the tourists. Pokhara and its very surrounding area, Annapurna trekking region of central Nepal, have undoubtedly succeeded to include in such lists of attractive tourist destinations. However, a big question has emerged as how the environmental beauty of Pokhara can be preserved for long term against the growing environmental pollution that this exotic city has been facing due to the continuous migration of people from the western surrounding area. The rapid increment of the migrated population and the accelerating constructions are not only deteriorating the natural beauty but also disturbing and contaminating the peaceful environment of this city which was labeled as 'exotic' and 'paradise.' Similarly, the tranquility and natural beauty of Fewa Lake have also approached to a risky moment due to human encroachments and the lack of proper conservation. Though a dozens of Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and local committees are found working at the community level to protect Fewa Lake, there is no indication of success.

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In this context, this chapter first explores the interface of complex relationships between tourism and environment in Pokhara. In milieu of the various environmental degrading factors that have made negative impacts on the sustainability of tourism in Pokhara, it recommends some damage-preventing plans of action, which concerned agencies should implement responsibly in order to bring pro-environmental consciousness among the people as well as stopping further environmental damages in Pokhara. This chapter is written on the basis of the review of various published and unpublished literature, observation of some specific sites and relevant interaction with tourism entrepreneurs in Pokhara and its surrounding.

8.2 Environmental beauty of Pokhara amidst the interrelationship of tourism and environment

Available documents reflect that there is not a very long history that the writers have published articles and books raising the concern of environment regarding this Pokhara city. However, some of the authors, Devendra Bahadur Lamichhane, Bisho Kalyan Parajuli, Krishna KC., and K.B. Parajuli have already done some researches and have published their outcome to prevent Pokhara from environmental pollution. Similarly, the great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota has expressed his environmental concern by composing a poem about 'Pokhara'. The poet presents the blooming beauty of Machhapuchhre in the tranquil Lake Fewa. Devkota even a few decades before predicted that Pokhara in future would be the famous tourist spot. He meditates, "This earth paradise will be an interesting tourist destination in the world" (Devkota 2004). He has praised nature as a paradise and Pokhara as one of the major tourist destinations of the world. He argues that the only truth is the truth of environmental consciousness that connects the soil, air, the mountains and the humanity.

Regarding the interaction that exists between tourism and the environment, Andrew Holden argues that it is necessary to understand the complexity of tourism. It is in fact a product of a variety of interacting factors in our home environment. Nature conservation and tourism in the contemporary sense date from the first half of the nineteenth century and, to a large extent, have developed parallel to one another (Holden 2008). It shows that the concept of tourism is complex and reveals heterogeneous factors associated with environment. Tourism development commonly has been advocated as an alternative to traditional natural resource-based

economic development, such as timber production, agriculture, mining, etc. Recently, many advocates of tourism have promoted seemingly new environmentally friendly tourism concepts, such as nature-based tourism, ecotourism, and sustainable tourism, among others. (Kline 2001). In this context, sustainable tourism is a derivative of the more general concept of sustainable development brought to prominence with the publication of “our common future”; the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WECD 1987). The term Sustainable Development came into appearance just after the release of Brundtland Report 1987 (Bhatta 2006). Sustainable tourism is tourism attempting to make as low impact on the environment and local culture as possible, while helping to generate future employment for local people.

Transport by air, road, and rail is continuously increasing in response to the rising number reported that the number of international air passengers worldwide rose from 88 million in 1972 to 344 million in 1994, and in 2011 the figure is observed 980 million (UNWTO 2012). One of the consequences of this rapid increase in air transport is that tourism now accounts for more than 60 percent of air travel, and is therefore responsible for an important share of air emissions. According to Hillman (1996), it is estimated that a single transatlantic return flight emits almost half the CO₂ emissions produced by all other sources (lighting, heating, and car use) consumed by an average person yearly.

With an area of 1, 47,181 sq km, Nepal has diverse climatic zone ranging from tropical to arctic. This has enriched Nepal with diverse flora and fauna across a distance of 120 km (Kunwar 2010). Eighty three percent of the total land is covered by high mountains and undulating hills while rest of the 17 percent by alluvial lands of Terai in Nepal (Bhatta 2006). The blending of the unique natural and cultural attractions is in fact the world-class primary tourist attractions which are second to none in the international tourism market. The abundance of spectacular tourism resources amidst the large population of poor people residing in rural and remote areas has positioned Nepal to go for ecotourism with pro-poor thrust.

8.3 Positioning the subject matter of environmental challenges in Pokhara

Before opening the issues of environmental challenges in Pokhara, having some ideas to identify its geographical setting, information of

tourist arrival statistics and population at district and national level will certainly be fruitful. Nepal recently celebrated Nepal Tourism Year 2011 with ambitious target of welcoming one million visitors carrying the slogan of “Together for Tourism” but unfortunately only 736215 visitors entered Nepal (MoTCA 2011). The delay in campaigning and ambitious target without proper planning and modus operandi has made the government’s extravagant project somewhat not completely successful in terms of achieving targets of international tourist arrivals. Out of a total of 1,000,000 targeted international arrivals, a total of 736,215 tourists arrived in Nepal in 2011. There were 545,221 arrivals by air and 190,994 arrivals by road. The growth by air is observed 22.1 percent compare to the year 2010 (MoTCA 2011).

While discussing tourism in Nepal the name of Kaski district and its headquarter Pokhara come in front row. With Pokhara city, Annapurna Himalayan Range, Machhapuchhre, Ghandruk, Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) Annapurna Circuit is just few names to identify this district. These are only a few famous images of Kaski. It has an area of 2017 sq.km with 43 Village Development Committees (VDCs), one sub-metropolitan city and one municipality. The total population of this district is 492,098 (CBS 2012). The northern part of the district slopes down from mount Machhapuchhre (6992 m), Annapurna I (8090 m), and Annapurna II (7937 m).

The major tourism sites of this district are Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City, Sarankot, Ghandruk, Ghorepani-Poonhill trek, Dhampus trek, and vulture restaurant at Bhalawat Setibagar. Interestingly Kaski district is the first Open Defecation Free district of Nepal which also reflects its commitment towards healthy and clean environment. Some of the sites are discussed below along with their present tourism and environmental scenario.

Figure 8.1 Map of Kaski District



Source: Google (2013)

Pokhara is one of the most rapidly growing cities and also the second most visited tourist place in Nepal. Because of its natural beauty with spectacular views of Annapurna Himalaya range and with Machhapuchhre peak standing very close by (only 28 km), it is a popular tourist destination (Oli 1996). Naturally, the Pokhara valley is famous for the lakes (Fewa, Rupa, Begnas, etc.), mountains (Machhapuchhre, Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, etc.), caves (Chamero Gufa, Mahendra Gufa and Gupteshwar Mahadev cave), natural water Falls (e.g. Devis Fall), Hindu temples (Taal Barahi, Bindavashini), Buddhist Monasteries (Matepani Gompa) Gorges (Seti gorge), viewpoints (Sarangkot and Peace stupa) and agro base village (Hemja).

According to the hotel entrepreneurs of Pokhara, more than 550,000 tourists visit Pokhara annually, of which around 300,000 are foreigners and remaining figure is domestic travelers (Pokharel 2012, p 8). Citing Republica's news report S. Pokhrel argues that there is increase in tourist arrival to Pokhara in 2010 by 13.39 percent, as compared to the arrival

figure of the previous year (Pokhrel 2011, p 6). Though Pokhara is welcoming domestic as well as international tourists at increasing level, this exotic city is also side by side facing immense pressure of environmental pollution. The major causes of pollution which harm tourist environment in Pokhara are problem of solid waste management, air pollution, noise pollution and pollution at Fewa Lake.

8.3.1 Solid waste management

The population of Pokhara Sub- Metropolitan City is 255,465 (CBS 2012). Compared to Kathmandu, environmental situation of Pokhara is better. Nevertheless, environmental pressure has increased in Pokhara especially along the built-up sites, river banks, eastern bank of Fewa Lake, and main market area between Bagar to Mahendra pool, Mahendra pool to Prithivi Chowk, Lake Side area and old Bus Park area (Parajuli 2000).

As per the report of Ministry of Local Development, Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City generates solid waste of 123.45 tons per day and the total municipal waste collection is 28.39 tons per day, which is based on the estimated population of 2008 (214,226). Average waste generation of the city is 0.42 kg per person per day. The total expenditure in solid waste management is NPR 83, 12, 93,369. Furthermore, there are 56 percent organic waste, 16.2 percent plastic, 8.9 percent paper and 16.5 percent inert waste. The existing waste collection services in the city are Door-to-Door service and daily Road pick-up services. To collect the waste, tractor trailer, tripper, rickshaw and specific services (compactors) are used. There is a controlled sanitary landfill site 12 km away from the city in Bachhebuduwa Ward No.18 near the converging point of Seti river and Phusre Khola being used for 3 years (SWMRMC 2008). In 2003, the Asian Development Bank supported Pokhara Environmental Improvement Program to build a sanitary landfill site for the city as part of the Second Tourism Infrastructure Development Project (Tuladhar et al. 2003). The landfill site is constructed for the municipal waste and fecal sludge discharge. There is Landfill Area, Treatment Area, Buffer zone, internal road and other infrastructure and Composting Areas with the total area of 200 ropani². The treatment capacity is 75 cum per day of seepage and 40 cum per day of solid waste leach ate. There was a need for a simple and cost effective system for treating the leach ate as well as the sludge produced by cleaning of septic tanks in the city. It was estimated that the city generated 12,000 m³ of sludge and 15,600 m³ of municipal

² Ropani is measurement unit used in Hilly regions of Nepal. 1 ropani= 508.83771 m²

waste every year, all of which would be collected and brought to the site (Tuladhar et al. 2003).

Eighteen wards of Pokhara Sub Metropolitan City have annual expenditure on solid waste management of around 25 million rupees. Out of 18 wards, solid waste in ward No. 6 is to some extent managed by the private sector i.e., Pokhara Waste Management Private Ltd. In the remaining 17 wards PSMC office itself manages the solid waste (Enayetullah 2011). Pokhara Municipality has entered into a public-private-partnership (PPP) agreement with Yam Composting for solid waste management of Wards 6 & 9. Yam Composting collects waste from 30 hotels and 25 households, and plastic from 200 households from Lake Side, a major tourist hub in Pokhara.³

The involvement of local clubs, *Tole Bikas Sashta* (Street Development Committee) and *Aama Samuha* (mothers' groups) are active in Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City (PSMC) to reduce the solid waste problem. Some of those are *Gyan Marg Swatantra Mahila Samuha*, NGO, established in 2001, which focuses on street sweeping and community cleanup campaigns, waste collection, transportation, composting, recycling and land-filling. There as well are other NGOs named *Samudaik Sewa Kendra* and *Prahari Sewa Kendra* working on Tole clean up, installation of filter pond and controlling the water hyacinth in Fewa Lake (SWMRMC 2008).

For the improvement of Pokhara's environment the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology has included six projects: Public Awareness and Environment education; sanitation facilities improvement, sanitary landfill site, land use concept plan, storm water drainage improvement, and urban road improvement.

8.3.2 Air and noise pollution

The clean and fresh air is pleasant to all living beings and this is vital for the tourism industry. Pokhara is called a piece of heaven on earth thus it should maintain its beauty to attract more tourists in the days to come. Without neat and clean environment it is not possible. The terrible noise and smoke emission from the vehicles, and dusty road can have negative impact in tourism business. The Total Suspended Particle Concentration in Pokhara was 874.4 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and the PM_{10} concentration is 839.9 (CAI-Asia 2006).

³ See www.pppue.org.np for detail.

Table 8.1 PM₁₀ (µg/m³) and TSP (µg/m³) concentration in urban areas of Nepal

City	PM ₁₀	TSP
Pokhara	839.9	874.4
Birgunj	664.5	705.86
Biratnagar	661.46	723.06
Janakpur	1298.06	1406.1
Narayanghat	572.93	658.5
Butwal	1066.89	1158.83
Bhairahawa	776.59	840.76
Nepalgunj	1448.20	1529.21
Mahendra Nagar	687.5	736.25

Source: CAI-Asia (2006)

Note: The values are 8-hour average concentrations.

The above table clearly demonstrates that the concentration of TSP is high in Pokhara which can have negative impact on tourism. According to Nepal Air Quality Descriptors for PM₁₀, if PM₁₀ is greater than 425 µg / m³ in that case it is hazardous (MoEST 2005). So, it has been already late to think about it and to stop air pollution. A number of surveys have been conducted in different time periods to assess the impact of air pollution on this major industry. Findings of the Departing Visitors Survey conducted among 1,702 tourists between May and June 2001 by MARG Nepal indicate that the quality of air is the number one area where tourists feel improvement is essential (CAI-Asia 2006). The increasing air and noise pollution is accelerated by the dusty atmosphere and unhealthy smoke, gaseous and displeasing noise generated by the automobiles. People in and around the Old Bus Park, Prithvi Chowk, Mahendrapool, Lake Side and Bagar are encountering air and noise pollution created by automobiles and city crowd (Parajuli 2000). Similarly, the discos and pubs running till late night are also causing noise pollution at Lake Side though several times government bodies and local people have conducted awareness programs to make the city tourist-friendly.

Moreover, Pokhara airport which is one of the busiest airports in Nepal is located at wrong place because it is inside the city area. Frequent landing and takeoff has made huge noise pollution in the city. Generally, such airports are built away from the city centers in other countries. So, shifting of Pokhara airport to Chinedanda is essential though it has become a huge political discourse at national and international level. Above facts and figures reveal that if the condition goes on with no more improvements

then the people in Pokhara are going to lose tourism business that will obviously affect their daily life as well as the main tourist hub will be faded.

8.3.3 Preserving Fewa Lake

The major source of tourism attraction of Pokhara is Fewa Lake which is intimately situated in the city. It is the second largest lake of Nepal with an area of 4.4 sq. km. where boating and fishing have become the matters of attraction. Another striking feature is the harmony of mountains and Fewa Lake and the shortest distance to enjoy mountain views. There are 22 native species of fish in the lake. One of the delicacies served in the several restaurants in the town of Pokhara is the local fish from the lake (Aryal 2008). Despite the beauty of the lake, the environmental problem is rising in the lake because the pressure has increased along the bank on the eastern side as well as rough roads and poorly constructed houses have been built except on the land acquired by the government (Oli 1996). Oli has reported that the main reason for the pollution of Fewa Lake is solid waste disposal. The increase in the number of hotel construction, business firms and other urban activities in the Southern and Western part of the lake are the causes for the pollution of Fewa, and loss of biodiversity and health hazards to the people. The degradation of water quality of the lake has made it unfit for recreational and aesthetic purpose too.

The poor sewage system in Pokhara and the sub-surface seepage from urban area has also polluted the lake. The nutrient load due to surface runoff from agricultural land has led to the *eutrophication* of the lake with proliferation of water hyacinth and algal bloom thereby increasing fish mortality and destroying Lake Ecosystem (Raya et al. 2008). The hotels and lodges running at the bank of the lake are also the causes for pollution. Most of the hotel waste is directly added to the lake and this waste is mostly organic waste which helps in accelerating the algal bloom and water hyacinth. This invasive plant has decreased the value of Fewa Lake thereby creating direct impact on tourism. Moreover, some hotels, restaurants and lodges surrounding the lakes have been drawing water from Fewa Lake using motors. This activity must be stopped and the local government should be responsible to provide alternative solutions of water scarcity. It is quite important to develop a sustainable drainage system to avoid water and other types of pollutions coming to Fewa Lake. To avoid such hazards, a modern drainage should be built from Masbar to beyond Dam Side so that surface runoff from the city will be blocked from mixing into Fewa Lake.

The lack of coordination among the concerned parties and the negligence of the local people are some of the reasons for the worsening condition of the lake. The interesting thing to be noted is that there are over 26 different organizations registered in the name of keeping Fewa Lake safe and hundreds of other NGOs claim that they have programs to clean it. In the same vein, Fewa Trust was also registered with a view to keep Fewa Lake neat and clean, but none of these organizations could save Fewa from pollution and encroachment. The primary reason why these organizations have failed to protect Fewa Lake is their earning motive.⁴ Therefore, it has been essential to involve the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the protection of Fewa enlisting in the World Heritage Site.

The subject 'lake' is narrowly defined under existing legal provisions like Aquatic Animal Protection Act 1961 (amended first in 1999), Forest Act 1993 (amended in 2001), National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act, Forest Act 1993 (amended in 2001), Soil and Watershed Conservation Act 1982, Water Resources Act 1992, Electricity Act 1992, and Environment Protection Act 1996. Furthermore, Local Self Governance Act (1999) empowers local units like District Development Committees (DDCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), Municipal Authorities, and Metropolitan Authorities towards conservation and sustainable development. Under this Act, promoting socio-economic development, natural resources management and conservation become sole responsibility of these local bodies (Oli 1997). Therefore, it signifies that protection act for all lakes have been essential in Nepal.

There is not only such dark side of the story, but also the positive part that can create optimistic vibes among the people in Pokhara. It was reported that for the conservation of the seven lakes in municipality bicycle routes are proposed in the plan that will connect the seven lakes- *Begnas, Rupa, Gunde, Khaste, Nureni, Dipang* and *Maidi*. According to Bastola (2011), the project of Rs.350 million is targeted to be completed in five years. The coordination among different sectors like local people, hoteliers, and communities based organizations (CBOs), and municipality is indeed in conserving Fewa Lake and promoting tourism in Pokhara. The PPP can be the effective tool in managing the wastes that are disposed in the lake thereby creating the win-win scenario which is very important in sustainability of the lake. Fewa Environment Development Committee,

⁴ See www.pokharacity.org.np for more details

Fewa Fish Entrepreneurs Committee and Fewa Boat Entrepreneurs are also working to clean the lake with financial support from Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). They still require doing a lot. It will directly help in preserving environment and will add a new chapter for sustainable tourism. The utmost activity that will help in conserving the lake is awareness program. Until and unless the perception of the people about the lake doesn't change, it is difficult to achieve the target of clean and pristine Fewa Lake.

8.4 Initiatives for environmental protection

Tourism business in Pokhara depends on the preservation of tourism assets, which should be taken care by hotel owners, local people, farmers, businessmen, government workers, political parties, CBOs, and NGOs, the major stakeholders of tourism. They all should work in cooperation with each other to preserve the beauty of Pokhara. Ecotourism is also possible when all the stakeholders come together to promote tourism by preserving local culture and traditions along with upgrading socio-economic status of the people. The hotel entrepreneurs, one of the influential stakeholders, are directly related to the tourism field. They should carry out responsible tourism focusing on preserving environment along with promotion of tourism.

Some of the hotels in Pokhara are taking initiatives to practice ecotourism to some extent. For instance, Hotel Barahi has set the example in saving energy by using biogas plant where the feed for biogas is from the wastes generated from the hotel itself. Thus, the use of biogas plays significant role to minimize the waste disposal in landfill site. Biplob Poudel, Executive Director of Hotel Barahi, says "Due to Biogas Plant, our waste problem is solved. Furthermore, we can produce renewable energy out of waste". The major input materials in the plant are human excreta and kitchen waste. The advantages of having biogas plant in the hotels and guest houses are easy disposal of kitchen and toilet waste, which helps to reduce the purchase of LPG for cooking. This hotel has set a good example of responsibility towards the society and environment.

Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge is also another example which has been promoting ecotourism through its activities. It verifies its commitment towards promoting tourism along with conserving the environment. It has set the responsible tourism policy that states "...TMPL fully supports and practices the group policy of environmentally responsible and sustainable conservation tourism. Protection and enhancement of the natural

environment, the people and communities in which Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge is privileged to operate are partners, stakeholders, and vital resources in our business". The lodge has clearly stated the management of energy, waste, water, and chemicals to make the business more resource- based and take care of occupational hazard. From the perspective of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), this lodge maintains the highest ethical and professional standards in the internal administration and accounting of the business. It runs the awareness program about responsible tourism and believes that the ultimate goal of responsible tourism – an enhanced and sustainable natural and social environment – can only be achieved effectively if all stakeholders are fully informed and are aware of the issues.

The lodge runs a 'Sustainable Action Group' forum three times a year or more frequently where any member of its staff is encouraged to participate and voice his or her ideas on how the company can become more sustainable. Guests are informed at welcome briefing about hotel's initiatives to minimize fuel and water consumption, reduce waste and use of chemicals. Guests are encouraged to provide feedback, comments and suggestions which are considered by the Sustainable Action Group and recommended for the implementation if they are feasible and beneficial. Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge works closely with local partners, and national and international charities. It seeks to support community-based development and promotes environmental enhancement projects. Emphasis in all projects is given to ensure that the ownership is with the community. The lodge undertakes a range of biodiversity monitoring projects and supports various social development and welfare programs. Similarly, a number of hotels, guest houses, lodge and restaurants are offering low cost jar water instead of plastic bottle water providing refuel facilities. This campaign is rapidly increasing in tourist area because it is good opportunity for the tourists and also it reduces the use of plastics in the tourist area.

Another organization that always remains with the city in tourism development and environment protection is Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) established in 1955. Over the years, PCCI has become a dynamic and result -oriented forum of trade, industry, tourism and environment including health, education and infrastructure development in Kaski district. It provides services to SMEs: Management Training, Skill Development Training, Programs for Women Entrepreneurs, Agro based training, Local Business Training, Awareness Programs, Environment

Protection, and Tourist Visit. In Awareness campaign, PCCI provides orientation on sanitation for public in different market areas. It also looks after the promotion of Tanahun as tourism destination. In Environment protection, it runs programs such as Water Fountain Construction, Tree Plantation and Green Belt Development, Bucket Distribution, and Sanitation and Cleaning Campaign. These aforementioned activities are directly linked to socio-economic development and promoting tourism in the area. Recently, PCCI has successfully organized 'National Industrial Trade Fair 2069, Pokhara' from 6th December 2012 to 16th December, 2012. This is also an effective medium to promote local goods and services that will help in promoting sustainable and responsible tourism in the region.

Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC) another umbrella organization is working for the welfare of tourism in Pokhara. It has been active in promoting tourism and maintaining the standards related to tourism in the town. A group of entrepreneurs coordinated by PTC approached local authority to help declare 'No Vehicle Zone' in a certain part of the main road at Lakeside. PTC has claimed vehicles are the reasons for sound pollution and difficulties for tourists to walk on the streets because of the vehicular movement. Convinced by the idea, the local authority declared three kilometers of main road to be a 'No Vehicle Zone' for seven hours (15:00 pm to 22:00 pm) every Saturday. This decision came into effect from 9 January 2011 (Ghimire and Upreti 2011). This was a good initiative in reducing pollution in the tourist area. However, due to the lack of coordination among all the stakeholders and strong support from local government this campaign has paralyzed.

In a recent effort, PTC, the South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, and Kathmandu University in association with 22 tourism and non-tourism related professional associations and organizations have formulated tourism ethical operation codes of conduct manual and CSR guidelines for destination level for the tourism sector in Pokhara.⁵ These guidelines were publicly disseminated through "Pokhara Tourism Declaration" program in April 2013. The process of these guidelines formulations have supported to gradual building of knowledge, awareness, learning, positive attitudinal

⁵ These guidelines were formulated under a partnership actions titled 'Meeting the challenges of Peace-building in Tourism in Pokhara- Strengthening the Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethical Business Operation' executed through the cooperation and exchange between NCCR and KU affiliated researchers and tourism practitioners of Pokhara in the years 2011 and 2012. See www.pokharatourism.org for more information.

changes and mutual understanding on core problems (conflict-sensitive tourism) as rooted on the irresponsible tourism principles and practices in tourism industry in Pokhara. The responsible and sustainable tourism guidelines, which have larger thrusts on environmentally friendly tourism, are supposed to achieve potential of sustainable profitability through increased number of responsible tourists (international and domestic) arrivals and responsible and sustainable tourism behaviors by both guests and hosts in tourism industry of Pokhara (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012).

For improving the condition and leading the tourism industry towards sustainability, it is necessary for all the concerned agencies to work together and solve the problems. The CSR is also playing major role in promoting eco-tourism through participation of local people and private firms who carry out their responsibility towards society by conducting different programs with attractive slogans beneficial to tourism industry. For example, tree plantation, cleaning campaign, awareness programs, and public demonstration [rallies] at different times are conducted by TMPL, PCCI, Pokhara Waste Management Private Ltd and few other environment-concerned intuitions.

Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) is the model of community conservation in Nepal. In 1986, ACAP was initially launched as an experiment towards an integrated approach in conservation and development. The goal of ACAP is to mitigate negative or undesirable environmental impacts through promotion of local guardianship and making tourism or other development activities responsive to the fragility of the area - generating and retaining tourism, and other sources of income in the local economy through skills development, increase in local production, and local entrepreneurship; promoting linkages between conservation, tourism, and local development through a proactive approach in planning, tourism revenue for local development, nature conservation and tourism development, and diversification of tourism products (ACAP 1996). For instance, Ghandruk is a model, village for tourists in the trekking route not far from Pokhara valley (Shrestha 2009).

According to ACAP, the thriving tourism industry paved way for investment in hotels and other infrastructures and tourism figure rose from 5000 in 1990 to 17000 in 1999 (ACAP 2012). The main energy sources in Ghandruk are firewood, kerosene, LPG and electricity. Solar heaters are commonly used by hotels for heating water which is seen as special service to tourists to generate income. Many hotels and restaurants have switched from

using local stoves to low-watt electric cookers. Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) has promoted it.⁶ So the use of solar heaters and the easy availability of other energy sources has decreased the dependency on firewood by the hoteliers. This has helped in promoting sustainable tourism in the area thereby creating a milestone in mountain tourism development in other regions of the country. The development of micro hydro power has a positive impact on the environment by reducing the use of firewood for lightning, and cooking. Micro hydro has also helped to uplift socio-economic condition of the local people.

8.5 Future Vision

The natural harmony of Pokhara valley is the jewel not only for the people in the region, but also for the people around the world. Tourism destinations are international by nature in this age of globalization. The future of Pokhara depends on the protective activities and a higher level of consciousness among the people to create tourist-friendly environment and environment-friendly tourism. There should be a clear modus operandi for the preservation of the tourism assets and the environment. All the stakeholders should work together having clear and effective vision to make Pokhara City better and healthier.

The discussion of the issue from the perspective of tourism and the management of wastes of Fewa Lake signifies that corporate industry should take the responsibility. The relationship between tourism and environment is like flesh-nail relation. Any disturbance in one part directly harms the other aspects. Thus, it is necessary for the stakeholders to carry out their duty effectively in order to maintain the breath-taking beauty of Pokhara. For this purpose, the strong bonding among the hoteliers, local people, government agencies, CBOs, NGOs, entrepreneurs, and corporate houses should carry out different joint-venture programs, which will ultimately meet the norms of tourism and environment. Thus, the effective vision and implementation of the proposed program in time will help in achieving the expected results.

It is essential to increase the level of understanding, the norms and values of tourism and environment which will not only help in economic development but also create a clean and healthy tourism in Pokhara. Some of the activities like management of hotel waste, cleaning of Fewa Lake, preserving the local culture and tradition, local cuisines, management

⁶ See <http://pace.energyprojects.net> for details.

of traffic, control of air and noise pollution are necessary conditions to meet the vision of “clean and healthy Pokhara”. First of all, the awareness among the local people is essential and they should feel the ownership of those assets upon which they take pride. The promotion of Responsible Tourism through awareness campaigns, joint venture programs, waste reduction, training and capacity building will be helpful to improving the status quo of Pokhara.

Apart from Fewa Lake and the Lake Side Area, Pokhara is also a valuable asset for nature, culture and sports tourism. The blending beauty of Pokhara is no doubt Fewa Lake and mountain views. The management of Begnas Lake and Rupa Lake, promotion of local culture, adventure sports like paragliding, ultra-light flight, sky diving, base jumping, Zip Flyer, rock climbing, canyoning are also important to flourish tourism business. The promotion of adventure sports in Pokhara is an extraordinary benefit of tourism industry in Nepal. Hence, all the organizations, NGOs related to environment as well as entrepreneurs require to focus on managing healthy atmosphere by coming together to fulfill the vision.

8.6 Conclusions

The main purpose of the terms 'eco-tourism', 'ethical tourism', 'green tourism', 'responsible tourism' or 'pro-environment tourism', is to preserve and utilize environment for sustainable tourism. The relation between tourism and environment is very intimate. Environment is affected by tourism and in the long run, tourism depends on the quality of environment. Indeed, the quality of environment is frequently the primary attraction for tourists. The concern in environment and tourism can lead to the sustainability of tourism. Ecotourism provides first hand encounter with the natural environment without disturbing local culture and involving local people in the tourism business.

Pokhara, with the increase in tourist flow by 13.4 percent in 2010 (excluding Indian tourists), should maintain its glory by linking tourism and environment. For this there should be effective coordination among different parties relying directly or indirectly on tourism. They should work together to make the “City of Lakes” better. The proper management of waste, energy and water is very crucial to make the city clean and healthy. For this purpose different organization, CBOs, government bodies, individuals, and hotels should contribute more to establish further models of eco concepts by profession in the days to come. For

instance, to develop the concept of responsible tourism Hotel Barahi, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, PCCI and PTC have already brought some newness to enhance community- based tourism and have helped reduce environmental impact. The initiation taken by Pokhara Tourism Council in the year 2011 to make Lake Side 'No Vehicle Zone' after 3 pm was certainly good starting to create more conducive environment. However, the campaign wasn't supported by all the stakeholders due to which there was controversy in declaring 'No Vehicle Zone' at Lake Side in Pokhara. This clearly shows that without active participation of all the stakeholders and lack of facilitation by the government, the very situation can lead to the failure of the project.

The future of tourism in Pokhara depends on how the entrepreneurs, NGOs, stakeholders, people and the government address the serious threat of environmental pollution in order to keep this exotic city neat and clean. In addition to this, development of tourism is only possible through maintaining tourist-friendly corporate culture. To enhance tourist-friendly culture all the entrepreneurs should stop cut-throat competition and build fixed price system to reduce dilemma of the consumers. Therefore, the concerned people need to work together to make Pokhara pollution free, eco-friendly and responsible tourism destination.

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Tourism events and facilities in Pokhara: current status and future potentials

Shreekanta S. Khatiwada¹

9.1 Introduction

Tourism is a multidimensional industry based on attractions, events and facilities with peace, stability and security. Natural environment, cultural traditions and people associated events are the attractions and major motivational factors for tourists. Tourism is defined by various scholars (*Chauhan 2004; Mathiesen and Wall 1982; Shrestha 2000*). However, there is common focus in all definitions of tourism which reveals it as an experience in travelling and involving in events with short and long term pleasure and recreational activities. This experience involves a set of interrelationships between people, places and their activities within the range of available products and services. Tourism events and services are basic elements in tourism which motivate or attract the visitors in tourist destinations. These are such elements which trigger off tourists' desires to visit tourist destinations, see them, involve in events and activities and admire these elements in such destinations. In this context, adequate attention to touristic events and services become obviously indispensable for the proper development of the tourism in any region or country. These are those elements in the tourism product which can determine the choice of tourists on one destination over the other (*Collier 1989; Negi 1990; Satyal 2000; Singh 1994*). The trends of tourism in recent years show that there are special interest groups of tourists. Such tourists are observed with changing behaviors and preferences. They are not only interested in visiting and observing natural places, cultural sites, and rural and urban settlements and consuming the comfort and luxury of available services but also observing and involving in lively events in tourist destinations (*Sinha 1997, Shakya 2008*).

Pokhara is a unique tourist destination in Nepal. It is popularly known as a land of paradise among the visitors due to the abundance of contrast land

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settings, close view of panoramic mountain ranges, beautiful lakes, old caves, deep rivers and mid and high hills (Khatiwada 2008). This tourist destination is popular among the domestic as well as international visitors. Tourism related events, activities and services have been increasing in Pokhara with the increment on the numbers of business firms and recreational activities in recent days.

Tourism in Pokhara had started with the visits of only few adventure tourists in 1950s. They were then largely interested in adventurous activities and natural environments. There were just 119 visitors who had visited Pokhara in 1957 (Gurung 1980). However, the number of visitors started to increase in Pokhara and its surrounding Annapurna region in later years with the development of basic infrastructure in Pokhara and some accessibility in the rural sectors of Annapurna region. This gave a thrust to tourism to gear up its commercial level since 1970s. The volumes of tourism business and activities have significantly increased in recent years. Apart from the general regular increase of tourism-related events and services, the national mega event like Visit Nepal Year 1998 and regional event like Visit Pokhara Year 2007 were milestones for the identification, exploration, development, promotion and protection of additional events, services and product in the entire Pokhara region (Khatiwada 2007). Furthermore, the golden jubilee celebration of the first ascend of Mt. Dhaulagiri (8167m) in the year 2010 with the presence of Mr. Kurt Dimberg² provided renewed attention on the development of mountain tourism in Pokhara and its surrounding. Furthermore, the western regional level launching and opening of Nepal Tourism Year 2011 from Pokhara in January 2011 also sensitized the importance of tourism-related events and services both in Pokhara and its surrounding rural areas. This chapter discusses the state of the tourism related current events and services in Pokhara. It highlights future potential of tourism events and services in Pokhara and comes up with some suggestions to strengthen the existing events and services and materialize the newly potential events and services.

This chapter is based on primary and secondary sources of information. The office bearers of the tourism related associations, the officials of the respective government offices and academicians are the source of primary information on existing tourism related events and services and their future potentials. Various research-based articles, books, booklets and web pages are the source of the secondary information.

² Mr. Kurt Dim berg was one the team members who made first ascend on the top of Mt. Dhaulagiri in 1960.

9.2 Tourism related events in Pokhara

There are a wide range of tourism-related scheduled events in Pokhara at present, which make it a live tourist destination. Such events offer varieties of choices to incoming visitors. Table 9.1 offers a list of such events which are of immense interest for the various categories of special interest tourists.

Table 9.1 Tourism-related scheduled events and festivals in Pokhara

S. N.	Events	Organizer	Approximate or actual date	Remarks on focuses and places of events
1.	Pokhara Street Festival	REBAN- Pokhara	December/ January	Organized for last 11 years on the eve of English new year
2.	Paragliding (13 th held)	NAA-Pokhara	January / February	Participation of 130 -170 paragliders from average 25 countries
3.	Aha RaRa Gold Cup	Sahara Club – Pokhara	January/February	football match for last 11 years
4.	<i>Dhungge Sangu Mela</i> (Festival)	Local Community	January	Sale of agro product, handicraft & Cottage industry product
5.	Winter Camp	TAAN- Westrn Regional Association Pokhara	January/February	Promotion of hiking and camping points
6.	Agro- Tourism Festival	Lekhnath Chambers of Commerce & Industry	January/February	Exhibition of agro product & cultural activities
7.	Pokhara Festival	United Club Pokhara	January	Trade fair with entertainment
8.	<i>Holy Purnima</i> (Full Moon)	Local Community	February/March	Festival of colors for blessing and common betterment
9.	<i>Shivaratri Mela</i>	Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave Committee	March/April	Religious & cultural activities
10.	Fewa New Year Festivals	PHA-Pokhara	April	Festival of food and culture
11.	Promotional & FAM Tour	NATTA-Pokhara	April & August	One time event in a year

12.	Annapurna Day	NMA- Annapurna Chapter	3 rd June	Interaction programme about mountaineering & tourism
13.	Annapurna Marathone	NMA – Annapurna Chapter	June	Every two years in the area between ABC to Dhampus
14.	<i>Ashare Ropain</i> (Rice plantation) Festival.	Pokhara Tourism Council	June/July	Agro-tourism based event with a slogan of Pokhara for all seasons.
15.	International Tourism Day	Pokhara Tourism Council	27 th September	Special welcome and free gifts to the first three incoming tourists by air and surface
16.	<i>Gai jatra & Lakhe Nach</i> (Mask dance)	Local Newari Community	August/ September	Cultural dance on the streets
17.	Teej Festival	Local Community	September	Batulechaur, Rambazar & Lake side
18.	Kojagrat Purnima Mela	Local Community	October	Barahi temple in Fewa Lake
19.	<i>Bhai Teeka</i>	PHA	October/ November	Exposition of the harmonious relationships between Nepalese brothers & sisters
20.	Thulo Ekadashi Mela	Local Community	November	Ramghat, Gaighat at the bank of Seti Gandaki
21.	National Industrial Festival	Pokhara Chambers of Commerce	December	Trade Fair with various entertainment

Source: Compiled by author from various sources

Apart from above scheduled events on annual basis, there are following general events and activities which are special and differential for tourists' enjoyments due the unique natural, geographical and topographical setup of Pokhara.

9.2.1 City sightseeing tour overlapping with soft walking

Pokhara is a superb tourist destination for general holiday tourists who are interested in pleasure trips. Such trips are related with sightseeing tours and soft walking in guided city tours. A number of famous tourist points like Devi's Fall, Gupteshwor Mahadev cave, Sarangkot hill, Fewa and Begnas Lake sides, K.I. Singh bridge, New Road, Bindhyabashini temple, Tibetan monastery and Tibetan refugee camps in Chhorepatan, Hemja, and Prithvichoke are easily accessible by coaches transfers.

9.2.2 Hiking as a day trip in surrounding mid hills

The contrast land setting with the plains, hills and hillocks on the shadow of towering mighty Himalaya range is the great virtue of Mother Nature in Pokhara. The entire valley is rich with lakes, caves, rivers and gorges. There are several hills in the adjacent areas of Pokhara valley which are interesting hiking points for the adventure-seeking tourists. Sarangkot (1591 m) hill is one of the most visited hiking points. This is located half an hour drive or three hours trekking from the city centre. It is popular to have the close views of Pokhara city, Himalayan range and also eye catching sun rise. The other such hiking points or hills are Kanhukot (1443m) and Thulakot (2000m) in the east, Armalakot (1430m), Dhampus (2155m) and Australian(1900m) camp in the north west, and Mattikhana (1543m), Nuwakot (1535m) and Pumdibhumdi hill (1520m) in the south west of Pokhara valley (Gurung 1980). The ridge line trekking from Kristi Nirmal Pokhari to Bharat Pokhari hills is the other most fascinating aspect of hiking in Pokhara. Each of these hiking points is easily accessible up to the base of the hills by road transport. It requires three to five hours of trekking to reach the top of hills. All these hiking destinations are more or less linked with rural tourism activities like home stay, farm tourism and cultural activities (ibid).

9.2.3 Trekking

Pokhara is also the gateway to the world famous trekking routes of Annapurna circuit. It takes about two weeks to complete this 120 km long round trip circuit trekking route which passes through the highest point Thorong-la (5416m) in Mustang district and the deepest gorges of Kali Gandaki in Myagdi district. Generally this trek starts from Bhulbuhle of Lamjung district. On the way of this circuit trek, the river valley of Kali Gandaki in Mustang and Marshyangdi in Manang area fall just between the Annapurna range of the Himalaya and the Tibetan plateau. These valleys are special to observe the indigenous life styles and cultures of Thakalis and other Mangolians (Gurung 2007). There are other interesting trekking trips which can be started from Pokhara and as the preliminary preparation base points. Muktinath (3780m) in Mustang, Lomanthang (3890m) and Damodar kunda in upper Mustang, Annapurna Sanctuary trek up to Annapurna Base Camp (4130m), Machhapuchhre Model trek, Mardi Himal trek, Sickles (1981m) Tara hill trek, Millennium trek and Panchase are some of the culturally rich and ecological friendly mid hill trekking routes that can be covered from Pokhara in one to two weeks.

Dhorpatan, the only hunting reserve of Nepal in Baglung district and Karnali Dolpo trek of western Nepal, can also be conveniently accessed from Pokhara. The trekking related activities and events in all of those trekking routes are very fascinating because of the rich cultural heritage, natural scenery and biodiversity. More than 70 of Pokhara based trekking agencies are well equipped, skilled and experience to arrange these trekking trips on various modes like all inclusive tented package treks or teahouse (lodge) only trek or mixed of both, with also home stay facilities.

9.2.4 Rock climbing and mountaineering

Pokhara is a preferable destination as the departure point for rock climbers and mountaineers. It is also a place of rock climbing and ridge line climbing related competitions. At present Nepal Mountaineering Association, Annapurna Chapter organizes rock climbing practice course and competition on June 3rd of each year on the occasion of Mt. Annapurna day. Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN) has been organizing rock climbing events in the winter season in most of the years when such rock climbing instructors are available on demand. A total of 69 persons have got one week long basic rock climbing training offered by EWN in the last six years (Khatiwada 2009a).

Mountains must have some incantation that draws one's soul toward its essence. Silent peaks are more than words as a way toward freedom and individual passion. Even from the ancient time mountains are the source of inspiration, philosophy, peace and creation for mankind (Thapa 2006; Gurung 2006). Upadhayaya and Upreti (2009, p. 3) score that 'these Mountains, devotedly considered the abode of gods, are not only the potential resource of fresh water in forms of rivers, streams and lakes as a basis of clean & renewable energy (hydropower) but also abundant & prospective products for the development of mountain tourism'. Pokhara region is pioneer in beginning mountaineering above 8000m. The first ascend of Mt. Annapurna by Maurice Harzog in 1950 and Annapurna IV by four Nepalese women under the event titled 'Nepalese Women Annapurna Expedition-2011' is notable in this regard. These successful events have largely boosted the mountaineering activities in and around Pokhara region. A number of mountains and Himalayas like Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Ghandruk Himchuli, Barah Shikhar, Gangapurna, Mardi Himal, Machhapuchhre, Lamjung, Sikles, Manaslu, Boudhachuli, etc. are in the proximity from Pokhara. Pokhara stands as the doorway for these mountain regions where rock, ice, peak and high mountain climbing can be done.

9.2.5 General sports

Pokhara is an appropriate avenue well-suited for sports, events, funs and recreations for athletes and sports lovers. Marathon and triathlon (Swimming, cycling and running) races are popular sports events. There are organizations of regular tournament of some national level football events like Aha Rara Gold Cup by Nepal Football Association, Kaski and Sahara Club of Pokhara in Pokhara stadium during October to March of each year. Cricket match has become more popular event in South Asian countries and Pokhara can be the very especial place for it. A full-fledged cricket ground is in the last stage of its construction within the vicinity of Pokhara stadium. Pokhara has good infrastructure to organize national level events like handball, volleyball and basketball in Pokhara stadium and Annapurna stadium within the premises of Prithvi Narayan Multiple Campus at Bagar. The nearby area of Tal Barahi Temple of Fewa Lake was introduced with beach volleyball in 2012. The ranges of sports events available in Pokhara can be appropriate means of socialization and to maintain the physical fitness for the busy people from business and professional sectors. Golf offers an amazing excitement in the peculiar land setting of Pokhara. Such golf related events can be observed and participated in the following places as listed in table 9.2.

Table 9.2 List of places for Golf sports events in Pokhara

S.N.	Name of Golf course	Location	Remarks
1.	Himalayan Golf course	Majheripatan in between the Seti River and Bijayapur Stream	Available with 11 holes
2.	Fulbari Golf course	Fulbari resort premises	Available with 9 holes
3.	Golf school	Damp side	Available as a Golf training centre

Source: Sharma (2008)

Pokhara also offers amazing opportunity for the boat race and fishing for recreation in various Lakes like Fewa and Beaganas.

9.2.6 Air sports

Pokhara has got good fame for the air sports activities. There is immense pleasure of flying on air sports like micro glider in an ultra light mountain flight or paragliding. These air sports offer unlimited thrills and excitements to soar above the hills with eagles, drop down to get a close view of the valley, glide and sail in the fresh air with personal maneuver, and feel freedom of birds (Sharma 2008).

a. Paragliding

Paragliding is one of the exciting and adventurous air sports activities. Pokhara is one of the most interesting and pleasing places for paragliding. Pokhara was the only place for paragliding in Nepal till the year 2011 before Bandipur of Tanahun and Sirkot of Syangja were given permission to start paragliding in 2012. In Pokhara, Toripani of Sarangkot is the take off place for paragliding sport which is on a distance of 7 km from Fewa Lake side and is well-liked by motorable road.



*Photo 9.1 Paragliding in Pokhara a unique adventure,
Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara, 2013*

The northern places of Fewa Lake like Khapaundi, Sedi and Pame are the landing points of paragliding. As one of the most popular and unique adventure tourism events of Pokhara, paragliding contributes to increase the average length of stay of tourist and accordingly for the income and employment generation. There were 8,319 domestic as well as international tourists who participated in paragliding throughout the year 2011 and majority of them were Chinese (MoTCA 2012). Nepal Air Sports Association (NAA) is the professional association of 18 paragliding companies of Nepal. The headquarters of NAA is located in Pokhara. NAA has been organizing annual paragliding championship in Pokhara for the last 14 years. It is an international paragliding championship event of Federal Aeronautic International (FAI) category-II, so called as sports

class. The competition is on the base of flying duration with aerobics activities on the air. A total of 200 domestic and international pilots from 24 countries participated in this championship in 2012 (personal communication through interviews with General Secretary of NAA).

b. Ultra light mountain flight

The next air sports activity in Pokhara is the flying with micro glider. This facility has started since 1996 with the delta wing aircraft that belongs to the category of Ultra light aircraft and fixed wing aircraft. The flight provides a good opportunity for the close view of the magic of the mountains, meandering rivers and the beauty of the valley throughout the year except the summer season.

c. Zip-line

Pokhara also serves an exciting zip-line adventure. It is another product of exciting activity. Zip-line is one way system where travelers can enjoy extreme speed unlike cable car and ropeway. Travelers can buy the package of a zip-line installed from Sarangkot village development committee to nearby Hemja village development committee. The 1.8 Km long zip-line is only 1.35 minute long in time and it gets the speed of 120 Kmph when it is operated.



Photo 9.2 An adventure on Zip-line from Pokhara, Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara, 2013

This service is advertised as the world's most incredible zip-line that starts from 5500 ft of elevation from sea level to the plain of Pokhara.

9.2.7 Social tourism related events

Pokhara is known as the treasurer of ethnic communities with their folklore and traditional activities. It has become the melting pot of different ethnic cultures and traditions. Basically, Aryan, Mongolian, Tibetan and even the Maithili culture and tradition have assembled from mountain, hills and terrain region (Parajuli 2004). The multi ethnic people celebrate and observe the festivals with pleasure and sense of humor, mutual understanding and harmony to each other. Various festivals and activities of these ethnic communities are remarkable for tourism as these are supporting to attract tourists in Pokhara. Some of these main festival based events are briefly discussed below.

a. English New year street festival

It is one of the biggest festivals as targeted for domestic and international tourists. The event was started in 1998 when Nepal organized Visit Nepal Year 1998. This New Year street festival has been organized by Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal (REBAN), Pokhara in the eve of every English New Year for the last 14 years. The prime objective of this festival is to promote Pokhara as a favorable tourist destination during the starting of New Year. This festival focuses on the cultural activities and traditional life style of different ethnic communities of the local society in Pokhara. The demonstration of the traditional household equipments like *Dhiki*, *Janto*, *Kol*, *Khal*, *Charkha*, *Aaran*, pottery and handicraft of bamboo and woolen woven materials reflect the traditional socio-economic life of local people for visitors.

Presentations of different cultural items from almost all parts of the country and some even from abroad are the major attractions for the visitors. Among the cultural presentations, *Dhan Nach*, *Sakela Nach*, *Surahi Nach*, *Dhimil Nach* and *Mithila* dance are from the eastern Nepal. Traditional *Newari* dance with *Dhime Baja* and *musk dance* (Devi and Lakhe Nach) are from Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. Stick and *Mayur* (peacock) dance of Tharu community of Terai and *Deuda* and *Maurni Nach* from the western Nepal are added attractions of this festival. Likewise *Ghantu* of Gurung community, *Kauda* of Magar community, *Tamang selo* of Tamang community, *Gai jatra*, *Bara Bhairav* and *Lakhe Nach* (musk dance) of *Newari* community, *Bhajan Chutka*, *Teej*, *Ratyauli*, *Lok Dohori* (folk song)

and dance of Brahmin and Chhetri communities and Yak dance of Tibetan community are some of the notable presentations performed in the street festivals. *Swosti shanti* (wishing peace) on the basis of Hindu religion and *Mane* (peace) chanting as per Buddhist religion also performed in the festival.



Photo 9.3 New Year street festival in Pokhara, Source: Ashesh Shakya, Pokhara, 2013

Live musical concert of rock and pop, traditional *Lok dohori* song and dance are additional attractions in this festival in the winter period. Besides these some international cultural presentations are also performed in this festival. Some of these include Bamboo dance from Mizoram of India, traditional musk dance of Japan and the Sama dance of Russia. Several items of fun game and race for tourists and hospitality service staffs offer wonderful memory for the visitors during this street festival (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012).

b. Holy Purnima as the festival of color

Holi Purnima is celebrated in a full moon day in mountains, mid hills and Terai region. The full moon day falls in the month of March every year. This festival is the symbol of friendship, peace and happiness which is celebrated by offering multi color powder and *teeka* on the forehead and faces among each other in the community. This festival is the most

popular among the youths with singing and dancing on the street. The native as well as the foreigners are also involved with their multi color painted faces. It looks like a festival of felicitation, mutual understanding and sharing with the love and emotion to each other. Almost all ethnic communities like Newar, Thakali and Madheshi perform this event. REBAN Pokhara organizes the musical concert and traditional cultural song with dance on this occasion. It has been developed as one of important cultural tourism events not only in Pokhara but also at other places of Nepal.

c. Nepali New Year Fewa festival

Nepal has its own original calendar of the year which is known as Bikram Sambat. This Nepali New Year begins always from the mid of April where the nature is colorful with spring flowers and new leaves on trees. Pashchimanchal Hotel Association (PHA) of Pokhara organizes a special festival on this occasion. This is known as Fewa festival in the name of beautiful Lake Fewa of Pokhara. It looks like a food festival where most of the tourist standard hotels serve their varieties of food on a number of stalls in the street. The demonstrations of handicraft goods, traditional Nepali *dohori* song competition with dance and live musical concert of pub and rock in the evening are some of the key attractions of this festival. Though it is the festival to welcome Nepali New Year, however it also contributes for the awareness campaign to save the natural environment of Fewa Lake with different activities (PHA 2007).

d. Ashare Ropain Festival

This festival has been organized by Pokhara Tourism Council for the last nine years. The name of this festival itself gives a clear sense as *ropai* is known as rice plantation. This festival is celebrated in the mid of summer with different peri-urban communities in their paddy fields in Pokhara valley. It is a single day event and generally falls on the first week of the July of every year.



*Photo 9.4 Asare ropai (rice plantation) festival,
Source: Pokhara Tourism Council, Pokhara, 2013*

This festival is focused to promote the agro-tourism with the concept of Pokhara for all seasons (Kshetry and Paudel 2008).

9.2.8 National Industrial Festival as commercial event related tourism

Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry is one of the member organizations of Pokhara Tourism Council. It has been organizing the national industrial trade fair in Pokhara for last 12 years. This festival is organized in the month of November every year at the demonstration centre in Naya Bazar in Pokhara. Most of the small and cottage industries have ample chances to promote their handicrafts and agro products in the festivals. This festival runs for almost one week with significant commercial activities. Thousands of domestic visitors can benefit by purchasing their household necessities in reliable price and enjoy with the folk Nepali song and dance with fun and jokes related program. The festival mainly focuses to promote the newly produced industrial goods and substitute the foreign products by domestic products. Such promotional activities are supposed to help to promote the export and the overall economic development of the country (PCCI 2013).

9.2.9 Other tourism activities and facilities in Pokhara

Besides above mentioned all events and activities, Pokhara Tourism Council organizes a short welcome program to the visitors, who step in Pokhara on the occasion of International Tourism Day on 27th September each year. Likewise home stay promotion program initiated by Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN) Pokhara and a talk program about mountaineering initiated by Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) Annapurna Chapter Pokhara can also be observed on the occasion of Annapurna day which falls on 3rd June of every year. NMA Annapurna Chapter also organizes marathon race from Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) to Dhampus in every two years. Dashain and Tihar are the two great festivals of Nepal generally which fall in October every year and are celebrated by almost all the Nepali citizens. The PHA Pokhara organizes a special program of *Bhai Teeka* (brothers and sisters day) at the occasion of *Tihar* during October- November. During this festival, Nepalese sisters offer colorful *teeka* (red marks) on the forehead of the tourists as their own brothers. This is a special festival of Nepal that reflects the close relations between brothers and their sisters. At this occasion, sisters offer *teeka* (red marks) with delicious food and their brothers love and respect them with some presents. PHA has been trying to cultivate this Nepali culture for the tourists as well.

9.3 Current status of tourism facilities in Pokhara

As a growing tourist hub of the central and western region of Nepal, Pokhara offers a complete set of facilities to cater products and services needs of tourists. Table 9.3 offers a list of the range of various sub-sectors of tourism service providers as well as the tourism related indirect service providers.

Table 9.3 Pokhara as a center of diverse tourist service facilities

S. N.	Facilities	Number	Remarks
1	Tourist Standard Hotels	230	Including five star to non star
2	General Hotels, Lodges & Guest house	320	Including in Pokhara city area
3	Travel Agency	97	Providing all types of services to tourists.
4	Trekking Agency	75	Organize hard and soft types of trekking.
5	Restaurants & Bar	124	Providing standard continental foods of 22 countries.

6	Dance Bar & Night club	11	Concentrated mainly in Fewa Lake side area
7	Taxi & Micro Bus Service	4154	Luxury car & van on rent.
8	City Bus Service	227	Provide service to the almost all points of the valley.
9	Air Sports Service	20	Including paragliding & micro glider service.
10	Trekking Equipment Shops	59	Provide all kinds of equipments for trekking
11	Embroidery & Garment Services.	75	Largely located in Fewa Lake side area
12	Tourist Bus Service	16 buses	Daily service to Kathmandu & Chitwan
13	Luxury Coach Service	180 buses	Daily to the East & West border cities & Kathmandu
14	Airlines Service	30 flights	Daily to Kathmandu, Jomson, Manang and Jumla
15	Yoga & Meditation Centre	4	Concentrated mainly in Fewa Lake side area
16	Banking service	115	Including banks & financial institutions.
17	Money Changer Service	52	24 hours reliable service.
18	Cyber Café	62	24 hours reliable service.
19	Colleges	26	Including technical and general education service.
20	Boat Services	900	Including Fewa, Begnas & Rupa Lakes
21	Books & stationery	100	Including in city centers & Lake side.
22	News Papers & Periodic Magazines	16	Including daily, weekly, monthly in Nepali & English.
23	Hospitals & Health Care Centers	32	Providing specialist medical & surgical services.
24	Shopping Complex	12	Availability of the goods of daily needs.
25	Museums	4	About Mountaineering, culture, nature and adventure.
26	Sports complex	6	Including stadiums & gulf courses.
27	Trekking & Tour Guides	270	Including city guides

Source: Field survey, 2012

Various tourism facilities offering professional tourism business organizations are members of their respective professional associations like Pashchimanchal Hotel Association (PHA), Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA) Western Regional Association, Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN) Western Regional Association, Restaurant and Bar Association Nepal (REBAN) Pokhara, Nepal Air Sports Association (NAA), Taxi Association of Pokhara, etc. Pokhara Tourism Council is an umbrella organization of all these hospitality related tourism

entrepreneurs' associations in Pokhara. At present more than 550 hotels are associated with PHA and 150 restaurants with REBAN Pokhara. These enterprises are directly involved to provide different services with food and accommodation to the tourists in Pokhara

There are around 100 travel agencies and 80 trekking agencies associated with NATTA and TAAN respectively. Likewise there are a number of tourism service providers to the visitors in the tourism market of Pokhara. These include 18 paragliding companies, an ultra light service company, several city buses and taxis, various trekking equipments and garments shops, boat clubs, book stalls, money changers, cyber cafes and other readymade tourist service providing agencies (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012). Amidst the service providers as listed in above table 1, there are following specialized service providers to cater the needs of all incomers in Pokhara.

9.3.1 Health tourism related facilities

In 1989, the local planners put forward the vision of Pokhara as city of tourism, health and education (Adhikari and Seddon 2002) that reflect the possibilities of health and education-based tourism in Pokhara. Pokhara has been developed as a well-managed health center. There are a number of homeopathic, allopathic and natural treatment centers offering health facilities in Pokhara. At the same time acupuncture, the Chinese treatment system and Tibetan tantric system are also available in Pokhara. At present there are a total of 100 health service offering centers which include hospitals, nursing homes, private clinics and treatment centers. Gandaki hospital situated at Ramghat is the Regional hospital of the western development region. The Manipal Teaching Hospital is located at Foolbari which is a well-equipped bigger hospital in terms of bed capacity and specialized services in Pokhara. These hospitals are providing normal to complicated medical and surgical facilities to the patients. Similarly Himalayan Eye Hospital at Gharipatan and Leprosy hospital at Hariyokharka have provided their expertise services for the patients in their respective fields. Besides these, there are Fewa City hospital, Charak Hospital, Om hospital, Fishtail hospital, Pokhara hospital, Padma Nursing home and others health centers run by private sectors. These health centers are capable to offer health facilities for all sorts of people. Thus, Pokhara has emerged as a popular destination for health related treatments and promotes health tourism for the domestic as well as international visitors. Furthermore, Pokhara has recently been known as a destination for dental tourism because of the attraction of many

western tourists for their affordable high quality dental treatment while holidaying in Pokhara (personal communication with immediate past president of Pokhara Tourism Council).

9.3.2 Educational tourism related facilities

Pokhara valley not only offers a wide variety of its nature and culture related events for the visitors but also as a center of study for the domestic as well as international students. Because of moderate temperature and pleasant weather throughout the year, the valley is very relaxing place for students and researchers to carry out their studies in a peaceful atmosphere. At present, a total of 26 colleges affiliated with four different universities are running in Pokhara valley. They offer various grades of courses in different disciplines. Prithvi Narayan Multiple Campus at Bagar, Western Engineering Campus at Lamachour, Medicine campus at Ramghat, Institute of Forestry at Hariyokharka and a community managed Janapriya Multiple Campus at Simalchaur are some of the leading academic institutes affiliated with Tribhuvan University.

These academic institutions offer a number of technical and non- technical courses. These campuses offer the Bachelor and Master's degree courses of their areas of specializations to thousands of students in different disciplines. There are two medical colleges. Manipal College of Medical Sciences at Foolbari is affiliated with Kathmandu University and Gandaki Medical College is affiliated with Pokhara University. These medical colleges offer the MBBS course to the domestic as well as international students. Pokhara Tourism and Hotel Management College at Majheri Patan, Kantipur Dental College at New Road, Pokhara Engineering College at Phirke, La Grandee colleges at Simal chaur, Novel Academy College at New road, Pokhara College of Management at Nadipur and other colleges are affiliated with different universities and managed by private sectors. These academic institutions offer the degrees in various disciplines. Bindhyabasini Bidhyapith at Bagar is affiliated with Nepal Sanskrit University which presents Bachelor's degree in *Sanskrit*, eastern culture and literature. About 30,000 students have been studying in all of these colleges of Pokhara. There are more than 100 higher secondary schools managed by public and private sectors in Pokhara valley. Hence Pokhara valley is an ideal location or centre for varied levels of higher study to the domestic and international students.

Pokhara has also a university which is centrally based in Pokhara. It is known as Pokhara University. It is situated at Dhunge Patan of Lekhnath

Municipality 15 km east from the Pokhara Bus Park. It offers courses on information technology, management and applied science for the students.

9.3.3 Rural tourism and home stay related facilities in surrounding peri-urban areas

Pokhara is a town on the process of urbanization. There are several rural settlements in and around the Pokhara valley with their age-old traditional cultures and living styles. These can be interesting tourism attractions. The adjacent hill sides of Pokhara valley are inhabited by culturally rich ethnic groups like Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Damai, Kami, Sarki, Chettri, etc. Some of these places are on walking distance from the downtown of Pokhara whereas some places are closed on the foothills of snowy mountains. There are also home stay facilities in some of these villages which provide traditional Nepali hospitality, taste of food and lodging facilities in homely atmosphere. Tourists share food in the same kitchen with the members of the host family of home stay owners. At present the following surrounding villages of Pokhara are in ready stage for offering home stay services.

Table 9.4 Rural tourism centers with home stay facilities surrounding Pokhara

S. N.	Name of the rural destinations	Duration to reach from Pokhara	No. of rooms available	Approximate bed capacity
1.	Kavre	One hour drive & one hour climb on hill.	16	41
2.	Ghalel	Half an hour drive & 4 hour walk in Mardi river valley	7	27
3.	Lwang	Half an hour drive & 3 hour walk in Mardi river valley & one hour climb on hill	17	46
4.	Bhadaure	One hour drive & 2 hour walk in ridgeline.	9	24
5.	Yangjakot	One and half hour drive and 2 hours climb up to the hill.	32	168
6.	Lekhanath-10	Half an hour drive and half an hour walk	5	49
7.	Thulakhet	One hour drive and one hour walk	5	25

Source: PTO (2011)

Agricultural farming, animal husbandry, bee keeping, traditional festivals and ritual activities are the attractive elements of rural tourism for tourists who are interested in such special interest tourism.

9.4 Future potential of tourism events and services in Pokhara

Shakya (2012, p 2) wholeheartedly appreciates the unparalleled beauties of Pokhara in his poem under the title 'Pokhara a splendid destination' as follows:

*Any way my dream has now come true,
Therefore I am here to get it through
I made a visit of some spots around here,
And enjoyed the world famous views from there
On my travel around the world
No where I got such a dale to behold
It is a unique fusion of the features,
Like, hill, mount, lake, plain, gorge and river.*

These lines of pomes of Surya R. Shakya are adequate to anticipate the future potential of tourism in Pokhara (Shakya 2012). The natural beauty of Pokhara was admired and appreciated by some of the noble personalities from very beginning. Ekai Kawaguchi, probably the first foreign visitor to Pokhara in 1899, remarked as Pokhara could be one of the most beautiful mountainous countries in the world. Similar remarks were given by a Swiss native Tony Hagen, a British General Charlce Bruce, and an Australian native David Bamwak (Gurung 2006). A famous Nepali Poet Mukunda Saran Upadhyaya (Upadhyaya 1995, p 79) highlights the beauty of Pokhara thus:

*'Oh Traveler! Through the poetry book and come to see soon,
Seen Pokhara is so sweet than being written'.*

The tourism development in Nepal was not on a systematic approach due to the lack of proper policy and planning feedback till 1970. The tourism master plan of Nepal was formulated in 1972. It is the first of its kind with detailed and comprehensive focus on planning aspects of Nepalese tourism. This document has clearly suggested that to develop the tourism products in Nepal which are related to sightseeing, trekking and pilgrimage tourism. Furthermore, the document has highlighted the tourism potential of Pokhara and suggested development and extension of tourism activities by preserving the natural beauty and reducing environmental vulnerability. Based on this plan, there are efforts made to develop tourism products, infrastructure and facilities in Pokhara and Annapurna region (Shrestha 2000; Khatiwada 2009b).

A team of experts from Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) discussed the natural beauty of Pokhara valley with lakes and mountains and put

some suggestions for the tourism development in 1975. In 1988, PATA suggested development Fewa Lake area as tourist resort, preserve the open space at the bank of the lake, involve the local community in tourism business, standardize hotel operation in Sarangkot, establish Mountain museum and develop Pokhara as tourism hub of this region (Gurung 2007).

Tourism development is the continued process and it should be done as per the demand and the interest of the tourists. Tourism events and facilities are the prime motivation factors of tourist to visit tourists' destinations. These require proper awareness for the development, promotion and protection of tourism events for the sustainability of tourism. In a research report, Koirala (1997) suggests eight points for the tourism development in Pokhara valley. These are; (a) planning, (b) coordination, (c) attractions, (d) products, (e) events and activities, (f) waste management, (g) promotion, and (h) conservation. Amidst these elements, Late Hark Gurung has stressed on organizing festival related events in low season and air excess from nearby border town of India to Pokhara (Gurung 2006). Further, he emphasized on the focus for pleasure and adventure tourism related events in Pokhara and production of local handicraft souvenirs for the visitors.

All the above mentioned literature highlights the need of future tourism development in Pokhara. Accordingly some efforts have been done to some extent. With such efforts, there are continued increases in number of tourists in Pokhara. It took almost 14 years to reach 100,000 tourists from 50,000 thousand during the period from 1980s to the end of 1990s. However, the growths of tourists have doubled in the last 12 years during 1999 to 2011. There are over 200,000 international tourists' arrivals and equal number of domestic visitors as well. This trend shows the high potential of Pokhara in terms of the growth of tourists in the future. It is assumed that there would be at least 500,000 international and another 500,000 domestic tourists in Pokhara by the year 2020. At present Pokhara is facilitated to accommodate almost one million tourists. A report published by MoTCA (2012) reveals that there are a total of 103,295 rooms in all five stars hotels in Pokhara whose occupancy is only 38.27 percent. However, this occupancy is far lower than the total occupancy of 61.63 in all five hotels in Kathmandu. This clearly indicates the necessity to explore the tourism events, products and come up with renewed services to strengthen the future potential of tourism in Pokhara. Nevertheless, there are following areas which show the future potential of tourism events in Pokhara and its periphery.

9.4.1 Potential of health, education and sports tourism related events

Pokhara has round the year mild temperature with the pleasing weather. The average temperature varies in between minimum 8 degree in winter to maximum 32 degree in summer. The mild temperature and pleasing atmosphere of Pokhara throughout the year is the great virtue for the development of health and education centre. It could be developed as international centre of study, research and health facility.

Sports tourism can be considered one of the highest potentials tourism events in future. The contrast land setting of Pokhara is not only the matter of attraction but also favorable environment for football, cricket, golf, marathons, triathlon and other sports activities. Looking at the craze and trends of international sports, it will be wise to organize and continue the national and international level tournaments of sports activities like paragliding championship, football, crickets and gulf matches to upscale the tourism potentials of Pokhara.

9.4.2 Potential for volunteer tourism

Recently, volunteerism has become one of the popular activities for tourists. Volunteer and philanthropic tourism are becoming popular and are supporting economic prosperity, goodwill, harmony, and peace-building in post-conflict Nepal. In volunteer tourism, there is scope for volunteers to spend time with the community, whereas in philanthropic travel the travelers just offer tax deductible donations to the locals as humanitarian partners as they have little to do in the implementation process of the projects. Many rural schools, health centers, child care centers, mobile health services, community-run guest houses, trusts, and solar-power generators are built and being funded by tourists in Pokhara and its surrounding villages under these initiatives.

Box 9.1 Volunteering for tourists in Pokhara !

After I finished high school in my German hometown Kassel in 2009, I wanted to do something completely different from what I had ever done before. Having always loved the mountains, Nepal and the Himalayas had a magical ring to them. By chance I came across a website about volunteering opportunities in a monastery in Nepal. The place I was going to live in for the following five months is called Pema Ts'al Sakya Monastic Institute and is situated on the north foot of Sarangkot in Pokhara. My task was to teach English to the younger students (from age 5 to 17). Not having learned English as my mother tongue myself, teaching a language to kids for whom English is not only their third language (after Tibetan and Nepali) but also a foreign script, seemed to be a difficult thing to do for me. What made it easier and actually very enjoyable in the end were the people at the monastery. All of the monks were wonderful students, interested in what is happening in the rest of the world, kind and welcoming to me as their guest and always in a cheerful mood with a big smile on their face or a joke to tell me. The unique atmosphere during the monks' debate or puja is also something I still remember very strongly now (3 years after being there) and I often find myself drawing from Nepalese experiences and inspirations during my studies in Landscape Architecture which I started in Germany after my time in Nepal. I am sure I will have the opportunity to do so in the future and also see more places in Nepal that I haven't been to before, but the monastery will always remain a very dear place to me and my love will stay with the people I have met there.

Source: Lucca Blumenstein, Kassel, Germany

Date: 20.02.2013



Photo 9.5 Lucca Blumenstein volunteering teaching at a Monastery at Sarangkot, Pokhara.

Source: Lucca Blumenstein, Kassel, Germany

The volunteer tourism shows as one of highly potential events for tourism in Pokhara in future.

9.4.3 Potential of nature based tourism products and related events

Pokhara is well known as the city of nine lakes (Bhadgaonle 2006). These beautiful lakes are the major attractions of tourism in Pokhara. The Fewa Lake catchment areas like Pumdi Bhumdi, Chapakot, Bhadaure Tamagi, Dhikur Pokhari, and Kaskikot villages along with Rupa and Begnas lakes catchment areas like Lamoswanra, Begnas, Rupakot and Pachbhaiya Sundari Danda villages are the potential destinations for rural tourism related events. The Begnas Lake area and its surrounding in Lekhnath Municipality in Pokhara valley are popularly known as the garden city of seven lakes. It has also high potential for developing nature-based tourism products and related events (Lamichhane 2001). However, these lakes are not free from various types of water pollutions and encroachment-related challenges. A community level lake conservation committee should be formed with the support of local administration to preserve and manage the beauty of lakes with flower belt, garden and park. The catchment area of the Fewa, Begnas and Rupa lakes need to be developed for rural and agro tourism related events. The practice of agro forestry and rural tourism activities could support to preserve the area of lakes and improve the water quality as well.

The premises of Ratna Mandir area at the bank of Fewa Lake need to develop as Biodiversity Park for the purpose of study and research that will attract the quality tourists. Basundhara Park could be developed as an exhibition centre for tourism-related fair and festivals and the Komagane Park for the religious and cultural activities. The Camping site near Hallane Chowk could be better developed as the water front resting place for the afternoon and evening visitors' activities thorough installing water fountain and flower garden.

The lush green forest area of *Rani Ban* (Queen Forest) across the Fewa Lake is appropriate to develop as natural zoo for watching birds and other wild lives. The park area covers 164.618 hector of land. There are 455 types of tree species and around 200 types of animal species. This area is inaugurated as a World Peace Biodiversity Park by the Government of Nepal on 15 February 2013. A recently envisioned construction plan by the Department of Botany aims to establish a mini zoo inside the park which would be a differential tourist destination for watching the natural events of wildlife by tourists in Pokhara (The Kathmandu Post 2012).



Photo 9.6 The natural Rani Ban as potential for close nature watch, Source: Author

The similar type of Zoological garden can be developed even in the small hillock of Pachbhaiya which is located in between Begnas and Rupa Lakes. Shanti *ban* (forest) area of Ramghat is very close with city centre. It needs to be developed as recreation Park with botanical garden. This could be an appropriate place as picnic spot and even to watch the Seti river gorge. However, it needs to manage with additional safety measure. The Banpale *danda* (hill) at Tutunga is another small hillock towards the east site of the International Mountain Museum. This is another place that could be developed as Botanical garden. Both of these forest areas (Shanti *ban* and Banpale *danda*) are managed by Institute of Forestry for the purpose of field study.

The gorge of Seti River could be developed as unique tourism product in K.I. Singh pool, Mahendra pool and Dhunge Sangu points (KC 2008). The old bridge of city centre at Mahendra pool on the way to Palikhe choke to Ranipauwa needs to be renovated. These areas need to develop as potential tourist sites with additional facilities, services and adequate safety measures for up-scaling the tourism events in Pokhara.

9.4.4 Potential of cultural heritage based tourism events

There are a number of localities inhabited by particular ethnic groups in Pokhara. Table 9.5 offers the highlight of such settlement patterns in Pokhara.

Table 9.5 Different locations with diversified community settlements in Pokhara

S. No.	Places in Pokhara	Focused community settlements
1.	Bindyabasini, Foolbari and Masbar	<i>Brahmin and Chhetri</i>
2.	Bhairav Tole, Nalakomukh, Ganesh Tole and Tersapatti	<i>Newar community</i>
3.	Ram Bazar, Naya Bazar and Deep	<i>Gurung and Magar communities</i>
4.	Batulechaur	<i>Gandharva</i>
5.	Prithvi choke and Chhorepatan	<i>Tibetan</i>

Source: Field survey, 2013

These places (table 9.5) could be highlighted and promoted as heritage sites of tourist attractions coinciding with the traditional culture and living styles of different communities as settled there. Building a community house like a cultural museum in each of these varied ethnic settlements could be a sparkling idea. By this way, the ritual activities, traditional musical instruments, utensils, weapons, ornaments and living style of the respective community could be demonstrated for tourists. These sites could also be developed as the home stay tourism in the urban area of Pokhara and the rest house for the retired old age tourists who want to be in calm and peaceful atmosphere.

An integrated program is necessary in Batulechaur area for the tourism development. The premises of Mahendra cave and Bat cave need to be well-maintained by flower belt and garden with the shades for resting place in a planned way. The temple with Hindu God and Goddess needs to be established nearby places of these both caves to add the religious aspect for the visitors. The Dhand Pakha Sundar Ban is good example of community management forest. The construction of a view tower and a Buddhist Monastery on the top of this small hillock will add the further beauty of this area. This place is also the settlement of Gandharva community known as carrier of Nepali folk song with their traditional musical instrument *Sarangi*. Increasing number of visitors might have golden opportunity to present their cultural program and the sale of musical instrument *Sarangi* and handicrafts goods. That could be interesting product for the various events of visitors. It could support to increase their length of stay and may attract more number of visitors. This could be an integrated project for the socio-economic transformation of this community people of Nepal.

The celebration of Nepali festivals should be made tourism-friendly with their guest participation and provide them new feeling especially in Gaijatra, Teej, Bhai Teeka, Holi Purnima and Buddha Purnima. The celebration should be well-managed, decent, cordial and full of fun and joy with adequate safety measures.

9.4.5 Potential of village tourism linked tourism events and services

Pokhara has tremendous potential to be linked with rural tourism activities like home stay and agro tourism to increase the number and frequency of tourism events, length of the stay of tourists and also expand the benefits of tourism to local communities. There are a number of destinations full with touristic attractions in Gandaki and Dhaulgiri Zones. Pokhara has the potential to develop regional center (Pokhara Tourism Office 2011; Tripathi 2007). One of such possibilities is the view tower of Mattikhan and Gorkha memorial Park at Samde Danda which are under construction. Likewise conservationist memorial park at Dhampus and biodiversity Park at Panchase can add the activities of the visitors and increase their lengths of stay. The cable car facility on the top of Sarangkot, Kanhukot and the Anadu Danda hills from their base point in Pokhara valley can also be good potentials activities to extend tourism events and services on those places. The similar products can be developed in other hiking points too. The hills of Pumdi Bhumdi, Kristi, Nirmal Pokhari, Bharat Pokhari, Rupakot, Yangjakot, Armalakot, Kaskikot, Bhadaure are the potential village tourism centers to increase the tourism events and activities in and around Pokhara Valley.

9.4.6 Potential of exploring additional trekking routes

A 3 -week long famous Annapurna circuit passing through the Thorong-la has been shortened within a week (Khatiwada 2012). This necessitates exploration and development of new trekking routes like Pokhara –Sickles –Tangting – Dudh Pokhari – Manang and promotion of newly explored trekking routes like Mardi Himal base camp trek and Machhapuchhre model trek (MTDC and TAAN WRA 2012). Maurice Herzog trek needs to be explored from Bhurung Tatopani – Narchyang - Mristi to Annapurna-I Base camp. Likewise the Round Dhaulagiri trek and Dhaulagiri icefall trek also need to be develop and promote for adventure tourism activities. The alternative trekking routes from Kali Gandaki corridor to Jomsom and upper Mustang need to explore and developed. There is potential of Singa

Tatopani – Deurali – Dhorpatan hunting reserve to Dolpo and Karnali trek which could be developed and promoted in international tourism market. Some of the Rocky Mountains in Kaski and Lamjung need to be explored and developed for honey hunting and rock climbing activities. All these hiking destinations in Pokhara valley need more linkage with rural tourism activities like home stay, farm tourism and cultural activities to increase the length of stay of tourists and sharing the benefits of tourism with the local community.

9.4.7 Potential of additional adventure sports events

There are great possibilities of water sports activities in the lakes like Fewa, Begnas and Rupa in Pokhara. Water-related sports like water polo, swimming in natural water, motor boat, and fishing competition can be organized in the lakes of Pokhara. A recent exploration by the Paddle Nepal has found the possibility of canyoning at Dahachaur, Ghachowk as there are 7 to 30 meter long 5 waterfalls falling into Lastikhola river. Ghachowk lies towards the north of Pokhara on a distance of about 15 km. The exploration team reveals that there is potential to organize this event during 9 months except 3 months in rainy season in a year (personal communication through interviews with ex. president of Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, Western Regional Association).



Photo 9.7 Newly identified potential canyoning site nearby Pokhara, Source: Basant Raj Dawadi, 2013

A new adventure sports named Zip-Line has started in Pokhara in 2012 which begins from Sarangkot and ends at Yamdi Khola in Hemja. It is an added attraction in the list of adventure sports in Pokhara. The various small peaks located nearby Annapurna, Machhapuchhre and Mardi Himal base camps areas can be developed as centres for ice-climbing. The lower portion of these peaks including the tops of Korchan and Khumai hills are potential for snow skiing players.



*Photo 9.8 The snowy areas of Korchan and Khumai hills as potential for skiing,
Source: Author*

For air sports related activities, there is possibility of ultra light jumping and parachute jumping. These adventure sports can be also added in the list of air sports originating from Pokhara. The identification, exploration, implementation, promotion and broader participation in all of above tourism events can be prospective to bring peace and prosperity at the local level (NCCR and TAAN WRC 2010).

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Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya¹

10.1 Setting the context

“Tourism without moral and ethical principles is like a ship without radar; it can cause great harm to the industry, people and the environment (Dawid de Villiers 2010).

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is guided by the belief that tourism can make a meaningful contribution to people’s lives and our planet. This conviction is at the very heart of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, a roadmap for tourism development.” (Taleb Rifai 2013).

These statements come from Dawid de Villiers, the Chairman of the World Committee of Tourism Ethics and former Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Taleb Rifai, the Secretary-General of UNWTO. These statements are thought-provoking in the context of tourism which, with 1.035 billion international tourists’ arrivals in 2012, is established today as one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the World (UNWTO 2013). Tourism is not automatically responsible until it is developed and backed up by certain ethics, codes of conduct (CoC) and regulations. However, the focus of this chapter is the role of codes of conduct rather than rules and regulations.

Box 10.1 What is tourism code of conduct?

The tourism Code of Conduct is defined as an “Ethical Road Map” to guide the sectors key-players through the tourism landscape in minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing the benefits for residents of tourism destinations. The objective of responsible tourism is to create better places for people to live in and to visit where CoC guidelines emerge as the blueprint for their voluntary contributions (UNWTO 2011).

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As the global tourism industry grows at an ever-faster pace, the development of tourism with the notion of sustainability has naturally become a challenging multifaceted phenomenon. Today's modern tourism has not only wide ranging positive benefits in socio-cultural, economic and environmental spheres in receiving (host) regions but also is abundant of negative impacts on these areas (Castaneda 2012; Eriksson et al. 2009; Günnemann 2006; Leong 2008; McKercher 1993). Tourism is multidimensional, multidisciplinary, multi-faceted, diverse and highly unregulated industry. It comprises a number of suppliers and producers of products, a vast array of government agencies and thousands of domestic and overseas tourists who consume the products and services (Eriksson et al. 2009).

Tourism shows evidences of its twofold opposite (good and bad) characteristics. On the one hand, it unquestionably brings prosperity through jobs, income, foreign exchange earnings, local supply linkages, increment of local absorptive capacities, and so on. These elements are supportive to build holistic peace in the society. On the other edge, with its competitive and resource-hungry trends, tourism is also highly exploitative. The 'structural realities' or 'fundamental truths' of the resource consumptive nature of tourism reveal not only about its positive but also plentiful negative effects on the social, cultural and physical environments in which it operates (McKercher 1993). As the traditional vacation destinations are gradually becoming oversaturated (Günnemann 2006), it can also damage environments, stress societies, erode culture, underestimate moral values, weaken collective traditional lifestyles, manifest conflict, and also heighten it. Kelly (2012) reveals that if tourism inclines to generate benefits at the expense of negative impacts on the socio cultural and biophysical environments, it is certain to raise the environmental conflict. From the case studies of tourism development as made by Equation India in Arossim (Goa), Lavasa (Maharashtra), Kevadia (Gujarat), Kullu (Himachal Pradesh) and Kanha (Madhya Pradesh) in India, Chanchani (2009) clearly marks that tourism appears as winner for some people and loser for many people. Tourism, apart of being cause of conflict and impunity, also becomes triggers to exacerbate the other underlying conflicts and tensions in society at the forefront. Tourism is unstable and sensitive to various political, socio-cultural and economic and environmental factors manifesting locally and also due to the complex behavioral relationships between hosts and guests in general.

Managing the dual characters of tourism is felt critical and challenging, especially for tourist receiving destinations which are intentionally growth-bound. These trends and issues of global tourism are undeniably

applicable in developing countries like Nepal where the tourist destination like Pokhara is really popular on the basis of its delicate natural and cultural resources but bound towards volume tourism. As a multifaceted industry comprising its own different dimensions and functionally interdependent sub-sectors, tourism in Pokhara constitutes the overlapping roles of various actors in developing and managing this composite sector. Various negative implications in environmental, social and economic spheres are reported attributing to the shortage of responsible and sustainable tourism practices of these multiple actors. Sporadic conflict at inter-organizational levels and various disputes between management and employees (laborers) at intra-organization level are also observed as challenging implications and side effects (NCCR 2013).

It is increasingly considered that an ethical foundation and a commitment to sustainability can ensure that tourism's enormous potential to do well is harnessed, and any negative impact curtailed (UNWTO 2011). The institutionalization of responsible tourism awareness and practices apart from the increasing the number of tourists and their average stays are undeniable needs and challenges to lead the sustainable development of tourism at destination level in Pokhara. This is also important in meeting the lasting peace and prosperity through tourism by establishing a peace-building sensitive tourism strategy backstopped by tourism ethical operation codes of conduct in Nepal. This earnestly necessitates careful and indigenous planning and implementations framed with appropriate guidelines in the tourism sector of Pokhara. In above contextual and conceptual essences, this chapter first attempts to generate some knowledge on responsible tourism and also establishes its relationship with ethical aspects (codes of conduct) in general. It gives a bird eye view on the ethical aspects of the responsible tourism management of tourism industry in Pokhara. Thus this chapter addresses following vital questions and comes out with some concluding remarks.

- a. What is responsible tourism concept and how is it valuably associated with the ethical aspects (codes of conduct)?
- b. How was the trend of responsible tourism practices backstopped by codes of conduct till recently in Pokhara?
- c. How is Pokhara preparing (organizing) itself to introduce and strengthen its ethical aspects of tourism management for future which could be responsive for the sustainable prosperity and peace through tourism at destination level?

10.2 Responsible tourism and value of ethical aspects

Responsible tourism is the form of tourism which represents an approach to engaging with tourism, be that a tourist, a tourism business supplier, local communities of tourist destinations, and any other tourism stakeholders at a destination. The Cape Town Declaration of Responsible Tourism highlights responsible tourism as an activity which involves local people in decision-making; minimizes negative impacts; generates economic benefits and well-being among destination communities; contributes to natural and cultural conservation and diversity; offers meaningful interactions between hosts and guests; promotes mutual understanding between these two parties; caters to physically challenged travelers; and engenders respect, local pride and confidence (Responsible Tourism 2012).

Responsible tourism is also linked with the scope of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism and travel has strong determination to deliver benefits to host communities. The tourist destinations affected with negative consequences on the lack of responsible and sustainable practices can become less appealing for tourists. In this context, a number of such issues as largely related with the challenges of the sustainability of tourism are fundamentally an issue of values – as largely ethical and moral issues. The term “ethics” refers to a set of standards and values that an individual, or a group, has about what is right and what is wrong. The two terms ‘ethical’ and ‘responsible’ are taken to be synonymous. Goodwin and Francis (2003) adjoin the terms responsible and ethical. Lea (1993) coincides the expression ‘responsible tourism’ when mentioning ethics. Mann’s (2000 as cited in Stanford 2006, p 39) glossary of terms reads ‘ethical tourism see responsible tourism’.

There are a number of scholarly works that highlight the essences of ethical aspects (codes of conduct) for responsible tourism management (Budeanu 2005; Cleverdon and Kalisch 2000; Fennel 2006; Hultsman 1995; Husbands and Harrison 1996; Kelly 2012). Apart from various rules, regulations and acts as laid down by responsible authorities to control and manage tourism properly, the voluntary and moral interventions are apparently important for the responsible and sustainable development of tourism.

Such codes of conduct are oriented mainly towards conservation of nature, promotion of local culture and benefiting local people while offering restorative holidays to tourists. These tourism codes of conduct

are inclined to strengthening the globally accepted responsible tourism practices.

Highlighting the value of ethical issue of responsible tourism in his book, Fennel (2006 as in Kelly 2012, p 35) refers to 'the emergence of new ethical knowledge for the creation of a safer, healthier and more responsible travel industry.' Hultsman (1995) reveals about the five broad categories (ecological, marketing, sustainability, social, and education) of tourism-related issues and its services which need ethical consideration. This need is supported in the literature by Cleverdon and Kalisch (2000, p 182) who state that "ethics in tourism should not be confined to an expensive niche market for sophisticated 'ego-tourists' ". Responsible tourism fills the gap that the alternatives leave, as a way of incorporating better practice into all sectors of the market. Husbands and Harrison (1996, p 2) support this vision and affirm that responsible tourism is not trademark or a niche tourism product, but a " [...] way of doing tourism" – any variety of tourism.

Thus it is clear that the planning, development, operation and management of tourism without the ethical (morale) values is certain to bring the abundance of damages to tourism industry, its society, local people and the environmental resources on which tourism is largely dependent.

Thus, these ground realities necessitate the importance of ethical aspects (Codes of Conduct) which can be a roadmap for responsible tourism development. Some international agencies (e.g. Association of Independent Tour Operators, Center for Responsible Travel, Ecotourism Association of Australia, International Tourism Partnership, Pacific Asia Travel Association, Tourism Concern, Tour Operators Initiative, Tourism Concern, Travel Industry Association of Canada & Parks Canada, World Tourism Organization, World Travel and Tourism Council, etc.) have prepared codes of conduct within the tourism industry. However, there is less awareness and compliance at the industry (Dodds and Joppe 2005). Downes (2006) emphasizes the necessity of maintaining consistency with the various existing overall international and regional standards and guidelines. One of the effective tools of code of conduct has been introduced by UNWTO for the tourism sustainability. It is the provision of Global Code of Ethics (GCET) for tourism as probably the best since the beginning of this century. The UNWTO (2012, p 1) defines the GCET for tourism as a 'frame of reference for the responsible and sustainable development of tourism. It is a comprehensive set of principles designed to

guide and address key-players in tourism development like governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists alike'. The GCET for tourism **aims** to help minimize the negative impact of tourism on environment, cultural heritage and societies while maximizing the benefits of tourism in promoting sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development not only mitigates the syndromes of global change but also enhances the opportunities (Hurni 2010). This philosophy of development is equally applicable in the area of tourism development in case of the application of the codes of conducts. The guiding principles for the GCET in tourism industry are depicted on following 10 articles (UNWTO 2012).

Table 10.1 UNWTO Global code of ethics for tourism

Article numbers	Focuses of articles
Article 1	Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies
Article 2	Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfillment
Article 3	Tourism, a factor of sustainable development
Article 4	Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and a contributor to its enhancement
Article 5	Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities
Article 6	Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development
Article 7	Right to tourism
Article 8	Liberty of tourist movements
Article 9	Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry
Article 10	Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

Source: UNWTO (2012)

Article 1 invokes tourists to be responsible travelers and abstain any conduct which can damage local environment. In line with article 1, the International Institute of Peace through Tourism has produced the credo of the peaceful traveler, which stresses for the personal responsibility and commitment of tourists to revere and protect the natural environment which sustains all life, to appreciate all cultures during travel, to respect hosts, and to offer hands in friendship to everyone they meet (IIPT 2011). Article 6 persuades media to issue honest and balanced information on events and situations that could influence the flow of tourists. Although

all above articles of GCET are not legally binding documents, article 10 provides a voluntary implementation mechanism through the recognition of the role of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics to which stakeholders may refer on a voluntary basis in any matters concerning the application and interpretation of the code (UNWTO 2012).

The GCET on tourism is a broader basis for all kinds of tourism at all sizes of tourist destinations to transform them as responsible. UNWTO is guided by the belief that responsible tourism can make a meaningful contribution to people's lives and our planet. UNWTO states that 'tourism represents a vital force for peace and a factor of friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world (UNWTO 2012, p1).

There are increasing ideological and practical opinions on the value of the ethical codes of conduct for responsible tourism, occupation and business not only at global but also at national and local levels (MoTCA 2010; NCCR 2011; 2013; Shrestha 2009; UN Global Compact 2012; UNWTO 2012; Upadhayaya 2009; 2012; Upadhayaya and Upreti 2009). The 'Policy Paper on Building Confidence in Tourism through Crisis Management' is one of the earlier policy documents formulated during the decade (1996-2006) long armed conflict. It insists the need of code of conduct by stating 'undue internal competition among private sectors has created lose-lose situation and it should be avoided. A code of conduct applicable to all stakeholders should be developed to avoid such competitions' (Adhikari 2005, p 21). Dhakal (2005, p v) on the 'policy Paper 4 for Sustainable Rural Tourism for Improved Livelihood for Local Communities' suggests that 'as the absence of self-regulating code of conduct has often helped growing unhealthy competition among tourism entrepreneurs, NTB should initiate to help the private sector to formulate and implement such codes for tourism establishments at the central level. Similar codes of conduct should also be persuaded at the local level'. The *Paryatan Niti 2065* (Tourism Policy 2009) gives importance to the need of tourism codes of conduct at the national level by stating;

Paryatan byabasaiharuma byayosaikatako bikash garna aaphano byayosaik sangharumarphat achar sanhita banai lagugarna protsahan garine cha (The tourism professionals would be motivated to formulate codes of conduct through their own professional associations and to implement it for the development of professionalism in tourism) (MoTCA 2009, p 12).

The *Home stay Sanchalan Karyabidhi 2065* (Home stay Operation Work Procedure 2010) is also laudable in this regard. Being a recent program document, it has clearly stated the codes of conduct for tourists under its Annex 4 (MoTCA 2010). Furthermore, the concept paper of the national planning commission also clearly states that **'Code of Conduct for tourism business will be implemented through their own associations'** (NPC 2010, p 98). However, these visions are found left over without materializing in real practice.

10.3 Tourism trends and the state of ethical aspects for responsible tourism in Pokhara

Nepal as a tourist destination has observed the lack of a clear policy which had only one focus as either on quantity (volume or mass) or quality (controlled or value) tourism in past (Agrawal and Upadhyay 2006; Kunwar 2006; Paudyal 2012; Pradhanang 2009). On one side, there is high priority for the growth-bound tourism in Nepal. This policy seems clear from the announcement of various mega events like VNY 1998, DNC 2002-2003, VPY, 2007, NTY 2011, VLY 2012, and ongoing Tourism Vision 2020 at the national level. All of these programs were exclusively focused at almost doubling the growth of international tourist arrivals in Nepal. On the other side, some efforts are initiated recently to make tourism inclusive, participatory, and balanced where there are some instances of lip-service on responsible tourism oriented codes of conduct. These initiations are reflected in some policy-related interventions. Such examples include *Paryatan Niti 2065* (Tourism Policy 2009), three years interim plan (2009/10 – 2012/13) and *Home stay Sanchalan Karyabidhi 2067* (Home stay Operation Work Procedure).

Pokhara is one of the most attractive tourist destinations and second biggest tourist hub for both domestic and international tourists in Nepal. Situated at an altitude of 827 meter and in an area of 123 sq km, Pokhara is full of unlimited natural attractions, cultural beauties, biological diversities, scenic Lakes, attractive gorge of Seti River and ranges of snow capped mountains (Adhikari and Seddon 2004; Bhadgaonle 2006; Kshetry 2012; Tripathi 2008). The early travelers in Pokhara like Japanese Buddhist monk Ekai Kawaguchi in 1899 and Swiss geographer and surveyor Tony Hagen in 1952 have described the unparalleled beauties of Pokhara (Shrestha 2007). Pokhara started to receive global attention after the first ascend of Mt. Annapurna in June 1950 by French national Maurice Herzog and his friends. However, the arrivals of tourists really started here in

1960s after the establishment of tourist information centre in 1961, the formulation of master plan for its physical development in 1974 and the construction of Prithvi Highway in 1976 (NRB 2002).

Pokhara offers tourists a number of events and activities which are based on nature, culture, tradition, heritage, ceremony, adventure, and sports (NTB 2011). Today, it is the main entry and exist point for trekking to Annapurna Conservation Area, Mt. Annapurna Base Camp, Mt. Machhapuchhre Base Camp, and post-trekking resting and relaxation point (NCCR, TAAN WRC 2010; Tripathi 2007). The earlier entry of international tourists with only few thousands in 1960s in Pokhara has grown continuously in last five decades. This trend is clearly observable from the table 10.2.

Table 10.2 The growing trend of international tourist arrivals in Pokhara

Year	International tourist arrivals in Nepal	Tourist arrivals in Pokhara	% of Pokhara in total arrivals of Nepal
1957	-	119	-
1962	6,179	681	11
1976	105,108	31,026	29.5
1987	248,080	50,275	20
1996	393,613	86,504	22
1997	421,857	92,717	21.97
1998	463,684	103,895	22.40
1999	491,504	105,546	21.47
2000	463,646	95,095	20.51
2001	361,237	77,853	21.55
2002	275,468	68,056	24.70
2003	338,132	85,529	25.29
2004	385,297	87,693	22.75
2005	375,398	74,012	19.71
2006	383,926	94,799	24.69
2007	526,705	165,177	31.36
2008	500,277	186,643	37.30
2009	509,956	203,527	39.91
2010	602, 867	230,799	38.28
2011	735,932	-	-

Source: MoTCA (2012); PTO (2011)

The above growth is notable in the sense that it has not only offered the restorative holidays for incoming tourists with the increased activities and

events of tourism in Pokhara, but also opened avenue of opportunities for unlimited tourism entrepreneurs, workers, suppliers, and contractors. There have been tremendous growths on the tourism service providing industries with various professions and levels. There are recently altogether 673 accommodation units (hotels, resorts, lodges, and guest houses) 21 tourist restaurants, 116 travel agencies, 81 trekking agencies, 18 paragliding companies, 59 trekking equipment shops, 75 embroidery and garment services, 750 boat services, 52 money changers, 62 tourist cyber cafés, 12 tourist shopping complexes, 2154 taxis and micro bus services, and 3 home stays in Pokhara (Pokhara Tourism Office 2011). These growths have noticeably brought both opportunities and challenges. Among these challenges, the unsustainable uses of biophysical resources, degradation of socio-culture environments, unhealthy competition among tourism entrepreneurs, and sporadic conflicts appear at forefront at the inter- and intra- organizational level of tourism industry. In this context, the formulation and application of tourism ethical codes of conduct has been marked important for creating awareness on responsible and sustainable tourism aspects, sustainable management of tourism, appropriate organization of tourism heritages, responsible operations of tourism based professions, sustainable growth of tourism activities, and the strengthening the positive destination image. The responsible tourism management through the process of tourism ethics and their applications are also relevant for mainstreaming Pokhara in the present trends of growing responsible tourist destinations in the world (NCCR 2013).

In fact, the natural, historical, adventurous and cultural heritages are the bases for the development of tourism in Nepal where Pokhara is at the forefront for the richness of these prerequisites. In this context, there can be sustainable and inclusive benefits from tourism if there could be appropriate management of the plentiful natural, cultural and biodiversity related resources and heritages in and surrounding Pokhara. Earlier, there was no ethical policy which could focus on conservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritages with commonly accepted don'ts for all actors (guests and hosts alike) of tourism in Pokhara. A number of studies and works (Adhikari and Ghimire 2003; Ghimire and Upreti 2011; Oli 1996; Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012) authenticate the uncontrolled tourism and the deteriorating state of natural and cultural heritages, and

poor management of touristic areas in Pokhara. Such heritages like lakes (e.g. Fewa Lake), rivers (e.g. Phirke and Bulaundi), streams are in the state of risk of depletion and nothingness due to the increasing human encroachments and pressures, pumping of water resource by some nearby hotels and restaurants, solid waste disposal, contaminations, and bio diversity degradation. The numbers of *Chautara* (resting spots) and open areas of religious sites, the erstwhile beauties of Pokhara, have also decreased now. There are problems of freely hovering domestic cattle and improperly (poorly) managed wastage and garbage on the streets.

From the perspective of the demand side of tourism, it is observed that some domestic and international tourists are also willingly or unwillingly lagging behind on their responsible holiday behaviors and deeds. Referring to the need for environment friendly tourism, Luhan (2003) expresses dissatisfaction over the behavior of foreign tourists. After observation of some trekking routes in Nepal, he states that the same tourists, careful in protecting the American Rockies and European Alps, ignore the rules in developing countries. For example, some tourists are not only found indifferent about the proper disposal of their rubbish produced by themselves, but some youngsters are also found heavily drunk and sometimes taken to Policy station by security guards for inquiry due to their very abnormal behavior.

Upadhayaya and Khatiwada (2012) reveal that such trends are also found with young domestic tourists who are sporadically found drunk at the outlets of Pokhara at the time of their departures. Such tourists are arrested by Police, kept in custody for whole night, and then allowed to go in the next morning. Such irresponsible behaviors of tourists can harm the positive destination image. Such episodes are related with the equal needs of responsible behaviors of tourists, which must consider social values, cultural norms, traditional communal moralities, local resource use patterns, practices of environmental protections, etc. during their holidays in Pokhara. The study of this author finds the series of the ethics related drawbacks which are directly and indirectly related with the responsible management of tourism industry in Pokhara. Some of these are depicted in table 10.3.

Table 10.3 Issues of ethical aspects as concerned for responsible tourism management in Pokhara

S. N.	Pertaining issues	Apparent immediate negative repercussions	Possible mid and long term repercussions
1.	Act of intermediaries for reservation and sales by various different tourism entrepreneurs beyond their professional area and scopes	Apparent conflict among travel agencies, small hoteliers, trekking agencies, rafting agencies, communications centers, etc.	Degradation of quality on customer handling (e.g. efficient communications, dominance of irresponsible trends, possibility of price cutting) and deterioration of quality service
2.	Lack of the benchmark of minimum rates by majority of SMEs of tourism	Be short of credibility on destination among tourists	Lack of attention on human and its social and environmental aspects
3.	Inability for optimum utilization of natural resources and heritages for tourism	Confinement of benefits to limited stakeholders	Limitation to expand the prospect of inclusion and participation at large (holistic) scale
4.	Inter-organizational (among entrepreneurship like restaurants, tour agencies, trekking agencies, etc.) unhealthy competitions and lack of coordination	Lack of professionalism	Tourist restaurants run by families without being registered, which are also not monitored on service quality and professionalism
5.	Apathy and deficiency in proper management of rubbish and garbage	Sporadically seen inappropriate dumping of rubbish and garbage	Negative implication on the healthy look and work environment of Fewa Lake side and its surrounding
6.	Trend of offering free Wi-Fi services by not only big corporate houses but also by SMEs	The increasing risk of the survival of the internet service providers	Possibility of deterioration on quality service due to the increment of the expense occurring on Wi-Fi service offering as a matter of obligation due to the need to be competent with competitors
7.	Non application of meter rate card system by taxis	Observable tourists' dissatisfactions	Possible unfriendly and unfavorable image of destination

8.	Occasional uses of drugs and ear-phones by trekking guides while on duty	Inconvenience and observable dissatisfactions on service level	Possible unfriendly image on the standard of service in the long run
9.	Sporadic disputes between laborers and management in absence of commonly accepted organizational codes of conduct	Lack of coordination and effect on smooth service management for guests	Possible repercussion and sensitivity on the destination image
10.	Lack of adequate safety and security and local mannerisms related pre-departure and on the spot briefings to tourists	Occasional tourists' dissatisfactions	Possibility of the formation of bad destination image and negative words of mouth to other VFR tourists
11.	Lack of proper mannerism in receiving guests and recommending them to particular hotels by the members of hotel representatives society	Possibility of conflict among the representatives of hotels and between hoteliers and hotel representatives. Inconvenience and bad impression to tourists at destination	Possibility of the low rating of the standard of services of tourist destination

Source: Developed by author

As highlighted in table 10.3, there are a number of issues of tourism in Pokhara which is related with codes of conduct. The lack of the application of codes of conduct till recently had caused various negative tangible and intangible implications on tourism industry of Pokhara. Such implications included unhealthy competitions among service providers, deterioration of environment, inconvenience to tourists, their occasional dissatisfactions, negative destination image, lack of ethics on professionalism, conflict between management and laborers, etc.

In this context, there are some observation based publications which ascertain the lack of the application of codes of conduct and it caused negative implication on the sustainability of tourism in Pokhara and other parts of Nepal. Upreti et al. (2013, p 49) mention that 'there are a number of negative implications of labour unrests such as forceful closures of the workplaces (tourist accommodations), restricting the entry of tourists in tourist accommodations, and obstructions in the entry of tourists in tourist accommodations, and obstructions in the hospitality services. There repercussions have triggered more unrest, deteriorated harmonious

industrial environment, and compelled both managements (business) and laborers in tourist accommodations to suffer. Highlighting the need of the codes of conduct in above mentioned context, TAAN mentions that 'instead of providing quality service and doing fair competition by practicing socially responsible tourism activities, the tourism service providers are practicing unhealthy price war. Because of such unethical activities, there are high chances that the industry will further deteriorate in the future' (Shrestha 2009, p 9). In this aspect, Upadhayaya and Khatiwada (2012) rightly reveal that what is lacking importantly is really the need and application of the ethical aspects for the operation and management of tourism in Pokhara.

10.3.1 Earlier interventions

A thorough review of literature reveals that some efforts were made in the past for the formulation and application of ethical codes of conduct. The idea of the responsible tourism management with some does's and don'ts had started through such provisions in tourism master plan of 1972 during the fourth five year plan period (1970-75). Such provisions included the provisions of traditional designs, materials and height limits of buildings, prohibiting the settlement of construction towards the South-West area of Fewa Lake and stipulation of the height limit and distance location of buildings from the road and Phewa Lake (PATA 1988; Poudel 1996).

The practice of codes of conduct is a very new concept in Nepal and the practice of them at destination level is virtually at infant stage. A review of published and unpublished literature and personal communications with several tourism associations reveals some efforts made for the formulation of code of ethics which are mostly newer.

Table 10.4 List of efforts on code of ethics for tourism sector in Pokhara

S. No.	Involved organizations (associations)	Types of codes of conduct formulations	Focuses on
1.	TAAN	Trekking and Mountaineering Business code of conduct – 2066	Healthy business operations as targeted for trekking entrepreneurs elsewhere including Pokhara in Nepal
2.	Fewa Lake Boat Association	11 points operational codes of conduct	Respectful development of tourist boat entrepreneurs

3.	PCCI	Operational and management codes of conduct	Responsible operation and management of all businesses including tourism in Pokhara
4.	PTC	Fixing of no vehicle zone for seven hours every Saturday	Prohibition to vehicles to enter the area of three kilometers of the main road in Fewa Lake side area
5.	ACAP	Environmental sensitive minimum impact code (guidelines) as based under <i>Sanrachyan Chettra Byawasthapan Niyamabali 2053</i> (Conservation Area Management Regulation 2000)	Environmental preservation in Annapurna conservation area with its sensitization to tourism operators in Pokhara too
6.	FNCCI	Business code of conduct of FNCCI-2061	Sensitivity to environmental protection in all areas of Nepal
7.	MTDC and TAAN WRC	Code of Conduct at Machhapuchhre Model Trek in Annapurna Conservation Area	Code of conduct in five areas (planning & managerial, social, economic, environmental, and tourists' safety)
8.	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation	Code of Conduct for home stay tourists under <i>Home Karyabidhi Nimawali 2065</i>	CoC for tourists at individual and community home stays at national level including Pokhara
9.	NTB	Sustainable Tourism Network	Sustainable tourism practice at national level including Pokhara
10.	PTC, NCCR North-South and KU	Destination level tourism codes of conduct and CSR guidelines by the joint efforts of diversified tourism practitioners and researchers of tourism	Both supply and demand sides actors of tourism envisioning the reciprocal relationships between responsible tourism and sustainable peace and prosperity

Source: Compiled from various sources by author

There are thought-provoking theoretical and practical expressions on the formulation and operation of codes of conduct by the direct participations and inputs of local stakeholders in above mentioned different scopes of codes of conduct. However, two situations are observed in relation to table 4. One is that the most of such efforts are concentrated in macro level rather than micro level. The other is that there are lackings on the strong applications of above ethics (table 4) by concerned stakeholders. In table 4, the destination level tourism codes of conduct as mentioned at serial number 10 is a recent joint endeavor of all tourism stakeholders for the responsible and sustainable operation and management of tourism in Pokhara. Though the result of its application is yet to come out, there are mutual interactions held among practitioners and also

between researchers and practitioners. The bottomup approach in its process has brought some changes in the existing situations. It has helped in generating mutual understanding, appreciating differences, fostering knowledge, enhancing societal learning, and boosting concerted actions as all related with the various aspects of codes of conduct for responsible tourism in Pokhara.

Apart from the above mentioned code of ethics, there are some professional codes of ethics built by some sub-sectors of tourism. For example, a total of 18 paragliding companies themselves fixed minimum rate of US\$ 100 for foreigner and NPR 5650.00 for Nepalese with effect from December 2012. This rate includes commission margin and also ascertains minimum quality standards for clients who include experience of pilot, quality of equipments, minimum time and duration of flying (Personal communication with General Secretary of Nepal Air Sports Association). Another example is about fixing one way fare (NPR 500.00 without lunch package on non air-conditioned coach, NPR 750.00 without lunch package on the air-conditioned coach, and NPR 950.00 with lunch package on the air-conditioned coach) for Nepalese tourists in tourist buses on Pokhara-Kathmandu-Pokhara route. This fare was brought in effect from 21 July 2012 by the joint initiative of Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), Pokhara and Tourist Bus Association of Nepal (Personal communication with Office Secretary of NATTA, Pokhara). The professional ethics through the common understanding and application have allowed both paragliding companies and tourist buses to reach win-win situation from earlier situations of lose-lose for some years.

10.3.2 Recent destination level intervention on partnership actions

Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC)² in association with the South Asia Regional Coordination Office of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South and Kathmandu University executed a partnership action. The key findings of the PhD research based field work in Pokhara and its surrounding on the thematic area of '*Tourism, conflict and peace*' **was the** knowledge background and the process of design partnership actions. This scientific research, as held in Kathmandu

² PTC is an umbrella organization of 11 tourism related associations in Pokhara. It has constitutional mandate to provide visionary suggestions and valuable ideas to the government in formulating sound plans and policies for the sustainable and responsible development of tourism in Pokhara. See www.pokharatourism.org for more information.

University in association with NCCR North-South in the year 2010-12, gave empirical basis to those research findings through partnership actions between researcher and tourism practitioners (NCCR 2013). The destination level collective document titled 'Codes of Conduct for Peace Responsive Tourism in Pokhara: A Manual' is the outcomes of this project. This manual is produced with the joint participations and efforts of 22 tourism and non-tourism associations in Pokhara. It was approved and endorsed by 15 tourism professional associations which are related with tourism and PTC in Pokhara. This manual was officially launched at a program named 'Pokhara Tourism Declaration 2013' in April 2013 in Pokhara.

This partnership action-based manual aims to strengthen the peace potential of tourism through mitigating the syndromes of irresponsible tourism development and by bringing the intra- and inter-organizational coordination and harmony in tourism sector in Pokhara. Such noble intentions were envisioned through the outlook of mainstreaming tourism codes of conduct in operation and management of tourism on bottom-up basis at destination level. Methodologically, this manual is produced on transdisciplinary³ approach as the major process in which there are partnership actions of all stakeholders (e.g. tourism practitioners, researchers, Nepal Tourism Board, local administration, local security agencies, and local civil society). Conceptualization of the experience (good and best practices) of various destinations in Nepal (as applicable) and in other countries is one of the methodological processes in the formulation of this manual. The ten guiding principles of Global Code of Ethics in Tourism of UNWTO formed the primary source of information and code of conducts guidelines of PATA, tourism industry of Australia, Bhutan, Hong Kong, India (Sikkim), South Africa, Thailand, etc. as the secondary source of information for the review of literature in its formulation process. The primary information holds the foremost inclusion in the content of this manual which is acquired largely through one to one bilateral consultations and interactions with all tourism associations and several rounds of face to face interactions for the first hand information with their board members.

³ 'Transdisciplinary' highlights the collaboration between science (scientific actors) and society (societal actors) for a common purpose. This approach tries to identify syndromes as well as the possible answers or solutions to mitigate them by developing participatory approaches. See Goetschel (2012) and Heim et al. (2011) for more information.



Photo 10.1 Mutual interactions between tourism industry partners and researchers for the formulation code of conducts, Source: Pokhara Tourism Council

The earlier information derived on internal strengths and weakness as well as the external opportunities and threats of 22 tourism and non-tourism organizations was the other base information for the production of this manual (Upadhayaya and Khatiwada 2012).

- ***What are ethical codes of conduct for the tourism sector of Pokhara?***

The ethical codes of conduct for the tourism sector of Pokhara are commonly accepted commitments on general ethical principles, core values, and working policies at destination level. These codes are the commonly discussed and accepted moral principles for major stakeholders of tourism in Pokhara.

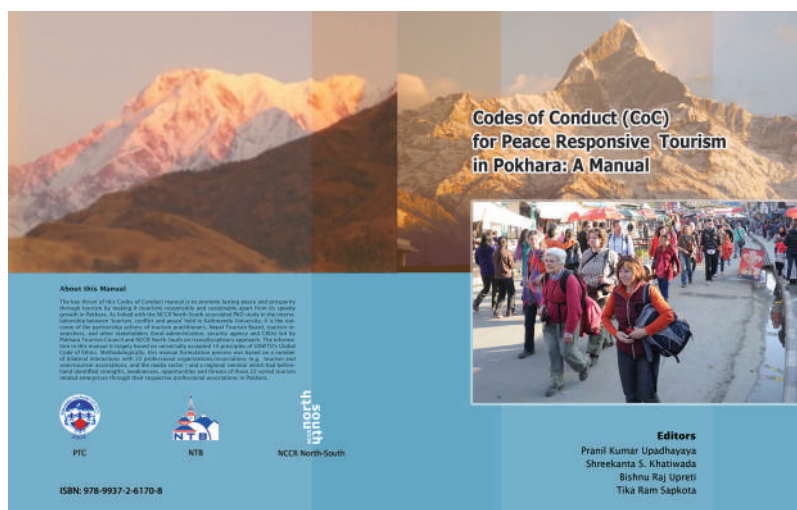


Photo 10.2 Codes of conduct for peace responsive tourism in Pokhara: A manual
Source: Upadhyaya et al., 2013

These specific codes of conduct are commonly understood and accepted do's and don'ts for a total of following 13 major professional tourism industries' associations and their actors in the tourism industry of Pokhara

Table 10.5 Tourism actors with their codes of conduct for responsible tourism in Pokhara

S. N.	Name of institutions/actors	S. N.	Name of institutions/actors
1.	Paschimanchal Hotel Association	8.	Embroidery and Garment Association
2.	Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, Western Regional Association	9.	Nepal Air Sports Association
3.	Nepal Association of Tour & Travel Agents, Regional Association	10.	Media sector
4.	Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal Pokhara	11.	Tourism Workers' Unions
5.	Taxi Association of Pokhara	12.	General Stakeholders ¹ of Tourism
6.	Pokhara Bus Entrepreneurs Association	13.	Tourists
7.	Trekking Equipment Shops' Association		

Source: Collected from PTC (2013)⁴

⁴ These stakeholders include local administration, government security agencies, civil society, tourism professionals, NGOs, CBOs, educational institutes and the non-tourist host communities who are indirectly related with tourism in Pokhara.

This manual in its complete form is believed to act as a kind of readiness by all concerned stakeholders for preventing and mitigating conflict and building prosperity and peace by the application of responsible tourism operations in Pokhara. The codes of conduct in this manual are not platitudinous and generic. This manual has an education effect, informing stakeholders about what is generally accepted as a good practice. The ends are supposed to be achieved by education, persuasion and voluntary compliance rather than compulsion. For it, sufficient awareness, orientation, interactions, training and capacity buildings of the board members of all member tourism associations of PTC are made to capacitate them on the application of CSR guidelines.

As a point of departure for developing sustainable tourism requirements, the codes of conduct manual serves as the basic guidelines for businesses of all sizes to become more responsible and help businesses choose responsible tourism programs that can be supportive to fulfill the globally competitive criteria. This manual has tried its best to adapt globally acceptable sustainable tourism criteria so that the adaptation of such criteria can be supportive to “brand” Pokhara as a responsible tourism destination on the international tourism map.

10.4 Conclusions

The ethical codes of conduct can be the best intervention on top of the regulatory framework for making tourism responsible. It can be the strong basis to qualify the responsible and sustainable management of tourism at tourist destination like Pokhara. Pokhara as a tourist destination with growing popularity in Nepal has recently produced tourism codes of conduct manual at destination level. The process of the formulation of the manual has also tried to fulfill the gap on the linkage between research, policy and practice in milieu of the need of the responsible and sustainable tourism management.

The process of codes of conduct formulation for tourism industry in Pokhara has given some lessons and learning experiences. The whole process has taught that there are some prerequisites in the process of the formulation and applications of code of ethics. Such conditions include faraway insight, visualization, awareness, collective (integrated) commitment, continual mutual dialogues, mutual consent, documentation, training and capacity buildings, learning from the satisfaction level of tourists (service users), mutual feedback on positive and challenging experiences among similar entrepreneurs, and so on. The proper process of codes

of conduct formulation can be itself supportive for brining common attitude, unification, and integration among similar professionals involved in tourism sector. Furthermore, the role of researchers and community organizations (e.g. community service centre) can be valuable in the process of the formulation of such ethics.

The extensive knowledge and awareness of all stakeholders and their collaborative efforts are a must to strengthen the ethical aspects of tourism and achieve responsible tourism in Pokhara. Furthermore, there is high need of the continuity of operational unity, internal dialogues, common understanding, reciprocal exchange of knowledge, conflict mitigation strategy, collective efforts, and concerted actions in the endeavor of responsible tourism development in Pokhara.

This chapter necessitates the importance of codes of conduct for the responsible management of tourism at destination level. A sense of morality and understanding the responsibility are very important. Nonetheless, it does not neglect the essence of the formulation of some new regulations and also strong execution of such regulations (both new and existing) on top of the existing business and operational ethics. For example, the increasing risk of the survival of the internet service providers (as point 6 in table 1 above) due to the rising trends of offering free Wi-Fi services by hotels, restaurants, coffee shops, etc. in certain touristic parts in Fewa Lake side area is a challenging matter. It needs the intervention of government through new rules and regulations. Or, there is also a possibility that all tourism associations come together with certain ethical norms to manage this challenge as what has been observed in the tourist site in Thamel, Kathmandu through the wise and responsible effort of Thamel Tourism Development Board.

The recent inclination of Pokhara towards 'responsible tourism' principles and practices is particularly important for its sustainability. The common acceptance of the codes of conduct manual by all concerned stakeholders (e.g. tourists, tourism entrepreneurs, tourism workers and local people) is expected to contribute not only for the sustainable development of tourism in Pokhara but also support for an effective marketing by creating value and confidence of both trade and consumer markets of tourism. The effective implementations of the codes of conduct with the continuous backstopping for capacity building are further needs to support the growth of peaceful and prosperous tourism and environmentally responsible travel. As it is a voluntary and non-binding document, its application can be enhanced by the incorporation of its contents and provisions also into

legislation and regulations by national tourism administration and tourism trade in future.

This chapter stresses the fundamental need of the code of conducts for tourism to be further read, circulated and adopted for the benefit of all forms and levels of tourism, all kinds of tourists, all levels of tourism enterprises, all levels of tourism workers, and entire host communities (including non-tourist community) and their environments in Pokhara and elsewhere.

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Role of tourism in urban-rural integration: Reflections from trekking (adventure) tourism in Pokhara

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Pranil Kumar Upadhayaya²

11.1 Introduction

Nepal has approximately 83 percent of its land area within mountains and Himalayas. The nation is yet mostly remote, and the entire nation is divided in isolated pocket economies. It often causes a constraint on easy accessibility and unhindered terrestrial mobility. In this context, the balanced socio-economic development is one of the prominent challenges in the mountainous country like Nepal. Any achievement of this premise is largely positioned on the strong linkage between market towns of urban areas and their rural surroundings. Since the late 1990s, the urban and regional development policy of Nepal has purposely focused on developing rural area through developing market towns and strengthening linkage between urban and rural areas in the country (Pradhan 2013). Tourism is considered one of the potential sectors of socio-economic transformation of the country. Tourism has been an integral part of the national development to cope with poverty, increase employment and to upgrade the national economy.

Nepali society is offered with multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-regional setups. The age-old cultural tradition of *Atithi Devo Vahwa* (Guests are God) is deeply rooted in its cultural heritages and spiritual traditions. The diverse topography, geography, vegetation, climatic conditions, unique natural beauties, sparkling mountains, thrilling and diverse wildlife experiences, lovely waterfalls, and ancient and mediaeval historical and religious places have high prospective for the growth of the inbound international tourists and tourism-based income.

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In this context, data in table 11.1 on total international tourists' arrivals and per day spending shows encouraging but fluctuating figures of last one decade.

Table 11.1 Tourists' arrivals and their spending in 11 years

Tourists Arrivals and Spending in Nepal		
<i>Source: MoTCA (published in the Kathmandu post on 3rd April 2012)</i>		
Year	Arrivals	Spending in \$/person/day
2001	361,237.00	39.6
2002	275,468.00	64.8
2003	338,132.00	79.1
2004	385,297.00	45.1
2005	375,398.00	58.5
2006	383,926.00	55
2007	526,705.00	45
2008	500,277.00	73
2009	509,956.00	65.3
2010	602,867.00	43.2
2011	735,966.00	39.9
Total	4,995,229.00	

Among various forms of communities, natures and cultures based Nepali tourism, rural tourism is an important segment. It incorporates rural environment, demography, socio-culture, cuisine and geography as primary elements. It involves local people as host that fulfill customers' demand in rustic way letting

them experience the complete village life. Rural infrastructure is taken as another principal element to showcase the genuineness. All tourism-related activities which are carried out in the village are considered rural tourism. Rural tourism is also a potential for community development strategy. It can be achieved by using tourism as a tool to strengthen the ability of rural community through various interventions like identifications of need, offering of trainings and capacity buildings, and preparing sustainable processes. Such interventions are aimed towards achieving the social, economic and environmental betterments by preserving natural resources (Sharma 2008; 2009a). Among various forms of tourism based on community, natural and cultural resources, rural tourism provides an opportunity to harness indigenous knowledge for the socioeconomic benefit of rural poor communities subject to making it sustainable and pro-poor (Pandey 2009). Village tourism is an innovative approach for the welfare of rural people while boosting tourism. It is the key to development of any region or community and has potential advantage to contribute to the development to non-industrial regions or villages (Pradhanang 1997 and 2009; Upadhyay 2008).

Rural tourism has tremendous potentials to flourish because most of the tourism destinations of the country lie in rural areas. This way, tourism

can largely help rural people to make their livings. Being geographically very diverse, Nepal offers tourists to visit to the plains, to the hills and to the mountains. The urban centers in Nepal have remained the doorway for both international and domestic tourists to enter rural hinterlands to experience very rustic lifestyle. Tourism in Nepal offers tourists primarily the urban civilizations in the process of their observations and participations in rural tourism. Thus, Nepali tourism is undeniably the amalgam of urban and rural tourism. And, this way, it has helped develop a win-win situation for both the urban and rural communities.

Formally, rural tourism started in 1997 at Sirubari of Syangja district with the inclusion of tourism programs in government's tourism policy 1995 (Upadhyay 2005). Nepal government's 9th five -year plan (1997-2002) and 10th five -year plan (2002-2007) gave due consideration to village tourism and promised to establish 14 different village tourism destinations in each geographical region within five years (Pradhananga 1999). However, unlike Sirubari in earlier phase and Ghalegaun in Lamjung district in later phase, the other rural destinations have not yet achieved much attention and the worldwide recognition even though there are tourism activities going in various rural areas of Nepal. Thapa (2006) rightly stresses giving proper attention to identify, conceptualize, understand, and upgrade knowledge on the potential of tourism and the fragile resources for the urban-rural integrated development of tourism in Pokhara. It will then also need to deliver the knowledge for incoming generations. This could make them responsible towards sustainable use of nature and culture.

Trekking adventure tourism is one of the most popular rural touristic activities. Out of a total of 3,259,946 tourist arrivals in Nepal during the years 2006-2011, a total of 562,480 (17.25%) went for trekking and mountaineering activities (MoTCA 2012). This segment shows important position of trekking and mountaineering related adventure tourism in the overall tourism operation of Nepal. Trekking is an adventure tourism activity which generally starts from urban centre for the preparations of its packaging and departures. Pokhara is one of the most admired urban tourist centers, and is also the generator of thousands of trekking tourists in surrounding rural areas. Annapurna Conservation Area is the most popular in these areas surrounding Pokhara. According to Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), a total of 1, 40,362 tourists visited the rural region of Annapurna Conservation Area in 2012 which was larger than in 2011 by 5,000 tourists. Prior to 2011, a total of 90,161 tourists had visited Annapurna Conservation Area. There is the highest flow of tourists

in Annapurna Conservation Area which is famous for trekking adventure and nature based tourism. This shows the position of Pokhara not only for those tourists who come only for Pokhara and admire it but its location as a solid transit for all those purposively incoming and outgoing trekking (adventure) tourists in Annapurna and other surrounding rural areas of Pokhara. In this background, this Chapter attempts to address following elements:

- a. The general conceptual foundation of the urban-rural integration in tourism;
- b. A historical perspective on the role of tourism on the urban-rural integration in Nepal;
- c. The component of trekking tourism as generated from Pokhara which acts as urban-rural connector in Western Nepal; and
- d. The strategic position of Pokhara for preparing pre-trekking packaging and arrangements, on the trekking establishments of supply linkages and the post-trekking preferred destination for rest and relaxations of tourists.

The information of this chapter is derived from review of various published and unpublished literatures, observation of trekking routes and rural communities, societal learning from the development of rural tourism product route (e.g. Machhapuchhre Model Trek) and interviews with rural and urban communities who are both participants and non-participants in urban-rural tourism field.

11.2 Understanding the concept of urban-rural integration in tourism

Tourism has recently emerged as a primary development strategy and a driving force for the regional integration on various aspects like human relations, economy, cultural traditions, and environmental resources. The developing area of rural-urban tourism integration research still remains the subject of secondary attention in the research of urban-rural interface (Grazuleviciute-Vileniske and Vitkuvienė 2012). Nonetheless, there are some interesting experiences in this field.

Integration is a collaborative approach which has wide range of applications on tourism development in urban-rural areas. It has gained wide attention on sustainable planning issues (Gössling and Hörstmeier 2003). It focuses on interactions and realizes partnerships between the various levels of

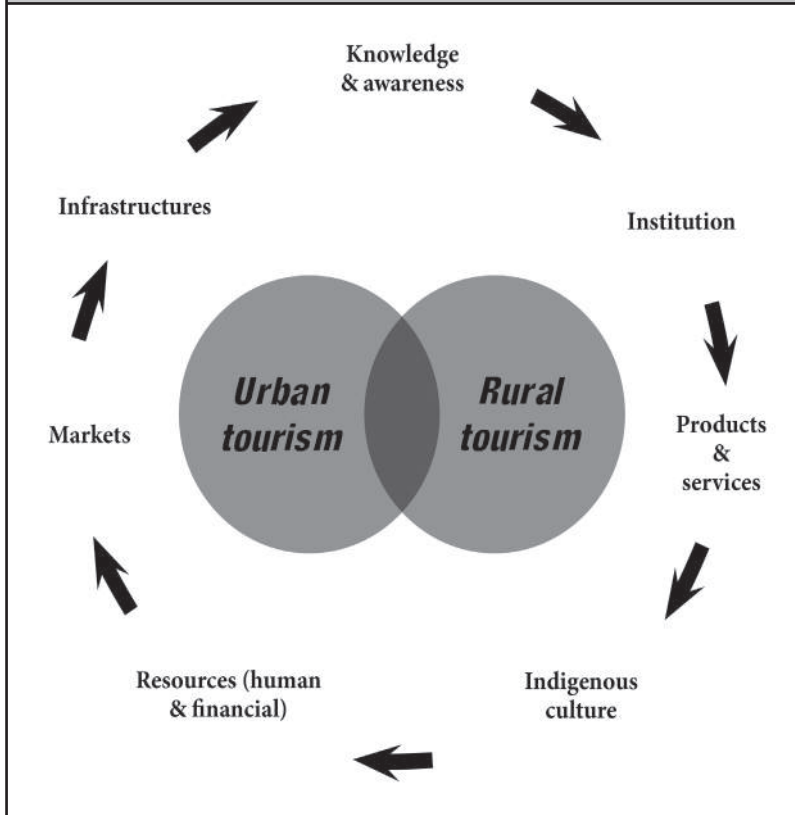
the responsible organizations and between the organizations and the stakeholders (Bramwell and Lane 2000; Hall and McArthur 1998 cited in Hall 1999). Carril and Araujo Vila (2012) have analyzed a peri-urban tourist initiative based on the agri-tourism or vegetable tourism. Their works reveal that the analysis of tourism development is focused on four main types of tourism destinations and activities: urban tourism, rural tourism, costal tourism, and tourism in natural areas. The existence of four main types encourages considering the possibilities to adapt the rural heritage (cultural heritage including the built structures) absorbed by the urban development to the needs of tourism.

Xiaoyan (2013) states that tourism can almost associate with every industry of national economy due to some specific indications like strong comprehensive nature, high interrelatedness, long industrial chain, and in particular featuring integration with industry. He states that the new form of tourism based on traditional industries through the development, evolution, integration and innovation, has become new force and main force in the "big tourism" today. The model of green rural tourism is considered to have potential to realize urban-rural integration for the underdeveloped Western region of China. Green rural tourism cannot only speed up economic development, promote culture intercourse between urban and rural set-ups, accelerate harmonious society but also effectuate social tourism³ (Ning and He 2012). However, the inclusion of the principle of characteristic development and the adaptation to local conditions and choosing the development model that suits the local culture and character is of immense importance.

As a collaborative approach, the concept of urban-rural integration in tourism includes a number of interrelated factors for its sustainable structure. These include information and awareness (knowledge-building), expertise of rural and urban tourism operators, supportive institutions, resources [financial (micro enterprise, cooperatives, investments), human and technological], growth in tourists (international and domestic), sustainable practices (including tourism codes of conduct), local context specific packages for product-services for tourists and cooperation at horizontal and vertical levels. Such integral elements of urban-rural tourism are demonstrated in a conceptual figure below.

³ Social Tourism is access to travel and leisure opportunities for all. Social Tourism is codified in World Tourism Organization's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. See BITS (2010) and UNWTO (2012) for more information.

Figure 11.1 Framework with interrelated factors of a sustainable urban-rural tourism integration



Source: Developed by authors

As a comprehensive integrated approach, there are not only opportunities and but also challenges for the rural-urban interface of tourism. There are larger implications of heritages in rural territories. However, the process of urbanization of rural territories can inevitably produce numerous conflicts. Costa and Batista (2011) reveal about the threatening to the preservation of built heritage and landscapes in rural areas. Costa and Batista (2011 as in Grazuleviciute-Vileniske and Vitkuvienė 2012, p 61) state that ‘urban values and rural values tend to overlap confusingly, neither producing a feeling of being in the city nor in the countryside, and result in a profound crisis of identity in landscape’. The coherence

of the goals of tourism development institutions operating at different levels means that this harmony is able to be maintained despite conflict between different tiers of the tourism industry. The work of Overbeek and Terluin (2006) mentions the appearance of the socioeconomic pressures resulting from urbanization and development of tourism with modern structures on rural communities. This can strongly affect the local identity.

11.3 Tourism in the urban-rural integration in Nepal

Mountain and Terai are two broader geographical regions where Nepal's tourism is based. However, it is mountain tourism which not only covers the bulk of tourism-related attractions being offered in the given geographic and topographic distributions of Nepal's territory, but also occupies vast occupancy in the overall tourism related activities in the country (Upadhayaya and Upreti 2009). These attractions present Nepal a fascinating mountain tourist destination.

The activities are varied, which range in aquatic (Rafting, /Kayaking, Boating, Fishing, Swimming, Cannoning, ware Running, etc.), terrestrial (trekking, mountaineering, pony trekking, Ski diving, rock climbing, bird watching) and aerial (Bungi Jumping, Hot Air Ballooning, Paragliding, Ultra Light Aircraft, Mountain Flight, Cable Car, etc.) sphere. All of these activities are full of adventures. Amidst the five typology of tourism like ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, environmental tourism and recreational tourism identified by Smith (1989), environmental tourism is synonym to mountain tourism which is primarily geographic and often ancillary to ethnic tourism, that attracts tourist elites to remote areas such as Antarctica or Nepal Himalayan region to observe man-land relationships and experience a truly alien scene (Kunwar 2006).

11.3.1 The pioneer promoters of mountain tourism and trekking trails in Nepal

There are some pioneers whose highlights are appealing in context of trekking and adventure related mountain tourism and the role of tourism for urban-rural integration in Nepal.

a. Ekai Kawaguchi

Having studied the Tibetan language in Darjeeling, the 34-year-old Kawaguchi came to Nepal in 1899 with the goal of secretly entering Tibet. Tibet was then closed to foreigners.



Photo 11.1 Ekai Kawaguchi

Originally he hesitated about whether he should go to Tibet via Bhutan or Nepal. Eventually he had chosen the Nepal route, considering that even if he failed to enter Tibet, Nepal could offer alternative destination to explore about Buddhist and Hindu religions, cultures, and languages. He was updated with the availability of many Sanskrit manuscripts along with sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Nepal which he could thoroughly investigate and study. He was also interested in the fact that no Japanese had ever been to Nepal (Japanese Embassy 2013)

b. Boris Lissanevitch

During King Tribhuvan's visits to India in 1951, the King met Boris Lissanevitch, a Russian ballet dancer who was running a club in Calcutta.



Photo 11.2 Boris Lissanevitch (on left back) with King Mahendra and Queen Ratna

Boris convinced the King that people would like to visit Nepal and would actually pay for the experience. Soon a few ladies flew from Patna to Kathmandu's *Gaucher* (cow grazing field) airport in an Indian Airlines Dakota. Boris accommodated them in his new establishment, the Royal Hotel. The women were charmed by Boris and the exotic kingdom of Nepal. Thus Nepali tourism was born. The Royal Hotel and its yak & Yeti bar was the meeting place for adventurous climbers who came to Nepal from the 1950s until 1971 (Himalaya 2008).

c. Bill Tilman

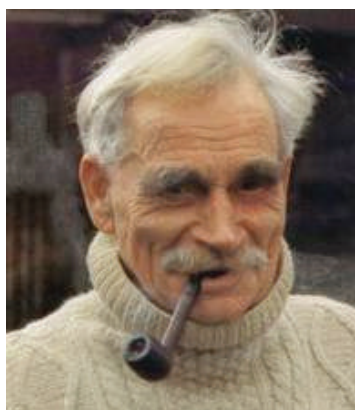


Photo 11.3 Bill Tilman

The first trekker to Nepal was Bill Tilman, who somehow obtained permission from the *maharaja* (rulers) in 1949 Bikram Sambat for several treks, including the rural Kali Gandaki, Helambu and Everest.

His adventures are described in *Nepal Himalaya: a mountaineering classic* that has been reprinted by the Seattle Mountaineers as part of a Tilman collection, the *Seven Mountain-travel Books* (Tilman 2002).

d. Maurice Herzog



Photo 11.4 Maurice Herzog

It was Maurice Herzog and his team who had exposed and popularized first Pokhara and Annapurna region to the external world from tourism point of view. They visited Pokhara and Mustang region widely to get acclimatized the situation well before they attempted to climb Mt. Annapurna (Herzog et al. 2012).

After the successful climb of Mt. Annapurna, Maurice Herzog wrote a book titled '*Annapurna*'. In the Book Maurice Herzog describes the busy little village of Tukucha (now Tukuche), where the men spin and weave

goat hair into strong fabric, and where the main source of income seems to be providing lodging for caravans passing by. The book became the best seller with 11 million copies by the year 2000. This book is considered to be a classic of mountaineering literature and perhaps the most influential climbing book ever written. The book helped attracting tourists to Annapurna mountain region and thus helped develop tourism in rural areas of Nepal.

e. Jimmy Roberts



Photo 11.5 Jimmy Roberts

Colonel Jimmy Roberts is known as the 'father of trekking' in Nepal (Dixit 2009). He was the first person to realize that trekking would appeal to tourists in Nepal.

In 1965 Colonel Jimmy Roberts introduced Nepal to the world to trekking. He played vital role in promoting and developing tourism in the rural areas of Annapurna region. He

was the first trekker to go to Annapurna base camp. He had accompanied Tilman on his first trek. He discovered and named Machhapuchhre base camp. At first, he tried to find Machhapuchhre base camp in Machhapuchhre Village Development Committee in Mardi Himal region but was not allowed to trek in the area by the villagers so he had to take another route to go to the recent Machhapuchhre base camp.

As a former Gurkha Officer and Military Attaché at the British Embassy in Kathmandu he had spent years of his life walking the hills of Nepal. His idea, revolutionary for the time, was to provide tents together with Sherpas, guide and a cook. He started the first commercial trekking trips from the damp site of Fewa Lake in Pokhara. He operated a group of trekkers from UK who were booked and sent by Thomas Cook in 1966. This made Nepal and the Himalaya available to a wide community and was an immediate success. In 1965 he took a group of ladies up the Kali Gandaki and founded Mountain Travel, the first of Nepal's trekking company and the inspiration for the adventure travel industry. This shows that the organized trekking tourism in Nepal was started from Pokhara.

f. Jhalak Thapa



Photo 11.6 Jhalak Thapa

Mr. Jhalak Thapa is redoubtable personality for his contribution to study and identify new trekking routes and producing its itineraries in various parts of Nepal.

According to Mr. Keith Howman, the President of World Pheasants Association, UK, Jhalak Thapa in association Col. Jimmy Roberts was the first person to identify Pipar in Annapurna sanctuary in 1976 and the potential of this area as important breeding ground for six of Nepal's seven Himalayan pheasant species (e.g. Blood, Himalaya, Kokla, Crimson, Cheer, and Nepal Kalij). Pipar is one of the best places in the world for bird watchers (Dixit 2009). Jhalak Thapa was also largely engaged in identifying, studying, promoting and conserving crafts in Pokhara and surrounding mountain areas. He served with 'Craft of Pokhara Shop & Museum' during the period from 1975 to 1990. In this context, Mr. Joy Rushfelt, the Vice President of World Craft Council, U.S.A., appreciated the crafts-related contributions of Jhalak Thapa in Pokhara. He mentioned his impression during his visit in Pokhara in 1988 thus: "I was very impressed by your museum and shop when I visited a year ago. Your shop was the only one I saw in Nepal, which seemed to have a real sense of 'integrity of crafts'". Furthermore, Mr. Kenneth L. Chamberlain, the Executive Vice President of PATA International in January 1980 appreciated Jhalak's contribution for mountain tourism with the quotation as 'I think the main purpose will be to demonstrate to the Ministry and to others in Kathmandu that there are people in Pokhara who are thinking creatively about the tourism development in the area and who are very much on the right track in terms of what sort of tourism development should take place' (Open source 2013).

g. Western Hippies

Kunwar (2010) links the evolution of the history of Nepali tourism with the advent of Hippies with their own culture in 1960s and 70s in Nepal. These were *Hippies* during the 70s who interestingly came to Nepal as explorers looking for discovery of new places for their heavenly world and involvement with local people. Their travels and stays during 70s and 80s also contributed to spread *Hippi* culture in Nepal (Poudyal 2013).



Photo 11.7 Hippies

The places like Jhochen, Basantpur, Swoyambhu Nath, and Bankali were the main places for the gathering of Hippies in Kathmandu. Today the freak street in Jhochen can be recognized as hippies' heritage. These were Hippies who were also the first Westerners to reach Pokhara in Western region in the 1970s. From the time of the monk Ekai Kawaguchi who travelled Nepal and visited Pokhara in 1899 to Maurice Herzog's climbing expedition in 1950 and Toni Hagen's geographical researching tour in 1952, Pokhara was visited by fewer foreigners. However, it was the Hippy era which made not only Nepal but also Pokhara famous in

European and American markets. The year 1970, when hippies started coming to Pokhara making significant change in tourism, can be considered the opening decade of modern tourism in Pokhara. They have enormous roles for exploring new mountainous tourist sites that contributed to the identification of new trekking routes and sites in Annapurna and other regions of Nepal (Upadhayaya and Upreti 2009).

11.3.2 Tourism in urban-rural integration in Western Nepal

Rural tourism and urban tourism started simultaneously. Almost all the visitors spend few days in the cities before they set off for the trekking or climbing. This way, they enjoyed the services provided in both urban and rural set up. Comparatively, urban tourism has thrived faster than the rural tourism because of the infrastructures like comfortable accommodations, easy accessibility and luxurious amenities. However, rural tourism has become the co-component for the overall tourism and benefited urban areas of Nepal. For instance, Kathmandu is benefitted from the visitors going to Langtang and Everest region, Pokhara from the visitors going to Annapurna region, Bhairahawa and Butwal from those going to Lumbini area and so on. Similarly, the rural villagers are also benefitted from the visitors visiting their villages. This way, cities and villages are interlinked. Villagers come to cities to seek tourism opportunities and city-based agencies seek for the village-based tourism products. This kind of interlinked phenomena offers to benefit both urban and rural areas.

Urban-rural tourism integration is crucial for the diversification of tourism income. Generally, the villagers in rural areas of Nepal are deprived of most of the opportunities due to inaccessibility and remoteness. They need to be provided with alternative ways of income. Tourism can be one of the major opportunities. If tourism is promoted in the villages with proper inter-linkage, it will undeniably help improve the local economy. And, it will affect the national economy positively. In 2011, more than 730,000 tourists came to Nepal and out of that, 100,000 visitors visited rural parts of Annapurna region generating country's economy considerably.

Table 11.2 Flow of tourists to rural areas in Annapurna conservation area in Western Nepal

Village-wise tourist arrival in 2011											
Month	Unit Conservation Office										
	Lomanthang	Jomsom		Manang	Bhujung		Sikles	Ghandruk	Lwang		
	Kagbeni	Phutang	Ghasa	Dharapani	Bhulbhole	Ghalegaun	Chansu	Birethanti	Sikha	Bhurjung khola	Pothana
Jan	0	258	111	247	269	10	1	2273	217	5	464
Feb	2	433	20	412	504	18	3	2308	278	11	637
Mar	40	2143	388	2113	2222	78	43	3786	1043	86	1269
Apr	176	3943	715	2808	2771	27	28	4608	1501	66	1269
May	306	2933	665	1023	916	21	8	2063	746	12	518
Jun	46	2055	345	278	252	2	0	694	144	3	98
Jul	188	1419	325	371	429	2	0	1080	170	2	174
Aug	348	1381	357	420	434	15	0	1524	207	4	281
Sep	429	2472	346	2099	2355	19	2	2890	429	15	724
Oct	542	3525	771	5811	5643	57	111	7726	2516	96	2204
Nov	151	1439	740	3560	3025	47	100	6037	2318	102	1449
Dec	19	738	106	504	476	12	6	3065	297	45	622
Total	2247	22738	4889	19646	19296	308	302	38054	9866	447	9709

Source-ACAP

Table 11.2 shows that tourists are significantly distributed to the rural parts of the Annapurna region. The more tourists are there in the area, the more possibilities for the villagers to be benefitted. So, it necessitates first to target to increase the number of tourists in rural areas. If the tourists' number is made equal in both urban and rural areas, the income from tourism will also be divided in both areas.

Community-based tourism run and guided in and by the jurisdiction of Annapurna Conservation Areas Project in Annapurna region of Western Nepal has followed the principle of maximum people's participation on sustainable approach. This project viewing indigenous people as one of the most important factors for successful management of conservation efforts, has tried to reach out to the poorest of the poor people as much as possible (Bajracharya et al. 2007).

Out of the World's 14 highest mountains above 8000 meters, Pokhara region is the home to the three highest mountains namely Annapurna

Box 11.1 The rural-urban inseparable relationships for trekking tourism

"I believe that tourism is the most important part of development of the rural areas of Nepal. Through tourism, local men and women can be self-employed and provide services through home stay provision, handicraft, local tour and trekking facilities, local sight-seeing, local culture and tradition to the visitors in the area. Consequently, villagers get benefits and the rural economy develops and thrives. Without development of tourism sector in the cities, surrounding villages cannot get tourism-related benefits. So, tourism development in the urban areas is essential to promote rural tourism. To attract more tourists in the villages, we also need to develop tourism infrastructures, upgrade other facilities and also enhance our service delivering capacities in our rural locations. In this way both rural and urban areas can get benefits from tourism sectors. Hence, rural-urban integration through tourism must be priority for mutual benefits."

Source: Rajendra Gurung, President, Machhapuchhre tourism development committee, Kaski

I, Dhaulagiri and Manaslu. Pokhara as an urban centre has also a very close link with the rural tourism destinations like Sikles, Sardikhola, Lwangghalel, Ghandruk, Ghorepani, Ghachok, Annapurna Base Camp, Manang, Jomsom, Muktinath, Upper Mustang, Dolpa, Mardi Himal, Nar Phoo region and so on. Some of these destinations are practicing community based village tourism. To go to these rural places, tourists have to come first to Pokhara. The larger scale trekking operation plans along with considerable segments of the packages formulations are done in Pokhara. This way, Pokhara has also been benefitted due to the starting of rural areas from tourism.

To uplift the living standard of the people of the country through tourism, rural-urban tourism integration and its development

is essential. The government, with the help from the tourism-related organizations, should bring innovative and village-oriented programs so that the tourists are fascinated towards visiting rural areas.

Karna Gurung is a social worker in Machhapuchhre Village Development Committee (VDC), who involves himself in rural tourism promotion and rural tourism infrastructures development. He insists on the need for exploration of alternative trekking routes and their promotion. He says, "Developing rural tourism in our area has excitingly motivated villagers for conservation of natural resources and preservation of cultural heritages. Tourism organizations like ACAP, TAAN, PTC and NTB should focus on exploration and promotion of alternative trekking routes in the rural parts so the income from tourism can be diversified. A link between cities and the villages should be developed to exchange the visiting tourists as well as let the tourists experience both urban and rural lifestyle"

Culture and heritage conservation initiatives can play prominent role to make this effort successful. Nepal Tourism board should promote the cultural and geographical facets of both rural and urban tourism products. Publishing of tourism materials like documentaries, magazines and videos will help draw more attentions of tourists. Villagers should also be trained in order to allow tourists to experience unique and differential time during their stay. Villagers are the frontline hosts in rural tourism where tourists can spend more times with them. So, they need to be made fully conscious about tourism. Aim of tourism, in our (authors') opinion, cannot be achieved without sharing knowledge of tourism in rural areas of Nepal.

11.3.3 Reflection from trekking tourism on urban-rural integration in Western Nepal

The formula of organized trekking trips, what Colonel Jimmy Roberts had initiated in 1965 with the pioneer effort and astonishing courage, has been well established now in Nepal. There are both group and free and independent travelers (FITs) passing through the hills and walking generally for five to six hours a day. In all inclusive tented package treks, all the equipments of group and individual trekkers (travelers) are carried by porters or mules. Trekkers are offered with comfortable tents, good quality meals, and warm sleeping bags. Trekkers generally carry only their personal packs like camera, water bottles, day clothing and snacks with themselves. Trekkers going on tea house (lodged treks) generally stay in lodges on the main trekking trails. Both types of trekking packages can have opportunities for home stay if the trekking routes pass through the village settlements.

Box 11.2 Milestones on trekking tourism

"We had no infrastructures and no rooms. We used to provide yak-woolen blankets to the trekkers in the initial phase. Slowly, we constructed the building and now we receive more than 100 trekkers daily".

Michung Gurung, hotel owner, Thorong-phedi, Mustang

Both Ekai Kawaguchi and Tony Hagen, the earlier travelers to Pokhara, had described it as an astonishing and very beautiful piece of land where all people should visit once in their life time. The trekking in Pokhara and Annapurna region started in the 1970s. The adventure lovers first trekked over the Thorong-la. By then there was no hotel. Michung Gurung, a hotel owner in Thorong-phedi in Mustang shares about the story of the steady development of trekking tourism (in box 11.2). Gradually, trekking tourism has been well developed in many areas including Annapurna

Base Camp, Ghorepani, Ghandruk, Chistibung, Jomosom, Muktinath, Nar-Phoo region, etc. These destinations are found to be supportive for the integrations between these rural areas and Pokhara (as urban center) through the use of urban resources, urban-rural supply linkages (supplies of village products like dairy products, vegetable, etc.) in Pokhara, rural-urban migration for work, philanthropic supports for school, health centers, and conservation activities in rural areas from Pokhara and other various urban-rural exchanges. A number of trekking tourism destinations with many facets of such urban-rural integration are highlighted below.

a. Round Annapurna

The round Annapurna, also known as the Annapurna Circuit, is one of the most popular treks within the Annapurna mountain range. It is about 256 km long and rises to an altitude of 5416 m on the Thorung-La pass, which touches the edge of the Tibetan plateau. The trek begins at Besishahar in the Marshyangdi River valley, and ends in the Kali Gandaki River valley.

Attractions

- Geographical and cultural diversity
- Thorong-Pass (5416 meter)
- Mountains: Mt. Annapurna, Fishtail, Dhaulagiri, Gangapurna, Tilicho Peak, Lamjung Himal and many others
- Lake: Tilicho, Gangapurna, Dhumba, Titi, Mring chho, Ice lake, Dudhpokhari, etc.
- The highest Lake -Tilicho
- The Deepest Gorge- Kali Gandaki
- Varied Festivals

b. Annapurna Sanctuary

Annapurna Sanctuary is one of the most famous treks in the Annapurna region. The scenery is spectacular. The natural beauty is vast and changing from lush jungle to rugged terrain. It is a good introduction to higher altitudes without being too demanding. Trek begins from Dhampus or Nayapul and ends at the same places.

Attractions

- Unique life of the mountain people and their culture
- Dhaulagiri (8167m), Nilgiri (7041m) Machhapuchhre(6998m) Annapurna I(8091m)0 Annapurna II (7939m), Annapurna III (7555m), Annapurna IV (7525m), Annapurna South (7219m), Hiunchuli (6441m) Lamjung Himal (6986m) Tukucho Peak (6920m) and many more
- Ghandruk and Chhomrong villages
- Annapurna Base camp and Machhapuchhre Base Camp.

c. Ghandruk-Ghorepani

Ghandruk-Ghorepani Poon Hill trek has been favorite among all our trekking tours. The breathtaking mountain scenery and the beautiful ethnic village life justify the popularity of this trekking. It's one of the easiest treks with walking paths along streams and forests for the people who want to spend time close to nature. This trekking can be done round the year except during the monsoon.

Attractions

- Ghandruk village
- Poon hill view tower and Ghorepani village
- Dense Rhododendron forests
- No risk of altitude sickness
- The shortest trek in the Annapurna and immensely popular
- Magar and Gurung Culture

d. Machhapuchhre Model trek and Mardi Himal

This trek is the combination of Mardi Himal Base Camp and recently introduced trail called Machhapuchhre Model trek. This newer and off the beaten type of trekking trail offers mesmerizing views of snowcapped mountains like Mt. Mardi, Mt. Machhapuchhre, and Annapurna Himalayan ranges from the close proximity. Tourists can closely observe indigenous lifestyles and culture of diverse ethnic dwellers.

Attractions

- Different villages with diversity of history, culture and traditional lifestyles
- Butterflies and many kinds of Rhododendrons.
- Scenery of Mt. Fishtail, Mt. Annapurna (I-IV), Gangapurna, Singu Chuli, Tent Peak, Gandarwa Chuli, Lamjung Himal, Manaslu, Dhawalagiri, and Mt. Mardi Himal.
- Natural hot spring at Kharpani
- Tea garden, Trout farming, and organic vegetable farm
- Home stay provisions in various villages.
- Vulture restaurant,
- Paragliding sites at Korchon, Armala, Kotefera, and Ilwang

There are additional attractions like unlimited rich flora & fauna, alpine forests, different bird species, wild flowers, wild animals, and natural hot spring in this trek area. These attractions are available for visitors of diverse interests.

e. Jomsom- Muktinath

This trek route is also known as a pilgrimage tourist destination due to the location of the Muktinath temple in Muktinath. It is one of the most sacred temples of Hindus which is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Jomsom and Muktinath regions are located in Mustang district which is bordered with Tibetan autonomous regions of China. This trek route includes windy valley, apple orchards and the Kali Gandaki River. The Kali Gandaki River is the world's deepest gorge as located between Mt. Annapurna and Mt. Dhaulagiri. Jomsom-Muktinath trek reaches to the maximum altitude of 3800m (12,464 ft) at Muktinath and can be completed by anybody with a moderate level of fitness. This trek route also offers opportunities to explore old monasteries over hundred years, ancient caves, local tribes and scenic beauties of the different landscapes. One can make an adventure trip starting from the world's deepest gorge Kali Gandaki to world's one of the highest regions passing through tree-less barren landscapes. The steep rocky trails, up and down hill and panoramic views of Mt. Nilgiri, Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and several other peaks are other attractive features of this trek route.

Attractions

- Muktinath Temple
- Titi lake, Dhumba Lake,
- Windy valley of Kali Gandaki
- Deepest Gorge Kali Gandaki
- Apple orchards

f. Nar- Phoo

This unique and seldom traveled route offers the adventurous trekkers with a bit of everything that makes Nepal very special. This trek route can be started from Besisahar in Lamjung district. The travelers gradually ascend the Marshyangdi River Valley to Koto. Here, they head towards north and enter the recently opened NarPhu Valley of Upper Manang. Passing through the chorten gate that designates the entrance to NarPhu, it's as if trekkers have been transported into a land where time has stood still. The Himalayan Pine quickly gives way to high plateau, remote Tibetan villages built of stone, ancient Buddhist monasteries and grand views of the Annapurna Range.

Attractions

- Nar and Phoo Villages
- Kangla Pass (approximately 5200 m)
- Tashi Lakhang Monastery
- Natural cliff
- Hot water spring
- Old Khampa (Tibetan refugee) settlements

g. Upper Mustang

Mustang was by far Nepal's one of the restricted trekking areas till 1991. It was opened to foreigners in 1992. It is located in the Northwestern area of Nepal, and is part of the Tibetan plateau.

This area has long been inhabited by Tibetan Buddhists. This kind of area is nowhere else in Nepal where a rich and untouched Tibetan Buddhism culture can be found. Trekkers are not common here which is why this

trek provides such a rare and close look at a society that has remained unaffected by change for centuries. Trekking in Mustang is truly one of the rarest and most rewarding experiences to be had in Nepal.

Attractions

- Age-old Monarchy
- High land desert
- Beautiful landscape
- Rich culture
- Unique Buddhist festivals
- Monasteries and abandoned caves

h. Dhaulagiri round

Dhaulagiri is one of the most popular peaks for climbing in the Himalayas, the seventh highest mountain in the world whose height is 8000m. Its surrounding region is popular trekking destination. Dhaulagiri lies north – west of Pokhara culminating to its highest point at the Eastern end. In fact, Kali Gandaki is dramatic as two eight thousander Mountains like Annapurna I and Dhaulagiri both stand near the river facing each other over a deep valley.

Attractions

- Unique in terms of its rise above local terrain where it rises to 7000 m over the Kali Gandaki gorge to the south-east in about 30 km of aerial distance.
- Various Glaciers
- Rhododendron forests and beautiful sceneries of Mt. Dhaulagiri and Annapurna range

i. Dolpa

Dolpa or Dolpo was popularized by the famous film “Caravan”. Dolpa showcases the extraordinary untouched beauty of the North Western region in Nepal. It is remote and fascinating, confined by the Dhaulagiri range in the South and East. The local inhabitants have Mongoloid facial features. These people speak Tibetan language.

Attractions

- Sisne and Kanjiroba in the West and Tibet towards the North
- Lake Phoksundo with its turquoise water
- Probably one of the highest settlements in the World (3600-4070 meters)
- A total of 130 *Gompas* (monasteries) in Dolpa reflect the religious feature of its inhabitants

Besides these, many other alternative routes are explored by Annapurna Conservation Area Project with help from Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, Nepal Tourism Board, tourism entrepreneurs of Pokhara and the villagers in local areas. Among them, Sikles-Timang, Tangting-Besishahar, Kabhre-Sikles and Pahirothapla-Muktinath routes have great potentials from touristic point of view. These alternative routes are yet to be developed and promoted.

11.4 Reflections from trekking tourism sub-sector in Pokhara

Pokhara has played significant roles as a hub for urban-rural integration from the time of the evolution of trekking tourism in Nepal. Such attributes of Pokhara are highlighted in succeeding paragraphs.

11.4.1 Pokhara as a trekking tourism originating destination

During the end of the 19th century, Ekai Kawaguchi visited Pokhara. In his book titled 'Three years in Tibet', he mentions (Kawaguchi 2005, p 70): 'in all my travels in the Himalaya I saw no scenery so enchanting as that which enraptured me at Pokhara.'

About the history of Pokhara, Lonely planet Travel book states (lonely planet 2013, p 1)'before the construction of the Prithvi Highway, getting to Pokhara involved a 10-day pony trek, with numerous deadly river crossings along the way. When the Swiss explorer Toni Hagen visited in 1952, he found ambling buffalo carts and streets lined with brick Newari houses. Hints of this time can still be seen in old Pokhara, just north of the Mahendra Pul bazaar. Aside from the odd explorer, the first Westerners to reach Pokhara were hippies in the 1970s. With its lakeshore setting, laid-back pace and plentiful supply of marijuana, Pokhara made a perfect endpoint for the south Asian overland trail. From these barefoot

beginnings, it developed rapidly. By the 1980s, it had transformed into a modern mountain resort, with hundreds of hotels, shops, bars and restaurants.’

Toni Hagenhas written (Holliday paradise 2013, p1) ‘Pokhara area shows the greatest contrast in landscape. Nowhere in the world can the highest mountain reaching 8000mt level be admired from such small distance and from the tropical low land without any intermediate mountain range. Pokhara is certainly one of the most extraordinary and beautiful places in the world’.

After the annexation of Tibet by China leading to the Indo-China war in 1962, the old trading route to India from Tibet through Pokhara became defunct. Today only few caravans from Mustang arrive in Bagar. In recent decades, Pokhara has become a major tourist destination in South Asia mainly for adventure tourism and the base (as the major entry and exist points) for the famous Annapurna Circuit trek. Gradually, Pokhara and surrounding villages attracted tourists especially for trekking, rafting, paragliding, ultra light flights, cycling, boating, hiking, Jeep liner, etc. Considerable numbers of climbers and mountain bikers are visiting Pokhara these days. Pokhara has been also visited by most of the travelers who want to reach some semi-restricted especial areas like upper Mustang, Manaslu and Upper Dolpa. These destinations were restricted earlier but opened only after the restoration of democracy in 1992. The unique landscape, magnetic mountain range and the lakes have made the travelers to these restricted areas spend at least one day in Pokhara while the time of both entry at and exit from Pokhara. This way Pokhara has become the center of trekking tourism originating destinations in Western region.

11.4.2 Pokhara tourism as source for supply linkages in urban-rural setup

Since 1990s, Pokhara has experienced rapid urbanization and as a result service and industries sectors have increasingly contributed to the local economy overtaking the traditional agriculture. The major contributors to the economy of Pokhara are manufacturing and service sector including tourism, agriculture and the foreign and domestic remittances. Tourism, service sector and manufacturing contribute to approximately 58% of the economy, remittances about 20% and the agriculture nearly 16%.⁴ Thus, a major contribution to the local economy comes from the tourism and hospitality industry.

⁴ for more information, See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokhara> for more information

Dozens of Pokhara-based organizations have been working to develop tourism in Pokhara and surrounding areas. Pokhara Tourism Council, Nepal Tourism Board, Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal-Western Regional Association, Annapurna Conservation Area Project, Hotel Association of Nepal, Nepal Air Sport Association, Pokhara Tourism Training Center, Nepal Mountaineering Association are the major organizations that plan and execute tourism activities in Pokhara area.

ACAP works in the field involving tourism entrepreneurs of Annapurna region. It forms Tourism Management sub-committees in almost all the settlements and trains the committee members to manage tourism in proper way. Additionally, it aims to uplift local peoples' living standard by providing various tourism opportunities, carrying out different activities, conducting trainings and workshops for the people. TAAN Western Regional Association helps in exploring and developing trekking routes in rural areas and operates trekking in those routes. They also conduct licensed guide trainings for young people in collaboration with Nepal Government. TAAN Western Regional Association has played vital role in producing human resources required for tourism industry of Pokhara. The section below offers the case study of Machhapuchhre Model Trek, which verifies how trekking tourism industry and their practitioners in association with tourism researchers and local communities have been able to integrate urban-rural tourism in the periphery of Pokhara and Annapurna conservation area.

TAAN, Western Regional Chapter explored and promoted Machhapuchhre Model Trek (MMT) comprising 7 VDCs in the north of Pokhara. It has covered and focused to Mardi Himal East base camp, Machhapuchhre South base camp, Korchon view point, Lwang based tea garden, Kharapani based hot spring, different ethnic groups and their cultures, Pipar Pheasant reserve and flora and fauna as its attractions. In 2007, during the Visit Pokhara Year, TAAN with technical and financial support from NTB and ACAP explored the area with the view to developing home-stay and adventure tourism destination.



Photo 11.8 A joint exploration team on Machhapuchhre Model Trek,
Source: TAAN Pokhara, 2007

The then TAAN president (Mr. Sanjiv Thapa), General Secretary (Mr. Basanta Dawadi) and the team of TAAN, Western Regional Chapter conceptualized the project naming “TAAN Machhapuchhre Model trek” and started feasibility study.



Photo 11.9 Exotic Machhapuchhre model trek areas,
Source: Basanta Raj Dawadi, 2010

After being permitted and supported by the local people of the 7 Village Development Committees (VDCs)⁵, the team excitedly carried out development and promotion activities. Firstly, the team organized different meetings and workshops in the villages to set the rules and develop future strategies. Secondly, the team organized familiarization trip involving tourism experts, media personals and technical people. Thirdly, the team looked for the financial supports from different tourism-related organizations. In 2008, TAAN and ACAP succeeded in forming Machhapuchhre Tourism Development Committee. In 2009, the then PhD researcher (Mr. Pranil Upadhayaya) in the thematic area of 'tourism and peace' from Kathmandu University (KU) and the regional coordinator (Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti) of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South supported for the development of MMT through research, technical backstopping, and financial resources. Swiss Development Cooperation had supported NCCR in executing partnership actions between researchers, local communities⁶, and Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal Western Regional Chapter-Pokhara and local governments of these VDCs (Upadhayaya 2003).

It was instrumental for the basic infrastructure (e.g. trail markings, campsites building, and five porters' shelters constructions and trekking route maps publication) and capacity (e.g. trainings to local women on home stay tourism with culinary and hospitality trainings) building activities including the commonly agreed responsible tourism codes of conduct formulations and their applications to ascertain sustainability and peace through local rural tourism.

Gradually, ACAP and NTB also helped executing these trainings by providing financial support. This model trek is an example of transdisciplinary approach where there is continuous interaction and cooperation between researchers and practitioners and local communities as the peace prospective of tourism (Bechtel 2010; Upadhayaya 2011). The products of this model trek were handed over to local community through MTDC in 2010 as shown in photo 11.11 (Sharma 2009b).

⁵ Such VDCs included Lahachowk, Ghachowk, Machhapuchhre, Rivan, Lwangghale, Sardikhola and Dhital

⁶ The local communities were represented by Machhapuchhre Tourism Development Committee, which represented seven tourism sub-committees of seven villages.

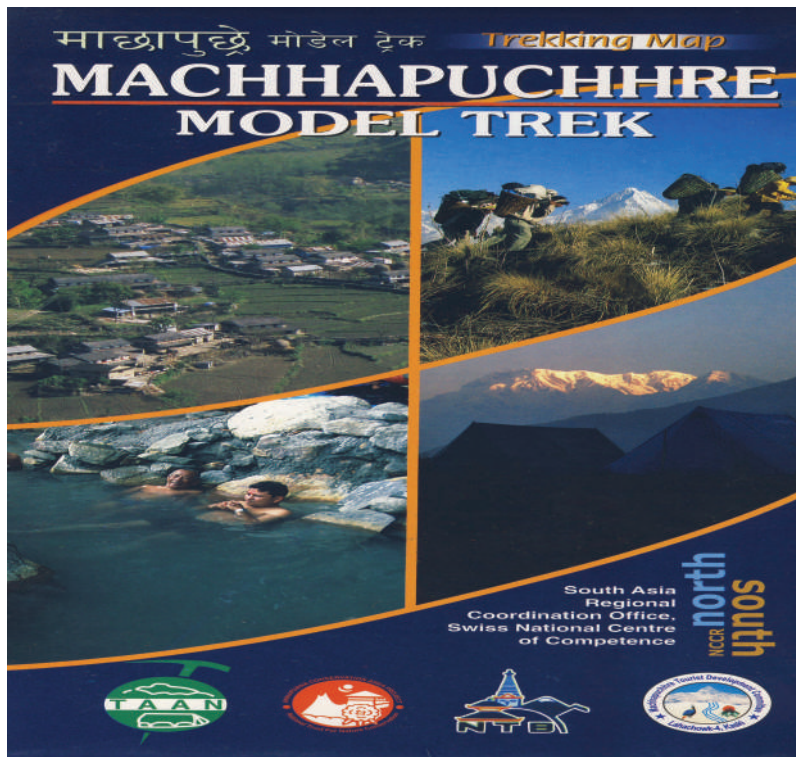


Photo 11.10 Trek map of MMT Source: TAAN Pokhara, 2010.



Photo 11.11 Handover of MMT to rural communities, Source: Siddhi Manandhar, 2010

Box 11.3 is offered with the all major attributes of Machhapuchhre model trek with its full- fledge operation at present.

Box 11.3 Machhapuchhre Model Trek and its major attributes in a nutshell

Characteristics : A twofold village tourism product with all inclusive organized trekking package as well as home stay provisions in seven villages resulted from the joint efforts of researchers and non- scientific local actors

Specific features: A trekking tourism product consisting with 5 trekking camp sites, 5 shelters for supporters, and 25 trail marking boards, and trekking route map

Location : Easily accessible from and to Pokhara (only 12 km drive to the trek start point)

Altitude variation	: 1000 meters to 3700 meters
Best sunrise view point	: Korchan (3682 meter)
Population	: Approx. 16,000
Available trekking days	: 1 day hike to 2 weeks of trekking
Home stay provisions	: In seven villages
Natural attractions	: Various Mountain ranges, Pipar Pheasant Reserve, Hot springs, waterfall, etc.
Manmade attractions	: Tea Garden at Lwangghalel
Cultural attractions	: Gurung, Tamang, Damai, Kami, Sarki, Chettri, Brahmin, etc. as multiethnic groups even in a single village Local institutional
representation	: Machhapuchhre Tourism Development Committee (MTDC) ⁷ as a core local body representing seven villages

Source: TAAN WRC (2010); TAAN WRA (2012)

More than 3000 trekkers have trekked in this route during the period from 2010 to 2012. The flow of tourists has gradually made the locals of Machhapuchhre Model more aware about keeping the clean, green and healthy environment. Home-stay operators are learning to keep their households also clean.

⁷ MTDC, as formulated covering seven villages immediately after the starting of PAMS project was engaged in coordinating activities like selection of trainees for capacity building trainings, organization of trainings, smooth execution of annual work plan on infrastructure buildings, organizations of local and regional level workshops, and formulation and finalization of conflict-sensitive tourism codes of conduct. See Bechtel (2010) on the focus of its sustainability aspects.



Photo 11.10 A typical Home-stay at Source: Pranil Upadhayaya, 2012



Photo 11.11 Tourists welcomed at Homestay, Source: Thomas Pedroletti, 2012

Introduction of various cash crops like tea, orange, ginger, amrisho, and coffee in villages like Lwang, Ghalel, Sardikhola, and Rivan are positive signs for improving the economic conditions the local people.

In Lwang village, there are eight registered and two unregistered Home-stays. All the home-stays are owned and run by *Janajati* (e.g. Gurung) women. Home-stay business has played a major role in empowering the women owners of 10 home-stays. Their occupational and communication skills have also improved. They are making money. The income from home-stay has been contributing about 4% of the total income for the average *Janajati* household (Thapaliya et al. 2012). Trekking operators in Pokhara have also been benefitted by sending tourists in package programs in villages like Lwang and Saardikhola. This has ultimately helped to integrate the tourism actors of urban and rural areas. The home-stay tourism in Lwang is also improving the living standard of home-stay operators.

Their professional skills and capabilities are upgraded due to the opportunity they are getting to attend different tourism and home-stay related training programs. However, *Janajatis* have the monopoly in home-stay business and no *Dalit* is involved in this business in Lwang. Unlike the *Dalits* in Ghalegaun in Tanahun (another pioneer in home-stay programme) district who are common actors and beneficiaries in home-stay tourism through their roles to be first to welcome the tourists in the village with music and garlands, *Dalits* in Lwang are not involved in home-stay in any role. The prevailing social system of untouchability along with the lack of essential capital is the major barriers for their participation and empowerment in tourism activities. Untouchability is so deep-rooted in Lwang that even guests who belong to a *Dalit* community are treated badly and are sent to a *Dalit's* house to spend the night if they happen to visit and stay in the village as a tourist (Thapaliya et al. 2013). Thus, the trekking tourism as a sub-sector is a medium for rura-urban integration and Machhapuchhre Model Trek is a new example in surrounding Pokhara.

11.4.3 Pokhara as relaxation place for post-trekking tourists

Surrounded by Annapurna massif and situated at the bank of Fewa Lake in a wide flat land, Pokhara is a perfect destination to relaxation for the post-trekking tourists. Many hotels and restaurants are operational for providing services to the guests. There are ultra-light flights for sightseeing and paragliding for the adventure lovers. Tourists can fly around Mt. Machhapuchhre, Lamjung, Gangapurna, Annapurna South and Himchuli on ultra-light flights and fixed-wing mountain flights. Moreover, they can

also fly over Pokhara and surrounding villages on paragliding tandem flights. Various services like massage and spa are available in Pokhara for the relaxation of the post-trekking tourists. Those who want to have quality time in Pokhara can enjoy swimming, rafting, cycling, pony trekking, hiking and boating. Tourists' hotels offer spa and sauna whereas restaurants offer traditional cuisines to continental foods. There are approximately 700 hotels ranging one 5-star, five 3-stars, fifteen 2-stars and many non-stars in Pokhara to fulfill tourists' comfortable accommodation. Likewise, there are 124 restaurants and bars in the city (Pokhara Tourism Office 2011). Additionally, about 156 trekking and travel agencies are operating tours and trekking.

Pokhara is also enriched with exciting attractions like Mahendra cave, Chamerogufa (bats cave) and Gupteswor where most of the visitors visit. Likewise, Davi's Fall is another exciting destination where people can see fascinating view of the waterfall dropping under the surface. Fewa Lake, Begnas Lake, Rupa Lake and some other small lakes situated in Lekhnath Municipality are the spots where people can enjoy boating. International Mountain Museum offers the details of mountaineering events. Vulture restaurant situated at Ghachok nearby Pokhara is another tourism attraction for environment friendly tourists. Tourists going to Annapurna start and end their trekking at Pokhara. So, tourism service businesses become actively busy in the trekking seasons. To make tourists' stay memorable, Pokhara organizes different festivals in different times. Rice planting festival, paragliding competition, New Year Street festival and Nepal New Year food festivals are the major event-based attractions. These festivals allow experiencing typical Nepali culture and lifestyles. In all the events tourists not only observe but can also participate. Moreover, Pokhara does have very pleasant weather. It is neither too hot in the summer nor too cold in the winter. This has made Pokhara a destination for all the seasons especially for post trekkers. Tourists can visit Pokhara in every season. They can come in monsoon to see agricultural activities including rice planting festival. They can come for trekking in the spring and autumn. They can come to see the snowy hills around the valley in the winter as all the hills and mountains are covered with snow in this season. With all these facilities and tourism products, Pokhara has been a point of relaxation for post-trekking tourists (Bhadgaonle 2006).

11.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Villages make earning from the tourism and cities make earning from the goods sold out to the villagers. There are distributions of income in both

cities and villages from tourism, but it may vary from the investments they made for business to business. Tourism in Pokhara is closely linked with the rural tourism. Rural people come to Pokhara in search for tourism opportunities and Pokhara-based tourism entrepreneurs get their business opportunities not only because of Pokhara itself but also due to the numerous attractions of rural trekking areas surrounding Pokhara. This has constructed an economic bridge between the village and urban area as the village economy depends upon the urban tourism and urban economy also depends upon the village tourism. Thus, trekking (adventure) tourism in Pokhara is focused to have high role for the urban-rural integration in this region. However, there are many issues that are affecting the strength of the urban-rural integration concept through tourism in Pokhara. A holistic benefits for both Pokhara as urban tourist area and its surrounding rural areas could be realized at greater scale if following recommendations are given due consideration.

a. The concept of Pokhara as a regional tourism hub to be up-scaled

There is need to implement strategy by positing Pokhara as a regional hub and the main areas surrounding Pokhara as sub-hubs. Some earlier studies (DDC-Kaski 2012; Tripathi 2007) have already recommended for it. The timely construction of regional international airport in Pokhara and linking Pokhara with Lumbini, Chitwan and Kathmandu through double-lane fast tracks are primary needs. The promotion of Pokhara as the regional hub for religious tourism for tourists who are bound for pilgrimages like Muktinath, Damodar Kunda, Kagbeni, Galeshwar, and Manakamana could be a wise and pragmatic step.

b. Exploration, development and conservation of unique identity of rural areas (villages)

The trekking adventure tourism needs to be developed as a basis for urban-rural integration which can be a basis for economic, social and environmental development of the urban and peri-urban as well as high and low land areas of Pokhara region. The preparation of tourism products profiles through exploration and identification of the uniqueness of each model village for the potential of tourism in rural areas surrounding Pokhara is the first step needed in this regard. It is high time that the recommendations of the Visit Pokhara Year 2007 for tourism products exploration, development and conservation were executed effectively

(Khathiwada2007). The concept of urban-rural integration and mutual benefits of both regions which are dependent between each other should be considered seriously.

c. Some explicit interventions at rural level

Some special interventions at rural level are needed which should consider the important issues. These issues can include the proper institutional set up, formulation and activating of tourism operation and promotion committees, documentation of potential tourism heritages, branding of model tourism villages, and increase of accessibility between Pokhara and rural areas. Other important plans of action include conservation of biodiversities, wildlife, rare bird species, and flora and fauna.

d. Offering more benefits to the locals

Generally urban tourism entrepreneurs are found benefitted more than the rural tourism entrepreneurs from trekking tourism. Tourists come through trekking agencies with their tents, porters and foods. From this, there are evidences that villagers get very little and plenty of waste and rubbish are left behind. So, the policy makers and program planners should consider making the villagers able to make proper amount of profit from trekking tourism. Adventure tourism can be developed as cross-cutting sub-sector which should be able to consume more and more organic, agro and homemade products. This would open the door of opportunities to enhance local absorptive capacity and increase income for even non-tourist sectors in rural areas.

e. Initiation to gastronomy (food) tourism in rural areas

Though there are efforts made to offer Nepali meals like *Dalbhat*, *Dhido*, *Gundruk* and other traditional varieties to tourists in rural areas, more efforts are needed to make it tourists-friendly in terms of cooking style, presentations and teaching tourists about the way of eating Nepali and other diversified varieties.

f. Inclusion of excluded rural communities

The information from the case study of Machhapuchhre Model Trek clearly reveals that the whole society is not equally benefited from home-stay tourism. Dalits are excluded to be planners, actors and beneficiaries from rural tourism due to the social discrimination and socially prevailing practice of untouchability. There is high need of equity and equality along

with the empowerment of Dalits. The capacity building of rural tourism development committee can support for the marketing and promotion of rural tourism destinations through their participations.

g. Joint promotion of urban-rural areas

Villages have plenty of touristically attractive spots but they are not harnessed and properly promoted in international markets. Promotion packages linking both urban-rural areas should be developed. Widespread promotions of these packages are needed. These can be done by publishing booklets and magazines and producing documentaries and promotional videos. They should also be broadcast thoroughly.

h. Trainings and workshops

Even though tourism has been practiced in the area for many decades, people are still unaware of proper hospitality skills such as on how to receive and serve tourists locally. Villagers need tourism-based trainings, especially basic communication skills, hospitality attributes, cooking, hygiene, sanitation, service presentations, etc. They also need to be involved in different workshops and seminars. This will support building awareness and helping local rural communities to learn various trends and issues of tourism.

i. Human resource development

The development of human resource is one of the important factors in urban-rural linkage through the development of tourism. As it is lacking, most of the youths do not live in the village and the people who live in the village do not have knowledge on tourism. This gap has radically affected local tourism in the pattern of integration. The next step should be towards the development of the tourism work force in both rural and urban areas.

j. Entry Fees at ACAP area

The entrance fees at ACAP area have also played significant role to discourage tourists from going to the villages. Most of the surrounding villages of Pokhara are inside Annapurna conservation Area and tourists need to pay NRs 2000 to enter the area. Tourists who do not have enough time seem to be uninterested to pay this amount. This way, villages nearby Pokhara do not get sufficient tourists. It means the nearby rural economy can be negatively impacted. If the Annapurna Conservation Area entrance

fee can be restructured, villagers nearby Pokhara will get more tourists and rural-urban tourism linkage can be strengthened further.

k. Closure of tourism businesses after 11 pm in Pokhara

The late night tourism activities have been hampered due to this rule set by the local government. Tourists are compelled to go to the beds before 11 even though they want to spend some more time enjoying on the streets or bars or at the restaurants. It has affected the local economy negatively. Instead of forcing tourists to sleep before they want, the government should focus on making strong safety and security provisions.

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*Mahendra Shrestha¹**Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya²*

12.1 Introduction

Pokhara has obtained popularity as one of the top tourist destinations in Nepal due to numerous Himalayan ranges, holy temples, cultural heritages, rivers and streams, flora and fountains, strange caves, linguistic and cultural diversity, etc. Pokhara is also popular with its identify as a city of nine lakes namely Begnas Nyureni, Gunde, Khashte, Rupa, Maidi, Dipang and Fewa (Bhadgaonle 2006). Amidst these nine lakes, Fewa is the biggest one in Pokhara valley and the second largest in Nepal. Pokhara covers an area of 123 square kilometres and lies towards the north-east belt of the Fewa Lake.

There are wide ranging significances of Fewa Lake from natural, religious, economic and social perspective in Pokhara (Lamichhane 2005; Shakya 1995; Thapa 2010). This lake is supposed to support local business and trade largely in the Baidam or Fewa Lake side area. Fewa Lake is also the source of Fewa Lake Irrigation System for 232 hectares of land and production of 1000 KW of electricity at Pardi Dam which is the outlet of Fewa Lake (Oli 1997).

This Lake is also the place where dozens of organizations and their unions have participated directly or indirectly. Because of the specific type of geographical structure and special kind of hilly environment, Fewa Lake has given comforts and lives to the numerous water creatures and animals since time immemorial. It has been the source of employment, income, livelihood, foreign currency earnings, prosperity, peace and the beauty to human life. The Phirke stream area of Fewa Lake side is also

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the location of various government buildings, guest house of Pokhara Sub metropolitan city, armed police force camp and other settlements.

There have been increased debates, discussions on the issue of its proper management relating to tourism. However, a knowledge gap remains on the interface of Fewa Lake with tourism in Pokhara. In this context, this chapter attempts to address following questions about Fewa Lake in its relationship with tourism:

- a. What is the state of Fewa Lake in relations to historical aspects, geographic features, demographic elements, vegetations, and various attributes (flora and fauna etc)?
- b. How is Fewa Lake interrelated with tourism in Pokhara?
- c. What are the challenges faced by Fewa Lake in relation to tourism?
- d. What is the prospect of Fewa Lake for promoting tourism in Pokhara?

Methodologically, the information for this chapter formulation is derived from the review of literatures on Fewa Lake and its interrelated tourism management issues. The conversation with the local people of varied ages (young and old), tourists and other visitors about the management aspects of this Lake have also been input in formulating this chapter. The information of this chapter is largely based on the knowledge gained for the study and investigation by this author for his upcoming book titled *Samagra Baidamma Fewalake* (Total Baidam Fewa Lake).

12.2 State of Fewa Lake

This section covers historical review of the existence of Fewa Lake, including the story related to the naming of this Lake and its key features like location, structure, area, demographic features, geographic elements and aquatic habitats.

12.2.1 Historical overview of the existence of Fewa Lake

According to one faction of geologists, the history of Pokhara is 700- 11,000 years old. There are mainly two different outlooks about the formation of Fewa Lake in Pokhara. One is the argument of scientists and geologists. The other is various legends and histories. The geologists calculate that the history of Fewa Lake must be between 700- 2000 years old. However,

it is very difficult to pinpoint the accurate shape, size and location of this Lake at the beginning. Before the existence of Fewa Lake the whole area is believed to be filled with water. However, only few ponds and lakes had existed due to the geographical change in course of time. According to some experts and academicians like Dr. Harka Gurung, Dr. Bishwa Shreshtha, Dr. Devendra Lamichhane and Dr. Krishna KC, the reason of the birth of Fewa Lake is similar to other Lakes. Earlier the breaking of a glacier in snowy area during 2500 – 3200 B. C. is believed to be the origin of Seti River and the dreg and the snow-soil of ice lake might have buried the low levels of Pokhara and in the same process, many tributaries of Seti River like Phurse, Yamdi, Bijaypur, Harpan, Khahare happened to be dammed. This thus gave birth to dozens of the lakes in Pokhara valley.

Dr. Devendra Bahadur Lamichhane (Lamichhane 2005, p 6) says “All the lakes in Pokhara are still alive. The then buried and plain because of snow dreg and soil caused by the break of glacier, the consistent flow of the active rivers turned Pokhara into ditches and canyon.” There are talks of folklores (myths) and legends about the formation of Fewa Lake. Though most of them do not offer scientific evidences, however, some of them seem to be reaching near the truth on the basis of scientific inquiry.

One common legend³ mentions that Fewa Lake was located at Thumki area some 300-400 years ago. Thumki area lies 15 kilometers towards the north of present Hallan Chowk in Baidam area. Later, the sandy soil gradually kept on pushing to southward. When the lake was at Thumki, a lower level village known as *Gairi Gaun* (Lower Village) was situated towards the south side of today's Barahi temple. One day, a Yogi, in guise of hermit came to the village for a night stay. But, no one welcomed him. Hardly an old woman hosted the yogi. The yogi got up early morning at 3-4 am and bade good bye to the old mother. While leaving, the hermit suggested the old woman not to stay in that village because a huge catastrophe would approach and also suggested to look under the pillow in his bed. When the old mother went there and looked, she found that the bread made of up husk which she had given the hermit to eat had turned into a golden ball.

The old mother informed all villagers about the yogi's forecast of the upcoming catastrophe. But the villagers did not believe her. She left the village. By the morning, the village had turned into a lake. Regarding the

³ Based on the conversation with Muktiram Gautam (aged 88), Methlang (94), Nainadevi Tilimalasina (76), Dinanaath pahari (52) and Mangal Nepali (76).

very subject, the other myth says, the village turned into a lake after a week as the old woman and the hermit left the village.

It was not known where the hermit and the old woman went. Some heard that they went toward the hill. Suryanth Adhikari heard the saying that they disappeared in today's Kedareshwar Mahadevmani area. Hom Bahadur Lamichhange (age 75) too indicates to the same legend that the Fewa Lake was founded out of Gairi Gaun. The findings of some household things like roots, logs, grinders and *Dhikis* (ancient domestic means to husk rice/husker) and other antiques, in the very place of Gairi Gaun area at Pardi during the excavation of the present dam in 2014 B.S. (1957 AD) gives some scientific evidence.

However, Dr. Devendra Bahadur Lamichhane argues that one should not believe in such legends. According to him "There is no scientific truth that there was a village in the place where the current Fewa Lake exists because there was no residential village in Pokhara at that time. Some 50-60 years ago, because of epidemic of malaria, there were a very few houses in Pokhara, how can we believe that there was a village? So far as the finding of *Dhiki* and grinder is concerned, it is likely that landslide floated them from the village on the top of the hills".

12.2.1.1 How was Fewa Lake named?

For all, it is the matter of curiosity how the lake was named as Fewa Lake. To pose a question how it was named is such an easy matter, but it is equally difficult to get the factual details and information about its naming because till the date no historical evidence and no scientific evidences (e.g. slate inscription or achieves) have been found. However, some vague legends are available which are highlighted below.

Legend 1

There used to be a village in north side of Barahi temple. It was the residential area of the Fewali people. Later, the village was drowned. Accordingly, it is believed that the lake was named as Fewa because the lake was settled in the place which the Fewalis once inhabited. While others have listened to different stories, Fewalis were also found in Swargadwari, and the Fewali claimed that their ancestors migrated from the Fewa Lake. However, there is no source that can scientifically prove it.

Legend 2

According to another hearsay⁴ there used to be a residence of porters towards the north side of the current lake. The maternal lineage gave the poor porters with some land which they cultivated to support their livelihoods. The porters deemed the land as *pewa* (special belonging) from the maternal house. In course of time, the word *pewakhet* (specially belonged cultivated land) underwent a change and became *Fewa Khet*. The lake settled just below the *Fewa Khet*, therefore, begun to be called Fewa Lake.

Legend 3

According to another story⁵, the streams that flowed from the north side of the lake used to float inconsistently from here and there by rounding up, thus, the streams were called *Fero Khola* (rounded river). In course of time, the lake out of *Fero Khola* might have been called *Fewa Taal* (Fewa Lake).

Legend 4

The other legend is associated with Newari people who are one of the ethnic people in this area. The *Palikhe* sub-groups of Newari people had a good amount of land in area surrounding present Fewa Lake. In Newari language, “Fe” means air and “wa” means water. And the Fewa Lake area is not only offered with sufficient water but also the strong wind. Newari community used these words to refer to the moment of approaching *Hawa* (air) with the newari word “fe” and *paani* (water) with the newari word “wa”. Thus the word was passed through the tradition. Similarly, the word ‘Fewa (Fe + Wa)’ in Newari language also means *hawa aaui* (call for air). Some people remark that in course of working in the field the Newars called for “Fewa” in order to invite the air, and therefore, the word came into existence.

For about the origin of the lake still there are words like “Fewa faant” and “Fewa khola” in use, so it is understood that the “Fewa” word was used for “Taal” (lake) just as the word was used as prefix to the *Faant* (field) and the *Khola* (river). The poet and cultural activist Tirha Shrestha says “we have been hearing a song like “*Wa ola fe ola aja aji ma ola*” (water

⁴ Based on the conversation with Badrika Laamichhane (78)

⁵ Based on conversation with Balkrishna Timilsina (71) and his old mother Nainadevi Timilsina (94), who guess so.

came, air blew but grandfather and grandmother did not come) since our childhood". The words "fe" and "wa" were from the Newari language and later the word "Fewa" was formed out of these words. Perhaps the song was sung for the Newari grandfathers and grandmothers and grandfathers who went to "Fewafaant", therefore, we see a strong basis that the word came into existence from Newari culture as the Newar had good amount of land there.

However, all the above mentioned assumptions about the naming of Fewa Lake stemmed from the legends factual truth and scientific evidence of which are not really in existence. Therefore, there is an urge to make an extra intensive inquiry regarding how and when it was named, and who named it and why.

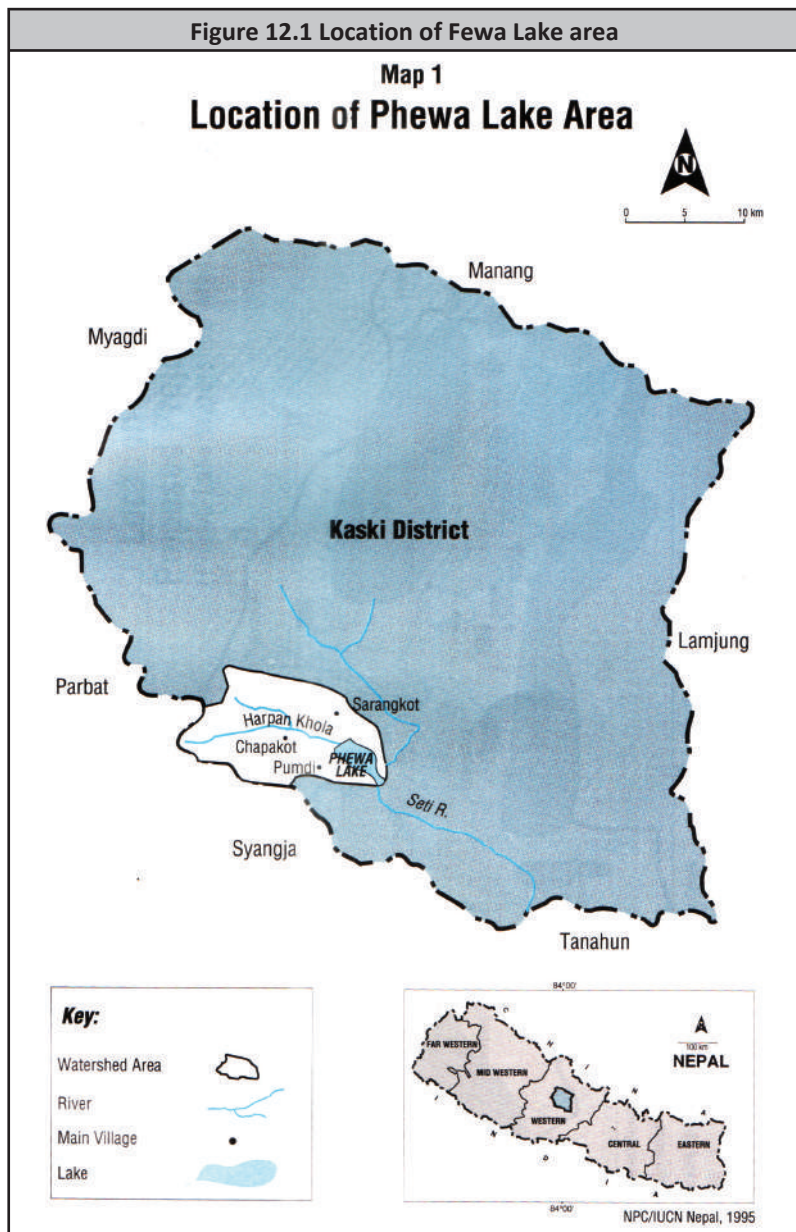
12.2.2 Key features of Fewa Lake

There are various features of Fewa Lake which are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

12.2.2.1 Location, structure and area

Fewa Lake is situated at south-west corner of Pokhara valley (from 28°7' to 28°12' North latitude and 84°7' to 84°19' East longitude) in Kaski district which is situated in the middle of the Mahabharat range (figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1 Location of Fewa Lake area



Source: Oli (1997)

Geographically the lake is flat. Administratively, the lake fully or partially touches six VDCs (Sarangkot, Kaskikot, Dhikurpokhari, Bhadaure Tamagi, Chapakot, Pumdi-Bhumdi) and the south-west belt of Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City of Kaski district (Lamichhane 1998 as in Lamichhane and Upadhyay 2006, p 49).

The water area of the lake covers 4.43 square kilometers. The average depth of the lake is 8.6 m. and the maximum depth is 19 m. Its water-area keeps fluctuating because the water of is used to produce 1000 KW electricity and irrigation. It spreads 4 km from north-west to north-east. It spreads up 2 km and stretches up to 100m. The peripheral area of the lake is around 443 hectares. The Lake has water storage capacity of 46,000,000 cubic meters.

A high-level investigation and measurement held by Pokhara Valley Lake Conservation Committee under the supervision of Pokhara Town Development Committee in 2065 BS (2008 AD) showed that the total area of Fewa Lake is 546.5920 hectares. Out of this area, currently the water area is 9955-6-2-3 *ropanis* (506.4720 hectares) while the rest of the area around 2754 *ropanis* (140 hectares) has already turned into agricultural and wet land as the lake has dried out. On the basis of these statistics, the area of Fewa Lake has narrowed by 2754 *ropanis*. Fewa Lake is extremely beautiful and enchanting. Min Bahadur Gurung, a distinguished social activist values Pokhara and Fewa Lake as heart of Nepal, in his book *Heart of Nepal* (2018). Besides its attraction and beauty, Fewa Lake is one of the biggest lakes in terms of the area it covers. In fact, the total area of Fewa Lake is bigger than Baidam which is in ward number 6 of Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan city. The area of Ward no. 6 is 464.44 hectares (Ward profile) whereas the previous area of the Fewa Lake was 646.5920 hectares; still only the water area is 506.4720 hectares (Oli 1996; Oli 1997). So, in comparison, the current area of the Fewa Lake is bigger than Baidam by 42 hectares.

The whole ranges of floras available in Fewa Lake area can be divided into different levels ranging from bottom to top: the lowest level (800-1000m), low tropical area (100-15000m), tropical area (1500-2000m), temperate weather area (2000-2500m).

12.2.2.2 Geographical features

The geo structure of Fewa Lake is multifaceted and uneven. Various geo-sights can be seen because of its hill-valley. The hill at various places is inconsistently constituted of nose-like steep knolls.

The inclination of its southern front (belt) is round 30-50 percent which is less than the inclination of the south which is above 50 percent). Panchase (2508 m) is the highest point of the water shade areas of Fewa Lake. The lake was built constructing a dam mainly to Seti River along with other small rivers. The shape of the lake has been widened for irrigation and electricity production. Harpan stream is the main source of water for Fewa Lake. Andheri and Sidhane are the two main sources of Harpan.

The stream winds through south-east and exists at west side and mingles with Phurse stream, a branch river of Seti, ultimately to fuse in the lake. The river floats from the place 5 km above the lake. There are a few rivulets. Most of them are seasonal and they float soil to the lake.

12.2.2.3 Demographic elements

Fewa Lake water-body is a densely populated area in mid-hill region of Nepal. According to the census of 1991, the population of this area (beside the population of the town) is 3,578. Of total population, 49.7 percent are males and 51.3 percent are females. According to the socio-economic survey, the average family members in this area are six. The density of population is 258 per square kilometer. The survey on fertile land and jungle shows that per square kilometer of land is shared by 912 and 586 people respectively.

12.2.2.4 Vegetation

A total of 50 percent area of the water conservation area of Fewa Lake has been occupied for agricultural use while the rest 25 percent is covered by the forest and woods. Out of the total forest area, 5393 hectare (98 %) of the forest area of this water-body is covered by the broad-leaves deciduous forest. A total of 82 hectare area has been afforested. The matured afforested area has been jotted down to the forest. A total of 32 hectare forest is on the verge of extinction and growing up and the area of coniferous forest is negligible.

There are different types of vegetations in this area. The main vegetations available include

Vegetations attuned to marshy land, floating vegetations attuned to moist land, Saal, Saal and Chilauni Jungle, Katus-Tuni, Camuna-Simal Jungle, Schimawallachi-katus-Mauwa Jungle, and Phalant-Gurans-Angeriraktchandan Jungle. However, some of those vegetations are on the verge of extinction because of the adverse human activities.

12.2.2.5 Aquatic and wild animals

There are 17 different types of local fishes and 4 types of imported, six types of amphibians, and 14 types of crawling animals, 104 types of birds and 34 types of mammals. There are 14 migrating birds while the rest of the birds live there locally.

12.2.3 Fewa Lake in the past

Fewa Lake was neater and cleaner in the past ⁶. People of Baidam and Malepatan drank the unprocessed water of the Lake and also used to carry water from Fewa Lake to their kitchen some three decades ago when there was no proper management of taps in this area of Pokhara city.



Photo 12.1 Fewa Lake as a source of pure drinking water in 2016 BS (1959 AD)

Source: Bishow Shakya, Pokhara, 2012

Mr. Rudra Gautam (51) from Sarangkot, Lamarka recalling his childhood reveals “I used to drink the water from the Fewa Lake till 2027 BS (1971 AD) as the water was cool then”. This state of Lake was observed by other visitors who went to Barahi temple to worship and the other party goers. Rudra Gautam shares his experience of last 30-40 years ago which

⁶ Based on conversation with Badrika Lamichhane (78) the founder president of Annapurna Mother Group and Buddha Bahadur Nepali, Santa Bahadur Jalari, Hom Bahadur Lamichhane, Premraj Pahari, Suryanath Adhikari, Ramesh Bhattarai who were born and brought up alongside the brink of Fewa Lake

is still the fresh in his minds. He states “in a deep location of the lake the grandfathers used to throw the coins and say the coins would be of those children who could pick up them, and we children used to compete to pick up the glittering coins seen at the bottom of the lake”. Different types of fishes were clearly seen in Fewa Lake then. Mr Shivaji is a Fisherman who has been fishing in Fewa Lake for last 60 years. He says, “I used to throw a fishery web to trap the clearly seen fishes”. This reality is unbelievable for the new generation at present. In the past, there were not only fishes but also other aquatic animals, ducks and geese.

“The water of Fewa was crystal clear which even healed the measles and cured wounds of people once they took bath in it. ” says Alak Giri, born and brought up in Guarighat. Most of the residents of Baidam hold the similar opinions regarding the lake.



Photo 12.2 Fewa Lake in the year 1986, Source: Bishow Shakya, Pokhara, 2012

The shadow of mountain ranges like Machhapuchhre and Annapurna were clearly seen in Fewa Lake some 35-40 years ago, which is rare now.

12.3 Fewa Lake: the center of tourism in Pokhara

Fewa Lake is one of the most precious natural gifts for the flourishing of tourism in Pokhara. In this context, “Pokhara” and “Fewa Lake” have become synonymous. Fewa Lake has become the center of attraction for the tourists visiting Pokhara.



*Photo 12.3 Fewa Lake as a tourist's most relaxing spot in 1980,
Source: Mahendra Shrestha, 2013*

In this context, now Fewa Lake has been an attractive destination not only for the international tourists but also for the internal tourist coming all the way from the different corners of the country. Boating is the most common activity for both international and domestic tourists. "I really felt good and romantic while boating and plunging in the lake", shares his experience, Rajesh Sharma, coming from Biratnagar. His personal experience is the representative for various other domestic tourists coming to Fewa Lake.

Statistics in the past shows that 30-40 per cent tourists who come to Nepal visit Pokhara (MoTCA 2012). In fact, no tourist goes without touching and embracing the lake. Apart from being a central attraction for all kinds of tourists, it holds greater significance for the cinema crew, newlywed couples, and young couples. Many national and international films have covered the beautiful scenery of Fewa Lake. Both young couples and married couples come in great number at Fewa Lake⁷. It is one of the dearest destinations for the politicians, sages, ascetics, monarchs, poets and writers, painters and artists (Thapa 2010).

Touching the lake with bare hands can give more pleasure than seeing the Mt. Machhapuchhre and Annapurna with bare eyes. Certainly the natural

⁷ Based on conversation with Budhthi Bahadur Nepali, the president of Phewa Boaters' Union

gift is more precious, which gives pleasure through touching than the one which gives pleasure through seeing.

The Fewa Lake is culturally rich and famous because of the location of the culturally significant Taal Barahi temple in the middle and the whole vicinity in the lap of Himalayas. Late King Mahendra had made the first official visit to Fewa Lake in 2011 B.S. (1954 A.D.). It was the first official visit by the head of the state. It was a milestone to establish the initial infrastructure at the spot where the present Tal Barahi temple is situated at nearly the middle of Fewa Lake.



*Photo 12.4 King Mahendra's first visit as a milestone for Tal Barahi temple,
Source: Bishow Shakya, Pokhara, 2012*

The Fewa lake side is also well-known for holding annual schedule tourist events like English New Year Street Festival and Nepali New Year Food Festival which are organized by Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal Pokhara and Paschimanchal Hotel Association Pokhara, respectively.

The colorful boats at Fewa Lake and the Raniban on the bank of Fewa Lake are added attractions. The next attraction of Fewa Lake is the sight of

birds and “Paragliding.” The Lake area is considered one of the prominent places for Para-gliding. Every day hundreds of Para-gliding flights take place in the area. The importance of Fewa Lake has yet increased because people get off from the Para-gliding at different places beside the lake.

Fewa Lake side is also a popular tourist destination for various dishes of fishes available in the lake. The domestic tourists and the foreigners are drawn here for also tasting the varieties of fresh fish items⁸. There are dozens of restaurants around the lake especially feeding fish items. The increased demand of fish is a good symptom for the rise of income of local entrepreneurs. The Lake has provided livelihood to the Podes and Jalari (fisherman) community who have sustained their lives by fishing since the ancient time. The lives of three hundred people of 90 families have been sustained by fishing in Fewa Lake (Gurung and Bista 2003).

About 3-4 decades ago, Baidam area was less expensive. An aged social activist, Badriaka Lamichhane (79) says “Baidam” was constructed from the word *Bedaam* (without a price). Previously people were scared to live around the lake, later when the Hippies began coming to the place, it took a radical turnover. Now people come to see the lake from all the places, the price of land grew expensive: now how can we buy?” It has now become one of the most commercial and expensive areas in Pokhara. With natural, cultural, adventurous and recreational attractions for tourists, Fewa Lake has become the heart of transactions from economic point of view. A study held by Ganesh Laxmi Trust in 2010 shows that there is a daily transaction of more than NPR 5,000,000 by various commercial organizations in Fewa Lake area which are listed in table 12.1.

⁸ Based on the conversation with Shiva Jalari, an old fish business man from Fewa Lake Khayaudi

Table 12.1 Number of tourism related commercial organizations

Vocational organizations	Numbers in operation	Vocational organizations	Numbers in operation	Vocational organizations	Numbers in operation	Vocational organizations	Numbers in operation	Numbers in operation
Bakery Shop	11	Contractor/Construction	5	Hair cutting	21	Music shops	13	
Bank & Financial Institution	8	Cosmetic	19	Handicraft shops	24	Paragliding	7	
Beauty Parlor	20	Cyber café	14	Hardware	2	Poultry farm	2	
Book Shop	32	Department stores	3	Hotel/Guest Houses/Lodges	328	Provisional cold stores	145	
Catering	3	Educational institution	3	Housing	3	Rafting	2	
Clinic/ Medical Hall	14	Electric shops	8	Juice	8	Restaurant (Khaja Ghar)	233	
Color Lab/Photo Studio	10	Embroidery and Garments	79	Jewelers	13	Stationary	2	
Communication	4	Fresh House	19	Laundry	9	Tailoring	12	
Consultancy	3	Furniture	7	Money changer	31	Tea shop	14	
Thanka Art Gallery	12	Trekking Agency	73	Trekking shops	71	Yoga meditation fitness	2	
Tours & Travels	103	Other business	153	Total		1545		

Source: Field survey, 2011

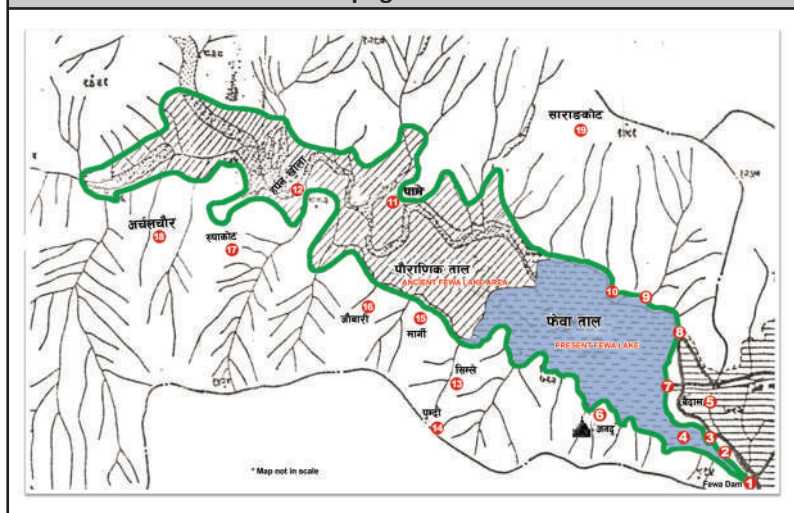
Apart from the above entrepreneurs, the Fewa Lake is the basis of sustaining the livelihoods of 723 boat owners and their dependents. Mr. Bharat Parajuli, the deputy president of Paschimanchal Hotel Association (PHA) Pokhara, remarks that “there has been investment of Nepalese rupees 40 Arab by all of such tourism-related enterprises in Baidam.” Besides this, the existence of Fewa Lake has assisted in development and economic progress of the VDCs of this water-body area and Baidam. This is the very lake which has given employments to many laborers; it has given lives to hundreds of fishermen; it has given persons millions of rupees to open heavenly hotels, malls and resorts. It is the very lake which has dragged thousands of firings and has accommodated ten or twelve thousands of them where once even one firing used to be chased away disgustingly. The Fewa Lake not only has given the breads to the residents of Baidam, it also has supported the national economy, and therefore, it has become everybody’s concern.

12.4 Challenges of Fewa Lake: challenges for tourism

Fewa Lake area is deemed to have progressed rapidly. Before 50 years, there was not even a tea shop in this area. Now, there are 400 restaurants and snack huts. This one example is sufficient to assert the rapid development of Fewa Lake area. Along with the rapid development, the area has also suffered a lot of malpractices. A number of studies (East Consult 2002; Lamichhane 2005; Lamichhane and Upadhyay 2006; Lamichhane et al 2009; Pokhareli 1992; Silt Consultants 2002) reveal about various natural and manmade challenges faced by Fewa Lake area. A number of studies⁹ on Fewa Lake highlight the common challenges faced by it (Oli 1996). Figure 12.2 shows a number of places surrounding Fewa Lake which are associated with such challenges.

⁹ For example International Union for the Conservation of Nature made a study in 1996, Japan International Cooperation Agency made another study in 2001 in association with Ministry of Population and Environment, and Ganesh Laxmi Trust made another study in last three years. See Oli (1996) for more information.

Figure 12.2 Surrounding areas as affected by natural and anthropogenic reasons



Source: Compiled by authors

Legends:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1.Fewa Dam | 7.Hallan Chowk | 13.Simla |
| 2.Firke Area | 8.Bangaladi | 14.Pumdi |
| 3.Ratna Mandir | 9.Gairako Chautara | 15.Margi |
| 4.Shree Taal Barahi Temple | 10.Sedi | 16.Jaubari |
| 5.Baidam City Area | 11.Pame | 17.Rupakot |
| 6.World Peace Pagoda | 12.Harpan Khola | 18.Archal Chour |

These studies along with the observation and conversation of these authors find two major types of challenges in which one is caused by natural calamities and the other is anthropogenic.

12.4.1 Challenges caused by natural calamities

The natural calamity is one of the prominent challenges for Fewa Lake. The sporadic floods and landslides are major components of natural calamity.

a. Burying

A local social activist Hom Bahadur Lamichani says the big flood of 1962 BS and 2014 BS buried the good deal of the lake. Harpan River is the main

source of Fewa Lake which gets enlarged with floods in rainy season. The stone, soil, tree, log, gravel and sand it floats every year has been burying the lake. Moreover, the same material flowed by the rivers like Andheri, Polopa, Maarse, Sindare, Birung, Budhimul, Parmishti, Sidane, Handi, Khahare 1, Khare 2, Orlang also have contributed to shrink the lake. The survey of 1994 conducted by Land and Water Resource Conservation Department concluded that every year volume around 175,000 to 225,000 cubic meters is buried by the stone, soil, sand, gravels, leaves and logs. Due to such reasons, the total area of the Lake originally with 10 sq km area in 1962 B.S. (1906 A.D.) has shrunk to 4.25 sq km of in 2065 B.S. (2009 A.D.) (Lamichane 2005; Pahari 2009).

There were huge landslides in 1957 and 1962. Hom Bahadur Lamichane who has experienced both the landslides says, the landslide buried the lake to a great extent with the stones and soil that floated along with the landslide. A study held by Forest Science Study Institute in 2005 AD concluded, due to the landslide because of the road construction work or natural cause in six VDCs which lie in the water-body area, around 583,619.73 cubic meter soil, stones and sand has piled up in the lake. The landslide which occurs annually is equally responsible as the adverse human activities are to make Fewa Lake lose its pristine character. The stone, tree and the soil flooded annually has been one of the growing problems of Fewa Lake

A research from 1996-1998 conducted by Dr. Devendra Laamichhane, a PhD holder on Fewa Lake, concluded that the Fewa Lake is being buried at the rate of 1, 59,553.23 metric ton per year. If the burial keeps on with this rate, the average age of Fewa is just around 287 years. In recent time, the Fewa Lake is being buried annually at the rate of 6.7 hectares (Pahari 2009). If this continues, Fewa Lake will be transformed into Fewa River and Fewa *phant* (land).

"When I used to arrive with brother and father for fishing, the Fewa Lake was up to Bhakunde", says Shivaji Jalari (72). "Now it is being buried and narrowed. When the lake had 11-doors-dam, it was too big." Similar is the experience of other people who spent their childhood in Fewa Lake like Alak Giri (79), Lilabhakta Acharya (82), Sovit Bahadur Kunwar (83), Chandrakant Lamichhane (62), Bheshraj Parajuli (62), Kikmat Bahadur Kunwar (64), etc.

b. Decrease of deepness

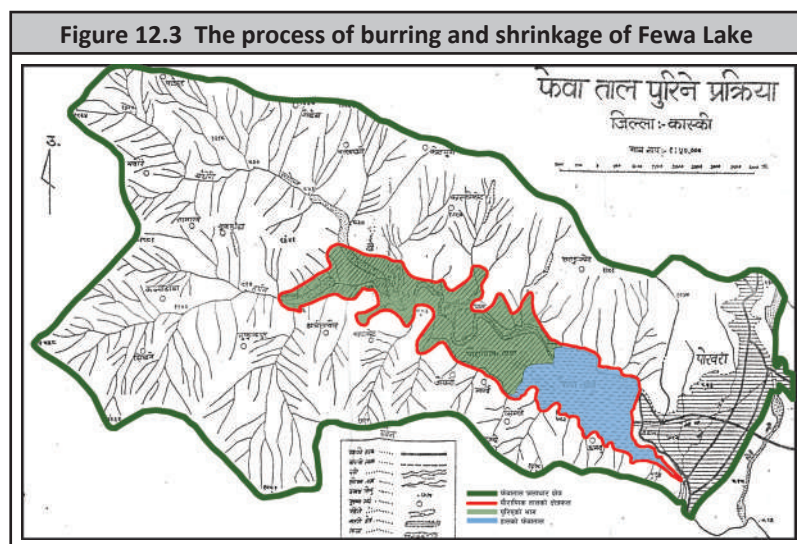
The decreasing depth is another challenge of Fewa Lake. The very Fewa Lake was deep up to 33 meter in the past. Now the depth varies. Its average

is 5.71 meters in Gauri Ghat and Raaniban area, 8.58 meter in Raaniwan and Ratna temple area, 9 meters in Sedi Danda-Chisapaani area, and 14-15 meters in Anadu area (Pahari 2012).

c. Shrinkage

In the past the lake stretched to Jun Thumki, Paame, and Chankhapur, now it has shrunk to khapaudi. Each year Fewa Lake contracts at the rate of 6.7 hectare (Hem Raj Pahari, Pokhar Water Resources). The land from Khapaundi northward to Thumki and Paame has turned into agricultural area. When the Fewa Lake was bigger, people barricaded the land; now they have begun to own the land which in fact belongs to the lake.

Spread up to the area of ten square km in 1956 B.S. (1900 A.D.), the Fewa Lake now is confined to area just around 4.25 square km. *Jalkumvi* (hyacinths) is one of the main problems of Fewa lake area.



Source: District Development Committee, Kaski, 2012

12.4.2 Anthropogenic challenges

The average population growth in Kaski district is 3.84 percent (Oli 1996). The population growth rate is higher in comparison to that of other hill districts of Nepal; this owes to the migration from other hill districts. Unmanaged urbanization is growing throughout the municipality impacting the facilities like drinking water, road and drain. The growing

urbanization has given rise to the adverse effects like sound pollution, road narrowing, water pollution and uncontrolled rubbish in the urban area and the tourist areas around the lake. The natural beauty has fallen prey to adverse human activities. There are following anthropogenic challenges observed in Fewa Lake area.

a. Pressure on land use

There is increasing pressure on the land which is situated towards the east of the damp beside the lake. This area covers places from Baidam to Kahare Gaira Chautara. There are increased constructions of huts and crude roads on land other than confiscated by the government. Similarly there is increasing building constructions on in the area covered by Phirke Khola.

b. Increased physical constructions

According to local people, the growing constructions of hotels and other development works in south-west belt of the lake (beside Raaniban), Anadu and Simle as well as in the upside have caused the pollution of the environment. This has induced troubles in the abodes of the wild animals. Irrespective of the proper management of urbanization, unregulated constructions are underway in the road area that links Baidam to Khahare. Similarly, houses are being constructed rapidly in Phirke area too. There is construction of physical structure without obeying the legal standard.

Thus, the construction works around the lake have negatively endangered the sustainability of this place from the perspective of tourism.

c. Unplanned settlement

The residence beside the Lake side area is inconsistent and unregulated. The residential areas have been basically settled on the basis of the structure of land. The choice of residence is based on the availability of the facility of drinking water rather than of environmental and cultural importance.

d. Sporadic overpressures on the boating management

The Taal Barahi temple situated in the middle of the lake is center of faith and attractions for thousands of religious and domestic tourists. The great annual religious days and the time of New Year are those occasions which are witnessing increased number of tourists year by year. Proper

management of boats and the life jackets are really challenging on those festival days. “The hotels and lodges of Lakeside having capacity of accommodating 12 thousand people altogether face difficulties to settle the people on such big occasions” says Gobindaraj Pahari, the former president of HAN, Pokhara.

e. Lack of moral and ethical practices by nearby settlers

Fewa Lake is observed with the lack of care for its clean up and purity. Shakya (2012, p 17) portrays such lacking as:

*The lake has now been a special feature,
Like glory, glamour and something other
For locals and others a spot for pleasure
However it seems to be beyond care.*

*The first beauty is the natural beauty.
The second one is man-made beauty.
The blend of both is a perfect beauty.
No beauty without cleanup and purity.*

A number of practices of nearby settlers of Fewa Lake are observed as consequences of the lack of disciplined and voluntary behaviors. Such trends are challenging to maintain necessary hygiene and sanitation and prevent any type of environmental degradation (Water Quality Monitoring of Fewa Lake 1996).

- a. Local people living around Fewa Lake and people running hotel, lodge and restaurant let the safety tanks mingle to the lake.
- b. People from nearby areas chemical matters, pesticide fertilizer, and the rubbish.
- c. There is increasing trend of human malpractice. The people representing the increased number of hotels, houses and restaurant wash the huge amount of clothes of hotels and restaurant. It has disfigured the lake's beauty.

12.5 Earlier efforts for the protection and conservation of Fewa Lake

There are a number of organizations involved in the protection and conservation of Fewa Lake and its vicinity as listed in table 12.2.

Table 12.2 List of organizations involved in the protection of Fewa Lake

S. N.	Organizations	S. N.	Organizations
1.	Mother Groups of Baidam	11.	Pokhara Tourism Council
2.	Barahi Youth Club	12.	Phewa Fishery Organization
3.	Boat Byabsahi Organization	13.	Nepal Tourism Board
4.	Jalari Group (Fishery Byabasahi Committee)	14.	District Development Committee
5.	Hotel and Restaurant Organization	15.	Pokhara Industrial Commercial Organization) (e.g. PHAP, TAAN, REBAN, etc.)
6.	Community Service Center	16.	Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City
7.	Phewa Environment Improvement Committee	17.	Government security agencies (Military, Armed Police, Civil Police)
8.	Phewa Boat organization	18.	Tulasi Hotel
9.	Damside Youth Club	19.	Other clubs (Rotary and Lions)
10.	Heralo Academy	20.	Bhattarai Group

Source: Field survey, 2012

These organizations (table 12.2) have shown their individual concerns for the protection of Fewa Lake through both advocacy and actions. It is also true that not all of these organizations are active. Some of those are defunct.

Fewa Environment Improvement Committee is one of such examples. The group had earlier owned two boats and the four boaters in an attempt to sweep the *Jalkumvi* (water hyacinths) from the lake. In the beginning years the work was done through the private investment of the Bhattarai family. Later, the attempt was assisted also by the local bodies. It spent money for two and half years at the rate of average NPR three Lakhs each year. This effort had also raised public awareness. This committee is not active now.

Nonetheless, there is a significant achievement in solving the problem of *Jalkumvi* (hyacinths) because of the shift from individual effort to the shared efforts for which a number of organizations like Community Service Center Baidam, Community Police Service Baidam, Boat Byabasahi Organization, Fishery Byabasahi Committee and Phewa Environment Improvement Committee are in one networking. NTB is also supporting every year for removing water hyacinth from the lake. This joint effort is also cooperated by District Development Committee. In this context, some of these organizations have come up with some projects for the conservation and preservation of Fewa Lake. For example, Fewa

Conservation Project was active earlier. However, there has always remained the lack of full implementation.

The prediction is not only that of Dr. Devendra Laamichane, other concerned persons and bodies sense the same future of Fewa Lake.

In 2032 when surveyors came, the individuals registered the land of the lake in their personal ownership, says Shiavaji Jalari, Krishna Pahari and Hom Bahadur Lamichhane. The people who cannot tolerate the act of owning the land of lake have unanimous view that “the lake can be restored in its previous shape and size by either extending the current dam higher or constructing a new dam around Fishtail Lodge place. But the practical chance of performing this act is equally difficult because the people who value the importance and future of the lake view that there is disparity between the talk of struggle to improve the lake and the practical approach from the concerned and rightful bodies.

12.6 Future prospects of Fewa Lake in tourism

Fewa Lake stands as one of the precious natural gifts of nation in general and economic stimuli from the perspective of tourism in Pokhara. The lake is important for its natural beauty, from economic, religious and more primarily from tourism perspective. Fewa Lake is an important natural legacy with the greater tourism potentials. It can be a lucrative and lasting source of income and base for livelihoods of thousands of people living beside this Lake. This area offers plenty of possibilities. Furthermore, it is also the potential source of multiple benefits for multiple stakeholders including tourists, local people, government, and various actors.¹⁰ Since the ancient times, Fewa Lake has offered livelihoods for thousands of people and terrestrial and aquatic animals. Looking at it from perspective of income and as a popular tourist destination, Fewa Lake area should be utilized as an international venture for durable peace, prosperity and harmony. However, there is no utilization of water, land and environment according to the way they should have been used. It is lacking proper governance and management. This Lake is found polluted, borders being encroached and pesticides being thrown in the water. There has been no concern from anywhere regarding the punishment, prosecution, preservation of the lake which is the matter of central concern for not only Fewa Lake side but also for thousands of entrepreneurs, laborers, and

¹⁰ Such beneficiaries include 223 boat operators, 1545 tourism and related entrepreneurs, thousands of workers, and 90 fishermen.

businessmen, the adults, peasants, fishermen, boaters and the common people of Baidam.

Even the state of its underutilization at present contains a number of managerial weakness for its durable existence. The sporadic natural calamities and human malpractices are such challenges which are not only causing to shrink and bury but also contaminating it. There is high need of showing concerns in preserving the lake, purifying its water, preventing the border encroachment, stopping soil erosion from the hill areas and building some more physical infrastructures to protect it on sustainable basis.

Thus, the dilemma of Fewa Lake is miserable. This is further resulting with the deterioration of the whole bio-diversity of Fewa Lake. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to preserve the important heritage of Fewa Lake and allow its longevity with natural right to live forever. However, there is lack of justice with Fewa Lake as it is only glorified a lot for its natural beauty but action plans are not properly executed to protect. There is a public grievance that the government, concerned bodies, political parties, preservation experts have not paid enough attention regarding its preservation and sustainable development. So it needs enough attention. The following efforts are recommended in this direction:

- a. Fewa Lake is a public property and it has assisted largely to enrich the prestige of people and the place and in economic development. Hence, there is a need of public awareness and hearing for its participatory conservation. This message should be promulgated to the general public. For this, public awareness campaigns should be launched.
- b. It is high time that the concerned bodies should pay enough attention for sensible development, preservation and management plans and proper implementation and management of these plans for the sustainability of Fewa Lake. Establishing locally powerful responsible body in united effort is needed to regulate, develop and preserve Fewa Lake.
- c. While making plans about Fewa Lake area, there should be concentration on imparting economic benefits not only to tourism entrepreneurs and employees concentrated in Fewa Lake side area, but also to all six VDCs like Sarangkot, Kaskikot, Dhikurpokhari, Bhadaure Tamagi, Chapakot, Pumdi-Bhumdi, which touch this Lake.

- d. Since the larger gravity and multifaceted issues of Fewa Lake cannot be managed by any single effort and entity, united effort among the different stakeholders like the tourist entrepreneurs, non-tourist local communities, political parties and the common people of Fewa Lake area is needed.
- e. The sustainable development of Fewa Lake requires a basket fund, for which a tax policy to the businessmen and professionals who get a direct benefit from Fewa Lake and the provision of management fee in proportion to their income could be planned.
- f. Furthermore, there should be priority given to more studies and research works in the Fewa Lake area.

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Tek Bahadur Gurung¹

13.1 Introduction

Pokhara, being a hub of tourism in the western part of Nepal, covers the Annapurna and its peripheral tourism. Ever since tourism was the first hosted during 70s, Pokhara has been proclaimed widely in Europe, America and the rest of the continents as 'a paradise' where people have to go once in their life for experiencing the original beauty of the divine nature. The Japanese Monk Ekai Kawaguchi had acquainted Pokhara in 1899. He mentions in his book entitled *Three Years in Tibet* that he has never seen beautiful scenery like that in Pokhara during his entire travel to the Himalayas. Similarly, Dr. Tony Hagen, the Swiss Geographer, who visited Pokhara in 1950, appreciates it as one of the most extraordinary and stunning places.

Surrounded by the very famous mountain ranges which include Fishtail, Annapurna south, Lamjung, Gangapurna, Dhaulagiri, Lamjung and Manaslu, the greater Pokhara is smilingly positioned in a bank of gorgeous Seti, embracing magnificent Fewa Lake. Thousands of tourists, pilgrims, holiday makers, researchers and visitors come to Pokhara every year to enjoy and experience its beauty. The top peaks of Fishtail and Annapurna, as the giant towering hosts, are always standby to welcome their guests. The hypnotized smile emanated from Machhapuchhre, sacred temperament borrowed from Fewa Lake and unique hospitality borrowed from Devi's Fall, merged in a complex form make Pokhara. In this context, Pokhara is indescribable in words as words sometimes fail to indentify the essence and reality of the spots like tranquility of Annapurna Base camp, the very challenging Thorong-la, a cultural and historic Lomanthang and windy valley Jomsom. Sometimes an image created in words remains unable

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to reflect the original scenery and hidden beauty and fails to quench the thirst of human heart. From such perspective, Pokhara is prettier than the image created in whatsoever eloquent words and phrases.

13.2 Annapurna Conservation Area Project

Annapurna conservation Area Project (ACAP) oversees sustainable tourism and biodiversity conservation programs in 57 village Development Committees of five districts which are located in the north side of Pokhara in western development region of Nepal. This is the largest protected area in Nepal.² Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) is rich in biodiversity and is a treasure house for 1,226 species of flowering plants, 102 mammals, 474 birds, 39 reptiles and 22 amphibians. After 1986, Annapurna came under the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), ACAP, which covers a region of 7,629 sq. km. ACAP was first tested as a pilot Program in the Ghandruk Village Development Committee (VDC) in the same year 1986. After being notified in the Gazette as a “Conservation Area” in 1992, ACAP’s program covered the entire area.

There are several features that make the Annapurna region a unique place in the world. It contains the world’s deepest river gorge named as Kali-Gandaki-Gorge, which is 3 miles long and 1.5 miles wide, and a valley with fossils from the Tethys Sea dating 60 million years ago. This region contains the world’s largest rhododendron forest, especially in Ghorepani and the highest altitude fresh water Lake named Tilicho located in Manang towards north of the Annapurna massif.

The biological diversity of the Annapurna region is equally rivaled by cultural diversity. It is also the home to over 100,000 residents of different cultural and linguistic groups. Gurungs and Magars are the dominant cultural ethnic groups in the South, whereas Thakali, Manange Gurung and Loba are dominant in the North. Each of these groups speak their own dialect, and have unique cultures and traditions. Besides, there are also Brahmin, Chhetri and other occupational castes in comparatively smaller numbers. From religious point of view, Hindu, Buddhist and pre-Buddhist followers are prevalent across the region. The natural and cultural features of Annapurna Conservation Area have made it the most popular trekking destination in the country. This area draws more than 60 percent

² For detail see <http://www.ntnc.org.np/project/annapurna-conservation-area-project>; accessed on 12 February 2013

of the country's total trekkers. Tourism, over the years, has been firmly established as one of the most important and competitive sectors of the local economy. There are over 1,000 lodges, teashops and hundreds of other subsidiary services to cater to the thousands of trekkers, pilgrims and their supporting staffs.

The soaring number of visitors, whose fuel wood consumption is twice more than that of the local people, has exerted immense pressure on forest resources already stressed from the growing local population. Similarly, litter, particularly the wastes produced by trekkers and hoteliers, is another major concern. It is estimated that an average trekking group of 15 people generates about 15 kg of non-biodegradable and non-burnable garbage in 10 days, trek, producing tons of garbage in mountain regions annually.

The multifaceted problems of Annapurna Conservation Area have been addressed through an integrated, community-based conservation and development approach. It is an experimental model which has been in the vanguard of promoting the concepts of "Conservation Area" through an "Integrated Conservation and Development Programme" approach in the country and abroad.

Additionally, Annapurna Conservation Area is the first protected area that has allowed local residents to live within the boundaries as well as own their private property and maintain their traditional rights and access to the use of natural resources. It is also the first protected area, which has refrained from using the assistance of army to protect the dwindling natural resource base on which the region fully depends. Instead, it invests whatever financial resources are available for community development and social capital building in the region. The NTNC receives no regular funding support from the government for the operation of ACAP, but has been granted the right to collect entry fees from visiting trekkers. Collected revenue is ploughed back to implement conservation and development activities in Annapurna Conservation Area. Additional funds are raised from national and international donors. This is an exemplary achievement of an ability of the non-government institution to manage a significant portion of the protected area within a system in Nepal.

Table 13.1 Fact sheet of ACA

Area	7629 Sq. km	
VDC	57 (5 Districts)	
Population	107000	
Landuse	in sq. km	in%
Forest	1160.50	15.21%
Agriculture	234.1	3.07%
Shrubland	308.37	4.04%
Grass Land	1622.32	21.27%
Barren Land	3789.37	49.67%
Sand Gravel	127.89	1.68%
Snow Cover	34.84	0.46%
Glacier	339.28	4.45%
River	5.36	0.07%
Lake Pond	6.96	0.09%
Total	7629	

Source: GIS unit of ACA

In order to manage various conservation and development efforts of ACAP more effectively, the whole ACA has been divided into 7 unit conservation offices- Jomsom, Manang and Lo-Manthang in the trans-Himalayan region and Bhujung, Sikles, Ghandruk, and Lwang on the southern flank of the Annapurna range. However, all the activities of these conservation offices are administered and managed from the head office located in Hariyo Kharka in Pokhara. The focus of Jomsom, Manang and Ghandruk conservation offices, which are among the most popular trekking destinations, is under integrated tourism management, and the other development activities that benefit the local communities and the environment. The Program priorities for Bhujung, Sikles and Lwang are poverty alleviation and integrated agriculture development and agro-forestry. Similarly, while focusing in upper Mustang, which came under the jurisdiction of Annapurna Conservation Area in 1992, has been managing controlled tourism on a sustainable basis in promoting heritage conservation as the major tourist attraction (NTNC 2008). The Conservation Education and Extension Program is being implemented in the entire region of Annapurna Conservation Area and it forms the backbone of all its endeavors.

The first management mandate given by the Government to NTNC to manage Annapurna Conservation Area ended in 2002. The Government

gave management mandate of additional 10 years to the Trust. And again in 2013, the NTNC has been given another 2 years to manage ACAP as well as develop its exit plan.

The NTNC believes that the areas such as the Annapurna Conservation Area will ultimately have to be managed by the local people themselves in perpetuity. Therefore, the focus is on building local capacity, both at the institutional and individual levels, to meet all the conservation and development aspirations of the people.

13.3 Annapurna conservation area management zone

Based on the management perspectives, Annapurna Conservation Area has been divided into four different distinctive zones which are intensively categorized as intensive use zones. Secondly, seasonal grazing and protected forest depicts the area which is partly protected but used as seasonal grazing. Thirdly, special management zone represents the area which is environmentally fragile and needs more attention, and lastly wilderness zone which is totally wild but has significant role to make the Annapurna area irreplaceable and unique (NTNC 2009).

a. Intensive use zone

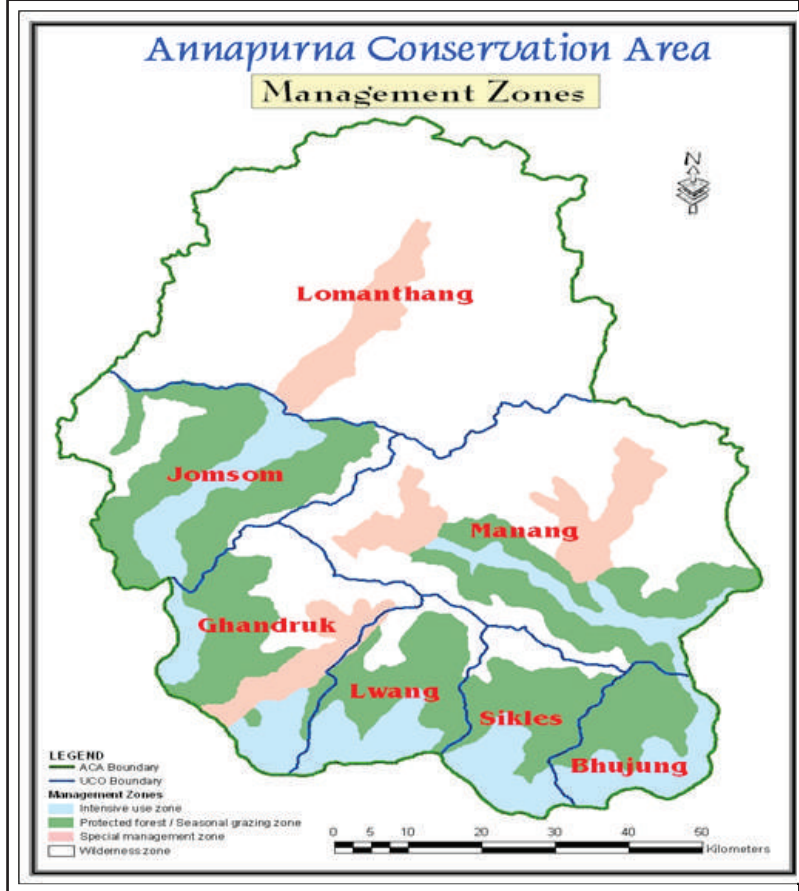
This is generally human settlement area where severe pressure on resources has been apparent for a long period of time. The human activities comprise agriculture, livestock, fodder and fuel-wood collection. Management implications include high and integrated interventions of plantation, improvement of the natural forest management practices, restriction on hunting, no commercial use of local resources, conservation education, alternative resources and income generating activities.

b. Protected forest grazing zone

This zone lies below the wilderness zone and just above the intensive use zone. Villagers cannot go for a one-day round-trip for fodder grass and fuel-wood collection to this zone. However, they seasonally use this zone for livestock grazing and timber collection for home use. The resources include alpine grazing pasture and mixed broad-leaf temperate forest. The management implications for this zone are to restrict the use of the resources. Only the local people (no outsiders) can use the resources from this zone seasonally.

c. Special management zone

Figure 13.1 Annapurna Conservation Area land management zones



Source: ACAP (2012)

This zone includes those selected and isolated areas which recently, within the last two decades, suffer from serious environmental problems directly or indirectly due to tourism. These isolated areas include Ghorepani – Chhomrong – Annapurna Sanctuary, Thorong Phendi, Tilicho Lake and Chame areas. This is a high priority area from conservation point of view. Intensive monitoring of all aspects of environment and tourism, and full spectrum of management and development efforts directed towards reversing present trend are to be implemented.

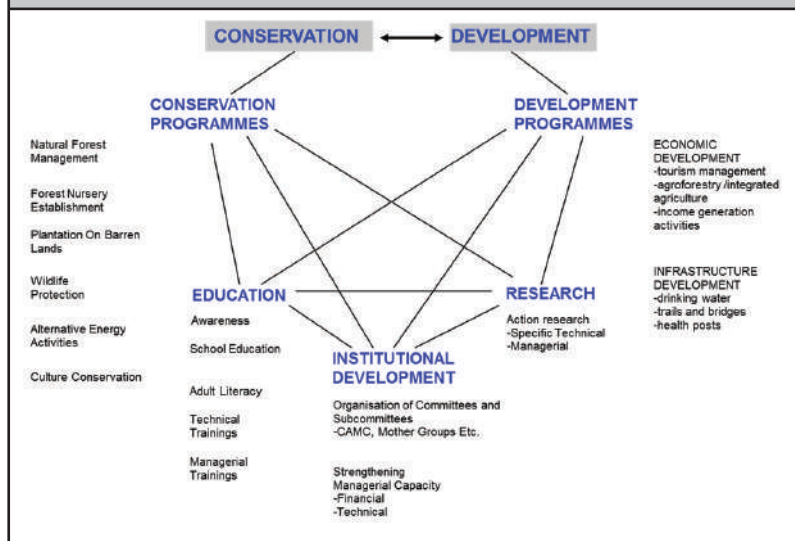
d. Wilderness zone

This is the area above the current upper elevation limits of seasonal grazing, roughly above 15,000 ft (approximately 4,600m). The resources include high mountains, glaciers, rocks and those pastures which have not been grazed to date or abandoned for more than a decade. The immediate management implication for this zone is to fully protect and not to carry any developmental activities.

13.3.1 How Does ACAP work?

To conserve natural resources of the area and to uplift living standard of local people through tourism and other income generating activities, ACAP works with direct support from the local people. People's active participation, catalytic role and sustainability are the three guiding principles that ACAP practices to achieve its mission "To conserve, manage and promote nature in all its diversity balancing human needs with the environment on a sustainable basis for posterity-ensuring maximum community participation with due cognizance of the linkage between economics, environment, and ethics through a process in which people are both the principal actors and beneficiaries".

Figure 13.2 The integrated conservation and development model in ACAP area



Source: NTNC (2012)

Until and unless the basic needs of the locals are fulfilled, peoples' interests towards nature conservation and environment protection are unthinkable. ACAP is aware of this reality. Moreover, basic infrastructure development is another part that a community needs. So, this integrates community development, women encouragement, agriculture and animal husbandry, health, conservation education, tourism, natural resource conservation with one another and designs its activities. Each activity links with another. For instance, health program is related to education, education is related to social development, social development is related to tourism and tourism is related to socio-economic development. This way, ACAP does have a web of programs as shown in the web chart.

To carry out these activities, ACAP has formed many VDC-based committees under 7 offices in the fields. Conservation Area Management committee is the leading committee through which all the activities are carried out. Mothers' group, forest management sub-committees, tourism management sub-committees and green force clubs are formed according to the conservation Area management Regulation 2053. Field offices are called unit conservation offices and each unit conservation office is staffed by at least 15 people from different backgrounds.

13.3.2 ACAP in tourism in Pokhara and Annapurna conservation area

Annapurna conservation Area is rich in culture and bio diversity. Different languages are spoken in the area by different ethnic groups. Diverse flora and fauna have also helped ACA to be popular among the tourists.

Table 13.2 Tourist arrival in ACA since 2001

Year	International	SAARC	Total
2001	64471	842	65313
2002	38037	605	38642
2003	39240	1428	40668
2004	40709	1638	42347
2005	34057	2167	36224
2006	35894	2007	37901
2007	57152	3122	60274
2008	67379	4796	72175
2009	70182	9714	79896
2010	75915	14246	90161
2011	83873	15423	99296
2012	91725	12762	104487

Source: ACAP (2012)

More than one hundred thousand tourists with the similar number of supporting staff visited ACA in 2011. With the increasing influx of tourists in the area, natural resources and cultural

values have also been threatened. Actually, to balance between the influx and the conservation of natural and cultural resources has stood as the challenge for ACAP. To overcome this issue, ACAP always involves local people from need assessment to planning and implementation. ACAP believes that local people are capable to share their indigenous knowledge needed for program planning and implementation. In addition, they are involved in every program to let them feel the ownership.

Heritage conservation programs implemented in upper Mustang, Manang and southern part of ACA have supported to generate awareness among the villagers about how significantly culture and tradition contribute to attract tourists in the area.

A number of attractions like Kohla Sothar, an archaeological site situated in the southern part of ACA, Muktinath temple of Muktinath, highest Tilicho Lake, the highest pass Thorong-la, the deepest Kali Gandaki Gorge, the fascinating rhododendron forest of Ghorepani, enchanting landscape, amicable people and their festivals have supported ACA to bring thousands of tourists annually. Different ethnic groups cherish different cultures and traditions. With these traditions and culture they have treasured, heritages that Upper Mustang conserved, bio diversity that the ACA people preserved and the landscape it owned, ACA had become one of the 10 best trekking destinations in the world in 2004.

Initially, Tourism was not well-managed in Annapurna Conservation Area. People did not know much about tourism. ACAP provided tourism-related trainings to the hotel owners. Consequently, currently, the tourism entrepreneurs have learnt many things. They are now able to provide better services to the guests. Gas and Kerosene depots are established in the villages, mineral water bottle is banned in Annapurna Sanctuary, waste collection centers are established, hydro power plants are installed and many environmental issues are discussed among the villagers to make them capable to manage tourism in an environment-friendly way.

This proves that ACAP has intensively focused tourism in Pokhara and Annapurna Conservation area. ACAP works in coordination with Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN), Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC), Tourism Management sub-Committees and other tourism-related organizations to achieve its goals.

Basically, ACAP forms a VDC or settlement level Tourism Management sub-Committee in the field. A total of 49 Tourism Management sub-Committees are functional throughout Annapurna region. They have been delegated with certain authorities to manage tourism as per the Conservation Area management Regulation 2053 and its Directives 2056. These Tourism Management sub-Committees (TMs-C) are the auxiliary institutions to Conservation Area Management Committee, a mother committee formed in each VDC. Every year, each sub-committee proposes tourism programs to the Conservation Area Management Committee (CAMC) in their yearly planning meeting. The CAMC relays those activities to the ACAP's unit conservation office (UCO) for further action. The UCO collects the proposals, prioritizes the needs identified and then sends them to the Headquarters for approval. Once the proposals are approved, the activities are instantly implemented in the fields. There is at least one Tourism Assistant positioned to look after the tourism activities in every UCO. Narendra Lama, Tourism Officer of ACAP states, "Besides in other regular conservation and community development activities, ACAP spends about 20 million rupees in tourism development and promotion annually"

In Pokhara, with technical and administrative supports from TAAN, PTC and NTB, ACAP has carried out different activities. Supporting the tourism-related events organized by different Pokhara-based organizations, conducting workshops and seminars on the tourism-related issues, exploring and promoting the alternative trekking routes, and providing trainings to the tourism entrepreneurs are some of the major activities carried out. ACAP provided financial support to TAAN for organizing international level paragliding competition in 2008 and 2009, Home-stay Management training at Kabhre in 2010, Annapurna Day at Mirsa in 2010, Winter Camps every year and familiarization trips in different places in different years. Likewise, ACAP also provided financial supports to Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC) for organizing *Ropain* (rice plantation) festivals at Chisapani in 2009 and at Lamachaur in 2010 and Annapurna Day at Kabhre in 2009. Moreover, the UNITRAV (Union of trekking travel rafting and airlines workers) was also supported financially to organize clean- up campaign in Annapurna Sanctuary area in 2012 and the same institution was again supported for organizing tourism workers' skill development trainings. Additionally, in 1998, ACAP collected non-biodegradable waste in Manang district and transported about 3000 kilos of bottles and tins to Pokhara to sale out.

Moreover, various studies and researches have also been done. In 2011, Mr. Shree Kanta Khatiwada studied an impact of road construction on trekking tourism in the Round Annapurna Trek. He was hired as consultant by ACAP (Khatiwada 2011). Likewise, in different times, various foreign volunteers were employed to study how the road construction has impacted on the local economy and the local cultural values, and how tourism has impacted on environment host of other issues.

In the field level, there are regular tourism programs. The TMs-Cs' regular planning meetings, waste management, check-posts and visitor centers upgrades and operations, sign postings, trekking trail repair and maintenance, trainings for hoteliers, etc. are some of the regular activities that ACAP field offices carry out every year.

ACAP solely manages fund to carry out its approved activities from the entry fee amount. Every trekker, who wishes to go to ACA, needs to pay NPR 2000 rupees. From this, ACAP collects approximately 1.8 million annually and uses this money for conservation and development in Annapurna conservation Area. However, unsatisfied voices regarding the usage of this revenue have been heard in public. Some stakeholders are satisfied with what ACAP has used this money for and some are not satisfied. Kizam Gurung, chairperson of Ghandruk Tourism Management sub-Committee and an owner of Gurung Cottage, Ghandruk, shows his satisfaction that ACAP's entrance fee is ploughed back to the community for sustainable tourism management and community development works (see box:13.1)

Box 13.1 Views on entrance fee

Kizam Gurung

Chariman, Ghandruk Tourism management subcommittee and an owner of Gurung cottage, Ghandruk.

"Entrance fee is not a debate of contradiction because NPR 2000 is not a big amount for the tourists visiting Annapurna region. Most importantly, trekkers will be satisfied if they are told that the entry fee they paid to enter ACA is ploughed back to 57 village development committees each by providing at least 5 to 7 hundred thousand rupees per year for conservation, sustainable management of tourism and community development activities".

Source: Personal communication by author

Tourism Management committees are bodies through which all the tourism activities are executed. Since the very starting, ACAP focused on creating awareness and providing training to the villagers to make sure

that the tourism in ACA should turn towards environment protection, poverty alleviation and cultural preservation. Unless the villagers and tourism entrepreneurs are conscious, tourism management is impossible. That is why, ACAP conducted tourism awareness camps in the initial phase. It has helped hoteliers to standardize menu. It also provided trainings on cooking and baking, front desk dealing, service of the waiter, waste management, Basic English Language, interior decoration and many more. Most of the tourism practitioners in the area seemed satisfied on this matter. Chairman of Tourism Entrepreneurs' Association of Manang (TEAM) and the owner of Yeti Hotel, Manang, appreciated ACAP for setting menus to reduce the unhealthy competition among the hotel-owners in the initial phase. He has also acknowledged that ACAP which has conducted the study tours and awareness camps for the hotel owners, would inevitably let them understand the real tourism and its importance (See box: 13.2).

Box 13.2 Views on ACAP

Binod Gurung

Chairman, Tourism Entrepreneurs' Association of Manang, and the Owner of Hotel Yeti, Manang

"ACAP was the prominent organization that led villagers to manage tourism in a proper way. ACAP provides trainings to the hotel owners, generated awareness of tourism among the villagers, set rules to control the unhealthy competition among the hoteliers, organized study tours to let hotel owners see the difference between the management systems of their place and the place where tourism has already bloomed. ACAP also standardized menus to set the prices of food in sequential order from TAL to Tharang-ia to maintain the uniformity. These efforts are remarkable and for this they are always appreciated".

Source: personal communication by author February 2013.

Likewise, President of TAAN, Western regional chapter, Mr Narayan Sapkota, said "ACAP's programs are noticeable. Whatever ACAP has done to promote tourism in ACA are appreciated by most of the villagers. ACAP, since the inception, has been generating awareness among local villagers on the importance of wild animals, forests, local culture and tradition. As a result, wildlife is preserved, and forest and local cultures are conserved to some extent. Illegal hunting and NTFP collection are also controlled. These would not have been possible without the existence of ACAP".

Dal Bahadur Gurung, president of Sanctuary Tourism Entrepreneurs' Association (STEC) admitted: "Positive features of ACAP regarding tourism development are: it has conserved wildlife, forests, culture and traditions

of the area and attracted many tourists annually. For the sustainable tourism management of the area, ACAP has formed Tourism Management sub-Committees in different village development committees, through which waste management, infrastructure development, conservation initiatives, and trainings have been done”.

Late Mr. Min Bahadur Gurung of then Conservation Area management Committee, Chairman of Ghandruk village, once said “ACAP is here to make villagers -the owner of the natural resources”.

With these assertions made by the local tourism practitioners, we can come to the understanding that this organization has won many hearts positively. Many villages have changed their appearances. Ghandruk became the world-known village, Ghalegaon is considered to be best village tourism destination. Bhujung which had been hidden behind the curtain for decades is now opened for the whole outer world. Micro hydro power plants were installed and it has started to help reducing the consumption of fuel wood. In this way, Jungle is preserved to some extent. People became more conscious about environment and conservation. Many students have been taught conservation education, and women are encouraged and empowered. Safe drinking water stations are installed and handed over to the local institutions to diversify tourism income and minimize pollution. Finally, Tourism has thrived as a main source of income for the ACA dwellers.

Table 13.3 Name and duration of the routes explored

Sn	Name of Routes	Duration of the Trek
1	Tangting-Bhujung-Besishahar	6 Days (one way)
2	Sikles-Timang	10 days (One way)
3	Odar-Namun Pass	6 days (up and down)
4	Bhujung-Dudhpokhari-Sikles	6 days (up and down)
5	Karpani-Sikles-Pokhara	5 days (One way)
6	Sabet-Ghandruk	4 days (One Way)
7	Pahirothapla-Muktinath	5 days (One way)
8	Ghandruk-khairbarah	3 days (one way)

Source: Gurung (2009)

With its regular programs, ACAP has also been implementing unpredicted momentum, however, in fact, significant activities in ACA. For instance, exploration of new alternative trekking routes, Home stay tourism development, expansion of local culture, etc. are the major achievements. ACAP in 2009 explored 8 alternative trekking routes (see table) within

ACA to give best alternative to the trekking routes displaced due to the motorable roads. It has also introduced home stay tourism in many villages to diversify local income to the wider section of the country. Both the programs, alternative trekking routes and home stay are intensified with the support of TAAN and NTB journalists and other stakeholders based in Pokhara. The positive results have been seen already. Villagers are benefitted from more tourists visiting their villages. There are trekkers in the alternative trekking routes. These routes contain more exciting potentiality.

Mr. Narendra Lama, who has been working in ACAP for about 18 years as Tourism officer, summarizes;

Box 13.3 Views on community based project organized by ACAP

Narendra Lama, Tourism Officer, ACAP

“ACAP is promoting community-based tourism focusing the very effective participation of the local people and other relevant stakeholders. More importantly, the project also emphasizes collaborative efforts for the promotions of ecotourism incorporating the efforts of likeminded organizations such as TAAN, NTB and local government bodies”

Source: personal communication by author February 2013.

“One of the major achievements of ACAP is establishing ACA as a model ecotourism region that has received over 60% of trekking tourism in Nepal. ACAP is a successful project for effective combination of resource conservation with ecotourism promotions which are verified by a half dozen international awards received by NTNC. At the very beginning of ACAP, the region received only 25000 tourists annually while in 2012 it received more than 10 million trekkers. This shows a significant increase in the tourists’ flow in ACA region. However ACAP is also facing some challenges. The major challenge is growth of rural road construction around the major destination within the protected area that ultimately hindered trekking route and its tourism. Considering this, ACAP is focusing on exploration of alternative trekking routes and its management. Hence it has already explored 8 main alternative trekking routes. Some of them are still under construction. For the last few years, ACAP has promoted home stay tourism in different areas within the ACA region. The main aim of the home stay tourism is to diversify tourism income in the remote rural areas within the ACA region.

ACAP is promoting community-based tourism focusing effective participation of the local people and other relevant stakeholders.

Recently, ACAP is promoting villages as a tourism destination: Kabhre, Mirsa, Lwang-Ghalel, Sikles, Yangjakot of Kaski district; Bhujung, Pasgaon, Ghalegaun, Ghanpokhara of Lamjung district; Odar and Tilche of Manang district; Khibang of Myagdi district; and many other villages have been listed to be developed. Homestay management trainings, cooking and basic baking training are being provided to the villagers to enable them to fulfill the immediate necessities of their guests. In order to execute such programs successfully, the project emphasizes on collaborative efforts for the promotions of ecotourism incorporating the efforts of likeminded organizations such as TAAN, NTB and local government bodies.

13.4 Challenges

In spite of the establishment of basic structures of tourism development, ACAP still faces many challenges. Mainly, the government's plan to link all the district headquarters with the motorable road, has appeared as the crucial challenge. Now, Chame and Jomsom, district headquarters of Manang and Jomsom respectively, have been linked with the main road from Besishahar and Beni displacing the famous and most trekked trekking trail "The Round Annapurna" (Khatiwada,2011) . Krishna Gurung who did MSc in conservation and Tourism from Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent, UK, and has been working in ACAP, says that the construction of road in the rural part of the region has affected tourism negatively as it has shortened total length of stay resulting in less economic benefit through tourism as majority of them prefer to ride vehicles and bypass many settlements, particularly between Marpha and Ghasa where few lodges have been forced to be closed (see box:4).

Box 13.4 Views on affects of motor road on Annapurna trekking trail

Krishna Gurung Tourism Professional, NTNC-ACAP

"After the road development in the region, it has impacted negatively on trekking tourism. It has shortened total length of stay resulting less economic benefits through tourism as majority of them prefer to ride vehicles and bypass many settlements; particularly between Marpha and Ghasa where few lodges have been forced to be closed".

Although, NTNC-ACAP's tourism activities are considered as eco-tourism initiatives, there is lack of systematic theme-based tourism programme with poor tourism diversification mechanism. Poor and disadvantaged groups have hardly benefited from the tourism programme."

Source: Personal communication by author

Waste management is another challenge for ACAP. Thousands of kilos of waste has been generated in ACA annually but the management system does not seem to be pleasing. Waste collection centers are not enough, incinerators are not used properly and most importantly, non-biodegradable wastes are not carried down to the cities for proper management. In addition, safe drinking water stations which are supposed to be reducers of mineral water bottles in the area are not well managed.

ACAP lacks a Tourism Management Plan, especially the systematic theme-based tourism program, which leads to the poor tourism diversification mechanism. The Poor and disadvantaged groups have hardly been benefited from such ambitious tourism programs. Furthermore, the author, on the basis of the interactions and interviews he himself has conducted, realizes that ACAP needs tourism master plan. However to address all required activities in the plan itself is a challenging task. Moreover, no sufficient primary database about demand of tourism products as well as quality of services and facilities is available in the concerned area. Similarly, no adequate researches have been carried out on the physical carrying capacity and impacts of tourism considering the rapid increase of Indian and domestic visitors.

Krishna Gurung further says, "Poor linkage and interpretation of biodiversity conservation and cultural heritage for tourism product development is one of the weaknesses in NTNC-ACAP's current intervention. ACAP needs to improve institutional coordination with other stakeholders at different levels, mainly with TAAN and and NTB.

13.5 ACAP's future

No matter what ACAP has done in ACA, the government will, one day, withdraw the mandate given to NTNC and come up with an alternative arrangement for managing the ACAP.

Box 13.5 Views on role of ACAP

Dal Bahadur Gurung, Chairman, Sanctuary Tourism entrepreneurs' Association

"ACAP should make Tourism Master Plan and follow it by dividing the tourism management zones, and carry out activities accordingly. For instance, Annapurna area was nominated as one of the best top 10 trekking destinations few years ago, but now it is removed from this list. It shows that the government and ACAP could not reserve its fame. It could be because of the roads which are arbitrarily being built in the area without considering the protection of the existing trekking trail. We have never been opposing the roads but there should be alternative routes developed and promoted to maintain the magnetism of the Annapurna area".

Source: Personal communication by author in January 2013.

“ACAP’s exit plan immediately needs to be prepared because NTNC will ultimately hand over ACA to the local communities by forming Annapurna Conservation Area Management Council or to the government through other means. For this, a law-for-handover should be drafted by the government,” said Mr. Lal Prasad Gurung, Project Director of ACAP.

According to box 13.5, Dal Bahadur Gurung, Chairman of Sanctuary Tourism Entrepreneurs’ Committee, “ACAP needs to prepare Tourism Master Plan and implement it urgently to save its fame in the world market. For instance, Annapurna area was nominated as one of the best top 10 trekking destinations few years ago, but now it is removed from this list. It shows that the government and ACAP could not reserve its fame. It could be because of the roads which are arbitrarily being built in the area without considering the protection of the existing trekking trail. We have never been opposing the roads but there should be alternative routes developed and promoted to maintain the magnetism of the Annapurna area.”

In addition, entry fee to Annapurna region seems to be restructured. This author has been raising this issue in almost every workshop and seminar because it is unfair for those trekkers who spend only one night in Dhamphus and other bordering areas and have to pay 2000 rupees. This problem can be settled by setting entry fee in rational practical ground. Three different rates should be fixed: one for the tourists spending one night, one for the tourists doing a week-long trip and one for the tourists doing more than week-long trip in the area. In addition, tourists who want to obtain entry permits at check points have also suffered from the extra 100% charge. The fine should also be reduced because certain percentages of the tourists are compelled to obtain permits at check point due to the lack of enough time. Most of the tourists, mostly in the foreign countries, do not disrespect and disobey rules and regulations willingly.

In addition to the conservation area entry fee, trekkers need to pay for Trekking Information Management System (TIMS) which Kisam Gurung of Ghandruk and Binod Gurung of Manang oppose. They think that the TIMS is an extra burden for trekkers. Clarifying the dispute, Narayan Sapkota stated “TIMS is a computerized database, which can be useful for the trekkers' safety and security. This is important in order to carry out search and rescue operations for trekkers in case of natural calamities and other accidents as all important details regarding trekkers and trekking routes are maintained in a computer with database management system. Moreover, this will also help control unauthorized trekking operations.

Ultimately, the income from TIMS will be used for better management of sustainable mountain tourism development in Nepal”.

13.6 Conclusions and recommendations

Pokhara is a transit point for the tourists intending to go to Annapurna region. That is why, tourists first arrive Pokhara and then proceed to Annapurna area. Those who have planned only to visit Pokhara, are also found to be fascinated to visit Annapurna area too as they hear and see about it. So, the Annapurna region and Pokhara are interconnected and inseparable from touristic point of view. Without Pokhara, Annapurna is inaccessible and without Annapurna Pokhara is incomplete and imperfect. Keeping this in mind, ACAP has played effervescent catalytic role by bridging these two distinct tourism destinations together. However, a few things are lacking. As recommended by the experts, ACAP should not follow its orthodox management system. An innovation must be brought out to achieve its goal- “Uplift local economy through tourism”.

Based on the interviews and discussions made with the experts, locals and other related tourism entrepreneurs, the following activities are recommended for National Trust for Nature Conservation and Annapurna Conservation Area Project to carry out for the better management of tourism in Annapurna Conservation Area;

- a) Prepare a comprehensive tourism master plan incorporating other plans such as ACA management plan, CAMC operational plan in line with the DDC’s tourism master plan. Design and implement activities accordingly.
- b) Develop alternative trekking routes as well as side trip trails from the major settlements, eco parks along with proper trail signs and information boards and adequate promotional activities.
- c) Study and develop religious tourism, village tourism, community-based tourism, agriculture-based tourism and wildlife-based tourism linking with biodiversity conservation.
- d) Provide various types of skill development training to local youths, women, poor and disadvantaged and unprivileged ones, and provide financial support to establish tourism-related micro-enterprises.

- e) Diversify tourism product and services by exploring potential new tourism services which are yet to be harnessed: rock climbing, rafting, kayaking, canyoning, nature based/wildlife tourism, bungee jumping etc.
- f) Carry out research periodically to assess environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism and mitigation measures in addition to visitor's perception, demand and recommendations for further improvement.
- g) Coordinate with NTB, TAAN and other tourism stakeholders to develop and promote alternative trekking routes and day hike/ short trek destinations. Influence NTB and TAAN to utilize their revenue from TIMS in alternative trekking route development and improvement in the area.
- h) Provide nature (wildlife/bird watching) and cultural guide training to local youths so to seek economic benefit from tourism and such skill can be linked with wildlife conservation that could reduce human wildlife conflict. Train and make aware tourism (hotel/lodge/restaurant/jeep/bus) entrepreneurs in order to enhance their quality services and facilities.
- i) Develop appropriate waste management system and educate local community. Explore better option for recycling and transportation of non-biodegradable waste in view of road access.
- j) Strengthen and encourage local tourism institution to face and mitigate tourism related to new challenges. Accomplish follow up/monitoring of activities efficiently.
- k) Organize workshops and seminars on yearly or half-yearly basis to evaluate the programs implemented in the field and monitor their efficacy.
- l) Promote tourism products through internet by developing websites, producing documentaries, publishing books, magazines, etc.
- m) Ban plastic, bottles and bags as they are the means of environmental contamination, especially in very sensitive areas such as Tilicho Lake, Thorong Phedi, Damodar Kunda, Mardi Himal, Nar Phoo etc.

- n) Design and execute grass-roots oriented programs so the villagers who are deprived of the tourism income will be benefitted equally.
- o) Think about restructuring of entry fee. If certain percentage of amount is given to the government, ACAP will have better support from the government bodies.

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About this Book

Tourism, as a leading industry and social force of the 21st century, has drawn growing inspiration and hope for achieving peace and progress. Tourism in Pokhara, the second most popular tourist destination in Nepal, is no exception. In this context, this book is focused on the various thematic issues (e.g. natural attractions, cultural heritage, history, planning and management, economic impacts, socio-cultural issues of tourism, environment and tourism interface, tourism events and services, challenges of Fewa lake, tourism for rural and urban integration, responsible tourism practices relating codes of conduct, role of ACAP, perspectives of tourists, future potential of tourism, etc.) and the trends of tourism with an emphasis for the balanced development of both volume (number) and value (quality) of tourism in Pokhara. This book is first of its kind with conceptual, theoretical and empirical observations and some pertinent case studies. It is an important resource for tourism practitioners, researchers, students, and policy makers for exploring multiplicity of tourism in Pokhara and its potential relationship with peace and prosperity.



Pokhara Tourism Council



NCCR North-South



Nepal Center for Contemporary Research