

# **Adventure Tourism in Nepal: Unveiling Potentialities in Pokhara**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Sabitri Kumari Sharma, affirm that this research is entirely my creation, and I have not previously submitted it to any educational institution for an M.Phil. degree. Furthermore, I have appropriately cited all the literature and sources utilized in this study, which fully adheres to the academic integrity guidelines of Tribhuvan University.

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**Sabitri Kumari Sharma**

Date: 21 March 2025

## **LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

I clarify that this thesis entitled “Adventure Tourism in Nepal: Unveiling Potentialities in Pokhara” was prepared by Mrs. Sabitri Kumari Sharma under my guidance, I hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the evaluation committee of Geography, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MPhil in Geography.

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**Prof. Dr. Kanhaiya Sapkota**

## **APPROVAL LETTER**

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the potential of adventure tourism in Nepal, with a focus on Pokhara, a prominent hub for adventure activities. By exploring the opportunities and challenges faced by the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the landscape. The qualitative research methodology is grounded in the interpretative paradigm philosophy and the theory of constructivism, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of each issue under study.

The study examines hard adventure tourism in Pokhara, exploring its complexities and appeal. Data collection employed a multifaceted approach, which included open-ended questionnaires and surveys among residents, focus group discussions with key stakeholders in adventure tourism, face-to-face individual interviews with entrepreneurs, and consultations with tourism experts via email and phone. This diverse range of research tools and techniques enabled the gathering of rich and varied data.

The collected data were transcribed and presented a bottom-up view, followed by a narrative analysis to uncover themes and meanings derived from the data. The findings reveal significant opportunities for growth in the hard adventure tourism sector in Pokhara, driven by its unique natural attractions and growing interest from both domestic and international tourists. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including infrastructure deficiencies, environmental concerns, and the need for skilled human resources.

Furthermore, this research explores the policies and strategies devised and implemented by local governments and entrepreneurs to promote sustainable development in adventure tourism. It assesses the effectiveness and impact of these initiatives on the sector's growth. The study concludes with recommendations for strengthening the sustainable development of adventure tourism in Pokhara, highlighting the importance of collaboration among government agencies, local communities, and entrepreneurs.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ACAP	:	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
AT	:	Adventure Tourism
ATDI	:	Adventure Tourism Development Index
ATTA	:	The Adventure Travel Trade Association
ATV	:	Average Transaction Value
EGA	:	Embroidery and Garment Association
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	:	Information and Communications Technology
NAA	:	Nepal Air Sport Association
NMA	:	Nepal Mountaineering Association
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NTB	:	Nepal Tourism Board
NTVA	:	Nepal Tourist Vehicle Association
PATA	:	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PTB	:	Pokhara Tourism Board
PTC	:	Pokhara Tourism Council
SATSA	:	Southern Africa Tourism Services Association
TAAN	:	Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	:	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTO	:	World Trade Organization

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Adventure tourism has emerged as a dynamic and rapidly expanding segment of the global tourism industry, catering to travelers who seek thrilling and immersive experiences in exotic and often remote destinations. This form of tourism has gained prominence for its ability to offer individuals opportunities to engage in activities that challenge their physical and mental capacities, fostering psychological states such as “flow.” The concept of flow, introduced by Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1990), describes a state of deep concentration and a sense of control over demanding yet personally chosen tasks. Adventure tourism is further distinguished by its emphasis on ambiance, aesthetics, and atmosphere, with natural landscapes often serving as the stage for adrenaline-inducing activities (Buckley, 2006). Adventure activities are typically categorized into three types: hard, soft, and nature-based, each varying in levels of risk, physical exertion, and skill requirements (Buckley, 2006; 2010; Rantala et al., 2016). These activities are facilitated by adventure tour operators who play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of risk and adventure to align with customer expectations. By carefully curating experiences that meet the thrill-seeking desires of participants, these operators contribute significantly to the sector’s growth (Nordstrom, 2022).

Existing research on adventure tourism has primarily focused on three key areas. First, studies have examined the *physical risks* associated with adventure activities, including the potential for injury or harm to participants (Bentley & Page, 2008). Second, the *environmental impacts* of adventure tourism have been explored within the broader context of ecotourism, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices to minimize negative effects on natural ecosystems. Third, researchers have investigated the *motivations* of driving adventure tourists, with a particular focus on “risk/thrill” as a central factor influencing participation in such activities (Buckley et al., Weaver, & Pickering, 2001). While these studies have provided valuable insights into the sector’s dynamics, they often adopt a generalized perspective on risk and thrill. This leaves gaps in understanding specific personality traits or profiles of individuals who actively seek out such experiences (Cater, 2006; Zuckerman, 1979).

Moreover, challenges related to guide training, safety regulation enforcement, marketing strategies, and environmental management remain underexplored, particularly in developing regions where adventure tourism is still evolving (McKay, 2013). These gaps highlight the need for further research to address the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of adventure tourism on host communities. Additionally, there is a pressing need to examine how trained professionals can promote sustainable practices within this sector (Echtner, 1995).

Nepal stands out as one of the most sought-after destinations for adventure tourism in the Asia-Pacific region due to its diverse topography and iconic Himalayan landscapes (Nepal, 2016). The country offers an extensive range of adventure activities such as trekking in the Annapurna and Everest regions, mountaineering expeditions to peaks like Mount Everest and Ama Dablam, white-water rafting along rivers like Trishuli and Bhoté Koshi, paragliding over Pokhara Valley, and jungle safaris in Chitwan National Park. In recent years, emerging activities such as skiing in Manang Valley, mountain biking on rugged trails across the country's hillsides, canyoning in waterfalls like Jalbire Canyon near Chitwan National Park, and bungee jumping from high suspension bridges have further enhanced Nepal's appeal as a premier destination for adventure enthusiasts (Wengel, 2020). Among adventure tourism hubs of the country, Pokhara occupies a unique position due to its unparalleled combination of natural beauty, including Phewa Lake and panoramic views of the Annapurna Mountain range, and its diverse array of outdoor activities. Pokhara serves as a gateway to some of the most famous trekking routes and offers experiences such as paragliding from Sarangkot Hill and zip-lining through lush forests. Despite its immense potential as an adventure tourism destination, Pokhara faces significant challenges that hinder sustainable growth. Issues such as seasonality in tourist arrivals and environmental vulnerabilities including deforestation and pollution pose serious threats to the long-term viability of its adventure tourism offerings (Phuyal et al., 2024).

This study aims to explore the current potential of adventure tourism in Pokhara by analyzing both opportunities and challenges within this sector. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate government policies governing adventure tourism in Nepal and assess their effectiveness in promoting sustainable growth. By addressing gaps in existing

literature, particularly those concerning developing regions, the findings aim to contribute to broader academic discussions on adventure tourism while offering practical insights for policymakers and stakeholders. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of sustainable practices in ensuring the long-term viability of adventure tourism while minimizing its social, economic, and environmental impacts on host communities. Therefore, understanding the role of Pokhara within the country's broader adventure tourism landscape is critical for fostering responsible development that benefits both local communities and tourists. This study endeavors to provide actionable recommendations that support sustainable practices while enhancing the position of Pokhara as a leading global destination for adventure tourism.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Adventure tourism has become a significant driver of economic growth and cultural exchange in mountainous regions, particularly in countries like Nepal, which is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and diverse adventure activities (Nepal, 2016; Wengel, 2019). It has been firmly established as a significant contributor to the national economy, leveraging its unique topography and cultural heritage to attract millions of tourists annually (Nepal, 2011; Wengel, 2019). The sector is well-known for activities such as trekking, mountaineering, and whitewater rafting, which not only generate substantial revenue but also create employment opportunities in various related sectors (Genç, 2021; Wengel, 2020). The growth of this industry has been supported by a robust infrastructure and a rich tradition of adventure activities that date back several decades (Ale, 2019). However, the established benefits of adventure tourism in Nepal, there are significant contradictions regarding its sustainability and environmental impact. Recent studies have highlighted the adverse effects of increased tourist activity on fragile ecosystems, particularly in mountainous regions (Genç, 2021). Issues such as trail degradation, waste management problems, and the overall ecological footprint of adventure tourism have raised concerns among scholars and policymakers alike. Moreover, while the government has implemented policies aimed at mitigating these impacts, their effectiveness remains questionable due to inadequate enforcement and a lack of awareness among tourists about their environmental responsibilities (Genç, 2021; Wengel, 2020).

Given the established economic benefits juxtaposed with the environmental challenges posed by adventure tourism in Nepal, there is a compelling need for further exploration into how these dynamics interact. Understanding the motivations behind tourist behavior and their impact on local ecosystems could provide insights into developing more sustainable practices within the industry. Additionally, examining emerging adventure tourism activities such as skiing and mountain biking could reveal new opportunities for diversifying adventure tourism offerings while addressing existing environmental concerns (Wengel, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the current state of adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal, focusing on its potential for sustainable growth amidst existing challenges. By analyzing government policies and their effectiveness in promoting environmentally responsible practices within the sector, this research seeks to fill gaps in the literature regarding the socio-economic and environmental impacts of adventure tourism on host communities. Ultimately, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how adventure tourism can be developed sustainably in mountainous regions like Nepal while minimizing negative impacts on local environments and communities.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the perceived opportunities for adventure growth in tourism, and how do these perceptions vary among different stakeholders?
2. What challenges do stakeholders identify in developing sustainable adventure tourism, and how do they perceive state policies to impact these challenges?
3. How do stakeholders perceive the role of community engagement in enhancing the sustainability of adventure tourism?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this research is to explore the lived experiences and subjective meanings that stakeholders (e.g., tourists, local communities, policymakers, and tour operators) ascribe to opportunities, challenges, and community engagement in adventure tourism development in Pokhara, Nepal, using an interpretive lens to understand how these perceptions shape sustainable practices. Similarly, the specific objectives are:

1. To investigate stakeholder and adventure tourist perceptions of growth opportunities in adventure tourism through socio-cultural constructs and multidimensional (economic, environmental) perspectives in Pokhara.
2. To identify critical impediments to sustainable adventure tourism development in Pokhara from stakeholder and entrepreneurial viewpoints.
3. To evaluate stakeholder and tourist interpretations of policy frameworks as sustainability mechanisms within triple-bottom-line (socio-cultural, economic, environmental) contexts.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study tries to explore the relationships between adventure tourism and host communities living in Pokhara, Nepal. The findings of the study will be valuable for the following concerns:

Adventure tourism will be more popular in the destination as many readers will go through the dissertation. The government, Visitors, and entrepreneurs will be aware of the recent status of adventure tourism in Nepal. Opportunities and potential threats, and challenges in adventurous tourism will be known. Administration regulatory bodies that determine the quality of adventure tourism may find the gap exists to be corrected and implemented. The government will prepare new plans and policies to meet the specific requirements of adventure tourists. Similarly, Locals will cope with and pacify the challenges to promote it. Future researchers will be concerned with the topic and may expand their knowledge as appropriate information and use the study for their valuable reference.

### **1.6 Delimitations of the Study**

This study is delimited to focus specifically on adventure tourism within Nepal, with a particular emphasis on Pokhara. It will not encompass other cultural or historical tourism destinations beyond those relevant to adventure tourism activities. The research aims to explore the potential, opportunities, and challenges of adventure tourism in Pokhara, examining plans, policies, and strategies pertinent to enhancing the sector within a defined timeframe to ensure relevance and currency of findings.

Given its qualitative nature, the study will employ a delimited sample size, utilizing focus group discussions, and face-to-face in-depth interviews to gather data effectively. These delimitations ensure that the research remains focused, manageable, and capable of providing meaningful insights into the targeted aspects of adventure tourism in Pokhara.

## **1.7 Chapter Organization**

The thesis is organized into eight chapters, systematically exploring various dimensions of adventure tourism in Pokhara and Nepal. Chapter I introduces the research by outlining its background, objectives, and significance, while defining key terms and tracing the historical development of adventure tourism. Chapter II consolidates existing scholarship through a structured literature review divided into theoretical, empirical, and policy analyses, culminating in a conceptual framework guiding the study. Chapter III details the qualitative research methodology, including philosophical underpinnings and data collection tools. Subsequent chapters focus on distinct thematic areas: Chapter IV examines destination branding as a strategy for sustainable tourism growth, Chapter V identifies opportunities for adventure tourism in Pokhara, and Chapter VI analyzes environmental, infrastructural, and regulatory challenges. Chapter VII evaluates existing policies and proposes recommendations for enhancing governance and sustainability. Finally, Chapter VIII synthesizes key findings, conclusions, and future research directions, offering actionable insights for stakeholders. Collectively, the chapters progress from foundational concepts to critical analysis and policy implications, providing a comprehensive examination of adventure tourism's potential and challenges in the region.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Historical Context of Adventure Tourism: A Global Perspective

This chapter aims to review the historical concepts, theories, methods, philosophies, and policies associated with adventure tourism by examining global and national studies from various perspectives. This new paradigm, termed “co-evolutionary development” by Norgaard (1984), emphasizes minimizing the negative impacts of economic activities on local cultures and environments. Lea (1988) also highlights the intricate interplay between economic, political, environmental, and social elements, which distinguishes tourism from other international trade activities. Various tourism models, including ecotourism (Brockelman, 1988), ethnic tourism (McKean, 1989), and adventure tourism (Cutler, 1988), further illustrate the field’s diversity (Zurick, 1992).

The chapter narrows its focus to the development of specific adventure tourism activities. In 1842, Lieutenant John Fremont of the U.S. Army first documented rafting during his expedition on the Platte River. The first commercial rafting operation, Kon Tiki, was established in New Zealand in 1974. A major milestone in bungee jumping occurred in 1979 when David Kirke and Simon Keeling made the first modern bungee jump from the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, leading to the first commercial bungee jump operation in Queenstown, New Zealand, in 1988. Similarly, NZONE Skydiving, founded in 1990 by AJ Hackett and Henry Van Asch, expanded adventure tourism in New Zealand (Downs & Bridges, 2014).

Adventure tourism can also trace its roots to historical figures like Marco Polo and Captain James Cook, whose lengthy sea voyages in the Middle Ages were aimed at discovering new trade routes but also offered opportunities for thrilling adventures (Aronson & Glenn, 2007). Throughout history, people have traveled for trade, conquest, pilgrimage, curiosity, knowledge, and pleasure. Towner and Wall (1991), as cited by Govindasamy (2012), observed that travel was once restricted to the upper class due to their financial means. The Middle Ages also saw the rise of religious tourism, inspired by works like Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. Unfortunately, global

conflicts like the world wars led to economic depressions, prompting people to travel to less-developed countries for affordable goods and scenic beauty.

The post-war period saw the invention of outdoor recreational equipment such as camping gear, skis, and white-water rafts. Initially expensive, this equipment became more affordable in the 1970s with the use of materials like aluminum, rubber, and plastics, which democratized outdoor tourism activities (Bentley et al., 2001). Over time, tourism expanded into various forms, including domestic, international, leisure, business, mass, nature, cultural, eco, and adventure tourism, among others.

Tourism's role in third-world countries has long been debated, as it is increasingly seen as part of a shift from purely growth-oriented economic development to more sustainable forms of development (Sharma & Thapar, 2016). Adventure tourism has evolved into a broad range of commercial outdoor activities that range from low-intensity hikes to high-cost, gear-intensive tours (Buckley, 2006). Buckley describes three phases of adventure tourism:

Earliest Phase: Adventurous travelers explored with minimal support and infrastructure.

Second Phase: The rise of mass tourism, where many tourists lacked a strong adventurous inclination.

Third Phase: The current era is marked by commercial adventure tourism fueled by the availability of equipment and packaged tours.

Significant milestones in the mid-1800s included the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865 and the descent of the Colorado River in 1869. Organizations like the National Geographic Society (1888) and the Explorers Club (1904) promoted scientific exploration, which indirectly fostered adventure tourism (Swarbrooke, 2003). The 1950s brought attention to first ascents, such as Maurice Herzog's climb of Annapurna and the historic Everest climb by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. These accomplishments inspired a generation of adventurers.

In the U.S., the commercialization of guiding services began in the 1920s with companies like Hatch River Explorations and later companies such as Abercrombie &

Kent (1962) and OARS (1969) (Buckley, 2011). The commercial expansion of rafting, bungee jumping, and skydiving in New Zealand, pioneered by figures like AJ Hackett, further highlights the rapid development of adventure tourism.

Today, adventure tourism is a growing sector that offers new and diverse experiences. Many small, owner-operated businesses provide professional guiding services, enriching the local economy and offering opportunities in rural areas (Mykletun, 2018). For instance, Queenstown, New Zealand, became a hub for adventure tourism. Thanks to Sir Henry Wigley's establishment of the Coronet Peak ski area in 1947 and the launch of jet boating in 1960.

Academic research in the 1990s and beyond has increasingly focused on adventure tourism, which blends outdoor recreation with elements of risk and personal challenge. Adventure tourism has become an outdoor leisure activity that involves traveling to exotic, remote, or wilderness destinations (Beard et al., 2012). According to Hall and Weiler (1992), adventure tourism includes commercialized outdoor activities that occur away from familiar environments and involve risk, with outcomes influenced by both the participant and the tour operator. As Swarbrooke (2003) notes, adventure tourism is driven by the desire for uncertainty, risk, and challenge, offering participants a break from routine and the opportunity for personal growth.

## **2.2 Geography and Adventure Tourism**

The examination of tourism geography encompasses various perspectives, including environmental, regional, spatial, and evolutionary aspects. Numerous geographical approaches are associated with physical and environmental studies, which are also known as applied geography (Hall, 2013). Tourism Geography has a long history as an academic discipline, with its origins dating back to the 1920s in the United States. According to Butler (2004), one of the earliest scholarly articles on tourism in the United States was published in 1933 in a reputable geographical journal. British geographers recognized the importance of studying recreation and tourism as a significant academic field. In comparison, the Association of American Geographers and the Canadian Association of Geographers have been more actively engaged, with their group being established in the 1970s. Since then, there has been a continuous development of research in the field of tourism, with a consistent thread of scholarly

work leading up to the present time (Butler, 2004). Geographers started exploring tourism and recreation in the late 1980s and 1990s, as these fields became crucial in responding to the impacts of global economic restructuring and the growing concern for environmental conservation (Hall & Lew, 1998). Adventure tourism possesses a distinct geographical dimension that forms an essential aspect of the industry. The International Geographical Union Study Group on the Geography of Sustainable Tourism focuses on the relationship between geography and sustainable tourism, highlighting how the geographic characteristics of a destination play a crucial role in influencing tourists' decisions (Song et al., 2000). This interaction between the physical environment and tourism emphasizes the importance of sustainability in managing natural landscapes and preserving their appeal for future travelers. Heli Skiing, white water rafting, surfing, etc., represent internationally renowned locations that exemplify worldwide geographical diversity (Buckley, 2006). The geographical attributes of a destination play a pivotal role in influencing the caliber of adventure tourism experiences it offers. Buckley (2010) points out that, in addition to factors like skill, excitement, risk, and remoteness, adventure tourism is uniquely defined by its geographical context. This highlights the significant role that the physical landscape plays in distinguishing adventure tourism from other forms of travel. He emphasizes that tour operators, magazine editors, and other stakeholders are aware of the geographical characteristics that shape various adventure tourism activities.

The geography, nature, and climate of a destination are essential considerations for tourists. Scenic beauty, natural attractions like mountains, beaches, lakes, and forests, as well as pleasant weather, all contribute to the allure of a place. For example, Nepal's Himalayan views, diverse landscapes, and temperate climate make it an attractive destination for trekkers and adventure enthusiasts (Nepal, 2003).

The combination of good geography, natural beauty, and a favorable climate is crucial for any tourism destination. These attributes not only attract tourists but also contribute to the overall tourist experience and satisfaction. A destination with stunning landscapes and enjoyable weather is more likely to leave a positive impression on visitors, leading to potential repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Becken & Hay, 2007).

The geographic characteristics and nature of a destination are closely linked to the concept of sustainable tourism. The relationship between humans and the environment has been a consistent topic in geographical research. However, this theme may have faced challenges lately due to the introduction of new analytical approaches and a growing focus on specialized areas (Douglas et al., 1996). Ensuring responsible management of natural resources, preservation of ecosystems, and mitigating the impact of tourism on the environment becomes imperative when a destination relies heavily on its natural assets. One of the most thriving adventure destinations is Queenstown in New Zealand, which proudly labels itself as the ‘adventure capital of the world with a unique geographic location (Cater, 2006).

A destination’s attractiveness is significantly influenced by its natural beauty, climate, and geography, alongside the perceptions and recommendations shared by social networks and media. To thrive in the competitive tourism industry, destinations need to consider both these aspects and work towards sustainable practices that preserve and enhance their unique geographic characteristics.

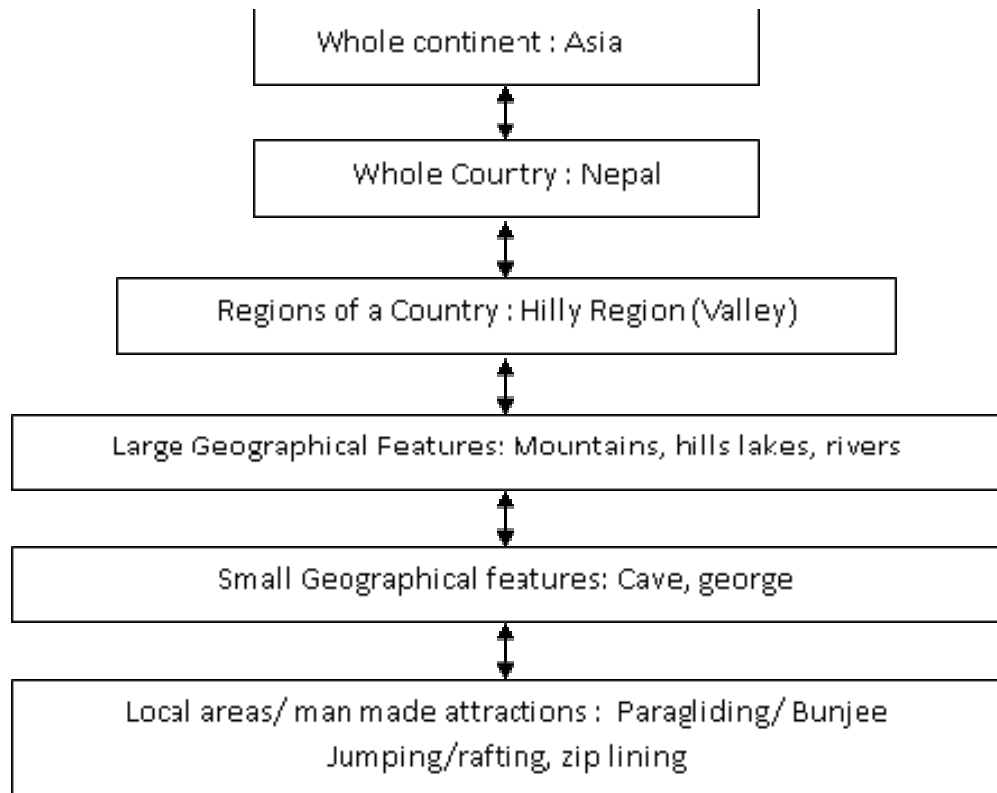
Geographers’ research contributes to the field of tourism in several valuable ways. Firstly, it helps in identifying and defining tourism regions, which aids in organizing the tourism sector and related associations effectively. Secondly, geographical research provides a foundation for estimating the number of visitors and their expenditures. Thirdly, it assists in studying the physical characteristics of tourism destinations, which is crucial for planning and assessing their impact. Moreover, geographers’ research helps developers understand the interconnected geographical features of potential tourism sites, which is essential for decision-making. Finally, a geographical perspective in tourism research emphasizes the significance of space and how travelers perceive and interact with it (Smith, 1995).

The geography-related activities are varied, which range from aquatic (Rafting, /Kayaking, Boating, Fishing, Swimming, Cannoning, ware Running, etc.), terrestrial (trekking, mountaineering, pony trekking, Skydiving, rock climbing, bird watching) and aerial (Bungee Jumping, Hot Air Ballooning, Paragliding, Ultra Light Aircraft, Mountain Flight, Cable Car, etc.) sphere. All these activities are full of adventures. Over the past decade, adventure tourism has been consolidated as a distinctive, albeit complex, field of academic endeavor (Swarbrooke et al., 2003, Buckley, 2010). Ponte

(2020) emphasizes that in adventure tourism, the geographical location is of paramount importance to tourists, as it forms the core of their experience by offering unique characteristics and prominent attractions. For example, iconic destinations such as Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania or the Great Barrier Reef in Australia have a pivotal role in shaping the adventure tourism encounter (Swarbrooke et al., 2003; Carr & Mendelsohn, 2003; McKay, 2013). Therefore, according to Buckley (2010), geography emerges as a significant distinguishing factor in adventure tourism, alongside elements such as skill, excitement, risk, and remoteness.

Geography plays a fundamental and crucial role in shaping the adventure tourism product, constituting a central aspect of the industry. Swarbrooke (2003) and Buckley (2010) emphasize that adventure tourism is closely linked to specific regions worldwide, each associated with types of adventure experiences. These researchers discuss the concept of a geographical hierarchy within adventure tourism, indicating how different locations hold varying significance and appeal for adventure seekers. It means more and unique Geographical features play a vital role in competitive destinations. In the context of Nepal, the Nepalese government has created multiple heritage trails in different geographical regions of the country. These trails offer the opportunity to embark on treks while also gaining insights into the geography and cultures of the locality (Pandey et al., 1995). Here, the primary focus of the trip is centered on the landscape, scenery, ecosystems, local culture, and historical richness of the region. Nepal holds paramount importance as a destination, offering travelers an exceptional and distinctive experience. Its unique and remote locations, characterized by their exotic nature, provide a sense of novelty, stimulation, exploration, and adventure for tourists. Similarly, Pokhara is a geographical boon, attracting thousands of tourists every year with its stunning surroundings, hills, lakes, caves, and beautiful scenic views, which serve as its geographical amenities (NTB, 2020).

**Figure 1 Geographical Location of Adventure Activities**



Source: Swarbrook et al (2003)

Figure 1 proves that Geographical factors, such as pulling or pushing factors (Dann, 1977; Swarbrook, 2003), play a crucial role in shaping adventure tourism by influencing accessibility, climate conditions, resource availability, infrastructure needs, and local community characteristics. The unique geographical features of a destination not only determine the feasibility of adventure activities but also enhance its appeal, making location a key element in tourism development (Stephens, 2009)

### **2.3 Conceptual Review of Hard and Soft Adventure Tourism**

The lines between nature tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, adventure travel, commercial expeditions, outdoor recreation, and outdoor education are not clearly defined. Adventure tourism primarily focuses on outdoor activities in natural environments, often involving specialized equipment, and offering excitement to the participants as commercial tourism. Ralph, Beames, and colleagues 2019 define adventure tourism as premeditated and demanding experiences that involve a certain level of unpredictability and necessitate specific physical and mental skills to

participate. Boudreau et al. (2020) provide a more precise description of adventure activities as self-motivated, nature-oriented physical endeavors that produce intensified bodily sensations and necessitate the acquisition of skills to handle both subjective and objective hazards. According to ATTA (2020), adventure tourism is a swiftly developing part of the tourism industry on a global scale, offering distinctive experiences to tourists and producing novel prospects for countries involved in this sector. Buckley (2006) identifies various adventure travel activities that are widely acknowledged, including climbing, trekking, abseiling, sea kayaking, white water kayaking, skiing, snowboarding, caving, ballooning, skydiving, mountain biking, diving, surfing, sailboarding, snowmobiling, off-road driving, heli-skiing, safaris, rafting, and paragliding, among others. In the same context, Bhattacharya (2013) distinguishes between soft and hard adventure tourism, noting that in soft adventure tourism, there may be a perception of risk, but the actual physical risk is comparatively lower, while in hard adventure tourism, both the perceived and actual physical risks are high. In this sense, UNWTO (2014) suggests that the simplest method of distinguishing between hard and soft adventure trips is by considering their primary activity. Beames and colleagues (2019), argue that examining adventure practices using a single perspective is highly challenging, as it leads to a reductionist, overly simplified, and limited academic approach. In other words, they believe that analyzing adventure practices through only one lens at a time fails to capture the complexity and richness of the subject matter. According to Sano Babu Sunuwar, who was named National Geographic Adventurer of the Year in 2010 and is also the founder of the first paragliding school in Southeast Asia, adventure serves as a means of inspiring and motivating individuals to venture beyond their perceived limitations and explore new frontiers.

Adventure tourism activities can also be classified along a risk continuum of “soft” and “hard” adventure (Lipscombe, 1995). Managing these two types of experiences can be quite distinct.

### **2.3.1 Hard Adventure Tourism**

Hard adventure tourism includes activities that demand physical effort, carry inherent risks, and require a heightened level of skill and preparation. Individuals participating in this category typically seek thrilling adrenaline-fueled experiences and are willing

to engage in pursuits that may pose potential dangers to their safety. Activities such as river rafting, skiing, snowboarding, kayaking, bungee jumping, mountaineering, scuba diving, skydiving, ice climbing, horseback riding, and surfing all fall within the scope of hard adventure tourism (Huddart & Stott, 2020). These activities require the expertise of skilled professionals and a high level of advanced skills.

Hardcore adventurers are typically prepared to journey to geographically isolated and culturally distant areas to gain encounters that arise from confronting genuine hazards and perils. These dangers are tangible rather than imagined and require effective management through the expertise and familiarity of both participants and tour guides (Mallett, 1992; Peterson, 1989; Rubin, 1989). Effectively overcoming the trials and managing the unpredictabilities and risks inherent in such circumstances enhances participants' sensations of self-assurance and capability.

### **2.3.2 Soft Adventure Tourism**

Soft adventure tourism targets individuals and families seeking adventure experiences without a high level of risk or strenuous physical activity. These activities generally maintain a high level of safety and comfort (Patterson & Pan, 2002).

Soft adventurers, on the other hand, are usually relative novices at the activity and setting and are looking for a carefully planned level of novel activity that provides excitement and emotional release (Lipscombe, 1995). Soft adventure experiences are generally passive and rarely involve physical discomfort (Butler & Waldbrook, 1991). Activities such as bushwalking, hiking, horse riding, canoeing, and snorkeling are examples of soft adventure (Buckley, 2007; Lawrey, 2010). The enjoyment for soft adventurers comes from overcoming the perceived risks and dangers that are created through the leadership of the tour operator and a spiritual association with the natural environment. Lipscombe argued that soft adventure tourism involves interrupting the routines of daily living with episodes of uncertainty, insecurity, newness, novelty, and perceived risk.

Packaging is an important component of soft adventure tourism, with the package normally including transportation, accommodation, equipment, activities, permits, entrance fees, catering, and entertainment (Christiansen, 1990).

- (a) By vehicle -Hard
- (b) Non-vehicularized - Soft

Source: Swarbrooke et al. (2003).

In a similar context, Table 1 clarifies the categories of adventure tourism (ATTA, 2013; Ponte, 2020).

**Table 1 : ATTA’s Adventure Activities Categorization**

<b>Hard Adventure Activities</b>	<b>Soft Adventure Activities</b>	<b>Non-adventure activities</b>
Archaeological Expedition	Backpacking	Attending Local Festivals/Fairs
Caving	Birdwatching	Cruise
Climbing (Mountain, Rock, Ice)	Camping	Cultural Activities
Heli-Skiing	Canoeing	Educational Programme
Kite Surfing	Cycling, Eco-Tourism	Learning a New Language
Motorized Sports	Environmentally Sustainable Activities	Visiting Friends/Family
Paragliding	Fishing/Fly-Fishing	Visiting Historical Sites
Rafting	Orienteering	
Scuba Diving	Research Expeditions	
	Safaris, Stand-Up Paddle Boarding	
Skiing/Snowboarding	Sandboarding	
Trekking	Sailing, Snorkeling	

Source: ATTA (2013) adopted from Ponte (2020)

## 2.4 Adventure Tourism in the World

People all over the world are increasingly choosing adventure tours for their outdoor experiences because it's easier and more convenient than ever before. It's changing the way we approach outdoor activities. Adventure tourism has changed over the years. In the past, if people wanted to do outdoor activities, they would often buy their gear and learn how to do it slowly, either as pilgrims, explorers, or colonizers. This made them specialize in one activity. But as equipment has gotten fancier and more expensive, it's become more affordable to rent it as part of a commercial adventure tour (Buckley, 2003). In recent years, there has been a significant and interdependent relationship formed among adventure tour companies, equipment and clothing makers, and the entertainment sector (Buckley, 2003). Tourism has emerged as a key global economic sector, substantially contributing to GDP and exports, with millions of international travelers each year. It is a vital source of employment, supporting millions of jobs worldwide, and is projected to maintain steady growth, surpassing overall economic expansion. Many destinations are increasingly investing in tourism due to its benefits in job creation, business opportunities, export earnings, tax revenue, and infrastructure development (WTO, 2016). While tourism is poised to become a leading global industry, it faces challenges like rapid growth, competition, and changing consumer preferences (James, 2007).

Measuring the adventure tourism market is a challenging task for several reasons. Firstly, there is no universally accepted definition of adventure tourism. Secondly, it often intersects with various other segments within the tourism industry, as noted by Buckley in 2010. These challenges, along with the growth of competing destinations, convention facilities, funding accountability, and security concerns, offer both opportunities and hurdles for destinations and businesses (Lundqvist, 2016).

In the context of worldwide adventure tourism as an opportunity, it's worth noting that thrilling high-ground adventures like paragliding and zip-lining are not just about the experiences themselves. They also serve as a valuable source of captivating imagery and iconic spots. These compelling visuals, often inspired by activities like rock climbing, play a crucial role in advertising a wide range of everyday consumer products across the globe, from mobile phones to chewing tobacco.

Furthermore, manufacturers of expensive recreational equipment, especially those producing motorized gear like snowmobiles, jet skis, ATVs, and SUVs, recognize the power of adventure imagery. They leverage these visuals to maintain strong sales worldwide. This synergy between adventure tourism and various industries underscores the economic potential and marketing opportunities that adventure tourism can offer on a global scale. Tourism has become a prominent and thriving sector globally and is even regarded as a top industry by some.

In 2010, the global adventure tourism market was estimated to be worth over US\$614 billion. Remarkably, within just three years, by 2013, this market had experienced a dramatic surge, tripling in value to exceed US\$1,843 billion. This rapid growth was largely fueled by a substantial increase in the number of adventure tourists worldwide, as well as a notable rise in per-trip spending. By 2019, a significant portion—approximately 69%—of all adventure tourists originated from Europe, North America, and South America. However, industry experts anticipate that this demographic distribution will evolve over time, with emerging markets in Asia and Africa playing a more prominent role in the future. Data from 2014 reveals that women accounted for 53% of global adventure travelers, while men made up the remaining 47%. These travelers were generally well-educated; around 37% had completed four or more years of higher education, and over 11% possessed professional qualifications. Their average annual income was about US\$45,500, indicating a financially stable consumer base (Huddart & Stott, 2020). In more recent years, the adventure tourism industry has continued to expand, generating US\$282 billion in revenue in 2021 and surging to approximately US\$483.3 billion by 2023 (ATTA, 2023). In the context of Nepal, tourism represents a vital component of the national service sector. It not only contributes significantly to economic development but also plays an essential role in safeguarding the country's rich cultural heritage, supporting local employment, and promoting a sense of national unity and pride across diverse communities.

Adventure tourism in Nepal has become a major contributor to foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, and rural development. The country's unique topography, including the Himalayas, makes it a global hotspot for trekking, mountaineering, paragliding, and river rafting.

**Table 2 : Motivations for Adventure Tourists as Opportunities and Challenges**

<b>Adventure Activity</b>	<b>Motives</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Hiking	Relax mentally, get away, challenge yourself, feel close to nature, and sense of accomplishment	den Breejen (2007)
Mountaineering	Aesthetic & physical enjoyment of the mountain environment, educational, psychological, physiological, safety (use of guides), ease of organization, skills development, gaining experience, natural environment, availability of mountaineering opportunities, mountain conditions, supporting infrastructure	Carr (1997), Pomfret (2006; 2011)
Multiple activities like Caving, paragliding, bungee jumping, canoeing	Rush, fear, thrill, excitement, uncertain outcomes, danger & risk, the challenge, anticipated rewards, novelty, stimulation & excitement, escapism & separation, exploration & discovery, absorption & focus, contrasting emotions, boredom avoidance, sense of adventure, change of environment, knowledge, insight, learn about other people, places & cultures	Cater (2006a), Patterson & Pan (2007), Schneider and Vogt (2012); Swarbrooke et al. (2003), Patterson & Pan (2007), (2013), Pomfret (2016)
Skiing	Thrill, relaxation, social atmosphere, snow conditions, fun, excitement, achievement, challenge, safety, quality of accommodation, hills and trails, resort services, range of ski runs & terrain	Holden (1999), Klenosky et al., (1993), Richards (1996)
White-water rafting & kayaking	New experience, enjoyment, socializing, natural environment, flow, playfulness	Fluker and Turner (2000); Wu and Liang (2012)

Source: Pomfret and Bramwell (2016)

Table 2 explores differing perspectives on the role of risk in adventure, with some emphasizing its positive contribution to enjoyment and others focusing on alternative motivations such as fear, thrill, and the rush of peak experiences. The essence of the discussion revolves around the role of risk as a motivator in adventure activities. There are contradictory viewpoints on this matter. On one hand, some argue that risk,

when perceived as a controllable challenge, enhances the enjoyment of adventure. However, most people tend to focus on the negative aspect of risk, perceiving it as a dangerous and perilous component of adventure.

Some researchers and practitioners view risk as an essential component of adventure, while others disagree, considering it an insignificant motivational factor. Instead, alternative theories have emerged. Cater (2006) proposes that individuals engaging in commercial adventure activities are primarily seeking fear and excitement. Similarly, Carnicelli-Filho and colleagues (2010) highlight fear as an influential factor. Buckley (2012) suggests that the allure of adventure comes from the “rush,” a blend of thrill and flow that generates a unique peak experience. Later, Buckley (2015) extends this idea, suggesting that the excitement from adventure can become addictive. In summary, the discussion explores differing perspectives on the role of risk in adventure, with some emphasizing its positive contribution to enjoyment and others focusing on alternative motivations such as fear, thrill, and the rush of peak experiences.

## **2.5 Adventure Tourism in Nepal**

Nepal, a mountainous country in South Asia, is well known for its abundant opportunities in adventure tourism. The country’s diverse cultural heritage, historical landmarks, religious sites, and stunning landscapes attract tourists from around the world (NTB, 2016). Each region in Nepal offers unique handicrafts, lively festivals, traditional dances, music, and warm hospitality.

Nepal is a renowned pilgrimage site and popular tourist destination, home to significant religious landmarks such as Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, and Swayambhu Stupa, along with numerous Hindu temples (Grant, 2001; Jenner, 1999). With its varied landscapes including high lakes and majestic mountains, Nepal appeals to adventure enthusiasts seeking extraordinary experiences (Dongol, 2019; Ruhet, 2021). The Himalayan terrain offers mountain expeditions and trekking opportunities, featuring iconic peaks like Annapurna I, Dhaulagiri, and Manaslu, which are known for their challenging climbs. Additionally, Nepal offers diverse trekking experiences, such as the Three Ridges (Tritalcho) Trail and the Kali Gandaki Gorge, which is recognized as the world’s deepest gorge (Mishra, 2023).

Adventure tourism in Nepal includes activities such as whitewater rafting, paragliding, skydiving, kayaking, and jungle safaris (Wengel, 2019; Aryal, 2019). Emerging activities like skiing, mountain biking, canyoning, stand-up paddle boarding, zip-lining, and bungee jumping are gaining popularity (Wengel, 2020). Despite its focus on mountainous regions, Nepal's adventure tourism extends to lowlands with jungle safaris offering wildlife viewing opportunities. Skiing opportunities are available in the Himalayan region, while activities like paragliding, bungee jumping, and mountain biking are prominent in Pokhara (Mu & Nepal, 2016).

This study aims to identify the challenges and opportunities in adventure tourism, linking to strategies for its sustainable growth in Pokhara, Nepal. It examines the roles of both the government and private sectors in enhancing sustainability and shaping future initiatives in adventure tourism (Cater, 2013; Buckley, 2010). Table 3 shows that despite environmental risks, Nepal remains a captivating destination for adventure seekers.

**Table 3: A Brief Movement of Tourism in Nepal**

Year	Tourism Movement
1949	Maurice Herzog climbed Mt. Annapurna (8091m)
1953	Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary reached the summit of Mt. Everest
1950	All the mountains above eight thousand were climbed in the spree of mountaineering
1966	The first travel association was established
1972	The first tourism master plan was drafted
1978	The Ministry of Tourism was created
1990s	Tourism was regarded as a means of poverty alleviation and economic development
2001-2006	Worst tourism year
2006	The peace treaty was signed among political party
2007	The ½ million mark was crossed for the first time
2008-2009	Arrivals continued to grow despite the recession
2010	6 lakhs tourist arrival
2010	Overland Indian visitors
2011	47% growth after August 2010 (Nepal Tourism Year 1011)

Source: NTB, 2012.

In terms of adventure tourism, Nepal offers a variety of thrilling activities such as mountaineering, trekking, rafting, kayaking, jungle safaris, paragliding, bungee jumping, canyoning, and mountain biking. Additionally, there are other attractions like ultra-light flights and mountain flights available to tourists.

NTB report (2012) highlights the Rana regime, which lasted from 1950, was neither transparent nor accountable. The reason for their resistance against democratic reforms was not due to concerns about potential instability. Furthermore, among the 8,000-meter peaks in the world, Annapurna I, located in the Annapurna Himal range of Nepal, stands as the first among all the peaks above 8,000 meters to be submitted.

In the context of adventure tourism in Nepal, the successful climb of Mt Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa in 1953 and Maurice Herzog's ascent of Annapurna in 1950, popularised modern adventure tourism for mountaineering all over the world (UNWTO, 2014). The most popular trekking routes have traditionally been the Everest, Annapurna, and Langtang regions (Hockey, 2018). The National Geographic Society (1888) and the Explorers Club (1904) promoted scientific exploration in various domains such as land, sea, air, and space. Their efforts contributed to the growth and popularity of adventure tourism, which continues to this day (UNWTO, 2014). Slowly and gradually, it has become a very vague and fastest-growing industry in the world today. At present, adventure tourism can be defined as a commercially guided tour where the focus is on engaging in outdoor activities that are dependent on the natural environment (Robinson, 2012).

According to a report by the Global Wellness Institute (2018), the adventure tourism market was valued at \$683 billion in 2017 and is projected to grow by 17.4% per year through 2027.

Manning (1999) argues that the degradation of natural and cultural elements by tourism in host communities and nations poses a serious threat to the future of adventure tourism. Krüger-Franke and colleagues (1991) suggest that neglecting important issues can exacerbate them and make them more complex to deal with. In this regard, transformative changes are required to mitigate those challenges and change into opportunities to move to truly sustainable adventure tourism. No desirable change in the tourism system is viable in isolation from wider societal

transformations. Miller and Twining-Ward (2006) argue that sustainable tourism requires a holistic approach that considers not just environmental concerns, but also social and economic issues. Subedi and Chapagain (2011) highlight the need for sustainable tourism development that considers the long-term impacts on the environment and the local community. They suggest that sustainable tourism should be seen as a means of achieving broader societal transformations, rather than just a niche market within the tourism industry. On the other hand, Shrestha and Jeong (2021) argue that ICT can enhance the competitiveness of the tourism industry by improving communication, access to information, and service delivery. It gives valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of implementing ICT in the tourism industry of Nepal. But taking into consideration the ongoing threats and challenges inherent in tackling sustainability in adventure tourism in Pokhara, it can be analyzed comprehensively.

At present, entrepreneurs and professionals are highly concerned about investment in the tourism sector. Žižek (2020) highlights the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and its impact on our daily lives. He also notes the potential economic consequences of the crisis, including a “mega-crisis” that could arise even if most people survive the virus. Like, it also introduces the concept of a “war on tourism,” referring to the severe disruption the pandemic has caused to the travel and tourism industries. Finally, he presents a binary between “reform” and “recovery,” suggesting that the crisis presents a chance to restructure our societies and systems of governance more equitably and sustainably. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis was devastating in its impacts on travel and tourism and events-affiliated sectors. He argues that we must focus on reform rather than just recovery to prevent future crises and create a more equitable and sustainable world.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has indeed estimated that the global tourism industry has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to UNWTO’s estimates published in 2020, international tourist arrivals were down by 80% in the first eight months of the year compared to the same period in 2019. The UNWTO also projected that the global tourism industry could suffer a loss of up to US\$1.2 trillion in export revenues and put up to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk due to the pandemic.

Nepal (2020) also notes that the global economic recession that occurred between 2008 and 2009 led to a decline in the number of tourists, with 40 million fewer tourists in 2009 compared to 2008. However, the tourism industry rapidly expanded from there, with international arrivals reaching a record high of 1.46 billion in 2019. This growth was then significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, causing the global tourism industry to completely halt.

Akbar (2017) has analyzed the topic of risk as one of the motivating factors of adventure tourism. Similarly, Ntanjana, Maleka, Tshipala, & Plessis (2018) have analyzed gender-based employment taking the case of adventure tourism. Two different perspectives on risk as motivating factors and gender bias in adventure tourism.

Yasmin, Haq, and Akil, (2021) have observed that various developing countries, companies, and organizations are using adventurous tourism as a means of income. However, they also note that there has been an insufficient emphasis on promoting adventure tourism in the region. Therefore, they suggest that efforts need to be made to revive this industry to ensure its long-term viability.

According to Giere (2010), researchers need to assess the efficiency of adventure tourism in Pokhara and its contribution to the region and the country. In addition, the opinions and perspectives of government entities should be taken into consideration. Similarly, Barmashkha (2013) recommends a collaborative approach, ethical values, and plans, and policies for further research to the academic researcher. Barmashkha highlights the need for policies to support further research into sustainable tourism. He argues that government authorities should provide funding and other resources to support research efforts and develop policies that promote sustainable tourism practices. To put it in other words, Giere emphasizes the need for researchers to examine how effective adventure tourism is in Pokhara and Nepal and gather input from government entities in the process. In the same context, Tshipala and Coetzee (2012) argue that adventure tourism has the potential to generate economic benefits for local communities and promote the conservation of natural resources if it is developed sustainably. They also note that poorly planned and managed adventure tourism can lead to negative social, environmental, and economic impacts.

According to Barmashkha (2013), Nepal is a popular location for adventure tourism, and the city of Pokhara is a crucial and distinctive attraction for tourists. The development of adventure tourism has a long history in Pokhara. Sharma (2008) states that Pokhara, which was once known as a peaceful destination for hippies, is now renowned for its exhilarating aerial sports activities such as paragliding, skydiving, ultra-flight, hot air ballooning, bungee jumping, and zip-lining. According to Sharma (2012), tourists come to Pokhara for various reasons such as sightseeing, leisure, and as a stopover during their trekking journeys. He also mentioned opportunities and challenges in tourism in Pokhara in the context of Visit Nepal 2020, but they were not explored and analyzed in detail.

## **2.6 Empirical Review**

Empirical studies on adventure tourism have widely examined the techniques used, the outcomes achieved, and the opportunities and challenges associated with its economic impact. These studies primarily focus on understanding how adventure tourism contributes to local economies and the development of tourist destinations, especially in regions like Pokhara, Nepal.

Singh (2023) provides a global market overview, highlighting the growth of the adventure tourism sector. The market was valued at approximately USD 852.2 billion in 2021, and it is projected to reach USD 2,446.1 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15.2%. This statistic underscores the expanding importance of adventure tourism, indicating significant economic opportunities that align with the broader global trends observed in this field. Similarly, Barkley (2021) reviews a continuing need for research on adventure tourism. Barkley points out the importance of exploring the techniques, outcomes, and impacts of adventure tourism on local economies. This finding calls for further empirical investigation into sustainable management and the economic implications of adventure tourism, a theme that is consistent across many studies.

Neupane and Shim (2019) explore the significance of incorporating the perspectives of various stakeholders in sustainable tourism. They conducted a qualitative exploratory study using social constructionism and thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with groups of 5 to 15 participants. Their research emphasizes

the need to understand how adventure tourism impacts the development of Pokhara and Nepal, particularly from the viewpoint of government and community entities. This study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism, but its focus on social perspectives and stakeholder engagement sets it apart from other studies focused on economic impacts alone.

Devkota and colleagues (2020) highlight the importance of enhancing the entrepreneurial environment to boost tourism in destinations like Pokhara. Their study employs purposive sampling and structured questionnaires with cross-sectional descriptive methods. This research mirrors studies like those by Buckley (2006), which focus on fostering entrepreneurial dynamics in adventure tourism. These findings support the idea that entrepreneurship plays a key role in maximizing the economic benefits of adventure tourism, providing a different lens from those focused purely on government policies or cultural aspects.

Neupane and Shim (2019) study also explores the impact of paragliding tourism on the cultural authenticity of the region, indicating a positive influence. This aligns with Sharpley and Jepson's (2011) research on cultural impacts in the Mediterranean. This study stands out by focusing on the cultural aspect, which is not always the primary focus of adventure tourism research, which often centers on economic or environmental factors. On the other hand, Magar and Lamichhane (2020) examine satisfaction levels with paragliding in Pokhara, demonstrating high satisfaction among tourists of both genders. This finding echoes Hudson's (2012) study on gender differences in adventure tourism satisfaction. The focus on gender in adventure tourism satisfaction presents an important nuance that is often overlooked in studies focused on broader satisfaction levels.

Sabina's (2019) study uses a mixed-methods approach to describe the adventure activities and potential of Pokhara as a prime adventure tourism destination. This methodological diversity is also present in international studies like Terblanche (2012), who employed similar mixed methods to explore the potential of adventure tourism in various global destinations. Sabina's research contributes to the exploration of adventure tourism potential in Pokhara, but it does not delve into the challenges, opportunities, and policy-related aspects of the sector. Ale (2019) employs a quantitative approach to discuss adventure tourism as a business in Nepal. However, it

does not address the full spectrum of opportunities, challenges, or plans and policies related to the sector, which is a gap also noted by Page and Connell (2009). The study provides valuable insights into the business aspects of adventure tourism, yet it lacks a deeper qualitative understanding that addresses the broader context, including policy and sustainability challenges.

Page and Connell (2009) argue for comprehensive studies that cover the full spectrum of opportunities, challenges, and strategic planning in adventure tourism. Their work emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of the sector holistically. This approach aligns with the need for more qualitative, in-depth studies, which remains a key gap in the literature. But, on the other hand, Thomas and Thomas (2020) stress the importance of qualitative research in understanding the complex dynamics of adventure tourism. They argue that qualitative methods are essential for capturing nuanced stakeholder experiences, a perspective that is especially important in understanding adventure tourism in destinations like Pokhara. This underscores the need for more in-depth, qualitative studies in this field.

While global empirical studies on adventure tourism provide valuable insights into market growth, entrepreneurial dynamics, satisfaction levels, and cultural impacts, many of these studies do not fully address the comprehensive intersection of opportunities, challenges, and sustainable policies. In contrast, this study focuses specifically on the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara, Nepal, and seeks to fill the gap in research by examining the local economic impact, the opportunities and challenges of “action sports,” and the role of government policies and plans. This study will utilize a qualitative approach to capture stakeholder perspectives and provide a more holistic analysis of the sustainability of adventure tourism in Pokhara, which has not been thoroughly explored in the previous studies highlighted. Thus, this research aims to provide deeper insights into the local dynamics, particularly in terms of policy effectiveness, cultural preservation, and economic sustainability.

## **2.7 Theoretical Review**

A comprehensive understanding of planned phenomena cannot be achieved through the application of a single theory (Thurmond, 2001). In this context, Thurmond acknowledged that Denzin (1979) and Patton (1999) have identified four types of

triangulations. Although Denzin and Patton have identified four types of triangulations, Thurmond intends to use only the constructivism/interpretivism framework in the study to create and interpret knowledge. The researcher of the proposed dissertation also decided to limit the scope of the study to this theory only.

Constructivism theory posits that knowledge and meaning are constructed through interactions with the world and the social context in which these interactions occur (Crotty, 1998). By combining constructivism with technology in the current era, it is possible to enhance knowledge acquisition about social networking between tourists and host communities. The study adheres to constructivism by examining participants' perceptions and experiences, focusing on how these interactions shape their understanding of adventure tourism.

The primary focus is on managing adventure tourism responsibly to promote and maintain it in terms of environmental, social, and financial aspects. Adventure tourism can offer significant benefits, but it also poses challenges that require a delicate balance to ensure sustainability. This study investigated environmental threats and their effect on the economy concerning adventure tourism challenges. For instance, Butler (1999) emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism practices that consider the carrying capacity of tourist destinations to avoid environmental degradation. Additionally, Buckley (2006) highlights that adventure tourism, while beneficial for economic development, can lead to negative environmental impacts if not properly managed.

Yasmin, Haq, and Akil (2021) argue that constructivist theory emphasizes the existence of multiple realities shaped by the experiences of different stakeholders, including officials, entrepreneurs, and consumers. These realities are not objective or inherent but are constructed through continuous interactions, extensive research, and practice on various aspects of tourism promotion, such as publicity, promotion, and public relations. The authors highlight the significance of setting sustainable objectives for tourism-related content promotion to ensure its long-term sustainability. Similarly, Pizam and Mansfeld (2009) discuss how the diverse perspectives of stakeholders in tourism can lead to different understandings and practices, reinforcing the constructivist view of multiple constructed realities.

Furthermore, the application of constructivism theory in this study will involve examining how technological advancements, such as social media and digital platforms, influence the interactions between tourists and host communities. As Sigala, Christou, and Gretzel (2012) note, technology has transformed the tourism industry by facilitating more personalized and interactive experiences, thereby reshaping the social dynamics between tourists and locals.

In summary, the study will utilize constructivism to explore how participants' perceptions and experiences contribute to a nuanced understanding of adventure tourism. By focusing on the interactions and constructed realities of various stakeholders, the study aims to provide insights into responsible management practices that balance environmental, social, and financial sustainability. The integration of technology in this context will further enhance the understanding of social networking and its implications for adventure tourism.

### **2.7.1 Theories Linked with Adventure Tourism**

There are several theories related to adventure tourism that can help to understand stakeholders' perceptions, experiences, and how they construct meaning. Here are a few key theories that I have considered to construct the meaning of adventure tourism, its challenges, and opportunities based on stakeholders' perspectives.

### **2.7.2 Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders in tourism planning and development to create inclusive and sustainable tourism experiences (Hall & Lew, 1998). This theory highlights the diverse perspectives and interests of stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, and businesses (Freeman, 1984). By understanding these perspectives, tourism planners can develop strategies that balance the needs of all stakeholders, leading to more successful and sustainable tourism initiatives.

Silva-Santisteban Mondoñedo (2021) has been applied in the tourism sector to promote sustainable recovery, especially after crises like the pandemic. It emphasizes engaging all stakeholders to create competitive advantages and social welfare (Silva-Santisteban Mondoñedo, 2021; Freeman et al., 2010). Involving local communities in

decision-making processes can lead to tourism activities that respect local traditions and promote economic growth. Therefore, it can be used to ensure that local communities are involved in decision-making processes. This can lead to the development of tourism activities that respect local traditions and promote economic growth, benefiting both the community and tourists.

### **2.7.3 Experience Economy Theory**

The experience economy theory posits that memorable experiences are a distinct economic offering, separate from goods and services (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In adventure tourism, creating unique and personalized experiences can enhance tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. This theory suggests that businesses should focus on designing activities that provide emotional and transformative experiences for tourists. Pine and Gilmore (1999) use this theory to create memorable experiences in adventure tourism. Research on the experience economy theory highlights the importance of creating unique and personalized experiences in adventure tourism. For example, a study on adventure tourism experiences found that memorable experiences enhance tourists' satisfaction and loyalty (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; 2013). While specific empirical studies directly applying this theory in adventure tourism are limited, the concept is widely recognized as crucial for enhancing customer satisfaction. Therefore, adventure tourism providers can use this theory to develop activities that cater to the specific interests and preferences of tourists. By creating memorable experiences, they can increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat visits.

### **2.7.4 Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory focuses on the reciprocal relationships between stakeholders, emphasizing the mutual benefits that can arise from positive interactions (Homans, 1958). In adventure tourism, fostering positive relationships between tourists and local communities can lead to economic growth for the community and enriched experiences for tourists. It is a unique theory that is closely associated with the cultural exchange and mutual respect between guests and the host communities. This can lead to economic growth for the community and enriched experiences for tourists. For instance, cultural exchange programs in adventure tourism can promote mutual

respect and understanding, enhancing the overall tourism experience (Homans, 1958). Tourism operators can use social exchange theory to design activities that promote cultural exchange and mutual respect (Becker, 1974; Rose, 2013). This can enhance the overall tourism experience and create lasting positive impacts for both tourists and the local community. However, specific empirical studies directly linking this theory to adventure tourism outcomes are not readily available.

### **2.7.5 Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivating behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In adventure tourism, providing tourists with opportunities for personal growth and challenge can enhance their overall experience and satisfaction. For example, research on flow theory, which is related to self-determination, shows that engaging in challenging activities can lead to a state of optimal experience known as “flow,” enhancing personal mastery and satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Allan, 2011; Monasterio et al., 2016). In adventure tourism, providers can design activities that allow tourists to set their own goals and overcome challenges (Aicher & Brenner, 2015; Houge Mackenzie, et al., 2023; Luong, et al., 2024). By fostering a sense of achievement and personal growth, they can create more meaningful and satisfying experiences for tourists (Houge Mackenzie, et al., 2023; Luong, et al., 2024).

### **2.7.6 Theory of Planned Behavior**

The theory of planned behavior suggests that behavior is driven by intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Understanding tourists’ intentions and motivations can help stakeholders design marketing strategies and activities that align with tourists’ preferences and expectations (Gstaettner, 2017; Hasan et al., 2020; Soundararajan, 2023). Adventure tourism operators can use this theory to develop targeted marketing campaigns that appeal to tourists’ motivations and attitudes. By understanding the factors that influence tourists’ decisions, they can create more effective marketing strategies (Hasan et al., 2020).

### **2.7.7 Ecological Systems Theory**

Ecological systems theory considers the complex interactions between individuals and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In adventure tourism, understanding the environmental and social contexts in which tourists operate can help stakeholders create sustainable and responsible tourism practices. Adventure tourism providers can use this theory to design activities that minimize environmental impact and promote conservation. By considering the broader ecological context, they can develop tourism practices that are both sustainable and respectful of the natural environment (Knowles, 2019). Research on sustainable tourism development emphasizes the importance of minimizing environmental impact and promoting conservation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). While specific empirical studies directly linking this theory to adventure tourism outcomes are limited, the concept is crucial for sustainable tourism practices (Peacock, 2017; Immonen, 2022).

## **2.8 Policy Review**

Sharma (2012) states that before the establishment of the Nepal Tourism Board in 1997, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation was responsible for developing policies, implementing programs, and monitoring, promoting, and marketing the tourism industry. The Tourism Act of 1985, along with its subsequent amendments and regulations, functions as the legal framework that governs several tourism-related activities. These activities include travel trade agencies, tourist standard hotels, lodges and resorts, mountaineering, and guides. Additionally, the Tourism Policy of 2009 and the Aviation Policy of 2006 guide the government's policies on tourism and civil aviation. Shrestha and Jeong (2021) report that, according to the Nepal Planning Commission (NPC) in 2010 and the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) in 2008, the tourism policy aims to position Nepal as a secure and attractive destination on the global tourism map. They further note that the eighth five-year plan was the first plan to prioritize tourism as a primary economic activity in Nepal, but it failed to yield any significant results. Gurung (2009) states that Nepal has implemented several economic plans, including different five-year and three-year plans since 1956, as well as various policies and campaigns, such as the tourism master plan in 1972, the Mountaineering Expedition Regulation Act 1978, Tourism Policy 1995, Visit Nepal year 1998, and Destination Nepal Campaign 2002-2003. Furthermore, the author

notes that the Visit Nepal year 2020 received significant international attention, and numerous constructions were undertaken to promote tourism.

All these policy directions aim to expand tourism circles. The leading role of the private sector in tourism and more focus on the partnership approach is a public-private partnership. It has an emphasis on rural tourism, communities-based tourism, and homestays but not adventure tourism/sports tourism.

The Nepal government has enforced the Recreational Aviation Regulation 2016 to boost adventure tourism. However, there is a lack of reliable policies for adventure tourism in Pokhara. Most studies focus on tourist experiences, like satisfaction and safety, rather than the response to adventure attractions, stakeholder security concerns, and the impact on the environment and economy. There's limited research on environmental threats and challenges posed by adventure tourism. Additionally, existing studies have theoretical, methodological, and knowledge gaps that need addressing.

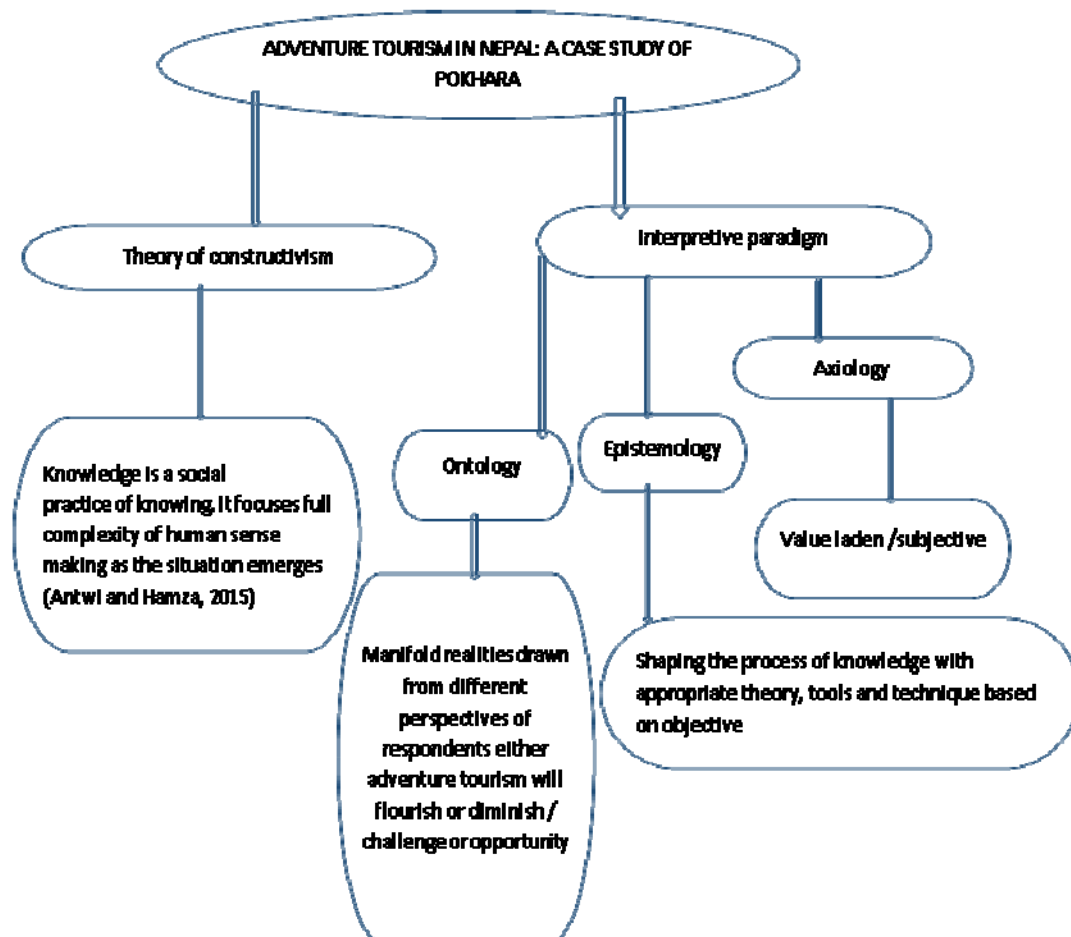
## **2.9 Conceptual Framework**

Qualitative research has gained importance as research is increasingly viewed as a process rather than a static activity, with methodology taking precedence over the mere appropriateness of the method (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). This study aims to achieve its objectives by incorporating the theory of constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of knowledge and learning. According to Fosnot (2005), constructivism describes not only what constitutes knowledge but also how individuals acquire knowledge. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) assert that from a constructivist perspective, learning is a process of creating meaning, which is how individuals make sense of their experiences in adventure tourism.

The ontology of interpretivism in this research suggests that adventure tourism in Pokhara can be seen either as a challenge or an opportunity, with multiple and socially constructed realities emerging from respondents to justify their views. Pilarska (2021) notes that researchers in interpretivism tie together these realities and focus on what is specific and unique to understand the subject. Epistemologically, this shapes knowledge for the overall process of theory building to generate interpreted meaning, helping readers easily understand the findings.

In this study, collaboration between stakeholders, tourists, and the host community is essential for creating different knowledge perspectives, as Guba (1990) suggests. The constructivist approach acknowledges the importance of multiple perspectives in creating knowledge, and the involvement of diverse stakeholders can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of adventure tourism in the context of Pokhara (Figure 2). Policymakers can work with the adventure tourism industry and shareholders to encourage placing greater emphasis on the interests of non-shareholders and promoting collaboration between various stakeholders, giving equal importance to shareholders, co-workers, visitors, and the local community. To uncover the hidden multiple social realities and address the existing challenges within adventure tourism, this theoretical framework is indispensable.

**Figure 2 : Conceptual Framework**



Source: Sapkota & Paudyal (2021)

In the study of adventure tourism in Pokhara, a constructivist philosophical framework provides the foundation for understanding the opportunities and

challenges within the sector. Rooted in the belief that knowledge and reality are socially constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), this approach emphasizes the dynamic, subjective nature of human experience. In the adventure tourism context, the constructivist paradigm views the perceptions of tourists, tourism operators, and local communities as integral to the understanding of how tourism initiatives unfold in Pokhara. This standpoint contrasts with positivism, which focuses on objective truths and measurable realities. Instead, constructivism recognizes that opportunities and challenges in the adventure tourism sector of Pokhara are shaped through interaction, interpretation, and the diverse realities of stakeholders.

For instance, the way tourists experience paragliding, ultra-light flights, or trekking routes is deeply influenced by personal expectations, prior knowledge, and cultural perceptions in Pokhara. Similarly, local operators' views on tourism development, safety practices, and environmental sustainability reflect the collective community's evolving understanding of tourism's impact. By adopting a constructivist paradigm, this research acknowledges the complexities of multiple perspectives and the subjectivity inherent in exploring adventure tourism in Pokhara.

## **2.10 Research Gap**

Many studies on adventure tourism in Pokhara rely predominantly on quantitative approaches, which fail to capture the nuanced perspectives and lived experiences of key stakeholders. The absence of qualitative approaches and methodological triangulation undermines the depth and reliability of these findings. Although studies like Yasmin, Haq, and Akil (2021) acknowledge the relevance of constructivist frameworks, their application to uncover diverse stakeholder realities remains largely underutilized. Furthermore, theoretical frameworks, such as constructivism, have been mentioned but are insufficiently applied to guide actionable strategies for stakeholder engagement and sustainable practices. Research like Devkota et al. (2020) underscores the need for a supportive entrepreneurial environment but lacks practical strategies tailored to the unique context of Pokhara. This disconnect between theoretical insights and practical implementation limits the development of effective policies and strategies for sustainability and growth.

Additionally, policy gaps persist in adventure tourism in Pokhara, as existing frameworks, such as Nepal's Tourism Policy (2009) and Recreational Aviation Regulation (2016), fail to address specific sectoral challenges, including environmental conservation, infrastructure development, and stakeholder safety. Research like Neupane and Shim (2019) highlights the importance of policies but does not address the role of public-private partnerships in bridging rural and adventure tourism efforts. Stakeholder engagement, while recognized as vital, also remains incomplete. For instance, Neupane and Shim (2019) emphasize stakeholder perspectives but overlook marginalized voices, such as local communities and small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as the dynamics of tourist-host interactions, which impact visitor satisfaction, community perceptions, and long-term sustainability. Moreover, although Devkota et al. (2020) stress the importance of entrepreneurial support, there is a lack of context-specific strategies for Pokhara and limited research on the economic linkages between adventure tourism revenue, community livelihoods, and regional development.

The potential of adventure tourism in Pokhara is further constrained by insufficient exploration of sustainability challenges. Studies like Magar and Lamichhane (2020) highlight high satisfaction levels with specific activities, such as paragliding, but fail to integrate tourist perceptions with destination sustainability goals or examine the cultural and environmental impacts of the sector comprehensively. To address these critical gaps, future research should adopt qualitative, interpretative, and multidisciplinary approaches to overcome methodological limitations and apply robust theoretical frameworks that connect research insights with practical outcomes. Policy-focused studies are needed to propose integrated frameworks for public-private collaboration and address sector-specific challenges, while inclusive research must incorporate marginalized stakeholder perspectives and explore tourist-host dynamics. Furthermore, studies should focus on understanding economic linkages and sustainability challenges holistically to ensure the sustainable development of the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara.

## **CHAPTER III**

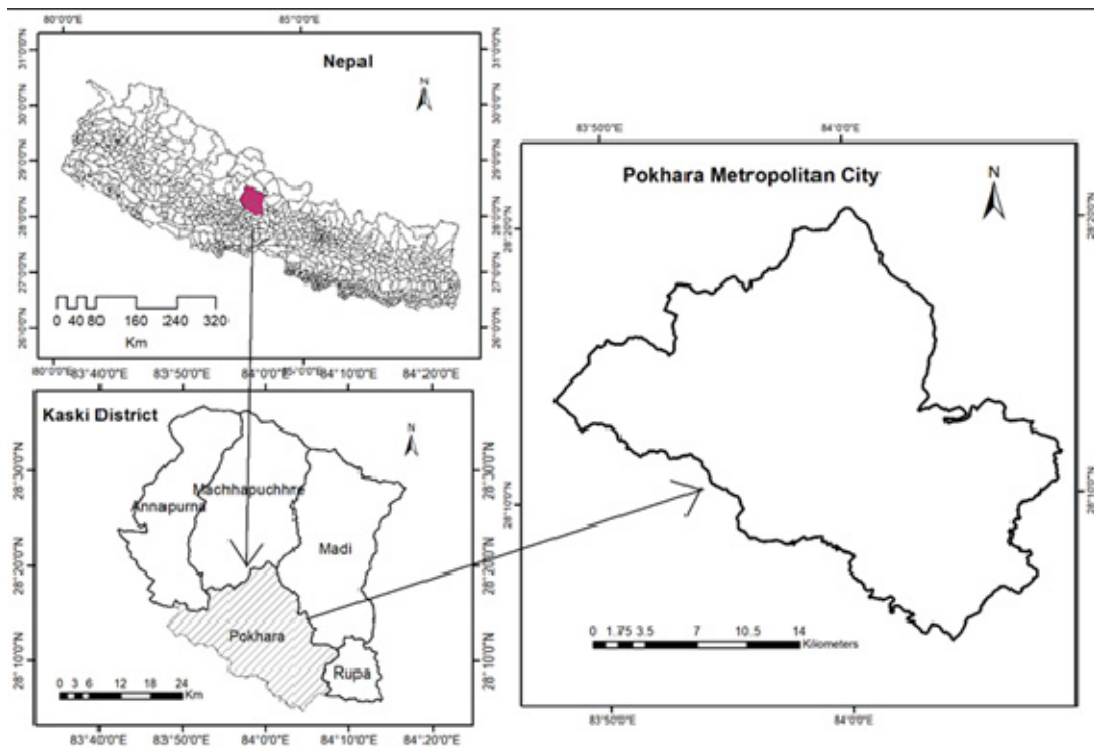
### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Jonker and Pennink (2010) emphasize that research methodology serves as a guide or blueprint for conducting research, outlining the plan, while the method refers to specific actions or steps that facilitate progression through this plan. Similarly, Brown (2006) describes methodology as the philosophical foundation upon which research is built. In this chapter, the methodology provides a comprehensive explanation of the research design, rationale for site selection, research procedure, sampling methods, data sources, tools and techniques for data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 The Study Area**

The research location for this study is Pokhara, a tourism capital situated in the Kaski district and serving as the headquarters of Gandaki Province in Nepal. Geographically, Pokhara lies between 28° 12' 3.67" N and 83° 56' 42.31" E, with an elevation of approximately 822 meters above sea level, covering an area of 464.2 km<sup>2</sup> and inhabited by a current population of 458,000 (figure 1) Pokhara is renowned as a gateway to the Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Machhapuchhre, and Mardi Circuits, which are popular trails in the Himalayas. Moreover, it is also known as the city of nine lakes, and the river Seti flows through it, surrounded by deep-cutting gorges carved by the river itself and panoramic hills around the valley. Several scholars and experts (Adhikari & Seddon, 2004; Bezruchka & Lyons, 2011; Bhadgaonle, 2006; Khatiwada, 2004; Kshetry, 2012; Raj, 1993; Tripathi, 2008; Tripathi & Singh, 1996; Fort, 2010; Paudel & Kazunori, 2000; Herzog, 1952) have extensively explored various aspects of Pokhara (Upreti et al., 2013). These include its offerings, such as trekking and tourism, its historical and geographical features, as well as its societal and functional characteristics. The city's significance as a hub for peace, prosperity, and pride in Nepal has been a common theme in their analyses. Due to its geographical diversity and ideal typography, Pokhara is a suitable destination for adventure tourism activities such as paragliding, bungee jumping, hot air balloon rides, ultra-light aircraft flights, boating, and more. Its tranquil beauty continues to inspire both local and foreign tourists to visit for adventure and exploration.

**Figure 3 : Location map of the study area**



Source: DEM data and field Observation,2023

Pokhara is situated at an altitude of 895 meters above sea level, and it experiences a subtropical monsoon climate (Figure 3). The average annual temperature in Pokhara is approximately 21.5°C. The area receives an average rainfall of 799.33mm during the summer and only 4.00mm during the winter. During the summer season, Pokhara receives approximately 74% of its annual rainfall. The average temperature in Pokhara during summer is around 31°C, while in winter, it drops to around 21°C. This information is based on the data recorded by the Pokhara Airport Weather Station from 2000 to 2019.

Topography: Pokhara is located at the base of the Annapurna Mountain range, featuring unique topographical characteristics. The region's geomorphic evolution is exemplified by the catastrophic episode of the Pokhara debris-flow aggradation, which serves as a model for the High Himalayan Front's geomorphic evolution Fort (1987); and Fort and Peulvast (1995). Pokhara is situated on a large sediment fan created by the Seti River, which flows through the partially glaciated and debris-filled foothills of Annapurna Mountain.

Pokhara, located in Gandaki Province, Nepal, is renowned as the country's capital of tourism and a top destination for adventure tourism. Surrounded by stunning landscapes, it is particularly noted for its opportunities for mountain adventure. The city's appeal dates to 1899 when the Japanese monk Ikai Kawaguchi visited and found it spiritually captivating, a sentiment that endures today, underscoring Pokhara and its significance in mountainous cultural heritage in Nepal (Fort et al., 2018).

The region's tourism is mainly based on three major routes (Adhikari, 2019): the Kathmandu-Pokhara-Tansen route known as the Golden Triangle, the Pokhara-Tansen-Lumbini route known as the Silver Triangle, and the Rara-Lo Manthang route, also known as the Adventure Route. Pokhara has gained popularity as the gateway for various popular treks such as Annapurna Circuit Trek, Annapurna Sanctuary Trek, Ghandruk - Ghorepani, Mardi Himal Trek, Jomsom-Muktinath, Dhaulagiri round, and Dolpo Treks. Pokhara is famous for land-based, water-based air-based adventure tourism. Jungle safari, trekking, mountain climbing, rock climbing, etc. are land-based adventures. Similarly, white water rafting, Kayaking, Cannoning, etc. are water-based adventures, and paragliding, skydiving, Zip-flying, and bungee jumping are air-based adventures in Pokhara. Since 2011/2012, some organizations have been motivated to explore and flourish in such adventurous sports.

Pokhara is widely recognized as a hub of adventure tourism due to its unique combination of natural beauty, accessibility to a variety of adventure activities, and its strategic location as a gateway to several renowned trekking routes and outdoor experiences. Here's why Pokhara is considered a hub of adventure tourism. Pokhara serves as a starting point for several iconic trekking routes, such as the Annapurna Circuit and Annapurna Base Camp. Trekkers are drawn to Pokhara as a base to embark on these adventurous journeys through diverse landscapes. The city offers a wide range of adventure activities, including paragliding, zip-lining, bungee jumping, mountain biking, and more. This diversity allows visitors to engage in various adrenaline-pumping experiences. Its stunning setting beside Phewa Lake and with the Annapurna range as a backdrop provides a picturesque environment for adventure enthusiasts. The combination of mountains, lakes, and lush landscapes creates a perfect backdrop for thrilling activities.

Collectively, these factors make Pokhara an ideal hub for adventure tourism, catering to a wide spectrum of travelers seeking outdoor thrills, cultural experiences, and stunning natural beauty all in one destination. Thousands of tourists do paraglide from Sarangkot to see superb shining silvery mountains flying beside different birds and floating over scattered villages, artistic monasteries, historical temples, beautiful lakes, and different vegetation. Similarly, zip lining, bungee jumping, boating and swimming, kayaking, trekking, etc are equally entertained by tourists in Pokhara. Besides these, Pokhara is rich in religious sites and culture.

The topic is deeply and silently observed as a source of economy and asset to earn the popularity of Pokhara. According to Sthapit (2016), the tourism industry has the potential to create more employment opportunities compared to any other sector. For instance, a single tourist's involvement in various activities can create a minimum of 9 to 11 jobs for the local Nepalese population. There are many challenges to seizing opportunities, such as safety and risk management, destination branding, sustainable tourism practices, accessibility and inclusivity, digitalization, and many more. Such matters can't be addressed at a time, though.

## **3.2 Research Design**

### **3.2.1 Philosophical Underpinnings**

This study adopts interpretivism as its guiding research philosophy, emphasizing the need to understand and interpret the subjective perspectives, behaviors, and experiences of individuals within society. Interpretivism is particularly suited for studying adventure tourism in Pokhara as it prioritizes capturing the unique narratives and diverse perspectives of stakeholders, such as tourists, local entrepreneurs, and community members. This aligns with Saunders and Lewis's (2012) assertion that research should explore the social world from the viewpoint of research subjects. By focusing on socio-cultural and environmental impacts, this research approach enables a deeper, contextualized understanding of tourism dynamics (Jennings, 2018).

The constructivist philosophical framework underpins this research, emphasizing that knowledge and reality are socially constructed through human interactions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Unlike positivism, which assumes an objective, measurable reality, constructivism acknowledges multiple realities shaped by individual

experiences and cultural backgrounds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This study rejects the notion of a single, absolute truth, instead embracing co-constructed knowledge, where meanings and insights emerge through interactions between the researcher and participants (Adom et al., 2016).

A qualitative, inductive approach is adopted, integrating philosophy, methodology, and methods to generate rich, contextual insights (Mills & Birks, 2014). The study employs narrative analysis, as outlined by Riessman (2005), to examine how stakeholders articulate their experiences and how these narratives shape the adventure tourism landscape. This aligns with Creswell's (2013) view that qualitative research design is a comprehensive strategy for gathering and analyzing data, allowing for a deep exploration of lived experiences rather than merely testing predefined hypotheses (Mhango, 2018). A key methodological choice in this research is the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews, which enable an open-ended exploration of participants' experiences, motivations, and emotions (Charmaz, 2008). This approach values multiple realities, recognizing that each respondent's perspective contributes to a broader, more complex understanding of adventure tourism. Additionally, participant observation and focus group discussions are employed to capture the nuanced interactions and experiential dimensions of tourism activities. Reflexivity is also a crucial aspect of the research, ensuring that the researcher remains aware of their influence on the data collection and interpretation process (Akhtar, 2016).

Unlike positivism, which relies on quantitative methods, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis, this study recognizes that human experiences cannot be reduced to numerical data (Bryman, 2016). The subjective and context-dependent nature of tourists' risk perceptions, community engagement, and entrepreneurial decision-making necessitates a qualitative exploration (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Positivism's reliance on cause-effect relationships does not capture the complexities of stakeholder interactions, place attachment, and policy dynamics in adventure tourism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Instead, a constructivist approach allows for multiple interpretations of reality, acknowledging the divergent views of tourists, businesses, and policymakers rather than reducing them to a single, objective truth.

Similarly, pragmatism, which blends qualitative and quantitative methods based on their practical utility, does not align with this research. While pragmatism is useful for

studies that prioritize problem-solving over epistemological concerns (Morgan, 2014), this study seeks not just practical solutions but an in-depth understanding of how stakeholders construct meanings around adventure tourism (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, pragmatism often integrates mixed methods, whereas this study employs a purely qualitative approach, reinforcing its alignment with constructivist epistemology (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

To analyze data, this study employs constant comparison and sensitizing concepts to refine and interpret responses iteratively. The inductive approach ensures that themes and insights emerge naturally from the data, grounding findings in participants' experiences. Rationalism serves as the foundation for justifying the beliefs and claims shared by interviewees, enabling a deeper understanding of how adventure tourism impacts stakeholders in Pokhara (Mills & Birks, 2014).

By adopting an interpretive research design, this study provides a compelling, in-depth exploration of adventure tourism in Pokhara, bridging methodological, theoretical, and practical gaps and offering meaningful contributions to both theoretical discussions and sustainable tourism policy development.

### **3.2.2 Ontology: Multiple Realities in Adventure Tourism**

From an ontological perspective, constructivism rejects the notion of a single, objective reality in favor of multiple socially constructed realities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the case of adventure tourism in Pokhara, the “reality” of opportunities and challenges does not exist independently of the actors involved. Rather, it emerges from the interactions between tourists, operators, guides, and local residents. For example, the perceived safety of adventure activities like paragliding may differ between a tourist who has experienced similar activities in other countries and a local operator who deals with the complexities of weather, terrain, and regulations daily. The challenges related to infrastructure, such as maintaining trekking routes or ensuring proper safety standards, are also interpreted differently based on one's role within the tourism ecosystem. These diverse interpretations shape how individuals engage with and respond to the adventure tourism environment in Pokhara.

### **3.2.3 Epistemology: Co-constructed Knowledge**

Epistemologically, the constructivist approach emphasizes that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction and interpretation (Adom et al., 2016). In the context of adventure tourism in Pokhara, understanding how tourism impacts the community or how tourists perceive safety is not an absolute truth waiting to be discovered but a subjective understanding shaped by dialogue and experience. Interviews with tourists reveal how they construct their experiences, whether by comparing Pokhara to other destinations or by interpreting their encounters with the local environment and culture.

Local stakeholders, such as guides or tourism operators, also co-construct their knowledge of adventure tourism. For example, operators might adapt their safety protocols based on feedback from tourists and international standards, while local guides learn to navigate both environmental risks and tourists' expectations through lived experience. Thus, knowledge about tourism opportunities, challenges, safety, and sustainability is formed through the collective interactions of everyone involved.

### **3.2.4 Axiology: Valuing Subjective Perspectives**

Axiology in constructivism values the subjectivity of different perspectives, acknowledging that research is inherently value-laden (Draucker et al., 2007). This philosophical standpoint is particularly important in adventure tourism, where stakeholders' values such as safety, environmental conservation, and community well-being play a key role in shaping tourism practices. In Pokhara, for example, the balance between economic growth from tourism and environmental sustainability is a point of ethical concern. Tourists may value their adventure experiences differently based on personal enjoyment, while local communities might prioritize the preservation of natural resources and the socio-economic benefits tourism brings.

Through this lens, it is crucial to engage with all stakeholders' values, including the aspirations of local communities for sustainable development and the tourists' desire for memorable, risk-free adventures. This constructivist approach ensures that the diversity of perspectives is respected, and that tourism development is aligned with both local and tourist needs.

### **3.3 Nature and Sources of Data**

The research site for this conceptual research is located at the periphery of adventure tourism destinations in Pokhara, providing easy access for host communities, tourists, and local businessmen. This location offers flexibility for building awareness, screening and evaluating the sites, and understanding targeted issues, as civil aviation, universities, tourism offices, hotels, and government offices are easily accessible. This is tried to aid in gaining insight into new visions, plans, and policies regarding adventure tourism.

### **3.4 Sample Design**

The sampling strategy for this study is designed to ensure a rich and diverse representation of key stakeholders in adventure tourism in Pokhara. A purposive sampling approach is employed, allowing the researcher to select participants based on their relevance and expertise in the field (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The study focuses on key tourism sites, including the periphery of Fewa Lake, Sarangkot, Begnas, Hemja, Mountain Museum, Bat Cave, and David's Fall, ensuring that data collection occurs in locations with high tourism activity and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, reliable institutional sites such as ACAP offices, tourism offices, and the tourism board were included to incorporate policy and administrative perspectives (Bryman & Bell, 2011, as cited by Graue, 2015).

The study involves semi-structured interviews with a total of 50 participants, distributed as follows:

- ✓ 30 tourists (Table 4, Figure 4) to gain insight into visitors' experiences, motivations, and satisfaction levels.
- ✓ 15 local guides (Table 5, Figure 4) to understand service quality, tourist behavior, and operational challenges.
- ✓ 10 community leaders and stakeholders (Table 6, Figure 4) to capture the broader socio-cultural and environmental impacts of adventure tourism.
- ✓ Focus group discussions were held with local tourism operators and community members to gain deeper insights.

- ✓ Participant observation was conducted during popular adventure tourism activities, such as paragliding and zip-lining, along with personal observations.

The study also incorporated secondary data collection methods, including reviews of government policies, research articles, books, and promotional materials (e.g., brochures and social media content) related to adventure tourism in Nepal (Sargeant, 2012). The primary tools used for data collection included open-ended questionnaires, interview guides, and observation checklists, ensuring that responses remained flexible and rich in detail. This methodological approach ensures that the study not only captures the complexities of adventure tourism in Pokhara but also provides practical recommendations for enhancing sustainability and stakeholder engagement in the sector.

**Table 4 : Demographic Representation of 30 tourists**

Category	Sub-category	Frequency
Gender	Male	18
	Female	12
Age Groups	18–25 years	8
	26–35 years	12
	36–45 years	6
	46+ years	4
Country of Origin	Europe	10
	Asia	8
	North America	6
	Australia	4
	Other	2
Experience with Adventure Tourism	First-time visitors	14
	Repeat Visitors	16

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

**Table 5 : Demographic representation of 15 local guides (Participants)**

Gender	Male	13
	Female	2
Age -Group	18–25 years	3
	26–35 years	7
	36–45 years	4

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

**Table 6 : Demographic representation of the 10 community leaders/stakeholders**

Category	Sub-category	Frequency
Gender	Male	8
	Female	2
Age -group	26-35	2
	36-45	3
	46-55	3
	56+years	2
Roles in the Community	Tourism-related business owners	4
	Municipality Representatives	3
	Government Officials	3

Source: Field Survey, 2023

### 3.5 Sampling Procedure

The research employed purposive and snowball sampling strategies, both categorized as non-probability sampling methods, to select participants based on familiarity, expertise, connection, and experience related to adventure tourism. The sample included entrepreneurs, visitors, residents, notable specialists, and policymakers from specific locations within the Pokhara Metropolitan Municipality. Targeted destinations and tourism-related offices served as the primary units of observation. Collins and Hussey (2003) emphasize that a small sample size is preferable for detailed qualitative analysis, a principle followed in this study. On-site surveys were

conducted with tourists, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders, while thematic interviews were held with key tourism actors to capture in-depth insights. Respondents aged over 25 were selected as they possess both academic and socio-cultural maturity, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of adventure tourism dynamics.

Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted with local tourism operators and community members to incorporate diverse viewpoints. Participant observation was carried out during popular adventure tourism activities, including paragliding and zip-lining, alongside personal observations and content analysis of promotional materials, brochures, and social media content related to adventure tourism in Pokhara (Sargeant, 2012). This approach ensures that the study captures authentic, experience-based insights that contribute to a holistic understanding of adventure tourism.

### **3.6 Source of Data**

The research relies on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through a multidimensional questionnaire, which included open-ended questions and outliers and was administered to participants who met the inclusion criteria. The selection of participants was conducted using purposive and snowball sampling techniques systematically. Furthermore, secondary data is gathered from diverse sources such as published research (books, Sport Adventure Tourism, Adventure Tourism New Frontier, Theory of Adventure Tourism, International Handbook of Adventure Tourism) newspapers, government documents, reports, and journals to augment the study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Tools and Techniques**

During the process of data collection, a semi-structured and open-ended questionnaire was used as an interview.

#### **3.7.1 The Open-ended Questionnaire Survey**

The open-ended questionnaire survey was carried out across all the designated destinations among business people to know the situation of tourism and business. The questionnaire was structured into three sections based on the study objectives. The first section collected demographic information about the participants. The

second section concentrated on the viewpoints of local businessmen and stakeholders regarding the advantages and hurdles of adventure tourism. Finally, the third section aimed to gather data on the development of strategies, policies, and regulations concerning adventure tourism in Pokhara. For the study, tourists who have spent at least one week in Pokhara, policymakers with over 5 years of experience in the tourism industry, and entrepreneurs who have worked in related fields for at least 4 years were given a questionnaire to fill up. More reliable data is accumulated based on their experiences. The survey had a wide scope and sought to evaluate tourists' preferences, current policies, plans, and the challenges and opportunities encountered in various destinations.

### **3.7.2 Focus Group Discussion**

A focus group discussion was conducted at the Tourism Council Office in Pokhara among twelve distinguished directors and entrepreneurs from various tourism sectors to collect stakeholders' perspectives on each destination. It was facilitated and moderated to discuss all three objectives based on Pokhara. Similarly, to gather feedback and viewpoints on policies and plans, mini-focus group discussions were arranged with provincial ministers and municipal bureaucrats separately. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough understanding of the diverse viewpoints and experiences related to adventure tourism in Pokhara.

### **3.6.3 Participant observation**

To acquire an in-depth understanding of the field, it was concentrated on building rapport with the participants engaging actively in the destinations. This involved spending ample time observing and documenting data on the conduct of both the host community and tourists. Comprehensive notes were taken on the various services rendered, as well as the location, date, and time of each observation.

### **3.7.4 Face-to-face interviews**

To obtain specific information from stakeholders, travel agencies, and hotels, it employed a straightforward approach and established a good relationship using appropriate skills without straying from the topic. It followed Fisher's (2005) value-laden inquiry approach as cited in Langos (2014). To gather respondents' agreement,

checklists were used to generate descriptive and interpretive data with some level of flexibility. The research involved both synchronous and asynchronous communication with various stakeholders, entrepreneurs, tourists, and experts to thoroughly investigate the complex issues mentioned earlier.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles were carefully adhered to throughout all stages of the research, ensuring integrity and respect for all participants. Rapport-building efforts fostered trust and encouraged open communication during the data collection process. Confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation were prioritized, with written consent obtained from all respondents. Cross-cultural communication skills were emphasized to ensure respect for diverse perspectives while maintaining a neutral and unbiased approach. Special attention was given to avoiding any potential harm to participants, upholding their dignity, and creating a safe and respectful research environment.

### **3.9 Determine the Data Analysis Procedures**

The research embraced a constructivist approach to narrative analysis, aligned with the belief that identities and meanings are constructed within specific contexts. Following Riessman's (2005) assertion that narratives do not inherently carry meaning, it was recognized that interpretation played a crucial role. The narratives gathered did not speak for themselves; they required thoughtful, ongoing engagement to uncover the layers of meaning embedded within them.

In the analysis, transcripts and field notes were not simply read; they were revisited multiple times to fully grasp the subtleties and complexities of the content. Each interaction, each story, held the potential for multiple interpretations, and the researcher positioned themselves within the data to allow the voices within these narratives to guide understanding. Organizing and filing the data was not a mechanical task; it was a personal process of getting closer to understanding the lived experiences and meanings embedded in the narratives.

Graue's (2015) four stages of qualitative data analysis collecting, reducing, displaying, and drawing recommendations were followed not as a rigid framework,

but as a fluid process that allowed the data to speak at each stage. The reduction of data through coding was approached as a delicate process of trimming away excess while preserving the essence of the narratives. As data was displayed, patterns began to emerge, not just in terms of structure, but also about the meanings of those patterns within the context of participants' lives.

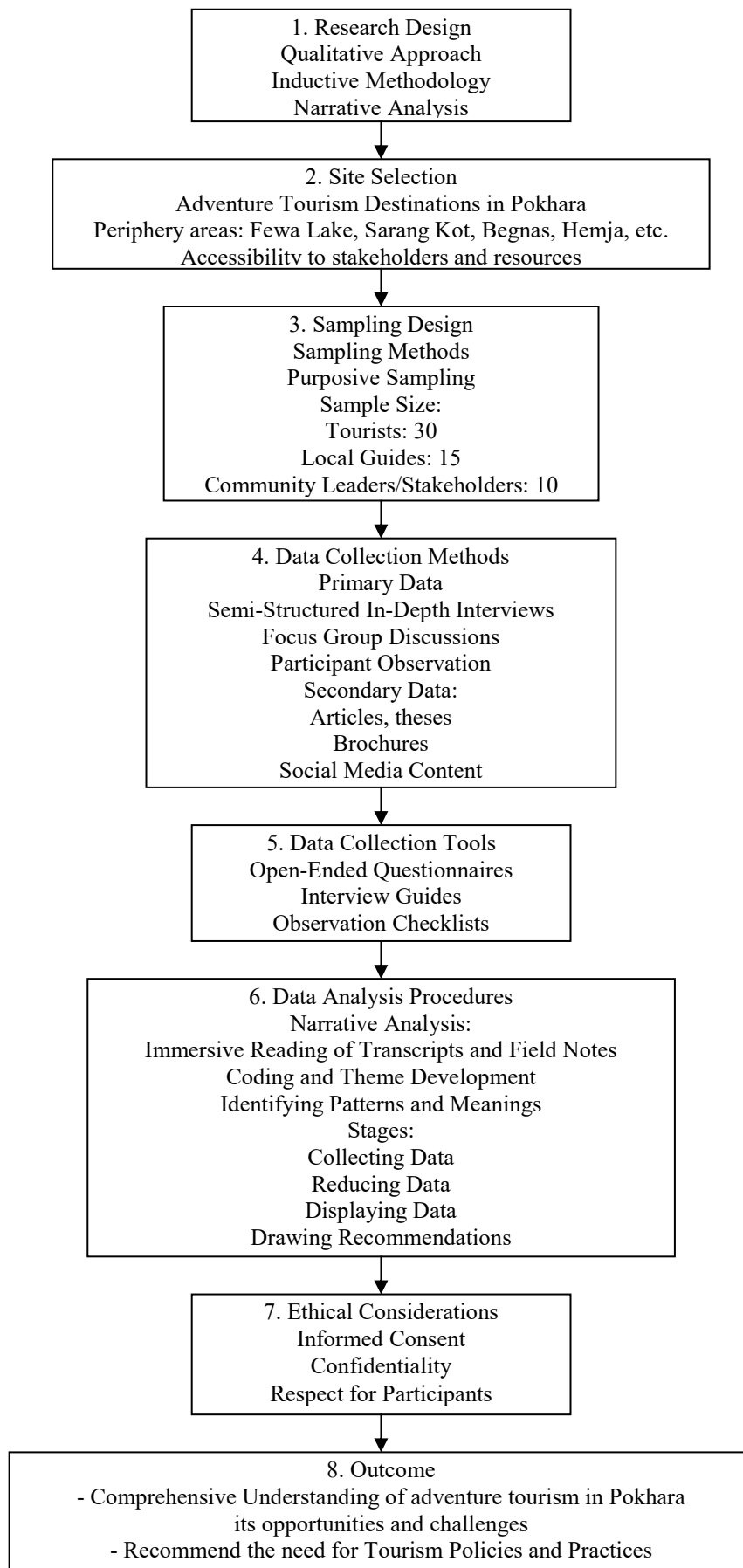
The interpretation of the data became a meaning-making act, approached with care and sensitivity to context and nuances. The objective was not merely to summarize what was said but to deeply understand the subjective experiences involved. Strategies such as focus, omission, addition, appropriation, and transposition were employed to shape the narratives, ensuring that the interpretation was not just a reduction of content, but a true reflection of the voices and experiences conveyed.

Following Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) process of organizing, breaking down, coding, synthesizing, and searching for patterns became a vital part of the research journey. Each step contributed to understanding how the events, when pieced together, revealed broader themes and insights. This interpretivist epistemology acknowledged that knowledge was co-constructed between the researcher and the narratives, shaped by their interaction and framed by the context in which they were situated.

The interpretation process was recognized as not just an academic exercise but as a deeply subjective practice, where the data and the researcher were in constant dialogue. The aim was not solely to find meaning but to construct it in a way that honored the voices within the narratives and provided context-sensitive insights reflective of the social worlds from which the narratives emerged. This iterative process required constant reflexivity, where the researcher continually examined their own biases and positionality in shaping the interpretations.

Meaning was derived not only from what was said but also from how and why it was said, considering cultural, emotional, and situational nuances. Ultimately, the goal was to present a layered, empathetic understanding that stayed true to participants' lived experiences while offering analytical depth.

**Figure 4: Research Methodology Framework**



## CHAPTER IV

### PROSPECTS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM IN NEPAL

#### 4.1 Background

In this research, a qualitative, interpretivist methodology is employed, following a constructivist approach as outlined by Creswell (2013), focusing on how meanings and identities are co-constructed within social contexts. The study leverages the principles of critical social research, social constructivism, and interpretivism to derive inductive insights pertinent to our research inquiries (Baker, 2020). The primary focus of the first objective is to investigate and assess contemporary developments in adventure tourism within Nepal. This analysis is grounded in an examination of both publicly available and undisclosed sources of adventure tourism in the Nepalese context.

Nepal, often referred to as a haven for trekkers according to the renowned guidebook Lonely Planet, boasts breathtaking views of the Himalayas, ancient temples, charming indigenous villages, and diverse wildlife in its jungles. In 2018, Nepal witnessed the arrival of one million tourists, and the government set ambitious targets to attract two million international visitors by 2020 through various tourism campaigns such as the Buddhist Circuit Tour 2019, the Asian Rural Tourism Festival 2019, and Visit Nepal Year 2020 (Vaidya, 2023). Although Nepal is renowned for its mountaineering opportunities, it also offers a wide range of adventure tourism activities, including rafting, paragliding, mountain biking, and bungee jumping, among others (Aryal, 2019).

Following the successful conquest of the Himalayan peaks in the 1950s, Nepal's adventure tourism market has been largely dominated by land-based activities, particularly mountaineering. Mountaineering can be further categorized into trekking and mountain climbing, with trekking being a prominent and relatively safe adventure activity, while mountain climbing involves higher levels of risk. Mountain climbing, being a well-established commercial adventure, has garnered significant media coverage and criticism in 2019, particularly concerning issues of health, safety, and environmental impact. Experts have called for policy changes, increased attention to

environmental conservation, and enhanced safety measures, especially at the world's tallest peak (Wengel, 2021).

Despite positive reputation and an abundance of unique adventure assets, its adventure tourism market hasn't witnessed the same rapid expansion seen globally. Nepal is widely recognized as a top destination for mountain tourism in the Asia-Pacific region (Nepal, 2016). Its rich biodiversity, unique culture, and warm hospitality have made mountain tourism popular in Nepal. Seven cultural heritage sites and one natural heritage site in Nepal, included in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1979, are located within mountainous areas (Upadhayaya & Upreti, 2011).

In November 1998, the UN General Assembly declared 2002 the International Year of Mountains and Ecotourism, presenting an excellent opportunity and challenge for advancing sustainable mountain development (Nepal, 2022). The Nepal Himalaya encompasses about 800 sq. km within the vast expanse of the Hindu Kush–Himalaya, stretching over 3,500 km from the northwest in Afghanistan to the southeast in Myanmar. This area spans from Byasrishi Himal in Darchula in the west to Kanchenjunga in the east (Upadhayaya & Upreti, 2008).

Mountainous areas have transformed into destinations for recreation, retirement, and investment in tourism-related amenities and services (Nepal, 2011). According to Karki (2023), 16% of tourists visiting Nepal are specifically drawn to trekking and climbing, highlighting the abundant mountaineering opportunities in the country. As a nature-centric destination offering isolation-based activities, Nepal aligns with the preferences of many individuals seeking post-COVID travel experiences. The country's diverse landscapes, including iconic peaks like Annapurna I, Dhaulagiri, and Manaslu, offer adventurous climbing experiences and various trekking opportunities. Popular trails include the Three Ridges Trail and the Kali Gandaki Gorge, known as the world's deepest gorge.

Covering around 83% of Nepal's total land area, the majestic Himalayas contribute to the country's reputation for unspoiled natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Beyond trekking, Nepal offers a range of adventure activities, including white-water rafting on rivers like Gandaki, Seti, and Trishuli. Established adventure pursuits such

as paragliding, skydiving, kayaking, bungee jumping, and jungle safaris add to tourism appeal in Nepal.

Nepal's allure extends beyond its landscapes, with its cultural diversity, historical landmarks, and religious sites drawing visitors from around the world. Notable pilgrimage sites such as Pashupatinath, Lumbini, and Muktinath add to the country's popularity as a tourist destination. Tourism has become a significant source of income for Nepal, showcasing its tremendous potential for growth (Genc, 2021).

Mountain tourism poses a challenge to the tourism industry because of tourists' behaviors and preferences. This type of tourism involves activities in mountainous settings with distinct landscape features, climates, wildlife, and local traditions. The appeal of mountain tourism lies in the unique natural environment, fresh air, and scenic landscapes, which attract prospective tourists (Zeng et al., 2022).

This research focuses on the revival of adventure tourism in Nepal to prosper mountain communities. It explores its prospects, emphasizing the country's unique blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure opportunities as key factors contributing to its appeal in the global tourism landscape. Additionally, the research addresses sensitive issues that need attention while planning. The transformation of mountainous areas into recreational, retirement, and investment destinations for tourism-related amenities and services is evident (Nepal, 2011).

## **4.2 Tourism Movement in Nepal**

The early legends and historical events, such as the transformation of Kathmandu Valley and King Ashoka's visit, lay the foundational cultural significance of Nepal (Bhandari, 2030; Sharma, 2033). These events highlight Nepal's rich cultural heritage, which continues to attract adventure tourists, blending both cultural and natural elements. This directly supports the objective of the study, which seeks to understand how place image constructs combining both cultural heritage and adventure activities impact the decisions of adventure tourists in Nepal.

The 19th-century visit of Captain Kirk Patrick (Chapaign, 2017) and the rise of adventure tourism with the ascent of Mount Everest in 1953 further cemented Nepal's status as a premier destination for adventure tourism. These historical milestones

demonstrate the growing international interest in Nepal's landscapes and mountaineering potential, directly relating to the study's objective of assessing the role of adventure tourism in community livelihoods. By understanding how global explorers' perceptions of Nepal influenced tourism development, the study can analyze the present-day socio-economic impacts of adventure tourism on local communities, particularly in regions like Everest and Annapurna. The 1978 Master Plan of Tourism and the Nepal Tourist Board in 1998 showcases how the government's strategic interventions played a key role in the sustainable development of adventure tourism in Nepal (Sacareau, 2009). The study's focus on exploring sustainable practices and community involvement can directly draw on these historical interventions to propose new frameworks that balance tourism growth with environmental and social sustainability. Understanding past policies will enable the study to offer informed recommendations for current and future tourism strategies that prioritize responsible and sustainable tourism. The decline in tourism due to the Maoist insurgency and the 2015 earthquake illustrates the vulnerability of the tourism sector to external shocks in Nepal (Rafferty, 2024). The objective of assessing the challenges and future trends of adventure tourism in Nepal aligns with these historical setbacks, highlighting the need for resilience strategies. The study can explore how the tourism industry bounced back after crises and identify key success factors for ensuring long-term growth in Nepal. Additionally, the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused an 81% decline in tourist arrivals (Economic Survey, 2020/21), can be integrated into the study's focus on preparing for future uncertainties in adventure tourism.

The launch of the Visit Nepal 2020 campaign and the country's efforts to recover from the pandemic reflects Nepal's ongoing ambition to strengthen its position as a global adventure tourism destination. The objective of exploring branding strategies for adventure tourism in Nepal is particularly relevant here. By analyzing the government's efforts to revitalize tourism through campaigns like Visit Nepal 2020, the study can assess how Nepal can effectively market itself to new demographics while maintaining its appeal to traditional adventure tourists. This aligns with the study's goal of identifying strategies for sustainable growth in the tourism sector.

The historical perspective provided offers a comprehensive backdrop against which current trends and future opportunities in adventure tourism can be assessed. By incorporating the historical development of adventure tourism in Nepal, the study gains depth in understanding the factors that have shaped the industry over time. The study can draw on historical data to forecast future challenges, opportunities, and trends in Nepal's adventure tourism sector. Additionally, it can examine how local communities have historically engaged with tourism and propose new ways to involve them in decision-making processes that align with sustainable practices.

Furthermore, the historical examples of crises and recovery, such as the aftermath of the Maoist insurgency, the 2015 earthquake, and the COVID-19 pandemic, provide valuable case studies for the study's objective of analyzing risk factors and developing strategies for crisis management in tourism. This can lead to the creation of more robust and adaptable systems that ensure the sustainability of adventure tourism in Nepal, preserving both its natural resources and cultural heritage for future generations.

By synthesizing the historical narrative with the study's research objectives, the study will be able to contribute practical insights into the long-term sustainability and resilience of adventure tourism in Nepal, offering a balanced approach that incorporates both historical lessons and contemporary challenges.

### **4.3 Adventure Tourism Bouncing Back after COVID-19**

Nepal is renowned as a destination offering a wide range of soft and hard adventure experiences. Its position as a top adventure location is consistently affirmed by the Global Adventure Tourism Index, which ranks Nepal among the top five based on its allure and appeal (Wengel, 2021). In 2021, Nepal faced a significant downturn in its tourism sector, with the number of foreign visitors plummeting to 150,962, largely attributed to the severe second wave of the virus. This decline was particularly notable among Chinese arrivals, a demographic that had been consistently growing and previously dominating the list of tourists (Prasai, 2023). The situation underscores the vulnerability of the tourism industry to external factors, such as public health crises, emphasizing the interconnectedness of recreational activities, accessibility,

accommodation, and amenities in sustaining and advancing the tourism sector, as Bhatia 1996 mentioned as essentials.

The sudden decline in tourism due to the pandemic had a severe economic impact on these regions, leading to job losses and economic hardship (Bastola et al., 2020). The pandemic raised health and safety concerns for both tourists and guides. Tour operators had to implement stringent health protocols to ensure the safety of participants. The pandemic changed consumer behavior, leading to increased demand for outdoor and nature-based activities as people sought to avoid crowded indoor spaces. Some adventure tourism operators adapted by offering new experiences that catered to these changing preferences.

The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in the adventure tourism sector. Online booking systems, virtual tours, and contactless payment options became more common to minimize physical interactions and enhance customer experience (Wengel, 2019).

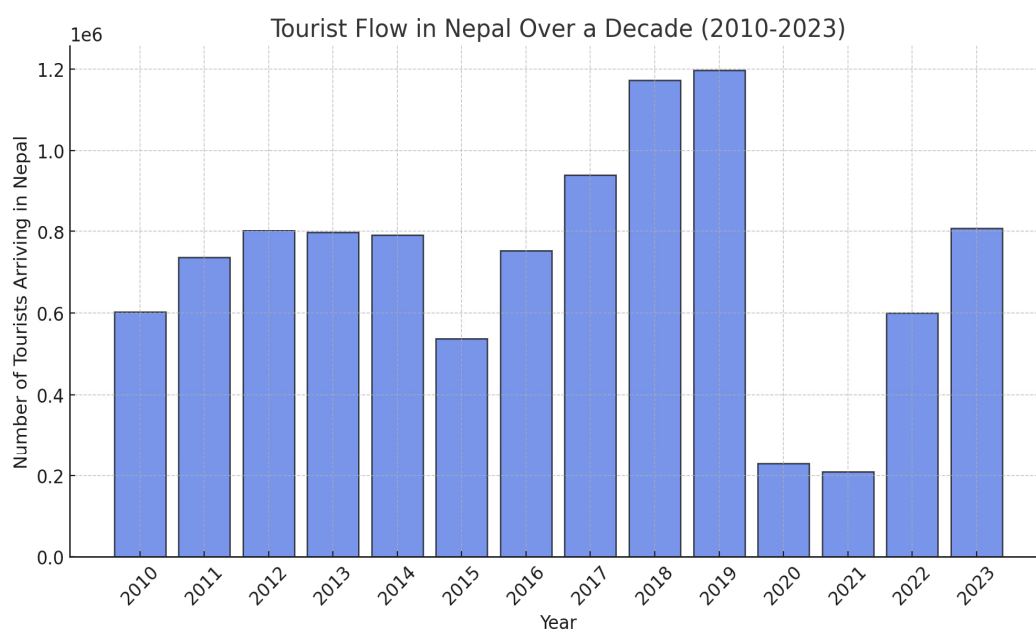
The ongoing uncertainty surrounding the pandemic made it challenging for adventure tourism businesses to plan. Many operators faced financial difficulties and struggled to survive the extended downturn in the industry. The pause in tourism due to the pandemic allowed some natural areas to recover from the impacts of overtourism. It also prompted discussions about the importance of sustainable and responsible tourism practices in adventure tourism. With the rollout of vaccines, some regions began to reopen to tourists, offering hope for the recovery of adventure tourism (Prasain, 2022).

Nonetheless, there has been a positive upturn in the number of tourists visiting Nepal since the year 2022, with a cumulative count of 614,869 visitors for that particular year. In the initial five months of 2023, Nepal welcomed 404,231 tourists, signaling a favorable trend for the tourism sector (Table 7). Nepal Tourism Board has targeted at least 1 million visitors in 2023, largely by attracting visitors from Asia, said Dr. Dhananjaya Regmi, the CEO of the Tourism Board of Nepal. Analyzing the fluctuation in tourist arrivals in Nepal from 2010 to 2023 requires considering various factors that might have contributed to the changes.

**Table 7 : Tourist Flow in Nepal in a Decade**

Year	Number of tourists arriving in Nepal	Change % from the previous year
2010	602867	+ 18.2
2011	736215	+ 22
2012	803092	+ 9.1
2013	797616	_ 0.7
2014	790118	_ 0.9
2015	537970	_ 31
2016	753002	+40
2017	940218	+ 24.8
2018	1173072	24.8
2019	1197192	2.8
2020	230085	-81
2021	210035	-89.32
2022	600000	+34.95
2023	8,09678	+31

Source: Department of Immigration, 2021 to 2023

**Figure 5: Tourist Flow in Nepal in a Decade**

Source: Department of Immigration, Nepal (2021/2023)

The narrative analysis of the tourism trends in Nepal from 2010 to 2023 provides valuable insights into the complex factors that influenced tourist arrivals. By interpreting these trends, we can understand not only the patterns of growth, decline, and recovery but also the underlying socio-political and global influences that shaped Nepal's tourism landscape.

#### **4.3.1 Positive Trends (2010-2017)**

From 2010 to 2017, Nepal witnessed consistent growth in tourist arrivals, a trend that can be attributed to several intertwined factors. Politically, the environment became more stable, especially after the country transitioned to a republic in 2008, culminating in the promulgation of a new constitution in 2015. This political stability likely reassured potential tourists and made Nepal a more attractive destination.

In addition, infrastructure improvements during this period, such as better road networks and enhanced air travel connectivity, made access to Nepal easier. The growth in infrastructure also played a role in enhancing tourist satisfaction and providing safer, more reliable travel experiences. These developments, combined with Nepal's historical legacy and the efforts of the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) to market the country effectively, fostered positive international perceptions. By aligning with global travel trends and capitalizing on its unique cultural and natural assets, Nepal positioned itself as an appealing destination for both adventure and cultural tourism.

#### **4.3.2 Negative Trends (2015-2017)**

However, the positive trajectory was sharply interrupted by the 2015 earthquake, which significantly impacted Nepal's tourism industry. The earthquake not only caused extensive physical damage to infrastructure but also severely affected the global perception of Nepal as a safe tourist destination. The media coverage of the disaster and subsequent international responses likely amplified concerns regarding safety and the country's ability to provide secure and reliable services to visitors.

The earthquake's aftermath created a sense of uncertainty and insecurity among potential tourists, leading to a decline in international arrivals. The disaster's long-term impact was compounded by the slow pace of reconstruction efforts in the immediate years following the disaster, which further delayed the recovery of the

tourism sector. Despite these challenges, the resilience of the Nepalese people, their efforts to rebuild, and the continued allure of Nepal's natural beauty set the stage for a recovery that began to take shape by 2016.

#### **4.3.3 Recovery (2016-2018)**

The sharp increase in tourist arrivals in 2016 marks a period of recovery for Nepal's tourism industry. The post-earthquake recovery was fueled by international support and a strong narrative of resilience and perseverance. The rebuilding of key infrastructure and the positive media stories surrounding Nepal's recovery efforts likely helped to counter negative perceptions, encouraging tourists to return.

In addition, Nepal's tourism marketing campaigns during this period likely capitalized on this theme of resilience, promoting the country as a safe and exciting destination once again. Furthermore, Nepal's diverse appeal, including trekking, mountaineering, and cultural heritage sites, remained as attractive as ever. The recovery phase also saw an increase in international flights and better infrastructure, which contributed to the ease of travel and fostered a more positive experience for tourists.

#### **4.3.4 Stagnation and Decline (2018-2020)**

While the recovery phase showed promise, the tourism industry faced stagnation in 2018, followed by a dramatic decline in 2020, largely due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had a profound impact not only on Nepal's tourism but also on global travel behavior. The suspension of international travel, combined with concerns over health and safety, led to an immediate drop in tourist arrivals.

Global media coverage of the pandemic, government lockdowns, and travel restrictions heavily influenced international perceptions of Nepal's safety and accessibility. These factors, coupled with the closure of popular tourist destinations and trekking routes, created an environment where tourism came to a near halt. As a result, Nepal's tourism industry faced severe setbacks, including a collapse in key segments like trekking and mountaineering, which are traditionally strong contributors to Nepal's tourism economy.

#### **4.3.5 Recovery Post-Pandemic (2022-2023)**

The years 2022 and 2023 marked a strong recovery for Nepal's tourism sector, with a notable increase in tourist arrivals. The successful management of the COVID-19 crisis, the widespread vaccination campaigns, and international cooperation in reopening borders contributed to a renewed confidence in Nepal as a safe destination.

The Nepal Tourism Board's efforts to promote the country as a resilient and welcoming destination likely played a significant role in the recovery. Additionally, Nepal's appeal as a nature-based and adventure tourism destination, where tourists could enjoy outdoor activities in relatively less crowded environments, contributed to the resurgence in tourism.

As per the data from the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB, 2022), India consistently remains the largest source of tourists to Nepal. The cultural, religious, and lifestyle similarities between the two countries might explain this trend. In 2021, the USA saw a significant rise in tourist arrivals, climbing from fifth to second place, possibly due to changing global economic conditions and easing travel restrictions. Bangladesh also entered the top five, displacing the USA, and showcasing the dynamic nature of tourist flow based on socio-political and economic factors.

According to the Nepal Tourism Statistics (2021), holiday/pleasure, pilgrimage, trekking, and mountaineering all experienced substantial declines during the pandemic, reflecting the challenges faced by these specific tourism segments. The category "Others" saw comparatively smaller declines, possibly due to local tourism or other non-traditional forms of tourism that were less affected by global restrictions. However, mountain tourism, which constitutes a large portion of Nepal's tourist economy, continued to demonstrate its strong appeal, with destinations like the Manaslu Trek, Mustang, and Lumbini remaining significant attractions.

In sum, the narrative analysis of tourism trends in Nepal from 2010 to 2023 reveals a cyclical pattern of growth, setbacks, recovery, and stagnation, shaped by both internal factors-such as political stability, infrastructure development, and marketing efforts-and external factors, such as natural disasters and the global pandemic. The study underscores the importance of resilience, adaptability, and strategic planning in sustaining tourism

growth. Moving forward, Nepal’s ability to recover from setbacks, combined with a continued focus on sustainable practices, effective marketing, and the development of diverse tourism products, will determine the future trajectory of its tourism sector.

#### 4.4 The Potential of Adventure Tourism in Nepal

Nepal, renowned for its stunning mountain ranges, offers a wide range of adventure tourism opportunities, including trekking, mountaineering, rafting, kayaking, and mountain biking. With iconic peaks like Mount Everest and numerous rivers such as the Trishuli and Seti, Nepal attracts adventure enthusiasts from around the world. The country is also home to diverse wildlife and over 646 bird species, making it a paradise for nature lovers (Ruhet, 2021; Huddart et al., 2020). Popular treks like Annapurna Base Camp, Langtang, and Everest Base Camp provide breathtaking views and a chance to experience Nepal’s rich culture.

Despite challenges like difficult terrain and economic marginalization in mountainous areas, adventure tourism offers a valuable opportunity for sustainable development, with local communities playing a key role in preserving cultural and natural heritage (Table 8). Preserving sites and promoting responsible tourism is essential for sustaining Nepal’s appeal as an adventure destination (Wengel, 2021). There are various types of adventure tourism in Nepal based on the medium:

**Table 8 : Types of Adventure Tourism in Nepal Based on the Medium**

	Land-based	Water-based	Air-Based
Established	Mountaineering, (trekking), rock climbing, jungle safari	White water rafting Kayaking	Paragliding Sky Diving Zip- flying
Emerging	Mountain biking, skiing	Canyoning	Bunjee Jumping

Source: Wengel, 2021.

#### 4.5 Mountaineering in Nepal

In the context of adventure tourism, Table 9 shows that outdoor activities take place in specific geographic areas, utilizing and appreciating the natural qualities and features of the surroundings (Buckley, 2007).

**Table 9 : Mountaineering in Nepal**

Category	Details/Statistics
Number of Peaks	8 of the 14 highest peaks in the world (above 8,000 m) are in Nepal, including Mount Everest.
Open Peaks	Over 400 peaks are open for mountaineering expeditions
Prominent Peaks	Mount Everest (8,848.86 m), Kanchenjunga (8,586 m), Lhotse (8,516 m), Makalu (8,485 m).
Climbing Permits	Issued by the Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation.
Spring Season	The most popular season for mountaineering is March to May).
Mount Everest Attempts	Over 11,000 attempts have been made since the first successful summit in 1953.
Permit Revenue (2023)	Approximately USD 5 million in permit fees for mountaineering activities
Success Rate	Around 60% of climbers successfully summit Mount Everest
Employment	Provides jobs for over 50,000 people, including guides, porters, and cooks annually
Fatality rate	3 %

Source: NTB, 2023.

The narrative analysis of mountaineering in Nepal reveals the country's significant role in global adventure tourism, particularly through its mountaineering activities. Nepal's mountainous terrain, which houses 8 of the world's 14 highest peaks, including Mount Everest, is a key attraction for adventure tourists. The historical and cultural richness of Nepal, paired with its natural features, makes it a unique destination for mountaineers. The popularity of trekking routes like Numbur Cheese Circuit, Langtang, and the Annapurna regions further enhances Nepal's appeal, contributing to the country's strong position in adventure tourism.

The statistics provided offer an in-depth look at Nepal's mountaineering infrastructure. Over 400 peaks are open for expeditions, attracting adventurers from

around the world, with Mount Everest being the most iconic. The revenue from climbing permits, approximately USD 5 million in 2023, reflects the importance of mountaineering to Nepal's tourism economy. The seasonal nature of mountaineering, particularly the peak months of March to May, indicates how carefully the industry is structured around favorable conditions for climbers. However, challenges like a 3% fatality rate and a 60% summit success rate underline the inherent risks of high-altitude mountaineering, emphasizing the need for preparation and safety.

Moreover, mountaineering in Nepal provides significant employment opportunities, benefiting over 50,000 people annually, including guides, porters, and cooks, thereby playing a crucial role in the local economy. The narrative underscores the dual nature of Nepal's mountaineering industry it is both a driver of economic growth and a testament to the country's natural and cultural heritage, with ongoing challenges in safety and sustainability.

The presence of established regulations, such as the issuing of climbing permits by the Department of Tourism, reflects the government's role in managing the sector and ensuring safety while promoting the sustainable growth of Nepal's mountaineering tourism.

#### **4.6 Skiing and Mountain Biking**

Skiing has the potential to contribute to the diversification of adventure tourism and offer recreational opportunities for residents. According to existing literature and research, several mountains, such as Mera Peak, Yala Peak, Mt. Manaslu, and Mt. Dhaulagiri, as well as regions like Langtang, Dolpa, and Annapurna Base Camp, show promise for the development of ski tourism (Groves, 2023).

Mountain biking is an emerging land-based adventure tourism activity, and Nepal presents extensive opportunities for this sport. The country offers a diverse range of trails that traverse landscapes ranging from the tropical plains of Terai to the mid-hills and mountainous terrain of the high Himalayas. However, currently, mountain biking remains a niche product in Nepal (Arnette, 2023).

The ski foundation in the area focuses on teaching local youth skiing, while a mountain biking company empowers women through guide training and operates a

free bike rental program exclusively for women. In terms of corporate social responsibility, pioneering adventure tourism companies provide advanced training programs, above-average wages, and year-round employment for their guides, rather than contracting them for specific tours. These initiatives often result in higher-priced packages for tourists, but research indicates that adventure tourists are willing to contribute to local communities positively and are aware of the costs associated with such tourism products. The initiatives in skiing and mountain biking are driven by passionate locals with international certifications who are working towards establishing internationally accredited guide certification courses (Wengel, 2021).

**Table 10 : Aspect of Skiing in Nepal**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Skiing in Nepal</b>	<b>Mountain Biking in Nepal</b>
Promising Locations	Mera Peak, Yala Peak, Mt. Manaslu, Mt. Dhaulagiri, Langtang, Dolpa, Annapurna Base Camp	Terai to Himalayas, Annapurna Circuit, Kathmandu Valley, Mustang
Current Status	Niche, with potential for growth	Emerging, currently a niche activity
Target Audience	Adventure tourists, local youth	Adventure tourists, cycling enthusiasts
Development Initiatives	Ski foundations for local youth, internationally accredited guide courses	Female empowerment through guide training, free bike rentals for women
Corporate Social Responsibility	Focus on local youth and sustainable tourism practices	Guide training programs, year-round employment for guides, above-average wages
Infrastructure	Still developing, potential for expansion	Developing trails, need for better infrastructure and maintenance
Environmental Impact	Low impact with potential for sustainable development	Growing interest requires environmental care for trail upkeep
Tourist Sentiment	Willing to pay more for community-driven tourism	Tourists support local empowerment initiatives, despite higher costs

Source: NTB, 2023.

Table 10 summarizes the current state of skiing and mountain biking in Nepal and highlights their potential as adventure tourism activities to diversify it.

#### 4.7 Caving in Nepal

The most attractive geographical features like caves for tourists are the ones that have tourist-geographical and traffic positions. The caves in Nepal that have a favorable location in terms of tourism- geography, and accessibility are the most alluring natural features for visitors. Exploring these caves is a primary objective for many researchers, scientists, and athletes, indicating that visitors of various ages with diverse levels of speleological expertise are attracted to them (Petrović, 2006). Some notable caves in Nepal are Bagdwar Cave, Bat Cave (Chamere Cave), Chobhar Caves, Gupteshwor Cave, Mahadev Parvati Cave, Mahendra Cave, Maratika Cave, Mustang Caves, Siddha Cave, Badrinath Cave. Cave tourism is one of the unavoidable parts of tourism package to Pokhara valley. The valley comprises at least 12 cavern features – 9 of them are easily accessible and eligible for show cave (Wasti, & Acharya, 2011).

**Table 11 : Caving in Nepal**

Cave Name	Location	Type	Special Features	Tourist Engagement
Mahendra Cave	Pokhara, Kaski District	Limestone Cave	Stalactites, stalagmites, rock formations	Popular among domestic and international tourists
Bat Cave	Pokhara, Kaski District	Limestone Cave	Thousands of bats, limestone formations	Niche, mainly visited by locals and adventure tourists.
Gupteshwor Cave	Pokhara, Kaski District	Limestone Cave	Shiva lingam, stalactites, and stalagmites.	Popular pilgrimage site.
Siddha Cave	Cave in Bandipur, Tanahu	largest cave	Limestone Cave	Popular among adventure tourists
Dhorpatan Cave	Dhorpatan Valley, Baglung	Limestone Cave	Scenic location, rare formations	Limited, trekkers and adventurers

Source: NTB, 2023.

Cave tourism in Nepal, particularly in regions like Pokhara, has grown into a unique segment of the adventure tourism market. The caves, renowned for their distinctive geological features such as stalactites, stalagmites, and vast chambers, captivate adventure seekers drawn to the country's hidden natural wonders (Tables 11 and 12).

Similarly, Mahendra Cave and Bat Cave, with their awe-inspiring rock formations and colonies of bats, showcase how cave tourism is attracting both domestic and international visitors. The caves are easily accessible, offering a thrilling and sometimes challenging experience. For many adventure tourists, the allure lies in the raw beauty and mysterious atmosphere that these caves provide. Similarly, Siddha Cave in Bandipur, one of Nepal's largest caves, appeals to those seeking quieter, less touristy experiences. This cave, along with other less-explored sites, broadens the scope of Nepal's adventure tourism, offering opportunities for both well-trodden and off-the-beaten-path explorations.

In contrast, Dhorpatan Cave, located in the more remote Dhorpatan Valley in Baglung, attracts trekkers and adventurers looking for secluded and untouched locations. Despite its challenging access, Dhorpatan Cave offers a unique combination of trekking and caving, appealing to true adventure enthusiasts.

Overall, cave tourism in Nepal provides a diverse range of experiences, contributing significantly to the country's adventure tourism landscape. Whether it's the popular caves of Pokhara or the hidden gems in remote regions, Nepal's caves continue to captivate explorers and adventurers from all over the world. The integration of cave tourism into broader trekking and eco-tourism circuits also enhances the overall tourist experience, promoting longer stays and increased local spending. Moreover, these sites often hold cultural and religious significance, adding a layer of spiritual depth to the physical adventure. Conservation efforts are increasingly vital to protect these fragile ecosystems from the pressures of growing tourist footfall. With proper management and sustainable practices, cave tourism has the potential to further boost Nepal's adventure tourism appeal while preserving its natural and cultural heritage.

## 4.8 Rafting in Nepal

**Table 12 : Rafting in Nepal**

River Name	Rafting Duration	Description	Tourism Data
Trishuli River	1 to 3 days	Popular for shorter rafting trips, suitable for beginners and intermediate adventurers	<b>March 2023:</b> 99,426 visitor arrivals
Seti River	2 days	Offers thrilling rapids and moderate difficulty	<b>2022:</b> International tourism recovers to 63% pre-pandemic levels
Bhote Koshi River	1 day	Known for its intense rapids, offers a more extreme experience	Rafting gaining popularity as a major adventure activity
Kali Gandaki River	3 days	Combines challenging rapids with spectacular natural scenery	Significant post-pandemic tourism rebound, with rising rafting interest
Marsyangdi River	1 to 2 days	Exciting and fast-moving river, ideal for those seeking adventure and breathtaking views	Increasing demand for adventure sports in Nepal
Sun Koshi River	7 to 9 days	One of Nepal's longest rafting expeditions, perfect for experienced rafters	Higher international interest, especially from Europe and North America
Arun River	9 days (combined with trekking)	A combination of rafting and trekking, ideal for adventurers seeking a multi-faceted experience	Strong recovery in adventure tourism post-COVID-19
Karnali River	10 days	A thrilling 10-day rafting and kayaking trip through Nepal's wildest river, a favorite for experts	Increasing participation in longer, multi-day river expeditions
Tamur River	10 to 11 days (combined with trekking)	Combines rafting with a trekking journey, offering a diverse experience	Continuous growth in the rafting sector post-pandemic

Source: Rafting Association, Nepal (2023)

Rafting in Nepal is rapidly gaining popularity as an adventure tourism activity, offering a diverse range of thrilling experiences for water sports enthusiasts. With options for both short excursions and longer multi-day expeditions, Nepal's rivers, such as Trishuli, Seti, Bhoté Koshi, and Karnali, cater to various skill levels. The country's unique topography provides rafters with a blend of rapid waters, stunning landscapes, and natural beauty, enhancing the overall adventure experience. In recent years, rafting has grown in appeal, supported by post-pandemic tourism recovery, marked by a significant rise in international visitors, including a 63% recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2022. The continued interest in adventure sports like rafting is contributing to Nepal's resurgence as a global adventure tourism destination, driven by local initiatives and international tourist interest. This growth aligns with the increasing demand for unique, action-packed experiences in the wake of the pandemic.

#### 4.9 Canyoning in Nepal

Canyoning in Nepal has emerged as an exciting adventure sport, drawing thrill-seekers to the country's rugged landscapes, with diverse canyons offering unique experiences. Table 13 shows its specialties in Nepal.

**Table 13 : Overview of Canyoning in Nepal**

Canyon Name	Location	Elevation (ft)	Special Features	Tourist Engagement
Jalbire Canyon	Sindhupalchowk	13,943	Waterfalls, Bagmati River	The most popular canyoning spot attracts global adventurers
Jagat Khola	Unknown (High-altitude)	26,000	Challenging canyons at high altitude	Known for challenging terrain, it appeals to experienced canyoning enthusiasts
Gosainkunda Canyon	Rasuwa District	14,000	Scenic waterfalls, deep pools, steep terrain	Gaining interest, especially for adventurous tourists
Rara Lake Canyon	Mugu District	9,500	Remote and pristine canyon areas	Newer destination, increasing tourist interest
Chitwan Canyon	Chitwan	500–1,000	River canyons and easy access	Popular among domestic tourists and beginners

Source: NTB, 2023.

Jalbire Canyon in Sindhupalchowk is the most popular spot, attracting global adventurers with its waterfalls and canyons, powered by the Bagmati River. Its accessibility and stunning natural beauty make it a top choice. Similarly, Jagat Khola, located at a high altitude of 26,000 feet, offers a more challenging experience, catering to experienced canyoneers seeking extreme terrains. Similarly, Gosainkunda Canyon in the Rasuwa District is gaining popularity for its scenic waterfalls and steep terrain, making it an ideal destination for those looking for more challenging canyoning experiences.

Rara Lake Canyon in Mugu District is a newer addition to canyoning offerings, known for its pristine, untouched beauty, and attracting adventurous tourists willing to explore remote areas. Meanwhile, Chitwan Canyon, with its lower elevation and easy access, remains a favorite among domestic tourists and beginners, providing a more accessible introduction to the sport.

This variety of locations, from high-altitude, challenging canyons to more accessible spots, highlights the growing appeal and potential of canyoning in Nepal, contributing to the country's thriving adventure tourism sector. As canyoning continues to develop, it is poised to become a significant part of Nepal's adventure tourism landscape, attracting a diverse range of tourists.

#### **4.10 Paragliding in Nepal**

Paragliding is an exhilarating air sport that offers a unique recreational experience, allowing individuals to glide through the air using a paraglider, which is propelled by the wind. Initially developed post-World War II as a practical means for hikers and mountaineers to descend from mountain peaks, paragliding has since evolved into a popular adventure tourism activity. In Nepal, this thrilling sport can be enjoyed without the need for extensive physical-geographical conditions or elaborate tourist infrastructure. Any elevated area, such as a hill or a mountain peak higher than 200 meters, can serve as a makeshift airfield, provided there are favorable weather conditions and suitable wind patterns.

According to Discover Nepal, the country's official tourism website, paragliding began in Nepal in 1995. By 2018, more than 60 tandem operator companies had joined the Nepal Airports Association (NAA). The NAA has also registered 294

tandem pilots and 50 solo pilots, who work with various tandem operating companies within Nepal. Although there are several paragliding spots in Nepal, Sarangkot in Pokhara is the most popular destination for enthusiasts.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) requires all paragliding pilots to have permits, with the NAA authorized to issue these permits. To obtain a permit, pilots must submit copies of their flying license, insurance coverage documents, passport, visa, and a photograph. The permit fees are \$50 for 15 days and \$90 for 30 days, plus a 13% VAT, along with an additional NAA membership charge of \$16 (Thapa, 2020).

Unlike other air sports, paragliding does not require extensive training or significant financial investment, making it more accessible for those seeking a challenge, an extraordinary adventure, and an opportunity to appreciate breathtaking landscapes from above. With basic training and a good understanding of meteorology and aerodynamics, anyone can partake in paragliding.

Registered paragliding airfields in Nepal can be found in Pokhara, Chapakharka, Kot Danda, Godavari, Phulchowki, Bandipur, and Syangja.

Table 14 highlights some key paragliding spots in Nepal, their features, and the level of engagement they attract from adventure tourists. Paragliding is an accessible and thrilling sport that contributes significantly to Nepal's adventure tourism industry, particularly in locations like Sarangkot, which remains a major draw for visitors from around the world.

Moreover, the popularity of paragliding in Nepal has led to the establishment of several training schools and tandem flight services, especially around Pokhara Valley, enhancing safety and professionalism in the sector. Tandem flights, where a certified pilot controls the paraglider while the tourist enjoys the experience, are especially popular among international visitors (Nepal Tourism Board, 2021). The Civil Aviation Authority also mandates periodic equipment inspections and certification to maintain safety standards. Local governments and tourism operators have collaborated to promote sustainable flying practices, ensuring minimal environmental disruption.

**Table 14 : Representation of paragliding in Nepal as an adventure tourism activity**

Paragliding Location	Region	Elevation (ft)	Special Features	Tourist Engagement
Sarangkot	Pokhara, Kaski	5,400	Panoramic views of the Annapurna range, Fewa Lake	The most popular paragliding destination attracts global tourists
Chapakharka	Kathmandu Valley	6,000	Scenic views of Kathmandu Valley, Mount Langtang	Gaining popularity, mainly for experienced pilots
Kot Danda	Kathmandu Valley	6,200	Offers views of the Himalayas and Kathmandu Valley	Lesser known, attracts adventure tourists and locals
Godavari	Kathmandu Valley	5,000	Located near Mount Phulchowki, greenery	Popular among local tourists and beginners
Phulchowki	Kathmandu Valley	9,500	Scenic and challenging, with views of the Kathmandu Valley	Known for scenic beauty, for seasoned paragliders
Bandipur	Tanahun District	4,400	Picturesque views of hills, a traditional Newari village	Growing in popularity among domestic and international tourists
Syangja	Syangja District	4,500	Beautiful rolling hills and proximity to Pokhara	Newer destination, attracting tourists seeking adventure

Source: NTB, 2023.

#### 4.11 Rock Climbing in Nepal

Rock climbing can be a challenging and exhilarating sport for outdoor enthusiasts. The history of rock-climbing dates to the early 19th century, with significant advancements in techniques, equipment, and safety standards occurring throughout the 20th century. There are 15 distinct types of climbing, including sport climbing, top rope climbing, aid climbing, traditional climbing, free climbing, free soloing, deep water soloing, big wall climbing, bouldering, alpine climbing, ice climbing, mixed climbing and dry tooling, speed climbing, crack climbing, and slab climbing.

Near Kathmandu, two popular rock-climbing spots are Nagarjuna rock climbing and another located in the Shivapuri National Park area. These cliffs, standing 12-15 meters high, are suitable for both beginners and experienced climbers. In Pokhara, the mountaineering museum features an artificial climbing wall named after French alpinist Maurice Herzog, the first mountaineer to summit an 8,000m peak, Annapurna I, in 1950. This wall stands at 23 meters high (Shrestha, 2016).

Rock climbing training is provided in Methlang, Pokhara, offering 18 different routes graded from 4c up to 6b, with the highest point reaching 23 meters. The site is managed by Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN), and visitors must arrange their entrance through the EWN office. The training includes the Patient Assessment System, patient lifting and moving techniques, splinting procedures, spinal cord injury management, shock treatment, constructing the human burrito for rewarming, frostbite and sunburn prevention, bandaging skills, and CPR (Himalayan Guides, 2016; Glaciar, 2014).

**Table 15 : Types of Adventure Tourism in Nepal Based on the Medium**

	Land-based	Water-based	Air-Based
Established	Mountaineering (trekking), rock climbing, jungle safari	White water rafting Kayaking	Paragliding Sky Diving Zip- flying
Emerging	Mountain biking, skiing	Canyoning	Bunjee Jumping

Source: Wengel, 2021.

**Table 16 : Perspectives of Adventure Tourism in Nepal**

Adventure activities in Nepal	Supporter	Obstacles	Benefits to Nepal
Ski snowboarding, sky mountaineering, split boarding, heli-skiing Mountain biking	Ski Guides Nepal Treks and Expedition Nepal Tourism Board and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation	trauma, illness and altitude sickness of snow sports’ lack of infrastructure and facilities. hazardous terrain Lack of geographical knowledge in adventure tourists	Adventure Sports Development Foreign Exchange Earnings Infrastructure Development Cultural Exchange: of different cultures and traditions Promoting tolerance and global harmony. Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage Health and Well-being Educational Opportunities Promotion of Rural Tourism Adventure Sports Development
White water Rafting, paragliding, mountaineering,	international guides, technical experts, and training advisors		

Source: Pandey and Pandey, 2017.

#### 4.12 History of Tourism in Pokhara

The historical development of tourism in Pokhara reveals a compelling narrative that spans nearly six decades. From its initial recognition as a transit point for mountaineers to its status as a multifaceted tourist destination, the journey is marked by key events and interventions, Prajapati, Huettmann, Ghale, and Regmi (2020). The interpretative analysis provides insights into the evolution of tourism in Pokhara. The introduction of trekking routes like the Annapurna Circuit in the 1970s significantly boosted Pokhara’s appeal among international adventurers.

#### **4.12.1 Early Exploration and Mountaineering (1950-1960)**

The early phase saw Pokhara being explored as a departure point for mountain expeditions. The historic ascent of Mt. Annapurna I in 1950 by Maurice Herzog played a pivotal role in introducing Pokhara as a mountainous tourist destination globally (Roberts, 2002).

#### **4.12.2 Commercial Trekking and Hippie Era (1960s-1970s)**

The initiation of the first commercial trekking tourism by Colonel Jimmy Roberts in 1966 and the influx of Western Hippies during the 1960s and 1970s marked a significant period of exploration and adventure in Pokhara. The Hippies, as adventure-seekers and explorers, contributed to the region's popularity through photography (Roberts, 2002).

#### **4.12.3 Tourism Development Initiatives (1970 to 1980)**

The professional development of tourism in Pokhara gained momentum in the 1970s. The formulation of a physical development plan in 1974, the construction of the Prithvi highway in 1976, and the establishment of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project in 1986 exemplify strategic efforts for tourism growth.

#### **4.12.4 Gateway to Various Treks and Conservation Emphasis (1980 Onward)**

The 1980s marked the popularization of Pokhara as the gateway to various treks, including the Royal Trek. The region gained fame for treks like the Annapurna Circuit and Annapurna Sanctuary. The opening of the restricted area of the Upper Mustang trek in 1992 further contributed to the popularity of Pokhara.

#### **4.12.5 Historical Trade Routes and Tibetan Refugee Influence**

The historical significance of Pokhara as a trade route between India and Tibet in the 18th and 20th centuries is highlighted to focus on adventure tourism. The establishment of Tibetan refugee camps in the 1950s and 60s contributed to the cultural diversity and heritage of Pokhara (Stevens, 1988). These trade routes not only facilitated economic exchange but also laid the foundation for modern trekking paths that adventure tourists use today.

#### **4.12.6 Infrastructure Development and Lakeside Transformation (1968 Onward)**

The completion of the Siddhartha Highway in 1968 connected Pokhara to the outer world, increasing tourist flows. The concentration of tourism around Phewa Lake led to the development of Lakeside as the central hub of Pokhara (Sharma, 2014). One of the stakeholders detailed that this infrastructural advancement transformed Pokhara into a gateway for trekking routes in the Annapurna region, fostering rapid growth in hospitality and tourism services. Over the decades, Lakeside has evolved into a vibrant zone offering accommodations, restaurants, and adventure tourism services that cater to both domestic and international travelers.

#### **4.12.7 Tourism Master Plans and International Recommendations (1972 Onward)**

Nepal's first tourism master plan in 1972 recognized the importance of tourism for socio-economic development. Recommendations from international organizations like PATA emphasized the development of the Fewa Lakeside area and conservation efforts in Pokhara (PTC, 2023). Subsequent plans continued to highlight Pokhara's potential as a center for nature-based and adventure tourism, integrating sustainability into long-term strategies. These initiatives laid the groundwork for infrastructure upgrades, capacity building, and eco-friendly tourism practices in the region

#### **4.12.8 Mega Events and Diversification (2007 Onward)**

Mega events like Visit Pokhara Year 2007 added to the positioning and popularity of Pokhara. The city expanded its appeal with the organization of events like the International Paragliding Championship, winter trekking camps, and triathlon championships (PATA).

These events not only attracted global attention but also helped diversify Pokhara's tourism portfolio beyond traditional sightseeing. To ensure long-term sustainability, it is essential to maintain ecological balance, cultural integrity, and quality visitor experiences, as highlighted by Buckley in Table 17. Table 17: Risk Management Strategy for Adventure Tourists for Sustainability.

**Table 17: Risk Management Strategy for Adventure Tourists for Sustainability**

Legal safety	A series of permits, licenses, business operations, registration, taxation, instructors' certification, penalty, compensation, insurance policy,
Medical safety	Medical availability, health check-up, own medical preparation, supply of routine medicine, emergency medical evacuation plan
Operational safety	Logistics, training, general safety, client supervision, appropriate equipment, emergency equipment, communication capabilities
Physical safety	Design adventure tourism products carefully to minimize risk, well maintain equipment, enough guides relative to clients, 4:1 to 12: 1 (Buckley, 2007), legal, and financial client information, good root finding ability, GPS map, compass, soft and hard skills in guides
Social	Group safety, interaction among clients and guides, constant attention and harmony (emotional Labour Sharpe 2005), client satisfaction choreography (Beedie, 2003)

Source: Buckley, 2010.

**Table 17: Motivations for Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Motivations	Adventure activities	Trekking/hiking areas
Challenge	Paragliding	Sarangkot View Tower
Risk	Zip flier	Kahu Dharhara
Thrill	Bungee Jump	Mattikhan View Tower
	Ultralight	Buddha Stupa and Shiva Temple, Pumdi
	Caving	Mahendra cave, chamere cave in Batule chaur Gupteshwor cave, Chhorepatan
Seeking sensation	Trekking/hiking	Dhiki danda
Excitement	International Airport	Nine Lake View trail
Water Adventures / Air Adventures	Rafting, kayaking, canoeing	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 18 shows that the motivations for adventure tourism in Pokhara are diverse, with each adventure activity and trekking/hiking area offering unique appeals to tourists. The interpretative analysis explores the motivations associated with hard and specific adventure activities in Pokhara. It is tried to reflect in chapter five.

**CHAPTER V**  
**STAKEHOLDERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF OPPORTUNITIES IN**  
**ADVENTURE TOURISM IN POKHARA**

**5.1 Background**

The perception of stakeholders in adventure tourism is analyzed using purposive sampling and a narrative analysis of their statements. Given the highly seasonal nature of tourism in Pokhara, stakeholders recognize the city's unspoiled natural landscapes as a primary attraction for visitors. This section emphasizes the importance of promoting ethical and environmentally friendly tourism, with a strong focus on fostering responsible and sustainable adventure tourism practices in Pokhara.

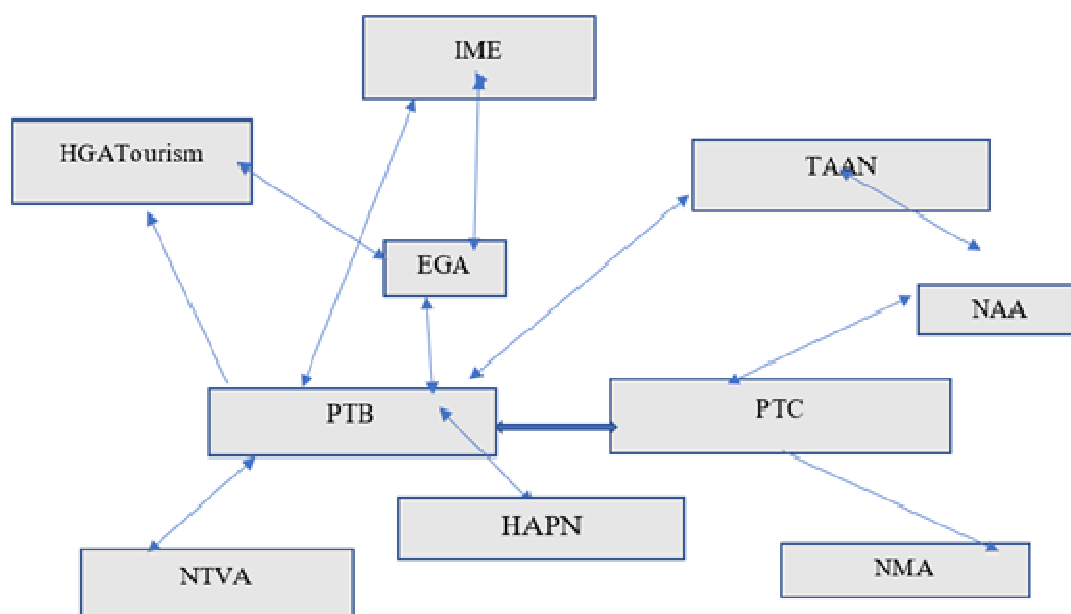
The discussion explores both challenges and opportunities in adventure tourism, particularly its intersection with policy and politics. Specific hard adventure activities, such as paragliding, bungee jumping, caving, and rock climbing, serve as case studies for narrative analysis.

Qualitative data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions with adventure tourism experts, industry professionals, and tourists. Grounded in stakeholder theory, this study highlights the need for tourism professionals and stakeholders to develop a deeper understanding of tourists' motivations for engaging in adventure activities. This knowledge is essential for ensuring sustainable tourism development while balancing environmental conservation and stakeholder interests.

**5.2 Tourism Entrepreneurs on Economic Growth and Employment Generation**

Figure 6 shows the institutions and organizations involved in the tourism development of Pokhara. They were all in a focus group discussion in the office of the Tourism Council Pokhara and discussed how adventure tourism providers should have the means to access a first aid facility, ensure that guides are well-versed in first aid procedures, and in the case of a client sustaining a severe injury, arrangements for medical evacuation must be feasible.

**Figure 6: Focus group in Tourism Council, Pokhara 2023**



Source: Focus group

As part of this research, key tourism entrepreneurs were selected to discuss hard adventure tourism activities, including paragliding, bungee jumping, white-water rafting, ultra-light flights, and boating. The focus group questions were pre-prepared, and the moderator and co-moderator facilitated the discussion.

The findings indicate that the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara is evolving rapidly, and success in this field requires a combination of outdoor-related skills, entrepreneurial initiative, and strong business acumen. Tourism entrepreneurs in Pokhara expect the provincial government to ensure business security, implement appropriate tax policies, and establish business insurance schemes to support the sustainability and growth of their enterprises. Modern business techniques, particularly financial management, play a crucial role in the sustainability of adventure tourism businesses. Due to the seasonal nature of the industry, asset management and securing long-term financing remain significant challenges. A key financial strategy discussed was bottom-up budgeting, which involves balancing trip revenue from participant registrations with total operating costs.

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) has acknowledged the changing dynamics of the industry and offers an online training program, Adventure Travel

Business Management for Ground Suppliers, to help professionals navigate these challenges. The course highlights that operating costs should not exceed 40% of sales, as adventure tourism businesses often function on low-profit margins, high-volume operations, or complex revenue structures.

The discussion also identified the various cost components within the adventure tourism sector. Variable costs include guest food, program expenses, high maintenance costs, guide wages, and transportation, while fixed costs consist of marketing, insurance, depreciation, and administrative expenses. Staffing remains a significant fixed cost, but maintaining a high standard of service is essential for long-term success.

The growth of adventure tourism in Pokhara has led to significant employment generation, creating jobs for adventure guides, safety personnel, equipment maintenance teams, hospitality staff, and administrative professionals. Additionally, the economic benefits extend to supporting sectors such as transportation, accommodation, and local handicrafts. The sector's expansion has contributed to overall economic growth, reinforcing its reputation as the premier adventure tourism hub of the country. Below is a transcript of insights shared by key stakeholders involved in the adventure tourism business in Pokhara.

Entrepreneurs highlight that adventure tourism contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings, local taxes, and business revenues. Activities like paragliding, ultra-light flights, and trekking permits bring direct financial benefits. For example, a 15-minute flight costs approximately USD 155.' These flights not only provide memorable experiences for visitors but also add to the income of local aviation businesses.'

The sector supports hotels, restaurants, transportation, and local handicraft businesses, stimulating a ripple effect throughout the local economy. Many entrepreneurs believe that the rising demand for adventure tourism has led to improved roads, digital services, and better tourism facilities in Pokhara.

**Respondents (PTC, Pokhara)** say that adventure tourism companies in Pokhara likely collaborate with international guides, technical experts, and training advisors to ensure the safety and quality of their services. Since there is a lack of specific local

regulations for some adventure sports in local bodies, these companies take it upon themselves to implement safety measures that meet or exceed international standards as PATA and NTB organized the PATA Annual Summit and Adventure Mart 2023 from 29 to 1<sup>st</sup> June with the slogan “Sustainability through Community-Based Tourism” that was held in Pokhara.

Moreover, these innovators in emerging adventure tourism pursuits make a concerted effort to run a business that is socially responsible and has a positive impact on local communities. He also added Ultralight Flight has the highest business in adventure tourism among all in Pokhara in 2023 and it was aimed to enter all the tourists to Pokhara who visited Nepal along with 6 lakhs domestic tourists on World Tourism Day and Christmas/New Year fair using publicity and slogan “Eat on the streets, enjoy on the streets”. Pokhara celebrated Bhaitika with the “slogan save culture promote tourism” All the programs were coordinated by PTC, NTB, TB Pokhara, and Pokhara Metropolitan.

**Respondent:** *“Adventure tourism plays a crucial role in our local economy,” said a tourism entrepreneur from Pokhara. “Activities like paragliding and ultra-light flights bring in substantial foreign exchange earnings and significantly boost local business revenues. The aviation sector benefits directly, while the ripple effect extends to hotels, restaurants, transportation, and even local handicrafts. When adventure tourists visit, they don’t just spend on the activity itself, they also contribute to accommodation, food, and souvenirs. “Currently, around 1,000 people are directly involved in paragliding, with 25 working in ultra-light flight operations and 50 in High Ground Adventure,” said a respondent from the adventure tourism sector. “We also have approximately 250 active paragliding pilots and 400 licensed individuals in the field. These numbers reflect the significant workforce dependent on adventure tourism in Pokhara. This, in turn, generates tax revenue for local authorities and creates numerous job opportunities, strengthening the entire tourism ecosystem.*

**Respondent:** *“After mid-October, we were operating around 300 to 400 paragliding flights daily, but now the number has dropped to nearly 150,” said a paragliding operator in Pokhara. “The decline in tourist arrivals from China has severely impacted our business. If this trend continues, it will be challenging to sustain air sports activities in Pokhara in the long run.”*

**Respondent:** *“Managing Pokhara’s vast airspace effectively is crucial for coordinating visual flight rules, instrumental flight rules, landings, and take-offs while maintaining a buffer zone between air routes,” explained an aviation official. Activities like skydiving, ultra-light flights, and paragliding pose challenges for air traffic controllers due to their complexities. To address safety concerns for both domestic and international tourists, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal imposed a ban on paragliding flights in Sarangkot, Toripani, and Tamagi. Initially covering an area approximately five kilometers west of Mandre Dhunga in Sarangkot, the restricted zone has now been shifted to Mandre Dhunga.*

“Respondant of NAA mentions that the increasing number of paragliding companies in Pokhara, currently at around 60, with 50 of them in operation, presents a significant challenge to entrepreneurship. With 376 licensed pilots and 250 flying commercially, the competition is fierce. Moreover, the initial investment in paragliding ventures in Pokhara is approximately equal to one billion Nepalese rupees, making it a financially demanding and risk-prone venture for entrepreneurs. Navigating the competitive landscape, attracting customers, ensuring safety standards, and sustaining profitability are some of the key challenges entrepreneurs may face in the paragliding industry in Pokhara.

Commonly what all these operators share is a shortage of resources for investing in new projects, a lack of communication with local authorities concerning environmental concerns, and a tendency to overlook specialized training in environmental matters as Williams and Soutar (2005), mention the primary concern for adventure tourism operators is application of green practices like preserving the natural environment, ensuring consumer safety (in terms of risk and potential legal issues), and safeguarding their market position by understanding and meeting consumer satisfaction. The researcher concludes that the primary obstacle for businesses, tourism developers, and tourism marketers in the adventure tourism sector is to guarantee that activities meet the expectations of visitors while also ensuring safety and sustainability.

Respondant (The Enduro Bike Race in Pokhara showcased the city’s potential as a premier adventure tourism hub, attracting 80 riders from 10 countries. With a thrilling course across Aarva Hills and Kau Danda, the event combined sports, culture, and

community engagement, boosting local businesses and promoting sustainable tourism. Featuring live screenings, entertainment, and global participation, the race not only enhanced appeal but also paved the way for future mountain biking events and economic growth through adventure tourism in Pokhara.

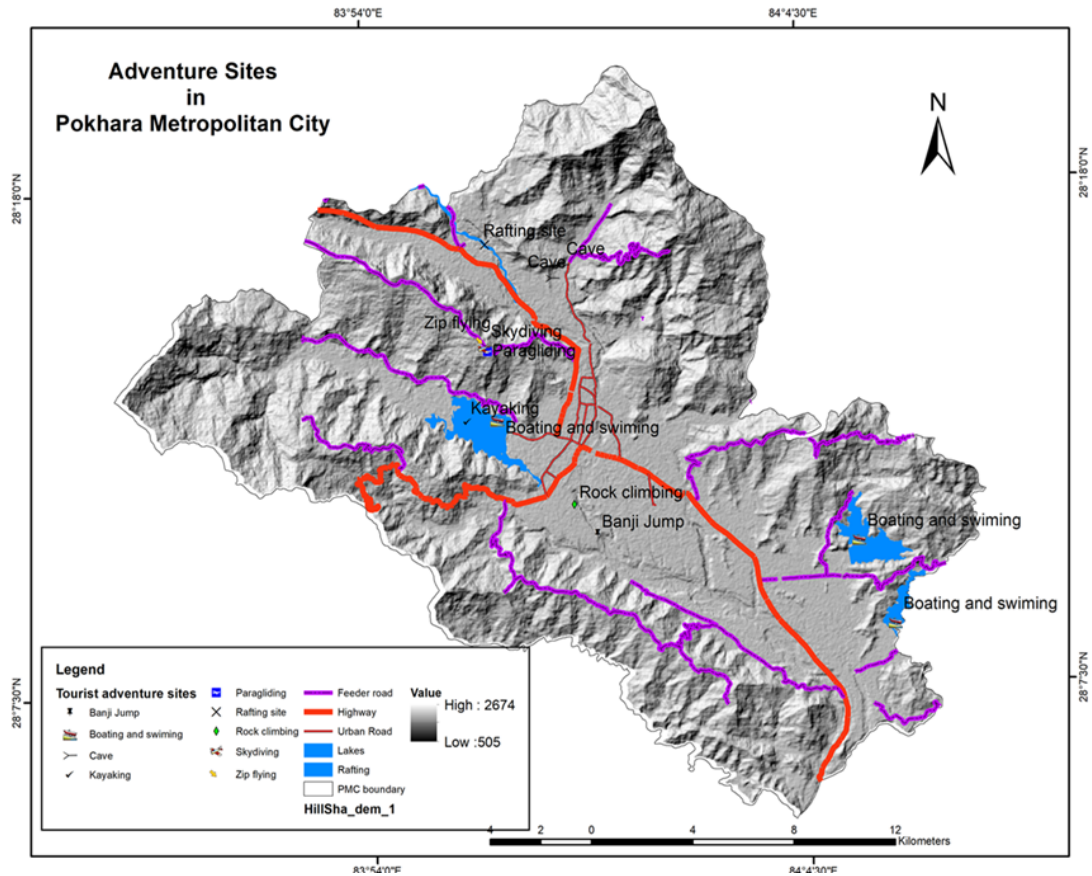
One of the interviewees claimed that tourism is promoted these days as the entrepreneurs invite all the members to provide input on the strategy planning process and business plan. They have a strategic review board, which sits above the board of directors, which is made up of 25 sector representatives and meets annually to give input on the final plan. The core stakeholders are members, the local community, the council, chamber of commerce, Pokhara Airport, Police, and national tourism bodies. There are regular schedules of communication, both formal and informal. There are quarterly update meetings for the members, monthly board meetings, annual input to business plan, annual general meetings to elect board members. There is an annual member communication survey and an annual member satisfaction survey.

The strategy focuses on promoting the shoulder seasons periods and maintaining adventure activities and growing value over volume. Describing the culture among the industry, he said that Pokhara has a positive overall culture; it's renowned for having a cooperative approach between members for the greater good of the industry. This has been built over many years as the town has grown with tourism as the biggest economic driver.

Pokhara truly is a captivating city, renowned for its stunning natural beauty and as a hub for adventure tourism. The serene Fewa Lake and the majestic Himalayan backdrop create a perfect setting for various adventure activities like paragliding, ultra-light aircraft flights, and starting and dropping point for trekking. It's no wonder Pokhara is often considered a must-visit destination, offering both thrilling experiences and tranquil escapes.

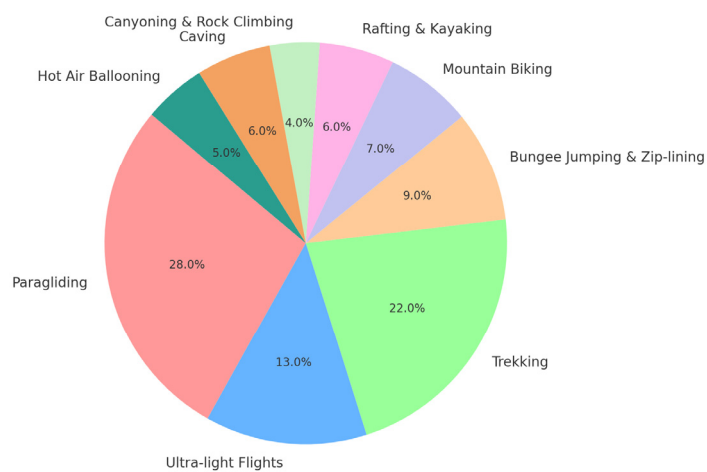
Among the various types of adventure activities, soft and hard adventure in Pokhara, certain hard adventure activities are often highlighted. Identifying their potential, opportunities, challenges, and the policies implemented at the local level regarding adventure tourism is crucial.

**Figure 7: Some Popular key drivers of Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**



Source: DEM data and field Observation, 2023

**Figure 8: Adventure Activities in Pokhara**



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The pie chart visually represents the diverse range of adventure activities available in Pokhara, highlighting their relative popularity among tourists. Paragliding (28%) emerges as the most dominant adventure activity, reinforcing its reputation as one of the world's premier paragliding destinations, thanks to the favorable weather conditions and breathtaking views of the Annapurna range and Phewa Lake.

Trekking (22%) follows closely, indicating the strong appeal of surrounding trails such as Annapurna Base Camp, Poon Hill, Dhampus, and Mardi Himal, which attract both domestic and international trekkers seeking immersive mountain experiences. The inclusion of Ultra-light Flights (13%) and Hot Air Ballooning (5%) reflects the growing trend of aerial adventure tourism, catering to those who prefer scenic views with minimal physical exertion.

Meanwhile, high-adrenaline sports like Bungee Jumping & Zip-lining (9%) and Mountain Biking (7%) highlight the region's efforts to diversify adventure offerings beyond traditional trekking and flying experiences. Rafting & Kayaking (6%) shows a moderate share, indicating their niche appeal, likely influenced by seasonal variations in river flow.

Caving (6%) and Canyoning & Rock Climbing (4%) occupy a smaller portion, suggesting they are less mainstream but still contribute to the adventure tourism landscape in the study area. The presence of caves like Gupteshwor Mahadev and Bat Cave makes caving an emerging activity, while canyoning and rock climbing cater to more specialized adventure seekers.

The experiences of adventure tourists in Pokhara reflect a dynamic interplay of intrinsic motivations, connections to the natural environment, and extrinsic societal influences. Intrinsically, adventure seekers are drawn to the thrill and excitement of activities like paragliding, ultra-light flights, and zip-lining, motivated by the rush of adrenaline and the challenge of pushing personal boundaries. Many view these experiences as opportunities to confront and overcome fears, such as the fear of heights or water, while also fostering a sense of mastery and control through mentally and physically demanding activities like mountain climbing, trekking, or rafting. Tourists with specialized skills find satisfaction in applying their expertise, whether navigating rapids or piloting equipment, while the sense of achievement from

conquering significant challenges, such as reaching Annapurna Base Camp or completing a multi-day rafting expedition, offers immense personal fulfillment. Fitness enthusiasts are equally drawn to the physical exertion of adventure activities, appreciating the health benefits they bring. Additionally, the inherent risk and danger in these pursuits serve as a direct source of motivation, adding to the excitement and allure of the experiences.

**Table 18 : Tourists’ Perspectives on Opportunities in Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Personal Challenges & Growth	<p>Thrill: Experiencing heightened adrenaline and excitement.</p> <p>Fear: Conquering one’s fears or anxieties.</p> <p>Control: Sustaining both physical and mental mastery over one’s body.</p> <p>Skills: Applying expertise to execute highly demanding tasks.</p> <p>Achieve: Surmounting challenges to attain ambitious objectives.</p> <p>Fitness: Engaging in activities primarily to maintain physical well-being.</p> <p>Risk: Embracing danger as a direct source of motivation</p>
Inherent/extrinsic, position within the natural environment.	<p>Nature: Recognizing the beauty in the natural world.</p> <p>Art: Identifying an action or creation as having artistic qualities.</p> <p>Spirit: Engaging in an activity as a spiritual or transcendental experience.</p>
Extrinsic, societal status.	<p>Friends: enjoyment in sharing an activity with others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image: enhancing how one is perceived by others</li> <li>• Escape: a change from the routine of home or work</li> <li>• Compete: competition against others [some studies have excluded this item]</li> </ul>

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The natural environment plays a pivotal role in shaping these adventures, as tourists often find themselves deeply inspired by the stunning beauty of the study area, pristine lakes, dramatic mountain ranges, and lush landscapes. For many, this connection to nature becomes a profound and transformative experience, with some perceiving their activities such as the graceful flight of paragliding as having aesthetic

or artistic dimensions. The serene and majestic surroundings also invite spiritual or transcendental moments, particularly during reflective activities like trekking or meditative walks. Extrinsically, social and societal factors further enhance the appeal of adventure tourism. Sharing these experiences with friends fosters a sense of community and enjoyment, while engaging in such activities can enhance one's social image, often amplified through social media or storytelling. Adventure tourism also provides a much-needed escape from the routines of daily life, offering a chance to disconnect and rejuvenate. For some, competition, whether against others or oneself, adds an extra layer of motivation and satisfaction.

These narratives reveal that adventure tourists in Pokhara value a combination of physical challenges, emotional connections, and social fulfillment. The insights highlight the importance of preserving natural and cultural integrity through sustainable tourism practices, ensuring the destination continues to offer transformative experiences in Pokhara. By tailoring offerings to align with the diverse motivations of adventure tourists, Pokhara can further solidify its status as a premier global destination for adventure seekers.

### **5.3 Factors Driving the Growth of Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Several key factors, including natural attractions, infrastructure development, government policies, and changing tourist preferences, drive the growth of adventure tourism in Pokhara. Here's a breakdown of the major drivers:

Caving in Pokhara offers a fascinating adventure for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts who are drawn to explore the hidden depths of the region's limestone formations. The presence of several significant caves, including Mahendra Cave, Chamere Cave, and Gupteshwor Cave, adds to the allure of caving as an exciting activity in the area.

The process of uncovering unique geological formations, including stalactites, stalagmites, and underground streams, takes on a more intricate character, marked by rugged and challenging conditions, limited spaces, and the potential for hazardous terrain. Ensuring the well-being of cavers within this framework involves not only providing them with appropriate guidance and safety equipment but also recognizing the significance of approaching these environments with sensitivity and care to prevent ecological disruption. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of guides

possessing a deeper understanding of the geological and ecological aspects. In this context, the consideration of natural hazards gains prominence.

**Table 19 : Caving in Pokhara**

Mahendra cave	Batulechaur was opened in 1960, managed by Bindabasini Higher Secondary School
Chamere cave	Batulechaur is managed by Bindabasini Higher Secondary School
Gupteshwor Cave	It is managed by Chhorepatan Higher Secondary School
Purpose of Visit	Discover unique geological formations, stalactites, stalagmites, and underground streams, to worship lord shiva
Challenges	more rugged and challenging, confined spaces, and potentially hazardous terrain. Ensuring the safety of cavers through proper guidance, safety equipment, delicate and sensitive to disturbances, a lack of geological and ecological knowledge in guides. Possible Natural hazards

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts between local authorities, tourism organizations, and caving enthusiasts. By implementing sustainable practices, promoting responsible tourism, institutional development, community organization, and stakeholders' negotiation caving in Pokhara can continue to be an exciting and enriching adventure for visitors while preserving the natural beauty and ecological value of these remarkable underground wonders.

**Table 20 : Rafting in Pokhara**

Spot	Upper Seti Rafting
Trip duration	4 hours
Distance	7 km. long
Rafting Starting Point	Bamboo bridge Hemja
Rafting Ending point	Dam near Pokhara, Kaski
Best Seasons Open	Sep.15 – Dec. and March-May
Number of visitors	50-60 per day in peak season
Challenges	-Monsoon brings faster currents and tough rapids; dry season has low water

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Rafting in Pokhara, particularly on the Upper Seti River, exemplifies the region’s appeal as an adventure tourism hotspot due to its combination of challenging rapids, scenic beauty, and accessibility. Introduced in 1991 by River Run Company and further developed after permits for Upper Seti rafting were issued, this activity has grown in popularity among thrill-seekers. With an average of 50–60 visitors daily during peak seasons (September–December and March), rafting offers an adrenaline-pumping experience through 7 km of white-water rapids, beginning at Bamboo Bridge, Hemja, and ending near the Pokhara Dam. However, challenges such as fluctuating water levels during monsoons and dry seasons, sudden weather changes, and the need for well-maintained safety gear and experienced guides underscore the importance of safety measures (Chaulagain, 2024). The emphasis on sustainable practices, such as the “Leave No Trace” principle, ensures that the activity aligns with environmental conservation goals while preserving the natural beauty of the river (Chaulagain, 2024). These factors, coupled with the exceptional natural and infrastructural advantages, position the city as a premier adventure tourism destination in Nepal.

**Table 21 : Tandem Paragliding in Pokhara**

Take off Point	Mandre Dhunga in Pokhara
Time taken	Thirty minutes
Height	Height is 1788 meters/ 5866 feet from sea level
Number of visitors	More than two hundred fifty paragliding flights happen in a day during peak season.
Peak season	September/October/November/December and February/March/April/May.
Age Range	Adults and Children aged 10 years and above
Thermal condition	Stable
Pilot	License holding and experience
Challenges	Weather, pandemic, International Airport, policy, lack of trust, marketing, lack of gov. support, recurrent training for pilots, non-standard company, and variation in fair, flying weight, airspace, unemployed pilots went to a foreign country

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

**Respondents:** While talking about challenges the data outlines several challenges faced in the paragliding industry in Pokhara, including weather-related issues, the impact of the pandemic on tourism, considerations related to the nearby International Airport, regulatory policies, marketing efforts, lack of government support, recurrent training for pilots, standardization of companies, variations in fare pricing, weight considerations for flying, and airspace management.

Paragliding in Pokhara is a cornerstone of its adventure tourism, yet several challenges hinder its sustainable growth and overall potential. Weather unpredictability remains a significant concern, as it directly impacts the safety and frequency of flights. The pandemic disrupted tourism, resulting in decreased tourist inflow and financial instability for operators. The proximity of the Pokhara International Airport raises concerns about airspace management and potential operational conflicts. Policy limitations, such as insufficient government support and unclear regulatory frameworks, further impede the industry's progress.

Additional challenges include a lack of standardization among companies, leading to inconsistent pricing and quality of services, and the need for recurrent training for pilots to maintain safety standards. Marketing efforts are limited, with inadequate promotional campaigns targeting international tourists. Weight restrictions and pilot shortages are exacerbated by experienced pilots seeking employment abroad in addition to operational difficulties. Despite these challenges, the stable thermal conditions and the popularity of tandem paragliding, with over 250 flights daily during peak seasons, highlight its immense potential.

To mitigate these challenges, a comprehensive strategy is required. This should include better weather forecasting infrastructure, clear policies for airspace management, and government incentives for operators to invest in safety training and standardized services. Collaborative marketing campaigns could attract a broader audience, while retaining skilled pilots through better incentives would stabilize the workforce. Addressing these issues can strengthen paragliding's role in boosting adventure tourism in Pokhara, ensuring its long-term viability.

**Table 22 : Rock climbing in Pokhara**

Type	hard adventure/ tough challenge
Spot	Methlang (natural)and Rato pahiro MT. Museum side(artificial)
Height	¾ m(natural) 12 m.(artificial)
Help	Embassy of France
Challenges	Official license, lack of systematic guidelines
Purpose of visit	to experience the thrill of scaling natural rock formations, testing their endurance, strength, and climbing skills.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The information suggests that the natural beauty and diverse rock formations make it an ideal destination for adventure enthusiasts seeking rock climbing challenges in Pokhara. The region's efforts to enhance climbing infrastructure and provide training opportunities for guides demonstrate a proactive approach towards sustainable and responsible adventure tourism development. The collaboration with foreign entities, such as the Embassy of France, further signifies the recognition and support for Pokhara as a prominent adventure tourism destination in Nepal.

**Table 23 : Canoeing in Pokhara**

Type	Hard
Spot	Kudi Waterfall, Ghaleli village
Canoeing distance	22 km northeast of Ghaleli village from Pokhara (Basic and 75 Advanced)
Challenges	flagging since the COVID-19 crisis,
Operation in Pokhara	2014 AD, implementing safety protocols, conducting risk assessments, and providing proper equipment to minimize potential hazards and accidents.
Best time for canoeing	March, April, May, June, July, August, and September

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Particularly in the realm of rock climbing, it can lead to ambiguity in safety standards, operating procedures, and risk management protocols. Without standardized

guidelines and licenses, there is a risk of inconsistent practices and potential safety issues, which could deter tourists and pose risks to both operators and participants.

The information provided highlights the appeal of canoeing for thrill-seekers and nature enthusiasts, offering both solo and shared experiences. However, it also brings attention to some challenges faced in canyoning, specifically concerning guides and the conservation of canyoning areas, particularly waterfalls. Preserving the natural beauty and ecological balance of canyoning areas may sustain adventure tourism.

**Table 24 : Bungee Jumping / High Ground Adventure in Pokhara**

Type	Hard
Spot	Hemja, Pokhara
Height	80-meter Tower Bungee Jump/ jaw-dropping 50-meter cliff
Challenges	COVID-19, negative message of recent plane crashes, delaying Prithvi highway extension, lack of government policy, managing staff
Opportunity	The sector is thriving, with 60% of tourists engaging in activities like ziplining and bungee jumping being international visitors, while the remaining 40% are domestic tourists. Many people are employed in season.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The provided information describes the introduction of bungee jumping in Hemja, Pokhara, Nepal, by High Ground Adventures three years ago. This unique bungee jumping experience is established on a 45-meter-long bridge constructed atop a hill in Hemja. The tower overlooks a pond created on the bank of the Myagdi River, providing an exhilarating experience for adventure tourists. This bungee jumping facility is recognized as the only tower bungee in Nepal.

The coordinator of the sport, Sarad Golcha, emphasizes the entertainment value for tourists and highlights the courage required to participate in this tower bungee. The presence of a 10-foot-deep water pond at the landing site, along with boats in the pond, adds to the overall experience. Tourists can use these boats after their bungee jump.

The information also mentions the positive impact on the local community. According to one respondent, local people have benefited from the introduction of bungee jumping by selling their products to visitors, thereby creating economic opportunities and employment in the area. Similarly, bungee jumping in Hemja, Pokhara, not only offers a thrilling adventure for tourists but also contributes positively to the local community by providing economic opportunities and employment for the residents.

**Table 25 : Skydiving in Pokhara**

Act	Detail
Location	Pame Danda drop zone, west of Phewa Lake, Pokhara, Nepal
Altitude	12,000 feet (3,658 meters)
Skydiving Type	Tandem skydiving
Scenic Views	Stunning views of Pokhara City, Phewa Lake, and the surrounding Himalayan landscape
Safety Measures	Professional and experienced skydive crew, adherence to safety protocols
Opportunity	Promotes adventure tourism in Pokhara, contributes to the local economy and tourism sector/ A unique opportunity to experience the thrill of skydiving amidst breathtaking natural beauty
Feeling during Free Fall	Exhilaration, excitement, adrenaline rush
Challenges	Naturally challenging as it is in the height of 12,000ft/3,658m, No returns on the investment, difficulty in paying interest to the banks and financial institutions

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The information gathered from the interview (Table 26) suggests that skydiving in Pokhara is strategically positioned as an adventure activity that goes beyond merely providing an adrenaline rush. Instead, it is portrayed as an experience that not only delivers excitement but also has positive implications for the local economy and the broader tourism sector.

The mention of safety measures and the tandem skydiving approach indicates a commitment to making the activity inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of participants. This approach allows individuals with varying levels of experience to enjoy the thrill of skydiving in a controlled and secure manner.

The acknowledgment of challenges, both natural and financial, emphasizes the inherent complexities and risks associated with operating a skydiving venture in such a location. Natural challenges might include weather conditions and the unique topography of the Himalayan region, while financial challenges likely involve the investment required to maintain safety standards and infrastructure.

**Table 26 : Ultra-light Flight in Pokhara**

Aspects	Detail
Location	Pokhara, Nepal
Purpose	Discovering the majestic Himalayas and Ariel sightseeing of Pokhara valley
Aircraft	very light aircraft without windows, seating for 2 persons (pilot and passenger)
Choice of Location	Pokhara was chosen due to its proximity to mountains and scenic lakes in 1996 A.D., making it the first in South Asia.
Availability	Only in Pokhara
Start of Professional Flights	Ultra-light flights began professionally in Pokhara in 1997 AD
Pioneering Initiative	Claimed to be the first Ultra-light flight in South Asia
Challenges	Weather, the season of tourism, the pandemic, etc.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Despite these challenges, the overall tone of the interpretation is positive, highlighting skydiving in Pokhara as a thrilling and unique opportunity for adventure enthusiasts. The combination of the exhilarating free-fall experience and the breathtaking scenery of the Himalayan region is presented as a key selling point. Fresh, new, natural, and unspoiled Pokhara creates a compelling attraction for those seeking a memorable adventure in this picturesque setting.

The information gathered from the description of ultra-light flights (Table 27) in Pokhara suggests that this adventure activity is presented as an exclusive and pioneering experience, providing a distinctive way to explore the Himalayas and the Pokhara Valley from the air. Several key elements contribute to the appeal of this activity.

Firstly, the deliberate choice of Pokhara as the location is highlighted. This suggests that the specific geographical features and scenic beauty of Pokhara make it an ideal setting for ultra-light flights. Additionally, the unique aircraft design employed in these flights and the promise of unobstructed views underscore the distinctiveness of the experience, emphasizing the focus on providing participants with a truly exceptional and immersive aerial adventure.

The acknowledgment of challenges, particularly those related to weather and tourism seasons, demonstrates a commitment to transparency and safety considerations. By addressing these challenges, the operators convey a dedication to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for participants. This also emphasizes the operational intricacies involved in offering ultra-light flights in a region with diverse weather patterns and fluctuating tourism activity.

It is found that ultra-light flights in Pokhara are strategically positioned as a remarkable and unparalleled adventure, aligning with the region's commitment to providing exceptional tourism experiences. The focus on exclusivity, distinctive aircraft design, and considerations for safety in the face of operational challenges collectively contribute to the overall appeal of this adventure activity.

As it is acknowledged, the information provided (Table 28) highlights significant environmental challenges facing Fewa Lake in Pokhara, Nepal. The confiscation of land ownership from approximately 950 people, with 700 having lands within the Fewa Lake Conservation Area, indicates a regulatory response to address environmental concerns. Professor Dr. Devendra Bahadur Lamichhane notes the adverse impact of human encroachment on the lake, leading to the deposition of substantial amounts (175,000 to 225,000 cubic meters) of various matters from tributaries into the lake.

**Table 27 : Lake Fewa (Boating/kayaking)**

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1. My Republica (17 August 2023)	Confiscation of land ownership of about 950 people. Among those people, about 700 had their lands inside the Fewa Lake Conservation Area
1. Respondent	said human encroachment on the lake has been severely harming the surrounding areas and their natural environment. The tributaries have been depositing 175,000 cubic meters to 225,000 cubic meters of various matters in the lake. The disposal of pollution from urban areas into the lake has also contributed to the problem.
2. Respondents from the Fewa Lake management	<p>Pokhara has no sewage treatment, with the flow going into the lake, along with pesticides. Not recommended for fish. The shoreline is dotted with garbage. Under current conditions, there is no swimming area (which you would not want to use anyway). In addition, motorcycle traffic at night (local kids going to bars and clubs)</p> <p>Water hyacinths have only added more woes to Fewa Lake, making things only bad and getting worse. These obnoxious weeds spread rapidly and cover a large area in no time.</p> <p>Tall concrete buildings around the Fewa Lake have largely reduced its beauty. People still wash clothes at its bank; by stealing the eyes, hoteliers and restaurant owners don't mind throwing rubbish into the lake.</p> <p>The increasing use of chemicals by the local farmers has contaminated Fewa Lake, which has posed a serious threat to the existence of several aquatic species.</p>

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Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The disposal of urban-generated pollution into the lake is identified as a contributing factor to environmental degradation. Sabina Timilsina, an accountant of the Boat Management Committee, and Surya Thapa, a member of the Rescue Team, further elaborate on the challenges. They mention the absence of sewage treatment in Pokhara, resulting in the flow of untreated waste and pesticides into the lake. The compromised water quality has rendered the fish unsafe for consumption, and the

shoreline is described as polluted with garbage. The absence of a suitable swimming area is noted, and concerns about motorcycle traffic at night are raised.

Water hygiene is highlighted as an additional problem, spreading rapidly and covering a larger area of the lake. The presence of tall concrete buildings around the lake is mentioned as detracting from their natural beauty. Activities such as washing clothes at the lake's banks and the indiscriminate disposal of rubbish by hoteliers and restaurant owners contribute to environmental challenges.

The increasing use of chemicals by local farmers is identified as a significant factor leading to the contamination of Fewa Lake, posing a serious threat to various aquatic species. The cumulative impact of these factors paints a bleak picture of environmental degradation, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive conservation efforts, waste management strategies, and sustainable practices to preserve the ecological health of Fewa Lake in Pokhara.

#### **5.4 Adventure Tourism Taken as an Opportunity by Entrepreneurs in Pokhara**

Adventure tourism in Pokhara presents a transformative opportunity, enhancing open spaces and recreational zones while managing environmental impacts. It supports community initiatives, revitalizes infrastructure, and leverages the region's diverse natural wonders. The growth potential is underscored by its appeal to international tourists seeking serious leisure and nature-based activities, contributing to local economies (Upreti, Upadhyaya & Sapkota, 2013; Williams, 2016; McKercher & Robbins, 1998; Burak, 1998). This development aligns with principles of ecodevelopment, linking economy, culture, and ecology for sustainable regional progress (Farvar & Glaeser, 1979; Norgaard, 1984). Nepal's role in global adventure tourism is strengthened by its investment climate and emerging infrastructure, promising significant benefits while navigating tourism's complex impacts (Lea, 1988; Saglio, 1979; Turner & Ash, 1975).

Respondents of High Ground Adventure Nepal say that adventure tourism is a significant contributor to the national economy. He says that in Pokhara, adventure tourism is going quite well. Among all the tourists that come for the zipline, bungee

jumping, and other adventurous sports in our company, 60 percent are international tourists, and the remaining are domestic tourists.

The other very exciting and must-do adventure activity in Nepal is paragliding from Pokhara. According to the respondent of NAA, Pokhara Paragliding is a relatively new adventure activity in Nepal. It is the simplest, safest, and least expensive way of discovering the joys of flying. It allows you to experience the aerial view of the magnificent Himalayas in the backdrop as you soar over lakes, villages, monasteries, temples, and jungles together with eagles and griffins. He added that Sarangkot, at a height of 1450 m above sea level in the Pokhara Valley, is the jumping point for the paragliders. One can take the elegant scenery of Mt. Annapurna and Mt. Dhaulagiri.

Respondents, Ultralight flight pilots, mentioned that this experience provides a luxurious alternative for those unable to trek but still want a close view of the mountains. Ultralight flights offer a distinctive perspective of breathtaking scenery, showcasing the Annapurna Mountain range and Phewa Lake.

He added that one can experience the beautiful scenes of mountains, peaks, glaciers, and valleys. Ultralight flights are from the domestic airport in Pokhara. He stressed that Ultralight is a must-try activity for thrill-seekers and a source of attraction for a broader audience visiting Pokhara.

Zipline, which is also relatively a new adventure activity, was introduced in the western part of the country, called Pokhara. High Ground Nepal runs the Zipline with all the necessary equipment and experienced staff. Respondent of High Ground Adventure said that Zipline has received one of the world's longest, steepest, and fastest zip lines to give you the ultimate adventure thrill award. He added it consists of a trolley mounted on a steel cable which is 1.8 km in length, the ride drops 600m vertically from the top of the Sarangkot hill with a resulting speed of 140 km per hour and finally ride concludes with a break-activated landing on the High Ground's Triangle in the village of Hemja.

**Table 28: National Revenue Boost**

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Employment generation	Policies integration
Economic value is raised	Scientific and technological Advancement
Marketing strength is high	Promotes quality of life and independence

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Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Adventure tourism in Pokhara plays a vital role in enhancing the region's economic value through increased revenue, job creation, and infrastructure development (Table 29). It also integrates policies focused on promoting sustainable tourism, aligning with a broader strategy to attract tourists who seek both comfort and adventure amidst the stunning natural landscapes of the study area. The shift towards lower-risk activities and the improvement of accommodation facilities, as predicted by Ayala (1996), reflect the response to the growing demand for a balanced adventure experience. Buckley (2002) also highlights how adventure tourism activities, such as surfing, generate economic opportunities, a concept that resonates with the strategy of developing remote areas through tourism.

According to the UNWTO (2014), a significant portion of adventure tourism expenditure stays within the destination, reinforcing the potential to retain substantial economic benefits locally. Tshipala and Coetzee (2012) support the development of adventure tourism attractions to stimulate local economies and improve the quality of life for residents. Similarly, Steynberg and Grundling (2005) advocate investing in tourism infrastructure to achieve long-term economic sustainability and income equality, which aligns with positioning itself as a competitive and sustainable adventure tourism hub.

Entrepreneurs and stakeholders in Pokhara emphasize that traditional outdoor providers can diversify their offerings by leveraging existing assets to tap into the adventure tourism market. There is a growing demand for authentic, immersive experiences that connect travelers with nature and local culture. Entrepreneurs from organizations such as TAAN Gandaki further assert that adventure tourism helps modify and sustain business strategies. For example, collaboration with industry bodies provides valuable insights and support. Events like the dragon boat race on

Fewa Lake and marathons organized in Pokhara serve as prime examples of how adventure tourism can attract attention, enhance visibility, and boost local businesses.

In conclusion, adventure tourism in Pokhara presents entrepreneurs with significant opportunities to capitalize on the region's natural beauty and growing tourist demand for thrilling outdoor experiences. Activities such as paragliding, ultralight flights, and ziplining not only drive local economic growth but also contribute to the development of the region's infrastructure. Entrepreneurs emphasize the need for sustainable tourism practices that ensure responsible environmental management, further solidifying the appeal as a premier adventure tourism destination.

### **5.5 Local Community Members' Perceptions of Socio-Cultural Benefits**

Underpinning the social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), this research is based on interviews with community members, exploring their perceptions of the socio-cultural benefits of adventure tourism in Pokhara, focusing on aspects such as cultural exchange, community empowerment, and infrastructure development. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that 67.9% were male, reflecting the patriarchal culture of the region, while 32.1% were female around Lakeside in Pokhara. The majority of respondents (42.8%) were aged between 25 and 34 years, indicating that most participants were in their prime working years. The respondents had low educational levels, with 70.41% having only completed secondary education and just 2.55% holding college qualifications. This suggests limited formal training in tourism-related professions, which may influence how community members engage with and perceive the tourism industry.

Despite these limitations, many respondents acknowledged positive cultural interactions with foreign tourists, highlighting opportunities for learning new languages, understanding diverse lifestyles, and sharing local traditions. Several participants noted a sense of pride in showcasing their heritage and believed that tourism contributed to greater awareness and preservation of local customs and festivals. Additionally, improvements in public amenities, road access, and communication facilities were frequently mentioned as indirect benefits spurred by tourism development. The narratives are as follow:

**Table 29: Local Community Members' Perceptions of Socio-Cultural Benefits**

Natural Environment	Quality of Life	Psychological	Sense of Place	of Socio-economic
Controls deforestation	Tour operators	Reduce financial stress	Explore and exchange culture	Global purchase of sports clothing
Harmony with nature	Tourists' guides	flow and deep flow	Attachment to the environment	Activewear and sports equipment
Awe-inspiring	Transporters	ecstatic experience		Job creation and income generation
		contrasting emotions		Gov. collects more taxes
		flow, play, peak experiences, peak performance,		Inflow of remittance

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Tourism in Pokhara drives socio-economic growth, spurred by initiatives like the PATA Development Authority (Upreti et al., 2013). It boosts employment and revenue, aligning with global adventure tourism trends (Yana & Wengel, 2020; Panthe, 2021). Adventure tourism enhances well-being through nature immersion (Kellert, 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1992), supports local economies, and preserves cultural heritage (Hollick & Braun, 2005; Hultman & Cederholm, 2009). It fosters a sense of place, revitalizing traditions and stimulating local businesses (Swartbrooke, 2003; Zuckerman, 1979). Adventure tourism in Pokhara not only enriches individual experiences but also sustains community vitality and environmental stewardship (Beard, C., Swarbrooke, J., Leckie, S., & Pomfret, G., 2012). It has significantly influenced the socio-cultural landscape of the region. While it brings economic growth and employment opportunities, its impact on local traditions, lifestyles, and cultural exchange remains an essential area of study (Table 30).

### **5.5.1 Positive Socio-cultural Impacts**

Many locals shared that adventure tourism brings diverse visitors, fostering cultural exchange and broadening local perspectives. A local restaurant owner stated, “I have learned so much about different cultures just by interacting with tourists. It has made me more open-minded.”

A traditional artisan mentioned, ‘Tourists’ interest in our crafts and traditions makes us appreciate our heritage even more. We feel proud to share our culture with them.”

Several young residents highlighted that exposure to new ideas and global perspectives through engagement with tourists has expanded their learning opportunities. A student working part-time in a travel agency noted, “Talking to foreigners has improved my English and knowledge about different countries.”

### **5.5.2. Economic Benefits and Improvement of Quality of Life**

A trekking guide explained, “Before adventure tourism became popular, job opportunities were limited. Now, many of us earn a good income by guiding tourists.”

A hotel manager shared, “Many locals have developed skills in hospitality, guiding, and management through training programs provided by tourism businesses.”

A homestay owner stated, “I started my business catering to tourists, and it has transformed my family’s financial situation.”

### **5.5.3. Preservation of Cultural Heritage**

Support for Local Artisans: An artisan selling handmade souvenirs remarked, “Tourists’ interest in our handicrafts helps sustain our traditional arts and crafts, which might have otherwise disappeared.”

Conservation Initiatives: A community leader mentioned, “Revenue from tourism is often reinvested in preserving historical and cultural sites, ensuring that our heritage is protected for future generations.”

#### **5.5.4. Improvement in Social Infrastructure**

A local teacher noted, “Thanks to tourism, we now have better roads, healthcare, and educational facilities. Our quality of life has improved.”

A social worker explained, “Many tourism businesses contribute to local social projects and charities, supporting underprivileged groups and funding community development initiatives.”

#### **5.5.5. Challenges and Concerns**

While there are many positive perceptions, some community members expressed concerns:

An elder in the community stated, “We worry that exposure to external cultures might lead younger generations to forget our traditional values and lifestyles.”

A local shopkeeper shared, “Not everyone benefits equally from tourism. Some areas see rapid development, while others are left behind, leading to social tensions.” “He added that sometimes overcrowding leads to the loss of amenities.”

The interviews reveal that local community members in Pokhara generally recognize the socio-cultural benefits of adventure tourism, particularly in cultural exchange, community empowerment, and infrastructure development. However, concerns about cultural erosion and unequal distribution of benefits highlight the need for sustainable tourism policies that ensure inclusive growth while preserving local traditions. Engaging communities in decision-making and providing equitable opportunities can help maximize the positive impact of adventure tourism in Pokhara.

### **5.6 Media, Marketing, and Global Positioning of Pokhara as an Adventure Hub**

Successfully driving the growth of adventure tourism in Pokhara as a premier adventure tourism destination, a multifaceted approach is essential, combining natural, cultural, and adventure elements into a coherent and attractive package. Below are key strategies for branding Pokhara:

### **5.6.1 Brand Identity Creation**

**Brand Name and Logo:** Use a name that encapsulates a unique blend of nature, culture, and adventure, such as “Paradise Pokhara.” The logo could feature iconic symbols like the Machhapuchhre mountain, Phewa Lake, paragliding, and ultra-light aircraft, evoking a sense of adventure.

**Tagline:** The tagline “Nature, Culture, Adventure” should serve as a simple and memorable statement that encapsulates the essence.

### **5.6.2. Leveraging Natural and Cultural Attractions**

**Promote Natural Beauty:** Highlight stunning landscapes, including the Annapurna Range, Phewa Lake, and trekking trails such as those leading to Poonhill and Mardi Himal. These areas offer opportunities for adventure tourism activities like trekking, paragliding, mountain biking, and boating.

**Cultural Richness:** Integrate cultural heritage, including its temples, pagodas, festivals, and ethnic diversity, into the branding narrative. Cultural tours could complement adventure activities to attract a broader range of tourists.

### **5.6.3. Positioning in the Global Adventure Tourism Market**

**Comparison to Global Destinations:** Position Pokhara alongside renowned adventure tourism destinations like Queenstown in New Zealand. Highlight its unique appeal as the “Adventure Gateway to the Himalayas,” a term that can resonate with international adventure tourists.

**Adventure Sports and Events:** Promote activities like paragliding, ultra-light aircraft flights, trekking, rafting, cycling, and bungee jumping. Organize events like international paragliding competitions, adventure marathons, and trekking challenges that will draw global attention.

### **5.6.4. Strategic Marketing and Promotion**

**Content Marketing:** Develop engaging content (blogs, vlogs, and guest articles) to showcase offerings in well-known travel magazines and websites. Create audio-visual

content that highlights the natural beauty and adventure experiences and distribute it through digital platforms.

**Social media and Digital Campaigns:** Leverage social media platforms to run targeted advertising campaigns and influencer partnerships. Create hashtags like ‘ParadisePokhara,’ ‘Nature,’ ‘Culture Adventure,’ and ‘Adventure In Pokhara’ to encourage user-generated content and enhance brand visibility.

**Educational Programs:** Launch educational initiatives in schools and universities about responsible tourism, sustainable practices, and the importance of preserving natural and cultural heritage in Pokhara.

#### **5.6.5. Infrastructure and Accessibility Enhancements**

**Luxurious and Comfortable Transportation:** Include high-end transport options (e.g., luxury buses, premium taxis, and chartered flights) to ensure accessibility for high-end adventure tourists. Improving transportation infrastructure, such as better roads, airstrips, and links with major cities, will support the destination’s accessibility.

**Public Art and Monuments:** Create landmark monuments that represent key elements of the adventure brand (e.g., a paragliding statue, Machhapuchhre monument, ultra-light aircraft installations) in prominent squares or at high-traffic tourist sites.

#### **5.6.6. Stakeholder and Community Involvement**

**Brand Ambassadors and Partnerships:** Appoint influential figures as brand ambassadors to enhance credibility and visibility. Encourage filmmakers, photographers, and content creators to showcase unique appeal through documentaries and social media campaigns.

**Local Collaboration:** Involve local tourism operators, hoteliers, restaurants, and guide associations in the branding process to ensure authenticity and community support. This fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for maintaining the destination’s brand integrity.

### **5.6.7. International and National Campaigns**

**Tourism Campaigns:** Implement international campaigns like “Visit Pokhara,” “Pokhara: Gateway to Himalayan Adventures,” and “Once is Not Enough” in neighboring countries and major tourist markets (e.g., India, China, the UK, and Australia). These campaigns should aim to increase awareness and visibility among international adventure tourists.

**Events and Competitions:** Regularly organize adventure events such as paragliding festivals, trekking challenges, ultra-light aircraft shows, and cultural celebrations to boost presence on the global adventure tourism map.

To establish Pokhara as a premier global adventure tourism hub, a comprehensive branding and marketing strategy is essential. This involves creating a strong brand identity, leveraging its natural and cultural attractions, and positioning it competitively alongside global adventure destinations. Strategic marketing efforts, including digital campaigns, influencer collaborations, and international tourism promotions, will enhance global visibility of the study area.

Improving infrastructure, enhancing accessibility, and incorporating public landmarks will strengthen the city’s adventure appeal. Engaging local stakeholders and international partners will ensure sustainable tourism growth while fostering community involvement. Hosting major adventure events and competitions will further solidify its reputation as the “Adventure Gateway to the Himalayas.”

**CHAPTER VI**  
**CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABLE ADVENTURE TOURISM**  
**DEVELOPMENT IN POKHARA**

**6.1 Background**

Several writers contend that in the absence of risk, the essence of adventure diminishes. It is precisely the potential for harm, including the prospect of fatality, that entices individuals toward adventure tourism, with a notable focus on those who engage in strenuous or challenging activities (Weber, 2001; Kane, 2010).

Bungy jumping, Paragliding, boating, sky-diving, caving, mountain biking, hill trekking, hot air balloons, etc., in Pokhara have played a significant role in establishing the city's enduring reputation as an adventure hotspot. As the popularity of Pokhara has grown, so has the accessibility of its thrilling adventure activities.

The city of Pokhara in Nepal has not been unaffected by the turbulent transition the country has undergone. The significant structural changes, such as the shift from monarchy to a democratic republic, have brought about various challenges for the region. The transition has also led to a shift in public expectations, resulting in increased frustration. While armed insurgency has subsided, there is still a state of negative peace, meaning there are underlying tensions and unresolved conflicts. Additionally, the interviewee mentioned that the composition of stakeholders has transformed from a close and limited group to a diverse and often contradictory set of individuals with different positions and expectations. Moreover, decision-makers in the political sphere have largely struggled to manage the political transition, further complicating matters. All these factors pose challenges for the tourism industry in Pokhara, which is considered a source of pride and a means for peace and prosperity in Nepal. According to Chaudhary (2019), as the tourism industry experiences significant changes and new trends emerge, the role of travel agencies has become increasingly complex.

To overcome the challenges brought about by these changes, travel agencies must prioritize adequate training and in-depth study of related subjects to excel in the industry. According to them, most of the destinations face seasonal fluctuation of the visitors. Managing human resources at the destination is another crucial issue.

Sometimes, there is labor overflow, while other times there will be a labor shortage, which also equally affects maintaining quality in tourism by rewarding and compensating the workforce.

The information received from Digital media is more prompt, accurate, and sufficient than that of live sources of information, to which service providers must have close monitoring, understanding, and adjusting (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009).

Adventure tourism in Pokhara remains underdeveloped as previous research in the field of tourism neglected to focus on adventure activities in the mentioned context. This can be attributed to the relatively recent emergence of adventure tourism as a distinct sector within the industry, which has yet to be fully recognized. Additionally, there is a lack of comprehensive information regarding adventure attractions and destinations in Pokhara.

The qualitative research employed for gathering data encompassed the distribution of surveys to 15 tourists from international backgrounds, as well as engaging in interviews with 30 local tour guides, 14 entrepreneurs and Overall data gathered through questionnaires and focus group discussions are analyzed using interpretative/narrative analysis.

Adventure tourism in Pokhara thrives due to its natural beauty and diverse offerings, yet its sustainability faces critical challenges that demand strategic interventions (Table 31). Policy gaps emerge as a primary concern, with the lack of a national strategic plan, provincial guidelines, or municipal frameworks hindering the development of standardized infrastructure and operations. The absence of feasibility studies before launching projects exacerbates inefficiencies, leading to resource misallocation and environmental stress. Moreover, political instability, favoritism, and nepotism create barriers to fair policymaking and implementation, stalling growth in this sector.

**Table 30: Themes derived from Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Policy in Adventure Tourism	Infrastructure	Knowledge	Politics	Technology	Security	Destination management
Lack of National Strategic Plan	No international standards for infrastructure No feasibility study before running the project	Lack of awareness among entrepreneurs	Instability Favoritism and Nepotism	No technical standards in ICT in the field of adventure tourism	Lack of safety and comfort	No grand publication and branding in the national and international market
No policy is formulated in the province	Lack of recreational activities management	Unaware of strategic partnership and basic requirements	Favoritism Nepotism	No tourist activities in the annual calendar	No security of investment and job	Environmental challenges like Flood, unfavorable weather
No policy is formulated in the municipality	Lack of fulfillment of current trends and demand	Lack of cooperation among tourists and entrepreneurs	Passive government and Rampant corruption	No research work regarding sustainability		Unmanaged pollutants, garbage
Low access to training opportunities. • Lack of technical guidelines, gears, and insurance policies. • High cost for training Lack of monitoring /evaluation	International Airport	No idea about Sensitive, reality, tourism for all opportunities		Irregularities, time delays, communication failures, lack of effective management of websites		Bar raises and more demanding customers

Source: Province Government Pokhara and Pokhara Municipality 2080

Infrastructure shortcomings are evident in poorly managed transportation networks, limited aviation connectivity, and substandard recreational facilities. These issues negatively affect the tourist experience and deter potential repeat visits. Technological limitations further compound these challenges, with outdated ICT systems, underdeveloped websites, and inadequate technical standards failing to meet the expectations of modern travelers.

Environmental fragility is another pressing concern, as entrepreneurs report adverse impacts caused by unregulated activities such as river extraction, shifting paragliding locations, and increasing tourist traffic. The region's delicate ecosystems face threats from climate change, deforestation, and soil erosion, intensifying the need for

sustainable practices. Adventure tourism's reliance on nature amplifies the risks associated with environmental degradation, as scenic and pristine surroundings are central to its appeal.

Economic challenges faced by entrepreneurs add another layer of complexity. Many hoteliers and service providers, burdened with loans and pandemic-induced financial losses, face the risk of foreclosure. This financial strain discourages further investment in infrastructure and innovation. Additionally, the lack of skilled human resources and inadequate training opportunities for guides and operators hinder service quality, further impacting visitor satisfaction.

Researcher observations reveal that visitor contentment hinges on several factors, including natural beauty, safety, cost considerations, the availability of amenities, and the proficiency of guides. Adventure tourists expressed concerns about safety standards, environmental conservation, and the management of activities. For instance, recurring issues like varying service quality in paragliding and poorly maintained rafting gear were highlighted. Many visitors also noted the need for better communication channels, transparent pricing structures, and enhanced marketing efforts to position Pokhara as a globally competitive adventure tourism destination.

To address these challenges, strategic solutions must include developing a robust policy framework, improving infrastructure, adopting advanced technologies, and implementing sustainable practices. Greater government support, stricter monitoring of environmental and socio-cultural impacts, and ethical business practices among entrepreneurs are essential. Additionally, fostering partnerships among stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, and businesses, can create a unified approach to managing resources and promoting sustainable tourism.

The potential as an adventure tourism hub is undeniable in Pokhara, but its long-term success depends on addressing these challenges systematically. By prioritizing sustainability, strategic planning, and inclusivity, Pokhara can safeguard its natural resources, enhance visitor experiences, and ensure the industry's resilience against future disruptions.

## 6.2 Key Challenges in Adventure Tourism Development

*“Adventure tourism in Pokhara faces several significant challenges,” said a local tourism expert. “For one, infrastructure limitations like poor road connectivity to remote adventure sites and inadequate rescue facilities make it difficult to provide seamless experiences for tourists. Safety is another major concern, as inconsistent regulations, a lack of proper training for adventure operators, and unpredictable weather conditions affect activities like paragliding and trekking. We also have to deal with environmental degradation, including waste management problems and deforestation in trekking areas, which jeopardizes the sustainability of tourism. On top of that, economic and policy barriers, such as high operational costs, fluctuating tourist demand, and bureaucratic hurdles in licensing, discourage new investments. Moreover, there’s a shortage of skilled workers, and many local communities have limited awareness of responsible tourism practices, which restricts the growth of the sector. To address these issues, we need coordinated efforts from the government, private sector, and local stakeholders to ensure sustainable development.”*

**Stakeholders as respondents mentioned that** *“After mid-October, we were operating around 300 to 400 paragliding flights daily, but now the number has dropped to nearly 150, said a paragliding operator in Pokhara. The decline in tourist arrivals from China has severely impacted our business. If this trend continues, it will be challenging to sustain air sports activities in Pokhara in the long run.”*

**Respondent:** *“Managing Pokhara’s vast airspace effectively is crucial for coordinating visual flight rules, instrumental flight rules, landings, and take-offs while maintaining a buffer zone between air routes, explained an aviation official. “Activities like skydiving, ultra-light flights, and paragliding pose challenges for air traffic controllers due to their complexities. To address safety concerns for both domestic and international tourists, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal imposed a ban on paragliding flights in Sarangkot, Toripani, and Tamagi. Initially covering an area approximately five kilometers west of Mandre Dhunga in Sarangkot, the restricted zone has now been shifted to Mandre Dhunga, which is invisible from the lakeside.”*

The narratives presented by stakeholders reveal critical challenges in the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara. These accounts highlight the intricate relationship between infrastructure, safety regulations, environmental sustainability, economic viability, and policy frameworks that shape the region's adventure tourism landscape.

The paragliding operator's statement about the declining number of flights underscores the sector's vulnerability to external factors, particularly fluctuations in international tourist arrivals. The drop from 300-400 daily flights to around 150 suggests a heavy dependence on specific markets, such as China, making the industry susceptible to geopolitical and economic shifts. Additionally, the aviation official's statement highlights the complexity of managing airspace, which is crucial for maintaining safety and efficiency. The challenges of coordinating different aerial activities indicate a pressing need for improved regulatory frameworks and technological enhancements in air traffic management.

The narrative about the Civil Aviation Authority's decision to impose a ban on paragliding in certain areas reflects a tension between safety regulations and the adventure tourism economy. While the decision aims to mitigate risks and ensure the safety of tourists, it also has economic implications for operators who rely on these prime locations. The shift in the restricted area further indicates the dynamic nature of regulatory adjustments, which can create uncertainty for businesses.

The paragliding operator's concerns reflect a broader theme of economic fragility within the adventure tourism sector. A decline in international tourists, especially from China, significantly affects revenues, leading to uncertainty about long-term sustainability. This narrative highlights overreliance on a few key source markets, emphasizing the need for diversification strategies to attract tourists from other regions.

Although not explicitly mentioned in the statements, the broader discussion of environmental degradation and lack of local awareness suggests another dimension of adventure tourism challenges. The industry's sustainability is at risk if issues such as waste management, deforestation, and unregulated tourism growth are not addressed. Furthermore, local communities' limited understanding of responsible tourism

indicates a gap in stakeholder engagement, which could hinder conservation efforts and responsible tourism practices.

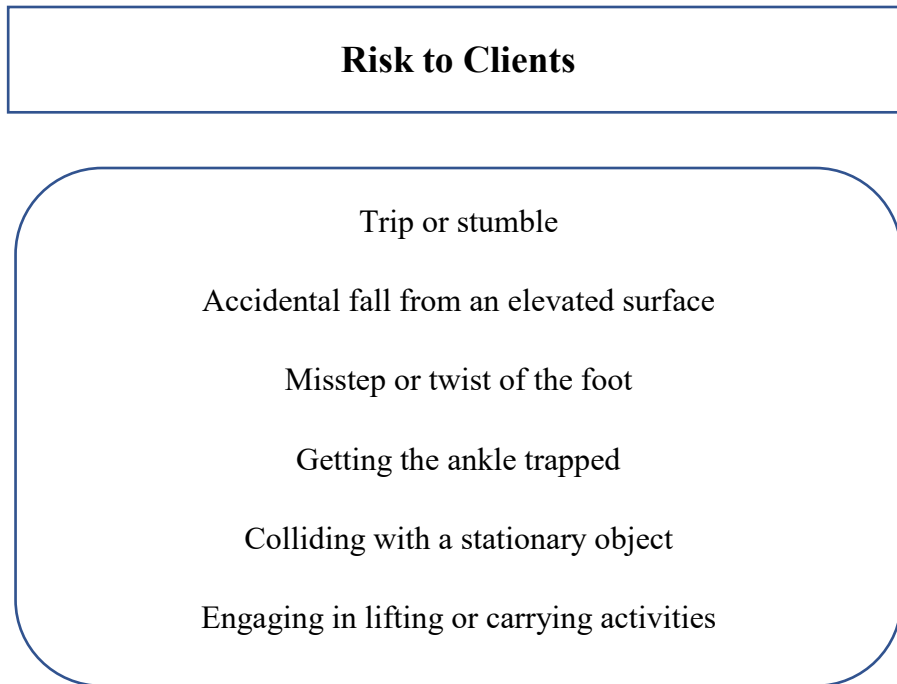
The narratives provided by stakeholders in interviews and focus group discussions illustrate a sector grappling with multiple interconnected challenges. Photos 13 to 19 visually depict how stakeholders are represented in interviews and focus group discussions, focusing on the harsh terrain, limited infrastructure, and safety challenges faced by adventure tourism operators in Pokhara. They show damaged trails, overcrowded sites, and inadequate safety gear in use. Stakeholder expressions reflect regulatory frustrations and economic pressures. Together, the images underscore the urgent need for coordinated, sustainable reforms.

Infrastructure limitations, regulatory restrictions, economic uncertainties, and environmental sustainability concerns all contribute to the complex reality of adventure tourism in Pokhara. Addressing these issues requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government bodies, tourism operators, local communities, and international organizations. A more diversified, well-regulated, and environmentally responsible tourism strategy is necessary to ensure the long-term growth of the sector while maintaining safety and sustainability.

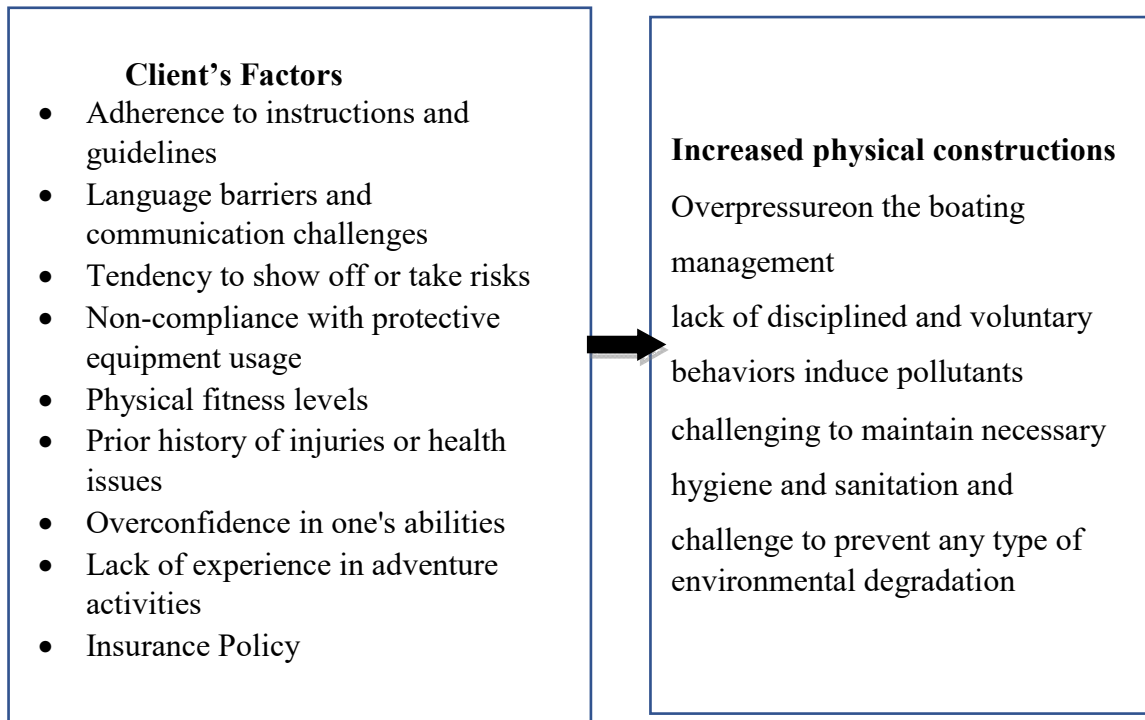
Adventure tourism activities in Pokhara often present risks to clients, particularly those stemming from individual characteristics and behaviors (Table 33). Physical fitness and health are crucial factors; clients who are physically unfit or have prior injuries are more prone to accidents, such as trips, falls, or muscle strain, which can occur when navigating challenging terrain or engaging in physical activities. Additionally, adherence to instructions is essential; failure to follow safety guidelines, such as wearing protective equipment (life jackets, helmets), can significantly increase the risk of serious injury.

Overconfidence and risk-taking behaviors are other risk factors, where clients may attempt maneuvers beyond their ability or show off, leading to falls, collisions with objects, or other accidents. Inexperienced clients, particularly those lacking experience in adventure activities, may struggle with basic skills, such as balancing in a kayak or controlling a boat, thereby increasing the likelihood of accidents.

**Table 31 : Perception of Adventure Tourists as Challenges**



**Table 32: Challenges in Rafting**



**Table 33: Perception of Management and Organization**

<b>Management and Organizational Factors</b>		
Failure to adequately brief clients Insufficient guide experience Untrained unqualified guides challenge to point out Specific hazards and risk for activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to match clients with equipment quality/inadequate investment</li><li>• Failure to check and maintain equipment</li><li>• Failure to provide clothing in extremes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to check weather conditions</li><li>• Failure to heed weather warning</li><li>• Lack of experience and immaturity of guide in weather conditions</li></ul> Momentary Hazards

**Table 34: Extra Organizational Influence**

Accuracy of weather forecasting Limited training for seasonal workforce Commercial pressure to operate in adverse conditions Insufficient presence of regulatory bodies Lack of comprehensive codes of practice
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Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The role of the adventure tourism operator and its management in ensuring safety cannot be overstated. Inexperienced guides are a significant risk factor; guides who are not adequately trained may fail to identify potential hazards or provide proper safety instructions, increasing the likelihood of accidents. The maintenance of equipment is also critical; failure to check and maintain boats, life jackets, and other safety gear may lead to malfunctions during activities, resulting in accidents. Additionally, guides must be able to assess and respond to environmental hazards, such as rapidly changing weather or challenging water conditions. Failure to provide

appropriate clothing or recognize severe weather warnings could expose clients to conditions like hypothermia or dehydration. Commercial pressures during peak tourist seasons can lead to rushed operations and reduced safety measures, increasing the risk of accidents. Furthermore, inadequate pre-activity briefings or lack of clarity regarding the risks involved in the activities may leave clients unaware of potential dangers. Pollution and hygiene concerns, such as litter or poor sanitation around the lake, can create a hazardous environment, increasing the likelihood of accidents or health issues.

Accidental falls are among the most common risks, particularly when participants trip on uneven terrain or lose their balance while boating or kayaking. Submersion in water is another risk, especially if a participant capsizes or falls off a kayak or boat. Individuals who are unprepared or unable to swim face significant dangers in these situations. Exposure to extreme temperatures can also pose risks, especially if clients are not provided with appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. Extreme cold can lead to hypothermia, while excessive heat can result in heatstroke or dehydration, making it essential for operators to monitor the weather and equip clients accordingly.

Several external factors beyond the control of tourism operators influence safety. Weather conditions can quickly change, and inaccurate weather forecasting or failure to heed warnings increases the likelihood of operating in dangerous conditions such as storms, strong winds, or extreme temperatures. Regulatory oversight is another challenge; in the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework and proper enforcement, safety standards may not be consistently maintained across the industry, resulting in inadequate risk mitigation measures. Additionally, the seasonal workforce can exacerbate risks as temporary or untrained staff may lack the experience and knowledge to handle emergencies or manage the unique challenges of adventure tourism.

Adequate insurance policies for both clients and operators are essential to mitigate the financial and legal consequences of accidents. Operators who do not provide sufficient coverage or fail to adequately inform clients about the inherent risks of certain activities increase liability exposure. Without proper insurance, both clients and operators may face significant financial burdens in the event of an accident, further compounding the risks associated with adventure tourism.

**Table 35: Perception of Adventure Tourist Entrepreneurship as Challenges in Pokhara**

Skills and competencies in hospitality
Managing the overflow of labor during peak seasons and addressing labor shortages during the off-season
Developing clear policies and codes of conduct for the tourism industry
Implementing insurance policies to cover injuries, calamities, and pandemics
Adapting to seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers
Navigating market competition and maintaining high service quality standards
Addressing expensive investment risks and challenges in adventure tourism entrepreneurship in Pokhara
Crisis of Identity in Landscape

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Adventure tourism entrepreneurship in Pokhara faces numerous challenges, particularly related to skills and competencies in hospitality, labor management, and market competition (Table 36). One significant challenge is managing the overflow of labor during peak seasons, where the demand for services increases drastically, while simultaneously addressing labor shortages during the off-season. The seasonal nature of tourism in Pokhara requires operators to continuously adapt, ensuring that the workforce is adequately trained and prepared for peak times while also managing costs when visitor numbers drop.

To navigate these fluctuations, the development of clear policies and codes of conduct for the tourism industry is crucial. These policies would help streamline operations, ensure compliance, and establish consistent standards across the sector. Additionally, insurance policies must be implemented to mitigate risks associated with injuries, natural calamities, or even pandemics, ensuring that both clients and operators are protected in unforeseen circumstances.

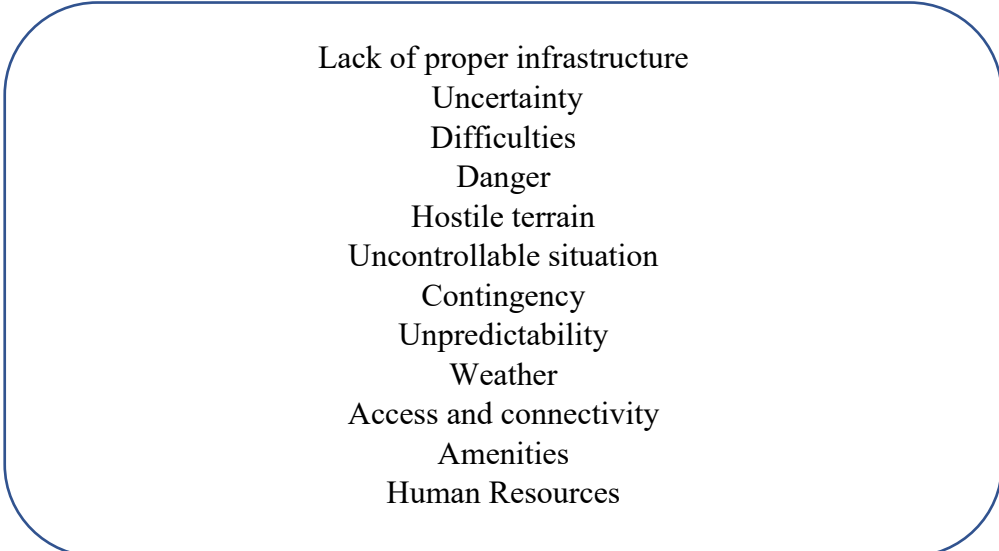
Market competition in Pokhara is another challenge, with numerous operators vying for the attention of tourists. Maintaining high-quality service standards is essential for

standing out in a competitive market, requiring continuous improvements in skills and customer service. At the same time, investment risks in adventure tourism activities can be high, particularly given the significant capital required to develop infrastructure and services, yet the return on investment can be unpredictable due to seasonal demand.

Lastly, the tourism sector also faces a crisis of identity in the landscape in Pokhara, where the rapid development of infrastructure and commercialization of the area threaten its natural beauty and authenticity. This creates tension between economic growth and environmental preservation, impacting both the experience of tourists and the long-term sustainability of adventure tourism.

In conclusion, overcoming these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes effective labor management, policy development, risk mitigation strategies, high-quality service delivery, and a balance between development and environmental sustainability to ensure that adventure tourism in Pokhara remains a viable and attractive industry.

**Table 36 : Common Challenges Perceived by Adventure Tourists**



Lack of proper infrastructure
Uncertainty
Difficulties
Danger
Hostile terrain
Uncontrollable situation
Contingency
Unpredictability
Weather
Access and connectivity
Amenities
Human Resources

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Sources of challenges can influence tourists' perceptions of difficulty. This study examined respondents' perceptions of challenges during their adventure tour using a single-item, five-point rating scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly

agree. Following the approach of Voelkl and Ellis (1998), respondents were asked to identify the challenges they faced (Table 37).

**Table 37 : Perception of stakeholders as Legal Challenges seen in Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

- Restricted Budget Allocation
- Limited Access to Investment Funds
- Lack of Investor Confidence
- Unfavorable Taxation Policies
- Poor Industry Cooperation
- Inadequate Promotion Efforts
- Absence of Tourism Development Fund
- Limited Emphasis on Industry Education
- Political instability, multiple strikes, Pandemics,

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Analyzing the perception of stakeholders regarding the legal challenges faced by adventure tourism in Pokhara reveals several key issues that directly affect the sector's sustainability and growth (Table 38). Interviews with staff from the Tourism Board of Pokhara highlight a combination of financial, regulatory, and political barriers that contribute to the challenges.

Restricted Budget Allocation emerges as a major constraint. Insufficient government funding limits the implementation of essential infrastructure projects, safety regulations, and marketing initiatives. This budgetary shortfall hampers efforts to develop and maintain tourism facilities, improve safety standards, and promote Pokhara as an adventure tourism destination. Without adequate financial resources, the sector's ability to compete on a global scale is diminished.

Limited Access to Investment Funds is another significant challenge. Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the adventure tourism sector face difficulty securing capital for expansion and modernization. This issue is compounded by a

Lack of Investor Confidence, which is rooted in concerns over political instability and fluctuating tourist numbers. These factors make the sector less attractive to potential investors, further impeding growth and innovation.

Unfavorable Taxation Policies are also a key concern. High taxes on tourism-related businesses reduce profit margins, making it difficult for operators to reinvest in their services or expand their offerings. This financial strain discourages new investment and restricts the ability of existing businesses to grow, ultimately stunting the development of the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara.

Poor Industry Cooperation between tourism businesses, government bodies, and local communities exacerbates the situation. A lack of coordination and unified policies hinders progress on critical issues such as safety standards, environmental protection, and infrastructure development. Fragmented approaches to industry challenges result in missed opportunities for collaboration, preventing the implementation of sustainable tourism practices.

Inadequate promotion efforts limit its visibility in the global tourism market. Despite its immense potential, the region lacks a cohesive marketing strategy to attract international tourists. Without a robust promotional campaign, international tourist arrivals remain below their potential, which directly impacts revenue generation and sector growth. This lack of visibility makes it difficult for Pokhara to position itself as a leading adventure tourism destination.

The Absence of a Tourism Development Fund further restricts the sector's ability to address long-term challenges or invest in necessary infrastructure. Without a dedicated fund to support tourism development, the industry is ill-equipped to respond to crises or capitalize on emerging opportunities. This absence prevents the sector from making proactive strides in overcoming challenges and promoting sustainable growth.

Limited Emphasis on Industry Education is another critical issue. A shortage of formal education and training programs for tourism professionals, such as guides and operators, leads to a workforce that may not meet international safety standards or provide high-quality service. This skills gap diminishes the overall tourist experience and tarnishes the sector's reputation, further hindering its growth potential.

Political Instability, frequent Strikes, and Pandemics have also created a volatile environment for tourism. These disruptions not only affect the daily operations of tourism businesses but also diminish tourist confidence in the region. Political instability and social unrest further discourage investment, while pandemics create uncertainty and reduce tourist numbers.

Finally, the Lack of Clear Laws and Policies surrounding adventure tourism is a significant legal challenge. The absence of well-defined, enforceable regulations creates ambiguity for operators, leading to inconsistent practices and poor strategic planning. This lack of legal clarity creates an unstable environment for businesses, which can deter investment and slow the sector's development.

The legal challenges faced by the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara are complex and multifaceted. These challenges include financial constraints, regulatory issues, poor industry coordination, inadequate promotional efforts, and political instability. Addressing these problems requires a coordinated effort between the government, local authorities, and industry stakeholders to create a stable, transparent, and supportive legal framework. By doing so, Pokhara can enhance its competitiveness in the global adventure tourism market and foster sustainable growth in the sector.

Table 38 reflects a range of concerns raised by the local community regarding the impacts of adventure tourism in Pokhara. These perceptions illustrate both the positive and negative implications of tourism growth on the community, highlighting the complexities involved in balancing development with the preservation of local culture and well-being.

Firstly, the perception that tourism has had a minimal impact on crime rates suggests that contrary to some common fears, adventure tourism may not necessarily contribute to an increase in crime. However, the concerns regarding the rise in prostitution and greater social permissiveness point to the darker side of tourism development. As Pokhara attracts more tourists, especially international visitors, there may be a shift in social norms, leading to increased exposure to behaviors that are seen as contrary to the local community's values. This shift can cause tension between maintaining traditional moral standards and embracing the liberal attitudes that often accompany tourism.

**Table 38: Perception of Community People as Challenges for Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

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- Tourism has had a minimal impact on crime rates in the area.
  - It has contributed to concerns about increased prostitution and greater social permissiveness.
  - Some locals feel restricted from accessing certain areas due to tourism activities.
  - Tourism development has, in some cases, led to the displacement of residents from their traditional homes.
  - The cost of living, including prices of goods, services, and land, has risen due to tourism.
  - The influx of people migrating to the area in search of tourism-related job opportunities has increased.
  - Tourism has influenced local lifestyles, leading to shifts in clothing, behavior, and dietary habits toward Western trends.
  - Some residents feel that tourism has contributed to the erosion of traditional cultural values.
- 

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

A more tangible impact is felt in the restriction of local access to certain areas. Some residents feel excluded from popular tourist spots such as beaches or scenic locations, which are increasingly dominated by tourists. This sense of alienation can foster resentment among the local population, especially when they see these areas, which were once central to their daily lives, being commercialized for tourism purposes. The displacement of residents from their traditional homes further intensifies this sense of exclusion, as the expansion of tourism infrastructure leads to the loss of land and housing that local people have relied on for generations (Table 39).

The rising cost of living is another significant challenge for the community. As tourism booms, the increased demand for goods, services, and land drives up prices, making it more difficult for local people to afford necessities. This economic pressure is particularly challenging for lower-income households that do not directly benefit from the tourism industry. The growing influx of people migrating to Pokhara in

search of tourism-related job opportunities only exacerbates these issues, leading to increased competition for jobs and housing, further straining local resources.

Tourism's influence on local lifestyles is also apparent, with shifts in clothing, behavior, and dietary habits toward Western trends. This cultural shift can be seen as both a consequence of the increased exposure to foreign visitors and a desire to integrate into the globalized world. However, for some residents, this change represents the erosion of traditional cultural values, which are central to their identity and way of life. The encroachment of Westernization, while often associated with modernization and progress, may not be welcomed by everyone in the community, particularly those who value the preservation of their cultural heritage.

In summary, the perceptions outlined in this analysis reflect a complex relationship between adventure tourism and the local community in Pokhara. While tourism brings economic benefits and global exposure, it also raises concerns about cultural erosion, economic inequality, and social changes that many locals may find challenging to accept. Addressing these concerns requires thoughtful planning, community involvement, and sustainable tourism practices that prioritize the well-being of local residents while accommodating the demands of a growing tourism industry. The challenge lies in finding a balance that allows for both the development of tourism and the preservation of local traditions and livelihoods.

### **6.3 The Analysis of Challenges in Adventure Tourism in Pokhara from the Perspective of a Participant Observer**

Adventure tourism in Pokhara thrives on its scenic beauty and diverse activities, but faces critical challenges hindering its potential. Inadequate infrastructure, including poor roads, limited transportation, and insufficient accommodation, restricts accessibility and tourist satisfaction. Frequent issues like sanitation concerns, power outages, and weak network connectivity compromise the visitor experience.

The shortage of trained guides and porters poses safety risks, while limited communication networks hinder emergency responses and coordination. A lack of international promotion and unclear regulations reduce Pokhara's competitiveness in the global market. Insufficient banking services add inconvenience to tourists and operators alike.

**Table 39: The Analysis of Challenges in Adventure Tourism in Pokhara from the perspective of a participant observer**

Challenge	Description	Key Statistics/Details
Infrastructure Issues	Poor road conditions, limited transportation, and insufficient accommodation affect accessibility	Road connectivity to key adventure spots is often unpaved and unsafe. Limited capacity in hotels during peak seasons
Sanitation and Utilities	Lack of reliable power, Limited clean toilet facilities in trekking areas.	Clean toilets and network coverage undermine tourist satisfaction. - Frequent power outages were reported by 40% of tourists.
Workforce Gaps	Insufficient training for guides and porters increases safety risks and reduces experience quality	Only 25% of guides have certifications, Limited language training for communication with international tourists
Limited Promotion	Inadequate global marketing reduces international tourist inflow	International visitor arrivals are concentrated in peak trekking seasons (less diversification). Lack of official global campaigns promoting adventure activities.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Environmental degradation and poor waste management further threaten the sustainability of tourism, calling for responsible tourism practices and robust conservation efforts (Table 40). The sector's growth depends on investments in infrastructure, workforce training, marketing, and the establishment of clear safety guidelines.

Collaborative efforts among stakeholders, including government, private operators, and local communities, are essential to addressing these challenges. By focusing on sustainable practices, improved facilities, and international collaborations, Pokhara can ensure long-term growth, safety, and a thriving adventure tourism industry.

#### **6.4 Analysis of Challenges from the Side of Entrepreneurs in Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

The insights provided by the focus group shed light on the complex array of challenges that the adventure tourism industry faces in the study area. One of the primary concerns is the availability of skilled and competent personnel within the hospitality sector. Ensuring that the workforce is well-trained and capable of delivering exceptional experiences to tourists is crucial for maintaining a reputation as a welcoming and hospitable destination, as Baum (2007) mentions. It was found that the issue of labor-management also emerges, with the need to effectively manage the surge of workers during peak tourist seasons while simultaneously addressing the shortage of labor during off-peak periods. It was discussed requires innovative strategies are required to balance and mobilize the workforce throughout the year, understanding economic value as Ladkin (2011) suggests.

Another key challenge highlighted is the development of clear policies and codes of conduct to be tailored to the tourism industry in Pokhara. Establishing well-defined guidelines can enhance professionalism and responsible practices across the sector. Furthermore, the need for comprehensive insurance policies to cover a wide range of contingencies, including injuries, natural disasters, and unforeseen events like pandemics, is vital to ensuring the safety and confidence of both visitors and industry stakeholders.

The cyclical nature of tourism, with varying visitor numbers across different seasons, necessitates adaptive strategies to maintain a consistent flow of tourists throughout the year. This must be coupled with effective competition management, as market dynamics require maintaining high service quality standards to distinguish Pokhara as a preferred destination among competing options.

The challenges faced by those venturing into adventure tourism entrepreneurship, particularly in regions like Pokhara, are significant. Addressing investment risks and

complexities requires a supportive ecosystem that encourages entrepreneurial spirit while managing associated challenges.

**Table 40: Environmental Effects Due to Waste Issues are a Challenge in Pokhara**

Challenge	Description	Source/Respondent
Accumulation of garbage	Tourists leave behind garbage, including food cans, wrappers, bottles, spent batteries, and ropes.	Respondent A
Improper waste disposal	Non-biodegradable solid waste, such as plastics and tins, is improperly disposed of, posing significant environmental stress.	Respondent B
Trail erosion	Increased trekking traffic causes erosion of hiking trails, vegetation trampling, forest thinning, and biodiversity loss.	Respondent C
Insufficient waste management infrastructure	Lack of proper disposal sites, inefficient waste management authorities, and insufficient infrastructure for solid waste management exacerbate the problem.	Respondent D
Solid waste generation	On average, fifteen people generate about 15 kg of non-biodegradable, non-flammable waste in ten days.	Lama and Sherpa (1994)
Unregulated tourism expansion	Rapid and unregulated growth in tourism contributes to waste accumulation and environmental degradation.	Poudel and Neaupane (2017)

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Lastly, the mention of an identity crisis within the landscape is a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between tourism growth and the preservation of unique cultural

and environmental heritage in Pokhara. This calls for thoughtful planning that ensures sustainable development without compromising the very essence that makes Pokhara a sought-after destination. These challenges underscore the intricate web of considerations that the tourism sector must navigate. Collaborative efforts and comprehensive solutions are imperative to maintain a thriving, responsible, and culturally enriching tourism industry that benefits all stakeholders involved.

The challenges faced include the need for bolstered entrepreneurial acumen and marketing expertise and the mounting strain on the environment due to escalating tourism activities. Moreover, the departure of skilled individuals coupled with brain drain poses a significant hurdle, threatening the sustainable growth of tourism industry in Pokhara. Addressing these multifaceted challenges necessitates a holistic approach, intertwining capacity-building initiatives, environmental stewardship, and measures to retain and harness local talent for the industry's advancement.

The rapid growth of adventure tourism in Pokhara, particularly around Lakeside and Pame area, has resulted in significant environmental challenges, primarily due to poor waste management (Table 41). Respondents highlighted issues such as the accumulation of non-biodegradable waste, trail erosion, vegetation trampling, and declining biodiversity caused by increased trekking and tourist activities. Non-biodegradable items, including plastics, batteries, and discarded camping materials, have become prominent pollutants, stressing the need for effective disposal systems and infrastructure.

Inadequate waste management systems, lack of proper disposal sites, and inefficient authorities exacerbate these problems, threatening the sustainability of natural attractions in Pokhara. The insights from Mutana and Mukwada (2018) underscore the importance of trail maintenance and managing waste generation to mitigate environmental degradation.

Promoting awareness through educational programs and regulating tourism activities are essential steps. Balancing tourism growth with environmental conservation is critical for sustaining status as a major adventure tourism hub of Pokhara. Collaborative efforts from stakeholders, including policymakers, tour operators, and

local communities, can ensure a sustainable future while enhancing regional prosperity and economic growth.

## **6.5 Collaborative Efforts by Entrepreneurs to Address Challenges in Adventure Tourism**

In the heart of the adventure tourism industry, entrepreneurs and professionals continuously navigate the complexities of an evolving market in Pokhara. Our qualitative research, grounded in firsthand observations, in-depth interviews, and active participation, reveals that adventure tourism professionals must develop a deep understanding of their clients' motivations. This knowledge is essential not only for delivering meaningful experiences but also for crafting tourism products that align with realistic tourist expectations.

One such entrepreneur, passionate about his role in the industry, envisions a future where adventure guides are empowered through fair wages, professional development, and expanded market access. "Adventure tourism is an evolving industry that requires innovative solutions to ensure safety, sustainability, and high-quality experiences. My vision is to build a strong brand identity that not only markets premium adventure services but also fosters a community where adventure professionals and tourists connect meaningfully," he explains. His narrative highlights a strong commitment to both economic sustainability and social responsibility.

However, the path to achieving this vision is fraught with challenges. Entrepreneurs in Pokhara must swiftly adapt to dynamic market conditions shaped by shifting tourist profiles, technological advancements, and growing competition. The influence of technology and evolving customer preferences plays a pivotal role in this transformation. As one entrepreneur notes, "*We must embrace digital tools and smart interactions to anticipate and respond to the needs of adventure tourists. This is not just about business, it's about developing a responsible and knowledgeable tourism society.*"

The narratives of these entrepreneurs further illustrate how self-perception plays a critical role in their resilience and success. The ability to cope with uncertainty, think critically, and build professional networks emerges as a defining trait of high-performing tourism entrepreneurs. Collaborative efforts, therefore, become

indispensable in fostering a learning mindset and equipping professionals with the necessary skills to thrive. Studies affirm that those who exhibit self-confidence, independence, and the ability to learn from setbacks tend to achieve sustained success in the industry.

Ethical considerations also shape the narratives of these entrepreneurs. Maintaining integrity while delivering competitive services remains a pressing challenge, yet it is essential for long-term industry sustainability. *“Sustainability is not just about the environment; it’s about people and ethical business practices. We must ensure our adventure tourism services uphold the highest standards of safety, professionalism, and respect for both tourists and local communities,”* asserts one entrepreneur.

Ultimately, the collective experiences of adventure tourism entrepreneurs highlight a multifaceted reality, one that demands continuous adaptation, ethical commitment, and a profound understanding of market dynamics. Their stories underscore the importance of collaboration, resilience, and forward-thinking strategies in shaping a sustainable and competitive adventure tourism industry.

Finally, entrepreneurial success in adventure tourism depends on adaptability, ethical commitment, strategic use of technology, and collaboration. Entrepreneurs who are resilient, open to learning, and responsive to market trends are more likely to sustain and grow their businesses. Meanwhile, ethical challenges and unrealistic tourist expectations necessitate thoughtful, well-structured tourism products that balance experience design with sustainability and responsibility (Phelan & Sharpley, 2012; Jaafar et al., 2011; Di Dominico & Miller, 2017; Cloutier, 2003; Buckley, 2010)

## **6.6 Challenges to Sustaining Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Adventure tourism in Pokhara faces many challenges stemming from environmental concerns, infrastructure issues, and socio-economic factors. Despite the lack of conclusive empirical evidence showing a negative impact on local ecology, the potential environmental repercussions due to the infrastructure required to support tourism are a significant concern. Responsible and sustainable tourism practices are paramount to preserving the study area's natural beauty and ecological balance.

*“The tourism industry in Pokhara has been significantly affected by recent plane crashes,” said an entrepreneur from the region. “These incidents have disrupted travel plans and sent negative messages globally, resulting in revenue losses for both the aviation and tourism sectors. This situation highlights the fragile nature of industry. Additionally, the regulatory challenges surrounding the international airport further complicate the issue, affecting the stability and reliability of tourism operations.”*

*“Elevated public expectations, dissatisfaction, conflicting stakeholder viewpoints, and unmet political promises are making it harder to foster adventure tourism,” said respondents who are entrepreneurs in the sector. “These challenges, coupled with environmental degradation like the impact of gravel and sand extraction on rivers, have diminished some of the key tourist attractions, particularly affecting activities like rafting.”*

*“The relocation of commercial paragliding due to the Pokhara Regional International Airport has led to unemployment among experienced pilots, with some seeking opportunities abroad,” said an employee in the sector. “This highlights the challenge of managing tourism amidst infrastructure development. Additionally, the financial strain from COVID-19 has left tourism entrepreneurs struggling with loan repayments, leading to asset seizures and hindering the recovery and growth of tourism despite heavy investments.”*

The narrative of adventure tourism in Pokhara reveals a complex intersection of environmental, infrastructural, and socio-economic challenges, each contributing to the fragility of the industry. Through the voices of local entrepreneurs and workers, a clear picture emerges of the struggles faced by those trying to sustain and grow the tourism sector.

The environmental dimension of the narrative is marked by concerns over the impact of infrastructure development required to support tourism. Though there is no conclusive empirical evidence linking tourism to negative ecological impacts, the potential for harm remains a significant concern. The region’s natural beauty and ecological balance hang in the balance, highlighting the need for responsible and sustainable tourism practices to preserve the unique landscape.

A recurring theme in the narratives of local entrepreneurs is the fragile nature of the tourism industry, particularly considering recent events like plane crashes. These incidents have had far-reaching consequences, disrupted travel plans, and damaged the reputation of the aviation and tourism sectors globally. As one entrepreneur noted, these safety-related setbacks have resulted in significant revenue losses and underscored the inherent instability of the industry. The complications surrounding the new Pokhara Regional International Airport, including regulatory challenges, further complicate the situation, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty for both operators and tourists alike.

The tension between public expectations, political promises, and stakeholder interests forms another critical aspect of the narrative. Entrepreneurs express frustration over unmet political promises and the conflicting interests of various stakeholders, which hinder the progress of adventure tourism. This socio-political instability, coupled with environmental degradation, such as the negative effects of gravel and sand extraction on river ecosystems, has diminished the appeal of key tourist activities, particularly rafting. This illustrates the interconnectedness of environmental, political, and economic factors in shaping the success of adventure tourism.

The narrative also highlights the socio-economic consequences of infrastructure development, particularly the relocation of commercial paragliding due to the Pokhara Regional International Airport. Experienced pilots face unemployment, and some have even been forced to seek opportunities abroad. This shift emphasizes the broader issue of managing tourism amid evolving infrastructure projects. While such projects are crucial for the long-term growth of the region, their immediate effects on the local workforce and business stability are evident.

Another recurring theme is the financial toll of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism entrepreneurs have struggled with loan repayments, leading to asset seizures and compounding the region's economic difficulties. Despite heavy investments in tourism infrastructure, the pandemic's aftermath continues to hamper recovery efforts. This financial instability is a key obstacle in the path to rebuilding and expanding the tourism sector in Pokhara.

The narrative analysis of these perspectives paints a detailed and multifaceted picture of the challenges facing adventure tourism in Pokhara. From environmental concerns and regulatory issues to socio-economic challenges, the industry is struggling to find stability. However, the shared call for coordinated efforts in sustainable tourism practices, better management, and support for local entrepreneurs suggests a pathway forward. By addressing these issues, there is potential for the adventure tourism sector to thrive and continue contributing to the region's economic and cultural growth in the long run.

### **6.7 Irrational Habits of Tourists to be Aware of to Sustain Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Adventure tourism, while beneficial for economic growth, poses significant environmental and socio-cultural challenges. The development of tourism infrastructure often leads to deforestation and increases the risk of natural disasters such as avalanches. Tourists contribute to pollution by leaving non-biodegradable waste, and activities like artificial climbing routes harm ecosystems. Overcrowding in wildlife safaris disrupts animal behavior, while diving damages marine life (Swarbrooke et al., 2003). Additionally, adventure tourism strains natural resources, increases air and water pollution, and puts pressure on national parks. Illegal harvesting, poaching, and the introduction of invasive species further threaten biodiversity (Butler, 2004). On a socio-cultural level, tourists may unintentionally offend local communities or introduce harmful influences such as drug use. Their presence can disrupt family values, and the rise of sex tourism poses serious health and social risks. Economic disparities between tourists and locals can contribute to higher crime rates, while giving money or gifts to locals may foster dependency rather than sustainable development (Swarbrooke et al., 2003). Moreover, tourism can divide communities, deepen social inequalities, and lead to the erosion of traditional cultures. Excessive tourism also places a heavy burden on local infrastructure and resources, making sustainable living increasingly difficult (Buckley, 2004).

Conducting thorough market research helps us understand evolving customer preferences, enabling tourism operators to offer personalized and high-quality experiences. This approach ensures customer satisfaction and repeat visits, ultimately driving business success (Addis, 2020).

To ensure the sustainability of adventure tourism in Pokhara, it is crucial to address the negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts associated with it. Implementing stringent regulations, promoting sustainable resource use, conserving wildlife, fostering cultural sensitivity, ensuring economic equity, and investing in infrastructure are vital steps. This research and adaptive management strategies will also play a key role in mitigating the adverse effects of tourism. By adopting these measures, Pokhara can preserve its natural and cultural heritage, maintain ecological balance, and secure a sustainable future for its thriving adventure tourism industry.

## **6.8 Sustainability Perspectives on Adventure Tourism Development**

A systematic review approach is utilized to identify, assess, and integrate relevant literature, positioning humans as key instruments within a constructivist framework to sustain adventure tourism in Pokhara, drawing upon the principles of the Brundtland Report (1987).

Sustainability encompasses a range of complex challenges that are difficult to define and trace to specific causes (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Research suggests that sustainability cannot be effectively addressed through fragmented, small-scale efforts, nor does it have a one-size-fits-all solution. Key considerations include visitor patterns around lakes, ethical social responsibility (Bondy et al., 2012), participation in certification programs and memberships, public commitments through pledges and declarations, as well as the adoption of guidelines and frameworks that promote socio-economic and ecological balance.

To build a sustainable and resilient adventure tourism industry in Pokhara, it is essential to adopt strategic measures that emphasize customer satisfaction, environmental stewardship, safety, and cooperative efforts. The following strategies present fundamental steps toward ensuring long-term sustainability.

### **6.8.1 Ethical and Responsible Practices**

Implementing eco-friendly technologies, minimizing waste, and supporting conservation initiatives can significantly reduce the environmental footprint of adventure tourism. Sustainable practices not only preserve natural resources but also

enhance the long-term appeal of Pokhara as an adventure tourism hub (Silva & Carvalho, 2017; Beames et al., 2019).

### **6.8.2 Safety and Training Initiatives**

Comprehensive training for guides, mentorship programs, and strict adherence to safety protocols are essential for maintaining high safety standards in adventure tourism. Ensuring well-trained professionals enhances customer trust and mitigates risks associated with adventure activities (Page et al., 2005; Bentley et al., 2010).

### **6.8.3 Weather Monitoring and Contingency Planning**

Developing robust weather monitoring systems and equipping guides with the necessary tools and training can improve preparedness for adverse weather conditions. This measure is critical in minimizing weather-related risks in activities like paragliding, trekking, and rafting.

### **6.8.4 Collaboration with Industry Stakeholders**

Strong partnerships with local authorities, tourism boards, and industry associations are essential to advocate for supportive policies, safety regulations, and quality standards. Such collaborations ensure a well-regulated and competitive adventure tourism sector.

### **6.8.5 Equipment Maintenance**

Regular inspection and maintenance of adventure sports equipment help guarantee safety and functionality. High-quality, well-maintained gear not only enhances the visitor experience but also reduces the likelihood of accidents, reinforcing trust in the adventure tourism industry in Pokhara.

Based on ATTA (2018), adopted from Ponte (2020), the sustainable growth of adventure tourism in Pokhara necessitates a focus on the following key pillars for destination Branding:

Ensuring Safety and Hospitality – Prioritizing risk management, emergency preparedness, and visitor well-being to foster a secure and welcoming environment.

Advancing Environmental Sustainability – Implementing eco-friendly tourism models that minimize environmental impact and support long-term ecological conservation.

Promoting Health and Well-being – Strengthening healthcare accessibility, hygiene standards, and wellness initiatives for both tourists and local communities.

**Table 41 Key Dimensions Required for Destination Branding in Pokhara**

Political stability	Natural Beauty
Democratic government	Adventure activities
Environmental conservation	Cultural richness,
Exceptional quality of life	Wellness and relaxation, Local Cuisine
Warm, amiable, courteous, industrious people	Thriving nightlife, Sustainable and Eco-Tourism,
Advanced, technologically sophisticated	Photographs, t-shirt transactions, images and posters, as well as scenic viewpoints and community participation.
Role in World Issues	Brand Ambassadors, Adventure hub, all-inclusive packages
Global Involvement	Pristine lakes, scenic hiking trails
Tourism from all over the world (regulating Pokhara International Airport)	Exotic atmosphere
Specialized trade shows	Built environment beliefs
	Evaluations of the destination
	Widely distribute brochures and flyers, use of the internet- blogs, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook

Source: Pike, 2012.

Facilitating Entrepreneurship and Economic Development – Encouraging innovation, local enterprise development, and investment opportunities to strengthen the adventure tourism sector.

Enhancing Access to Adventure Resources – Expanding infrastructure, maintaining adventure tourism facilities, and ensuring accessibility to key sites.

Upholding Social Responsibility and Humanitarian Initiatives – Promoting ethical tourism practices, community involvement, and inclusive growth strategies.

Improving Infrastructure and Public Services – Developing transportation networks, accommodations, and tourism-related facilities to support sustainable expansion.

Preserving Cultural and Heritage Assets – Integrating cultural heritage conservation into tourism activities while respecting local traditions and customs.

Strengthening Destination Branding and Image – Positioning Pokhara as a leading global adventure tourism destination through effective marketing and sustainable tourism policies.

Like broader tourism strategy of Nepal, which aims to enhance awareness and promote the ‘Naturally Nepal’ concept, Pokhara can leverage its natural beauty and cultural heritage to attract visitors seeking adventure and spiritual enrichment.

This approach not only appeals to adventure enthusiasts but also aligns with the concept of ‘pure personal upliftment’ associated with Nepal’s identity as the ‘Cradle of the Himalayas’. By integrating these elements into a cohesive branding strategy, Pokhara can evoke strong emotional connections and resonate with travelers seeking profound experiences.

As highlighted by Blain, Levy, and Ritchie (2005), collaboration between governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) is essential to effectively implement this strategy. These partnerships can facilitate consistent messaging and robust promotion across various platforms, enhancing visibility and reputation as a premier adventure tourism destination in Pokhara.

In conclusion, Pokhara can establish itself as a premier adventure tourism destination by emphasizing its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and commitment to safety. At a macro level, political stability, environmental conservation, and technological advancements enhance its appeal, while global engagement fosters inclusivity (Table 42). On a micro level, pristine landscapes, adventure activities, and rich traditions

create immersive experiences. By integrating these elements, Pokhara can attract diverse travelers, ensuring sustainable growth and a strong global presence.

## **6.9 Tourists' Perspectives on Adventure Offerings and Destination Appeal**

Tourists' perceptions of adventure sports in Pokhara vary based on the psychological impact and personal experiences of everyone. According to research by Kler-Tribe (2012), common elements influencing these perceptions include a sense of play and excitement, positive emotions, engagement, the discovery of love interests, and experiences of joy and contentment. These factors align with Seligman's (2011) insights, which suggest that tourists are driven by motivational factors associated with positive emotions and engagements, contributing to their overall perception of adventure tourism.

A field study conducted in August 2023 using a convenience sampling approach included participants in various adventure activities such as paragliding, bungee jumping, boating, and rafting. Participants expressed that "visiting the destination just once is insufficient," indicating a strong desire to return due to the enriching experiences. This aligns with Seligman's (2002) theory of pleasure and happiness, where positive emotions play a significant role in forming perceptions.

The sample primarily consisted of male participants (11), with a significantly smaller representation of females (3). This suggests a notable gender disparity among the respondents, which may reflect broader trends in adventure tourism, participation, or the specific activities studied. Participants' ages varied across multiple categories, with the largest group being 18-25 years (5), followed by equal representation in the 26-35 and 36-45 age ranges (3 each). Fewer participants fell into the older age brackets, with only 2 in the 46-55 range and 1 above 56. This distribution suggests that younger individuals dominate adventure tourism, possibly due to their greater physical capacity and interest in high-energy activities. The respondents hailed from diverse international backgrounds, with the largest groups being Australians and New Zealanders (3 each). Chinese participants followed closely (4), while Americans (1), Germans (1), and Finns (2) were less represented. This diversity highlights the global appeal of adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal, drawing tourists from various continents. Of the 14 participants, a slight majority (8) were first-time visitors, while 6

had engaged in similar experiences before. This suggests a balanced mix of new and returning adventure tourists, emphasizing allure as a fresh destination and its capacity to foster repeat visits.

**Table 42: Participant Demographics and Insights**

**N=14 14 As Sergeant (2004) suggests, 3-15 participants at a time**

Gender	Number
Male	11
Female	3
Age	
18-25	5
26-35	3
36-45	3
46-55	2
56 above	1
Nationality	
Australian	3
Newzealand	3
Chinese	4
American	1
German	1
Finish	2
First Visit	Yes=8
	No = 6

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The narrative analysis of tourists' experiences in Pokhara reveals that adventure activities, particularly paragliding, played a central role in shaping their perceptions of the destination. The breathtaking views of the mountains and the thrill of flight created powerful emotional connections, with many tourists expressing feelings of exhilaration, joy, and a profound sense of achievement. Activities such as rafting and boating also contributed positively to the overall experience, but paragliding stood out

as the highlight. Tourists repeatedly mentioned that these experiences, intertwined with the natural beauty of Pokhara, left them with lasting, positive memories.

Beyond the activities themselves, the emotional impact of adventure tourism in Pokhara was significant. Tourists often described how the combination of engaging with nature and experiencing thrilling sports led to a deep emotional response. The sense of accomplishment that came from participating in these activities reinforced their connection to the destination, leaving many eager to return. However, safety emerged as a crucial factor in tourists' feedback. Many emphasized the importance of comprehensive safety briefings before participating in adventure sports, particularly for newcomers who may be unfamiliar with the risks. Additionally, tourists suggested that a wider range of activities be promoted, encouraging visitors to fully experience all that Pokhara has to offer.

The analysis (Table 43) highlights key implications for the adventure tourism industry in Pokhara. Positive emotions generated through these activities, coupled with the cultural and natural engagement that Pokhara offers, are essential for enhancing tourists' overall experience. The strong desire for repeat visits points to the potential for growth, provided the destination continues to prioritize safety, diversify its offerings, and maintain its unique cultural appeal. These insights suggest that with effective branding, a sustained focus on safety, and a deeper integration of cultural elements, Pokhara can solidify its reputation as a premier global destination for adventure tourism. Finally, they suggested that multi-day adventure tours with instruction and training should be provided to less skilled tourists before taking an adventure tour. Unsurprisingly, the equipment problem is identified as one of the challenging sources because the equipment is important for participation and coping with unexpected contingencies.

## **6.10 Entrepreneurs' Collaboration for Sustainable Development**

Tourism is acknowledged as one of the most extensive industrial systems and articles of expenditure within contemporary Western economies (Britton, 1981). Adventure tourism offers individuals the opportunity to achieve social and personal benefits, including the accomplishment of tourism in reorganizing established economies (Agarwal, 1977) and the agreement regarding tourism's pivotal contribution to the

advancement of economies in developing nations (Shaw and Williams, 1994,) fosters the recognition of tourism as a multi-dimensional sector.

Recognition and prestige by becoming part of specific adventure communities. These individuals aim to uphold their social status by consistently participating in adventure activities and actively showcasing their involvement in daring pursuits. Through active engagement in adventurous experiences, adventure tourists seek to gain intangible social rewards, as described by Jonas et al., (2003), Trauer (2006), and Berger and Greenspan (2008). In addition to this, this study explores adventure tourism in Pokhara and focuses on three key aspects. Firstly, it highlights how engaging in risk-taking empowers tourists by overcoming personal challenges and building confidence. Secondly, it discusses “adventure capital,” akin to travel experience, gained through risky activities. Lastly, it emphasizes the emotional rewards from adventure in scenic landscapes, fostering a positive connection with the local community and promoting personal growth and happiness.

**Table 43: Perception of Entrepreneurs of Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Social	personal	Personal /cultural
Cognitive development	Positive perception	Strengthening social, physical, and emotional abilities
Social inclusion /Collaboration	Interdependence	Personality development
Positive attitude	Fearless	Social skills increase
Ownership	Strong feeling / true satisfaction	Adventure tourism drives economic prosperity and fosters cultural exchange in local communities.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The perceptions of entrepreneurs in Pokhara regarding adventure tourism reflect a multifaceted interplay of social, personal, and cultural dimensions (Table 44). Insights from the interview narratives underscore key themes that shape their outlook. Socially, entrepreneurs view adventure tourism as a platform for fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, emphasizing the interdependence between

tourism operators, local communities, and government bodies as essential for sustainable growth and shared success. They exhibit optimism and positivity about the sector's growth, expressing a fearless approach to challenges, driven by their belief in its long-term potential. Additionally, they perceive their entrepreneurial journey to strengthen social skills, enabling better engagement with both local and international stakeholders while fostering stronger community bonds.

On a personal level, entrepreneurs highlight how their involvement in adventure tourism has enhanced their cognitive abilities, reporting improved problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptability to dynamic market trends. Many attribute their personal growth to the diverse experiences within the sector, which contribute to their development as resilient and innovative individuals. A deep sense of ownership and satisfaction is prevalent, as they take pride in their contributions to the industry and view their efforts as instrumental in driving economic prosperity and fostering cultural exchange.

Culturally, adventure tourism is perceived as a catalyst for strengthening not just physical abilities but also emotional resilience, closely tied to cultural pride and the promotion of natural and cultural heritage of the country. Entrepreneurs acknowledge their role as a key driver of economic growth and cultural exchange, connecting local traditions with global audiences and enriching both perspectives. These dimensions collectively shape a positive entrepreneurial mindset, highlighting the transformative impact of adventure tourism in the region.

### **6.11 Stakeholders' Collaboration and Sustainable Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Regarding sustainable tourism development, Swarbrooke (2001) categorized stakeholders into five primary groups: governments, tourists, host communities, tourism enterprises, and other sectors. The actions and perspectives of these stakeholders, while external to strategic planning and management procedures, hold significant influence over tourist destinations.

As emphasized by Wall (1997), it is important to recognize that what is deemed sustainable today may not remain sustainable in the future due to shifts in population, the emergence of new technologies, and evolving preferences. Furthermore, distinct

management teams and individual personalities may delineate stakeholders differently and interpret their requirements in varied ways, thereby influencing the objectives and orientations of tourism management (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007). Decker et al (1996) provide a suggestion for tourism planning and development from the source of stakeholders' collaboration who are the residents of host communities, and businesses, that cater to tourism (hotels, restaurants, adventure sports, spots, attractions, souvenirs, etc.) chamber of commerce, local government officials, environmentalists to be well organized.

As stakeholders reside in the host community, their quality of life is reflected through different indicators promoted by tourism planning and development (Budruk & Phillips 2011). Keeping the 'rational choice theory of Alexander (1995) in mind, the researcher and respondents of the host community of Pokhara had a long discussion on what is valued and needed to incorporate adventure tourism into their overall comprehensive planning process for sustainability.

The above forward-thinking strategy that integrates conservation, innovation, community involvement, and sustainable practices. By emphasizing the preservation of its pristine natural resources, such as lakes and forests, the approach ensures ecological balance and long-term appeal. Developing eco-friendly infrastructure and upgrading adventure equipment is vital to reducing environmental impact while enhancing tourist experiences and safety. A diverse range of activities and stringent safety standards strengthen its reputation as a dynamic and secure destination. Furthermore, empowering local communities through training and employment fosters ownership reduces conflicts and creates a supportive ecosystem for tourism. Adaptive marketing strategies and regular monitoring ensure balanced demand and supply, minimizing over-exploitation and maintaining accountability. The interconnectedness of these elements highlights the necessity of collaboration among stakeholders to achieve sustainability. Thus, this roadmap positions Pokhara as a global hub for adventure tourism, balancing growth with responsibility and ensuring long-term success. Here are some indicators to promote and sustain adventure tourism in Pokhara to be crafted by stakeholders based on their perceptions after discussion.

**Figure 9: Key Indicators for Promoting and Sustaining Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**



Source: Field Survey, 2023.

### **6.12 Balancing Opportunities and Challenges for Sustainable Growth in Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Bishop's (1988) renowned statement highlights that tourism serves as both a source of valuable benefits and a cause of its own environmental and social challenges. In the context of adventure tourism in Pokhara, a multidisciplinary approach is essential for sustainable growth, as indicated by Ratntala et al. (2016) and Cheng et al. (2018). This approach incorporates a range of disciplines, such as marketing, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, all of which contribute to the comprehensive

understanding and development of adventure tourism. Buckley (2006) underscores the paramount importance of ensuring that adventure tourism experiences are both enjoyable and safe, a balance critical for Pokhara, where the stunning natural landscape attracts tourists for activities such as paragliding, rafting, and hiking. The wide range of benefits associated with adventure tourism including goal achievement, fear management, enjoyment, optimal engagement, enhanced courage, and improved connections to others and the natural world can be fully realized only if safety and environmental sustainability are prioritized. Striking this balance in Pokhara necessitates enhanced safety protocols to ensure all adventure activities meet high standards, alongside thorough briefings and training for both tourists and guides.

Environmental conservation practices must also be implemented, promoting awareness among tourists to preserve natural beauty. Furthermore, integrating insights from various disciplines will create a holistic tourism experience that addresses the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of adventure tourism. Community involvement is crucial, as engaging local communities in tourism activities fosters a sense of ownership and ensures that tourism benefits are shared locally. Finally, sustainable marketing strategies that promote Pokhara as a destination, valuing thrilling experiences alongside responsible tourism practices, will enhance its appeal. By adopting these strategies, Pokhara can effectively manage the challenges posed by the influx of adventure tourists while maximizing opportunities for sustainable growth and positive tourist experiences. This balanced approach will ensure that adventure tourism continues to thrive in Pokhara, providing economic benefits while preserving the environment and social fabric of the region.

**CHAPTER VII**  
**POLICY AS A MECHANISM FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN ADVENTURE**  
**TOURISM IN POKHARA**

**7.1 Background**

The interpretive research used observation, interviews, and document analysis to investigate the development of pioneer policies on adventure recreation regulation in Nepal, especially in Pokhara. This study shows that many of the challenges experienced in developing national public policies and policies are neglected by both the federal government and the tourism authorities of Pokhara. To foster economic growth through tourism, policymakers need to maximize the potential of adventure tourism along with its clear policy. Adventure tourism in Pokhara, defined by activities such as hiking, paragliding, dragon boating, rafting, and bungee jumping, has become a cornerstone of the region's appeal. However, managing the inherent risks associated with these activities requires robust safety measures. This includes developing comprehensive regulations aligned with international standards, providing training and resources for operators, and ensuring compliance through regular audits and licensing. Risk management skills, such as crisis handling and first aid, should be prioritized through specialized training for guides and operators. Collaboration among local authorities, tourism stakeholders, and communities is essential to create a unified approach to safety, while public awareness campaigns can empower tourists to make informed decisions. By integrating these elements into a structured framework, Pokhara can maintain its position as a premier adventure tourism destination while safeguarding both participants and its reputation.

Tracking accidents, legal compliance, and training guides are key to managing risks down to acceptable levels and formulating and promulgating industry regulations (Bentley et al, 2008). The entrepreneurs expect that the newly formed provincial government should provide business security, formulate appropriate tax policy, and provide business insurance schemes for smooth operation, growth, and sustainability of their tourism entrepreneurship (Devkota et al., 2020).

Nepal's status as a tourist destination has witnessed a historical absence of a coherent policy, with a singular emphasis either on quantity (mass tourism) or quality

(controlled and valuable tourism) as highlighted by scholars like Agrawal, Khatiwada (2013), Upadhyay, Kunwar, Paudyal, and Pradhanang. Policy-related interventions, including Paryatan Niti 2065 (Tourism Policy 2009), the three-year interim plan (2009/10 – 2012/13), and Homestay Sanchalan Karyabidhi 2067 (Homestay Operation Work Procedure), reflect these endeavors. (Upreti, Upadhyaya, Sapkota, Pokhara Tourism Council, NCR (2013). Without or with minimal involvement of tourism sector representatives, the private sector doesn't feel a sense of ownership over these policies. Therefore, the government must adopt a tourism-friendly approach that actively involves all stakeholders in policy dialogues at every level and stage. Some endeavors are analyzed here for future trends.

## **7.2 Policy Gaps and the Need for Targeted Approaches**

The oversight of tourism varies among countries; some assign it to the Ministry of Trade, others to the Ministry of Environment, and some have a dedicated Ministry of Tourism (Lundqvist, 2016).

The oversight of tourism varies globally, with some countries assigning it to different ministries (Lundqvist, 2016). Nepalese tourism policies, such as Tourism Policy 2065, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, and Tourism Vision 2020, focus on infrastructure development, rural employment, grassroots benefits, and private sector collaboration. However, these proposed policies do not explicitly address adventure tourism in Nepal (Pokhara). Despite the increase in tourism activities and the emphasis on inclusive growth and sustainable development, there is a noticeable gap in the specific promotion and development of adventure tourism in these areas. The research highlights the need for targeted policies to support and enhance adventure tourism in Pokhara.

## **7.3 Strategic Initiatives, Infrastructure Development**

Nepal Tourism Year 2011 had ambitious goals, such as achieving one million annual international visitor arrivals (IVAs) by 2011, which indicated a strategic push to foster economic growth through tourism. It focused on dispersing tourism to new areas to prevent over-tourism in popular destinations and promote the sustainable development of less-explored regions. Increased investment in tourism facilities signaled the need for continual improvement in infrastructure, services, and facilities

to meet the growing demands of the tourism sector. The promotion of domestic tourism was also a priority, recognizing local engagement in contributing to economic activities and fostering national pride. However, despite these comprehensive strategies, there was no specific focus on adventure tourism or related policy formulation. This emphasizes other sectors while adventure tourism strategies remain unplanned.

#### **7.4 Future Prospects of Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

Tourism Vision 2020 was a strategic initiative designed to foster comprehensive growth in the tourism sector in Nepal, integrating it into the country's socio-economic advancement through a coordinated institutional framework. The plan aimed to expand tourism into new areas, empower local communities, promote Nepal internationally, ensure flight safety, and enhance airport capacity. It set ambitious goals, such as increasing annual international arrivals to 2 million by 2020 and creating one million jobs in the tourism sector. Strategies included improving livelihoods at the grassroots level, diversifying tourism products, integrating tourism into broader economic development, enhancing international image, and attracting new investment of the country (Badal, 2019).

Despite these extensive goals and strategies, there was no specific focus on adventure tourism or related policy formulation within Tourism Vision 2020. This reflects a broader emphasis on general tourism growth and infrastructure development rather than targeted efforts to promote adventure tourism in Nepal, including areas like Pokhara.

A holistic and integrated approach to tourism development in Nepal emphasizes quantitative growth, community engagement, sustainable practices, and inclusive development. Collaborative efforts involving the private sector, communities, and the government show a commitment to building a resilient and responsible tourism industry. However, the tourism sector is influenced by factors like geopolitical events, natural disasters, and global economic conditions. Nepal's 87th rank in the global tourism competitiveness index by the World Economic Forum highlights both the potential and challenges in its tourism policies. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index underscores attractiveness as an economic destination,

appealing to budget-conscious travelers (Chaudhary, 2023). This recognition should be viewed in the context of a paradigm shift towards more sustainable, responsible, and diversified adventure tourism practices in Nepal.

In this context, Golder and Ritchie (2012) define tourism policy as “a set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directives, objectives, and strategies to promote tourism as a framework. Politics, public policy, and the socioeconomic position of the country are the significant leading aspects of tourism policy at the national and local levels. It is a power struggle and influence (Hall 2000). Developing countries like Nepal prepare plans and policies at the central level to guide tourism development for foreign earnings and employment generation (Dongol 2019). In Pokhara, making tourism policy is the reflection of the traditional values of the destination and tourism resources to regulate the tourism industry. This is the government’s responsibility and depends on power and relationships, as Bramwell Meyer (2007) mentions.

In the context of policy formulation, as entrepreneurs’ expectations, the following three areas are explored in a field study. They are an adaptive tax policy (Avoidance of unscientific /unreasonable tax system), an insurance policy, and promotion of entrepreneurship to meet some of the requirements of adventure tourism sustainability in Pokhara.

The future of adventure tourism in Pokhara is promising if supported by improved policies and infrastructure. Enhancing safety standards and training for guides will boost tourist confidence and service quality. Emphasizing sustainable practices is crucial to protect the natural environment. Strengthening public-private partnerships can diversify tourism products and increase innovation. Technology adoption, like digital marketing and online bookings, will expand international reach. Better transport and emergency services will improve visitor safety and experience. Community involvement ensures local benefits and cultural preservation. Addressing climate change impacts is essential for long-term sustainability. Overall, focusing on safety, sustainability, and community empowerment will help Pokhara become a top adventure tourism destination.

**Table 44: National Policy Continuing Initiatives to Enhance Connectivity in Pokhara**

National Policy	Ongoing efforts to connect Pokhara
Tourism Act 2035	Engage stakeholders to discuss and tackle environmental effects on lakes.
Tourism Policy 2052	Kathmandu-Pokhara-Tarai route (Golden Triangle) Pokhara-Tarai-Lumbini route (Silver Triangle) Rolpa-Rara-Lomanthang route (Adventure Route)
Policy, 2065 Tourism strategy/ vision	Recognizing potential as a central hub in adventure tourism
Offer renewable energy awareness and education initiatives for all tourism stakeholders across Nepal.	The Tourism Development Act 2020 was passed by the eighth municipal assembly. The act mentions the formation of three institutions viz: Metropolitan Tourism Development Committee, Ward Tourism Development Committee, and PMC homestay regulation committee, but no separate departments are regulated so far, and no adventure tourism is mentioned clearly.
Establish an inter-ministry working group to coordinate regulations, formalize unregistered tourism businesses, and enforce standards, including food safety, through collaboration with relevant departments and organizations. broaden its registration efforts to encompass oversight and adherence to	Round Fewa View Fewa (Purposed project)
standards for all tourism businesses, including hotels, funded potentially by recouping lost VAT revenue from unregistered enterprises.	Declared Pokhara as the capital of tourism (4thChaitra 2080) with various parameters.
Promote and execute a Nepal Tourism Quality Supplier Scheme	
Branding ‘Naturally Nepal’	
Promote the Concept of Trekking Routes:	
Establish and promote trekking routes such as the Lomanthang-Lumbini-Rara (Lomantang-Lumbini-Rara) circuit and the Rolpa-Rara (Rara-Rara) region to attract adventure tourists.	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The global tourism industry is very competitive, compelling tourist destinations to find innovative solutions for survival and sustainability. Destinations encounter difficulties in building and sustaining competitiveness due to their varied nature and the involvement of numerous stakeholders. Respondents of High Ground Adventure Pokhara say that adventure tourism operators in Pokhara adopt strengthened safety regulations to ensure participant safety and maintain a high industry reputation. He added that operators communicate serious risks to customers before, during, and throughout activities, and take reasonable steps to inform them of potential hazards. Work Safe-like authorities have expanded powers to suspend operations immediately if there is an imminent serious risk and have the authority to suspend, cancel, or refuse registrations for unsafe operators. He added that operators monitor natural hazard risks at activity sites and establish clear criteria for postponing, canceling, or relocating activities if risks change. These measures have standardized safety practices across the adventure tourism sector in Pokhara, ensuring tourists are well-informed and protected (Table 45).

Guidance and support for operators to comply with new regulations available, with a full review of adventure activity regulations scheduled to ensure ongoing safety and industry improvement. The Ministry of Tourism is enhancing the training and certification facilities by implementing nationally recognized certification processes and collaborating with tourism operators. Respondants Tourism Council, Pokhara, say that adventure tourism necessitates support from all three tiers of government federal, provincial, and Local as well as robust collaboration with the private sector and local communities. A thorough strategy and a unified long-term vision are essential to unite all stakeholders. This collaboration will help to unlock the state's adventure tourism potential and leverage tourism as a means for sustainable social and economic development and job creation.

The absence of explicit policies on connectivity to Pokhara for adventure tourism hinders its development as a central hub. Improved transportation infrastructure is crucial for attracting adventure tourists to trekking routes and other adventure attractions, aligning with the tourism goals of the study area. Respondents from the municipality emphasize tourism as pivotal for its growth, focusing on infrastructure, technology integration, and environmental conservation to enhance visitor experience

and city appeal. These initiatives balance economic benefits with community well-being, promoting sustainable tourism development in Pokhara under Nepal's federal governance framework. He added that the Ministry of Tourism will enhance the training and certification facilities by implementing nationally recognized certification processes.

As it is acknowledged, the competitive nature of the global tourism industry drives destinations to adopt innovative solutions to ensure survival and sustainability. In Pokhara, adventure tourism operators are taking significant steps to enhance safety and industry standards. *Government official: "We have implemented strict waste management policies in key trekking areas and are working on banning single-use plastics in popular routes like Annapurna Base Camp."* Entrepreneurs highlighted *strengthened safety regulations, emphasizing the communication of risks to participants before, during, and after activities.* Operators are now required to inform customers of potential hazards, and authorities like Work-Safe have the power to suspend or cancel operations of unsafe operators. Additionally, natural hazard risks at activity sites are actively monitored, with criteria established for postponing, canceling, or relocating activities when necessary. Local intellectual *"in the Phewa Lake watershed area it is necessary to prevent landslides and maintain its beauty.* These measures have standardized safety practices, ensuring tourists' protection and confidence in the industry.

The Ministry of Tourism is actively enhancing training and certification facilities, implementing nationally recognized processes, and collaborating with operators to ensure industry improvement. Respondents from the Tourism Council, Pokhara, stressed the importance of robust collaboration among all three tiers of government federal, provincial, and local along with private sector and community engagement. A unified long-term vision and comprehensive strategy are deemed essential for unlocking adventure tourism potential and leveraging it for sustainable social and economic development.

However, the absence of explicit policies on connectivity to Pokhara hinders its development as a central adventure tourism hub. Improved transportation infrastructure is critical to attracting tourists to trekking routes and other adventure attractions. A respondent from the Municipality emphasized *the importance of*

*focusing on infrastructure, technology integration, and environmental conservation to enhance visitor experiences and promote sustainable tourism. These initiatives, aligned with federal governance framework of Nepal, aim to balance economic growth with community well-being, solidifying the position as a premier adventure tourism destination.*

### **7.5 Nepal's Adventure Tourism Policy Landscape: Regulations, Incentives, and Safety Measures**

Nepal's adventure tourism policy landscape reveals a dynamic approach to promoting and regulating the sector, with a particular focus on leisure aviation activities like paragliding and ultra-light flights. Government Official (Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation):

*"The Recreational Aviation Regulation 2016 was introduced to streamline licensing and expand adventure tourism beyond Pokhara. However, balancing growth with airspace management remains a challenge." He added "Due to congestion in Pokhara's airspace, we have halted new paragliding permits. Our focus is on regulating existing operators to ensure compliance with international safety standards.*

**Entrepreneur said regarding policy gap** *"Incentives such as fee reductions for operations outside Pokhara are a step forward, but there must be investment in infrastructure to support these locations."*

*"We need more government support for lesser-known adventure destinations. The current policies mostly benefit big operators in Pokhara."*

*"If adventure tourism expands to villages, locals can benefit from homestays and guiding services. Government incentives for training and promotion would help."*

#### **Rescue Team Leader:**

*"Recent accidents highlight gaps in safety enforcement. Some operators do not follow proper maintenance schedules, increasing risks for tourists."*

Despite these efforts, recent tragic incidents underscore critical gaps in safety and regulation enforcement. Fatalities and injuries from canyoning, amusement park rides, paragliding, and ultralight activities reveal the urgent need for stringent safety protocols. *‘Equipment checks, regular maintenance, certified safety gear, and comprehensive training for operators are essential to mitigate risks and maintain the industry’s reputation. We are revising policies to mandate insurance for all adventure activities. This will provide better protection for both tourists and operators.’*

**Rafting operators say,** *“Adventure activities like canyoning and rafting require skilled guides, but training programs are limited. The government should enforce certifications before allowing operations.”*

**Local Business Owner (Adventure Gear Supplier):**

*“There is no clear regulation on the import and quality checks of adventure gear. Poor-quality equipment increases accident risks.”*

Nepal’s adventure tourism policy framework seeks to balance industry growth with safety, yet key challenges persist. While the Recreational Aviation Regulation 2016 aimed to expand leisure aviation beyond Pokhara, airspace congestion has led to restrictions on new permits. This ensures safety but limits market entry and innovation. Incentives like fee reductions for operators outside Pokhara exist, but a lack of infrastructure investment hinders expansion to rural areas. Sustainable tourism requires both financial and training support. Fatal accidents in paragliding, canyoning, and ultralight flights reveal weak enforcement of safety measures. Routine equipment checks, training, and mandatory insurance are crucial for risk mitigation. Many adventure activities lack structured training programs and certifications, risking tourist safety. Mandatory guide training and collaboration with industry experts are necessary.

No clear regulations exist for imported adventure equipment, increasing accident risks. A quality assurance mechanism is needed to enforce global safety standards. Despite regulatory efforts, Nepal’s adventure tourism sector faces infrastructure, safety, and quality control challenges. A multi-stakeholder approach involving

government, operators, and local communities is essential to enhance sustainability, safety, and equitable growth.

**Table 45: To effectively flourish adventure tourism in Pokhara, the proposed strategies can be implemented**

**Increase Budget Allocation**

Risk of misallocation or inefficiencies in spending without clear accountability.

Budget constraints or competing priorities may limit the allocation to tourism.

**Facilitate Financial Access**

Difficulty in attracting private investments due to perceived risks or low returns in the tourism sector.

Lack of financial expertise or infrastructure to effectively manage investments.

**Boost Investor Confidence**

Slow implementation of transparent policies and incentives could deter investors.

Economic volatility or changes in government policies may undermine investor trust.

**Equitable Taxation Policies**

Resistance from local businesses or stakeholders who may perceive tax policies as burdensome.

Potential revenue loss for local governments if tax incentives are overly generous.

**Strengthening Government Collaboration**

Bureaucratic hurdles or inter-agency conflicts could hinder effective collaboration.

Inconsistent priorities or political changes may disrupt ongoing collaborations.

**Promoting Tourism Aggressively**

High costs and limited effectiveness of promotional campaigns in reaching target audiences. Negative perception or misrepresentation of offerings despite marketing efforts.

**Establish a Tourism Development Fund**

Limited availability of funds or competition with other sectors for funding.

**Challenges in ensuring the fund is used efficiently and transparently**

**Educating Stakeholders**

Resistance or apathy from stakeholders who do not see immediate benefits from tourism education.

Difficulty in reaching and engaging diverse stakeholder groups effectively.

**Enhance Data Collection and Analysis**

Insufficient resources or expertise to implement robust data collection and analysis methods.

Challenges in standardizing data collection across different agencies and stakeholders.

**Increasing Funding Opportunities**

Dependence on volatile external funding sources that may fluctuate or dry up.

Difficulty in attracting private sector partnerships or grants due to perceived risks or market conditions.

**Clarify Roles and Responsibilities**

Resistance from existing agencies or stakeholders reluctant to redefine roles.

Complexity in defining clear boundaries and responsibilities in a multi-agency environment.

**Strengthening Coordination**

Government agencies accustomed to working independently may be inert or resistant to change, and there may be a lack of incentives or mechanisms to sustain long-term collaborative efforts.

**Ensure Political Stability and Consistency**

Political transitions or changes in administration lead to shifts in tourism priorities or policies.

Challenges in maintaining a long-term commitment to tourism development amidst competing political agendas.

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

These strategies highlight the complexities and potential pitfalls associated with implementing policies to promote adventure tourism in Pokhara (Table 46). Addressing these challenges requires careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive management to ensure sustainable and effective tourism development.

**7.6 Comprehensive Future Outlook of Adventure Tourism in Pokhara**

The future of adventure tourism in Pokhara depends on integrating robust safety measures, comprehensive policies, and sustainable practices to address academic challenges, seize opportunities, and create binding policy frameworks. Implementing

a notification and registration system would require operators to declare adherence to safety standards and be listed in a public database. Periodic licensing, such as a three-year cycle, can ensure continuous compliance, while stricter enforcement, including prosecuting unlicensed operators, would uphold industry standards. Incorporating elements of international frameworks like ISO 21101:2014 could significantly enhance safety protocols and improve the expertise of adventure tourism leaders, despite associated costs (ATTA, 2022).

Training and certifying adventure guides is essential, focusing on stringent risk mitigation, mandatory safety equipment, and adaptability to environmental conditions. Establishing systems to monitor safety incidents and near-misses will allow continuous refinement of protocols, leveraging data-driven insights and emerging best practices. Public awareness initiatives to educate tourists about the importance of choosing licensed operators and adhering to safety guidelines will foster a safety-first culture among visitors and operators alike (Buckley, 2011).

Promoting responsible tourism practices is equally critical. Educating tourists and operators about minimizing environmental footprints through principles like “Leave No Trace” will help conserve Nepal’s rich natural and cultural heritage. The economic impact of adventure tourism is particularly notable in regions like Gandaki Province, where it contributes over 40% of tourism-related jobs, benefiting guides, local businesses, and equipment suppliers. Encouraging local community involvement through initiatives like homestays, handicraft sales, and community-based tourism projects can further enhance economic gains and ensure equitable distribution of benefits (Marion, 2014; NTB, 2023). Sustainable adventure tourism messaging in marketing campaigns can attract eco-conscious travelers, reinforcing Nepal’s commitment to environmental stewardship (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Abundant natural resources and diverse landscapes present unparalleled growth opportunities of the study area. Activities like trekking, rafting, paragliding, zip-lining, and rock climbing are well-suited to meet the rising demand from families, baby boomers, and younger thrill-seekers. Local sites such as Rupakot, Hyangjakot, and Sarangkot combine adventure with cultural experiences, enhancing the region’s appeal to diverse tourist demographics.

Sustainable resource management is vital for long-term growth, requiring innovative conservation strategies and the establishment of best practices to minimize environmental impact (Buckley, 2010; Silva & Carvalhinho, 2017). Regulation remains a key driver of sustainability, necessitating a coordinated approach to mitigate potential obstacles to sector growth (McKay, 2018). Infrastructure development, such as the Pokhara International Airport, is pivotal in improving accessibility and supporting local businesses (Shrestha & Khanal, 2021). However, rapid growth in areas like Fewa Lake raises concerns about ecological damage, calling for strict conservation measures and the promotion of eco-tourism (Pandey & Bhattarai, 2020). Addressing climate change challenges, such as unpredictable weather, requires strategies like diversifying activities and promoting off-season tourism for resilience and sustainability (Chhetri et al., 2022).

Integrating local culture into adventure tourism enhances visitor experiences and enriches the country's global tourism image (Gurung & Adhikari, 2021). Strategic digital marketing efforts can amplify international visibility, aligning with the country's improved ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2019 (Acharya & Dahal, 2022). As adventure tourism continues to attract high-value customers, it fosters local economies, promotes sustainability, and strengthens its position as a premier destination. By balancing growth with conservation and stakeholder collaboration, Pokhara exemplifies how adventure tourism can drive both economic development and environmental stewardship.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 8.1 Summary

Nepal, renowned for its majestic Himalayas, diverse ecosystems, and rich cultural heritage, has emerged as a global hub for adventure tourism. Among its prominent destinations, Pokhara stands out as a premier gateway to the Annapurna range, offering a plethora of adventure activities such as trekking, paragliding, and ultra-light flights. This thriving sector contributes significantly to the local and national economy, fostering growth and development. However, sustainable advancement in adventure tourism faces considerable challenges, including environmental degradation, insufficient infrastructure, safety risks, limited financial and human resources, and weak policy enforcement.

Despite these challenges, Pokhara holds immense potential for growth and development. Opportunities lie in diversifying tourism offerings, fostering deeper community involvement, leveraging its global appeal, and promoting strong public-private partnerships. To address the barriers and secure sustainable development, robust policy interventions are essential. These include implementing comprehensive environmental protection protocols to safeguard natural landscapes, offering financial support and microfinance opportunities to local tourism enterprises, and establishing skill development programs to train local guides and staff. Risk management frameworks need to be strengthened, including systems for incident reporting, safety monitoring, and insurance coverage. Furthermore, infrastructure improvements, particularly in transportation networks such as air and road connectivity, are vital to enhancing accessibility. Strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks and integrating voluntary self-regulation can create a balanced and thriving tourism ecosystem.

This research, grounded in a constructivist paradigm, highlights the importance of understanding the subjective experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, and tourism operators. By employing qualitative methods like semi-structured interviews and narrative analysis, the study provides insights into the socio-economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of

adventure tourism in Pokhara. Through a combination of strategic policies and sustainable practices, Pokhara can position itself as a global model for adventure tourism. This approach will not only boost the economy but also ensure community upliftment and the preservation of Nepal's natural beauty and cultural heritage for future generations

## **8.2. Conclusion**

The sustainable growth of adventure tourism in Pokhara necessitates a comprehensive approach that integrates economic development, environmental conservation, and community engagement. As a premier adventure tourism destination, Pokhara must adopt policies and strategies that ensure long-term sustainability while enhancing its appeal to both international and domestic tourists.

The application of stakeholder theory underscores the need for inclusive tourism planning that involves all relevant parties, including local communities, businesses, and tourists. By fostering collaboration and ensuring that all perspectives are considered, tourism development can be more sustainable and beneficial to all stakeholders. The engagement of local communities in decision-making not only supports economic growth but also respects cultural traditions, fostering a harmonious relationship between hosts and visitors.

While adventure tourism offers economic opportunities, it also presents significant environmental challenges. Issues such as plastic pollution, waste management, and land degradation must be addressed through sustainable infrastructure development, conservation initiatives, and stringent regulations. The research highlights the complex interplay between economic, social, and environmental factors, emphasizing that economic prosperity cannot be sustained without environmental preservation.

The study also explores various psychological and behavioral theories to understand tourist experiences and motivations. Theories such as flow theory and self-determination theory suggest that adventure tourism should focus on providing challenging yet rewarding experiences that promote personal growth and satisfaction. Similarly, the theory of planned behavior can aid in designing effective marketing strategies that align with tourists' preferences and expectations. The implementation

of social exchange theory can further enhance the relationship between tourists and host communities, fostering mutual respect and cultural exchange.

From a policy perspective, the study identifies gaps in Nepal's adventure tourism regulations. While the country has implemented several tourism policies and economic plans over the years, adventure tourism has not received adequate policy attention. Existing regulatory frameworks such as the Recreational Aviation Regulation (2016) have been established to support adventure tourism, but comprehensive policies addressing environmental sustainability, safety, and stakeholder collaboration remain insufficient. Government decision-making processes often exclude local stakeholders, leading to administrative challenges and unaddressed concerns within the tourism sector.

The research reveals that while adventure tourism has significant growth potential, its sustainability requires stronger policy interventions, better regulatory frameworks, and greater stakeholder participation. Future studies should integrate various theoretical perspectives to provide a more holistic understanding of adventure tourism's role in economic development, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. Ensuring long-term sustainability in adventure tourism will require continuous collaboration among policymakers, tourism operators, local communities, and environmental organizations to create a balanced and thriving tourism ecosystem in Pokhara.

### **8.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this research significantly contribute to advancing adventure tourism in Nepal, particularly in Pokhara. To enhance the management and sustainability of adventure tourism in this vibrant destination, the following grand recommendations are proposed:

#### **8.3.1 Environmental Protection Protocol**

Develop and implement a comprehensive Environmental Protection Protocol tailored specifically for Pokhara. This protocol should provide clear guidelines for responsible tourism and sustainable practices, ensuring the preservation of the region's unique

natural beauty. Additionally, it should foster a culture of environmental stewardship among tourists and operators alike.

### **8.3.2 Collaboration and Cooperation**

Strengthen collaboration among government agencies, tourism operators, and local communities to address the underdevelopment of tourism infrastructure and services. Public-private partnerships should be emphasized to create a unified approach to tackling challenges and maximizing opportunities in the adventure tourism sector.

### **8.3.3 Financial Support**

Encourage the provincial government to provide essential capital support to adventure tourism enterprises. Funds should be allocated for purchasing equipment, conducting training programs, covering overhead expenses, and facilitating certification courses. Establishing a transparent application and vetting process will ensure equitable distribution of resources among stakeholders.

### **8.3.4 Training and Skill Development**

Offer comprehensive training and skill development programs for local adventure guides and staff. Financial aid for certification courses should be prioritized to enhance service quality and ensure that guides are well-prepared to deliver exceptional experiences to visitors.

### **8.3.5 Risk Management**

Implement a robust risk management mechanism by maintaining systematic datasets, incident reports, hospital records, and insurance claims. Close collaboration between adventure tour operators and relevant authorities is critical for enhancing safety standards across all adventure activities.

### **8.3.6 Government and Private Sector Collaboration**

Highlight the importance of collaboration between government entities and the private sector for tourism development. Stimulating private sector investment, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), can foster innovation, growth, and sustainability within the adventure tourism industry.

### **8.3.7 Infrastructure Development**

Prioritize infrastructure development, particularly aviation-related improvements, to enhance connectivity between Pokhara and key adventure tourist source locations. Improved ground and air connectivity will facilitate easier access, making the region more attractive to visitors.

### **8.3.8 Product Development and Geographic Focus**

Concentrate product development efforts on areas adjacent to evolving infrastructure. Prioritize specific geographical regions and adventure tourism products for targeted development to ensure efficient allocation of resources and maximize tourism potential.

### **8.3.9 Legal and Regulatory Frameworks**

Strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks governing the tourism industry. Establish a harmonious balance between legislative measures, effective implementation, robust enforcement, and voluntary self-regulation to create a stable and supportive environment for adventure tourism.

### **8.3.10 Microfinance and Local Collaboration**

Provide access to microfinance for supporting micro-enterprises in tourist-centric locales. Encourage the utilization of local resources through interlinked collaborations across sectors. This approach will empower local communities and enhance the overall tourism experience.

### **8.3.11 Promoting Adventure Enthusiasts**

Offer financial assistance to recognized adventure enthusiasts, enabling them to establish their adventure businesses. Support should include training, investment guidance, and networking opportunities to foster entrepreneurship within the sector.

### **8.3.12 Integration with Rural Areas**

Integrate tourism with rural areas to strengthen local supply chains and promote sustainable tourism practices. This integration will enhance the visitor experience while providing economic benefits to local communities.

### **8.3.13 Quality Improvement**

Focus on upgrading infrastructure, refining facilities, enhancing skills, and improving hospitality services. Striving for excellence in these areas will significantly elevate the overall quality of the visitor experience in Pokhara.

### **8.3.14 Diversification and Connectivity**

Diversify tourism offerings by integrating adventure tourism with non-tourism sectors. Foster a harmonious relationship between tourism and local industries to ensure the long-term sustainability of the adventure tourism sector.

By implementing these recommendations, Pokhara can position itself as a competitive and sustainable adventure tourism destination. This strategic approach will attract more visitors while contributing to the economic growth and cultural enrichment of the region. At the same time, it will ensure that adventure tourism thrives in harmony with breathtaking natural environment in Pokhara.

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## Appendix

### Transcription of Adventure Tourists

Mary USA (Adventure Tourist): The first time visiting Nepal, Mary, experienced great joy while flying in the sky of Pokhara. Upon coming to Nepal for the first time, she expressed her fascination with the natural beauty and hospitality of the place. She added hard to find elsewhere in the world. She added she also enjoyed white water Rafting in Pokhara.

1. What motivated you to participate in adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?  
I came here mostly because I love mountains and wanted to see the Himalayas. There are great opportunities for outdoor activities in Pokhara and wanted to learn culture of Nepal.
2. What type of adventure tourism activities did you participate in and how did you find out about them?  
I hiked the Annapurna circuit, which I found online years ago from a travel blogger, while visiting I also went paragliding and rafting which I discovered from tour agencies here.
3. How did you plan and prepare for your adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?  
I found all the information I needed to plan trekking online. I mostly read blogs from other people who have done adventure activities.
4. What challenges did you face during your adventure tourism activities and how did you overcome them?  
All the activities I did were challenging. The trekking guide needed to know new rules because many times it was confusing.
5. How did you perceive the environmental and social impacts of your adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?  
I think my activities had an overall positive impact and I contributed to the local economy. Environmentally, I think there could be more effort to limit plastic waste.
6. How do you think adventure tourism can contribute to the sustainable development of the study area?

Hopefully adventure tourism can attract tourists and locals to care about protecting the beautiful ecosystem and letting everyone enjoy it.

7. How satisfied were you with the services provided by adventure tourism service providers in the study area?

I was very satisfied, there were many tour companies and options available, so it was not hard to organize things to do.

8. What suggestions do you have for adventure tourism service providers in the study area to improve their services?

Educate tourists and guides as much as possible about the social and environmental conditions here and about how tourism impacts things. Be as socially responsible as possible to work with local communities.

9. Would you recommend adventure tourism activities in the study area to others, and if so, why?

Yes, there is unique and beautiful nature here. There are a lot of options for organized activities that make it easy for tourists.

10. How important are environmental sustainability and community well-being considerations to you when choosing adventure tourism activities to participate in?

Very important. However, it is hard to know which companies just responsible and which ones are just wanting to seem that way.

### **Sample of Questions for Objective 1**

**To explore the current trends of adventure tourism in Nepal, and identify the key factors that contribute to or hinder its growth and development**

**Adventure tourists (Duncan Quincey (d.j.quincey@leeds.ac.uk))**

1. Have you ever participated in adventure tourism activities in Nepal?

Yes

2. If yes, what activities have you tried?

Kayaking, trekking, glacier hiking

3. What made you decide to try adventure tourism activities in Nepal?

It is part of my research into how glaciers are responding to climatic changes

4. How did you plan for your adventure tourism activities in Nepal?

We use a company – Himalayan Research Expeditions

5. What challenges did you encounter while participating in adventure tourism activities in Nepal?

Fortunately, we have not experienced any challenges so far.

6. What factors do you think contribute to the growth of adventure tourism in Nepal?  
Advertising outside of the country, reputation of safety, the lure of the mountains
7. What do you think are the obstacles hindering the growth of adventure tourism in Nepal?  
The current economic crisis (less people able to travel), understanding/awareness of what is being offered (again to do with advertising)
8. How do you think adventure tourism service providers in Nepal can improve their services to attract more tourists?  
Advertising outside of the region, in adventure-type magazines for example.
9. What impact do you think adventure tourism has on the local communities in Nepal?  
Bringing money to the economy, providing jobs, building infrastructure
10. In your opinion, how can the government of Nepal support the growth and development of adventure tourism in the country?  
Promote the services of Nepal to other countries and explore opportunities to have them advertised in popular literature (e.g. kayaking/hiking magazines).

**Miaa, USA**

1. What motivated you to participate in adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?  
Nepal's reputation in adventure attractions, is hard to find elsewhere in the world.
2. What type of adventure tourism activities did you participate in and how did you find out about them?  
Safari in Chitwan, white water rafting in Pokhara. I got to know it by means of publicity.
3. How did you plan and prepare for your adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?  
Limited planning, either talked to tourism agencies or hotel owners and signed up.
4. What challenges did you face during your adventure tourism activities and how did you overcome them?

### **Physical demanding**

5. How did you perceive the environmental and social impacts of your adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?  
I am concerned about it, encroaching upon habitat, animal privacy, but being in people's way also.
6. How do you think adventure tourism can be well sustained in the study area?  
Investment, publicity, preservation of natural resources
7. How satisfied were you with the services provided by adventure tourism service providers in the study area?  
Very
8. What suggestions do you have for adventure tourism service providers in the study area to improve their services?  
Hard to distinguish between different companies, it would be nice to figure out.
9. Would you recommend adventure tourism activities in the study area to others, and if so, why?  
Yes, for a better place
10. How important are environmental sustainability and community well-being considerations to you when choosing adventure tourism activities to participate in?  
I would like to say "very but it is hard to tell and everything seems the same.  
Questions for local communities (Trekking Guide: Santosh Rimal)
2. How familiar are you with adventure tourism activities in your area?  
I am quite familiar with tourism activities around Pokhara as I have invested more than 10 years in this field.
3. How do adventure tourism activities impact your daily life and livelihoods?  
It directly impacts my daily life as most of my income is generated from tourism activities.
4. What are the benefits of adventure tourism activities to the local community in the area?  
Revenue is generated  
It has provided job opportunity opportunities to 60% of people around Pokhara.  
It has promoted local skills and products

5. What are the negative impacts of adventure tourism activities on the local community in Pokhara?  
Westernization  
Lost of local old culture  
Being lost the traditions
6. How do adventure tourism activities affect the environment in Pokhara?  
The environment has been directly / indirectly affected by tourism activities. Many people throw the waste/ dirts that make the environment polluted though there are many practices to control it.
7. How do you think what are the activities can contribute to the sustainability of adventure tourism in Pokhara and how can adventure tourism service providers in the Pokhara area better engage and involve the local community in their activities?  
Tourists are attracted by local products, traditions and sports, tourism service providers run the program like Phewa lake cleaning campaign, afforestation around Pokhara, Awareness program, trekking guide classes, regionwise publicity etc to sustain it.
9. What are your expectations from adventure tourism service providers in the area in terms of benefitting the local community?  
Local community people are the ambassadors of the city to promote its nature and beauty to attract tourists.
10. What actions can the local government take to ensure that adventure tourism activities benefit the local community and environment in the area?  
Local government should make mandatory to promote local culture, beauty, and production to popularise the place, it should explore hidden reality and brand of Pokhara.
11. How can the local community actively participate in the development and management of adventure tourism activities in the area?  
The needs and desires of local communities should be fulfilled by the local government.
12. What are the productions used by the tourists around you?  
Mostly imported items as luxury and natural beauties around the city for entertainment.

MPhil/Ph.D. Research work on Adventure tourism in Pokhara

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## Questionnaire

Please try your best to fill up the questions

Participants' Information

Respondents Name:

Organization:

Gender:

Age:

Abroad:

Nepal:

Project Title: Adventure Tourism in Nepal: Unveiling potantalties in Pokhara

Purpose of the study

To evaluate the current trend of adventure tourism in Pokhara, Nepal, study and analyse opportunity and challenges in adventure tourism in Pokhara and provincial and municipalpolicy regarding to it.

Questions for Objective 1

To explore the current trends of adventure tourism in Nepal, and identify the key factors that contribute to or hinder its growth and development

### Entrepreneurs

1. Have you ever participated in adventure tourism activities in Nepal?
2. If yes, what activities have you tried?
3. What made you decide to try adventure tourism activities in Nepal?
4. How did you plan for your adventure tourism activities in Nepal?
5. What challenges did you encounter while participating in adventure tourism activities in Nepal?

6. What factors do you think contribute to the growth of adventure tourism in Nepal?
7. What do you think are the obstacles hindering the growth of adventure tourism in Nepal?
8. How do you think adventure tourism service providers in Nepal can improve their services to attract more tourists?
9. What impact do you think adventure tourism has on the local communities in Nepal?
10. In your opinion, how can the government of Nepal support the growth and development of adventure tourism in the country?

### **Questions for local communities**

2. How familiar are you with adventure tourism activities in your area?
3. How do adventure tourism activities impact your daily life and livelihoods?
4. What are the benefits of adventure tourism activities to the local community in the area?
5. What are the negative impacts of adventure tourism activities on the local community in Pokhara?
6. How do adventure tourism activities affect the environment in Pokhara?
7. How do you think what are activities can contribute to the sustainability of adventure tourism in Pokhara?
8. How can adventure tourism service providers in the Pokhara area better engage and involve the local community in their activities?
9. What are your expectations from adventure tourism service providers in the area in terms of benefitting benefiting the local community?
10. What actions can the local government take to ensure that adventure tourism activities benefit the local community and environment in the area?
11. How can the local community actively participate in the development and management of adventure tourism activities in the area?
12. What are the productions used by the tourists around you?

MPhil/Ph.D. Research work on Adventure tourism in Pokhara

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## Questionnaire

Please try your best to fill up the questions

### Participants' Information

Respondents Name:

Organization:

Gender:

Age:

Abroad:

Nepal:

Project Title: Adventure Tourism in Nepal: Unveiling potantalties in Pokhara

### **Question for Objective 2**

To analyze the opportunities and challenges of adventure tourism in the study area and assess their implications for the industry's sustainability and community well-being.

### **Questionnaire for Entrepreneurs**

1. How long have you been involved in this business?
2. How did you plan to start this business?
3. What are the opportunities you gained from this business?
4. How are people benefited from this business in your locality?
5. What is your role to flourish this business in Nepal?
6. How many people are engaged in your business?
7. What can be done to grow the business in Nepal?
8. What challenges did you face when investing in adventure tourism activities in the study area?
7. What obstacles do you think are hindering the growth and development of adventure tourism in the study area?

What kind of risk management system does your present company have?  
or earlier companies had?

8. To what degree have you contributed to evolving or improving such systems?
9. What situations in the products that you are guiding do you find most difficult to handle (e.g., terrain hazards, customer-related)?
10. What kind of risks do your guests normally experience?
11. What are the most challenging situations with tourists?
12. How do you involve your tourists in your products (based on background information, etc)
8. What policies are made to secure your business?
9. Does the government support your business (compensation/ low interest/ security)
10. What are the obstacles created by an unstable government in policy making and implementation?
11. What do you expect from the government to be done in your business?
12. What are the negative impacts brought by tourism in Pokhara?
12. Would you please suggest the government what can a government do to flourish tourism in Nepal/Pokhara
13. How can Pokhara be made popular in the international market?
14. Please feel free to write about what we should do to make adventure tourism sustaining for a long time.
15. What do you think adventure tourism entrepreneurs are doing to improve their services to attract more tourists?
16. Is there an insurance policy for the accident victims / pilots/ and business?
17. What do you enjoy most about being an entrepreneur in Pokhara?
18. What skills would you suggest for new entrepreneurs to develop?
19. Can you please tell me what we can do to make Pokhara the best place for adventure tourism?
20. What can be done to sustain adventure tourism in Pokhara?

## **Questions for policymakers**

### **Questions for objective three**

#### **To investigate the adaptive strategies implemented by the state in different adventure tourism operators in the study area.**

1. How long are you involved in the Tourism sector?
2. What policies and regulations are in place to govern adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?
  1. How effective have these policies and regulations been in managing the impacts of adventure tourism activities in the study area?
  2. How do you ensure that adventure tourism activities benefit the local community in the study area?
  3. What are the key challenges in balancing the development of adventure tourism with the preservation of natural and cultural resources in the study area?
  4. How do you involve and engage the local community in the development and management of adventure tourism activities in the study area?
  5. How do you ensure that adventure tourism activities in the study area are sustainable in the long run?
  6. What are your plans for promoting and developing adventure tourism in the study area while ensuring its sustainability?
  7. How do you measure the impact of adventure tourism on the environment, local communities, and the economy in the study area?
  8. What actions are you taking to address any negative impacts of adventure tourism activities in the study area and ensure the well-being of the local community and environment?
  9. What challenges have you experienced during your working tenure regarding policy making and implementation regarding adventure tourism?
  10. What prospectives of adventure tourism have you seen in Pokhara?
  11. What is your point of view regarding destination branding at the international level to flourish adventure tourism?
  12. What policies are made to attract more tourist from china and India as our neighbouring countries?

Questions for adventure tourists

1. What motivated you to participate in adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?
2. What type of adventure tourism activities did you participate in and how did you find out about them?
3. How did you plan and prepare for your adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?
4. What challenges did you face during your adventure tourism activities and how did you overcome them?
5. How did you perceive the environmental and social impacts of your adventure tourism activities in Pokhara?
6. How do you think adventure tourism can contribute to the sustainable development of the study area?
7. How satisfied were you with the services provided by adventure tourism service providers in the study area?
8. What suggestions do you have for adventure tourism service providers in the study area to improve their services?
9. Would you recommend adventure tourism activities in the study area to others, and if so, why?
10. How important are environmental sustainability and community well-being considerations to you when choosing adventure tourism activities to participate in?

**Adventure Activities fill up**

Paragliding	Bunjee jumping	Rock Climbing	Caving /Kayaking	Zip lining	Trekking	Rafting	Other

**Types of Opportunities during the Operation of Adventure Tourism Activities**

Social	Economic	Infrastructure	Health	Environmental	Cultural

**Types of challenges during operation**

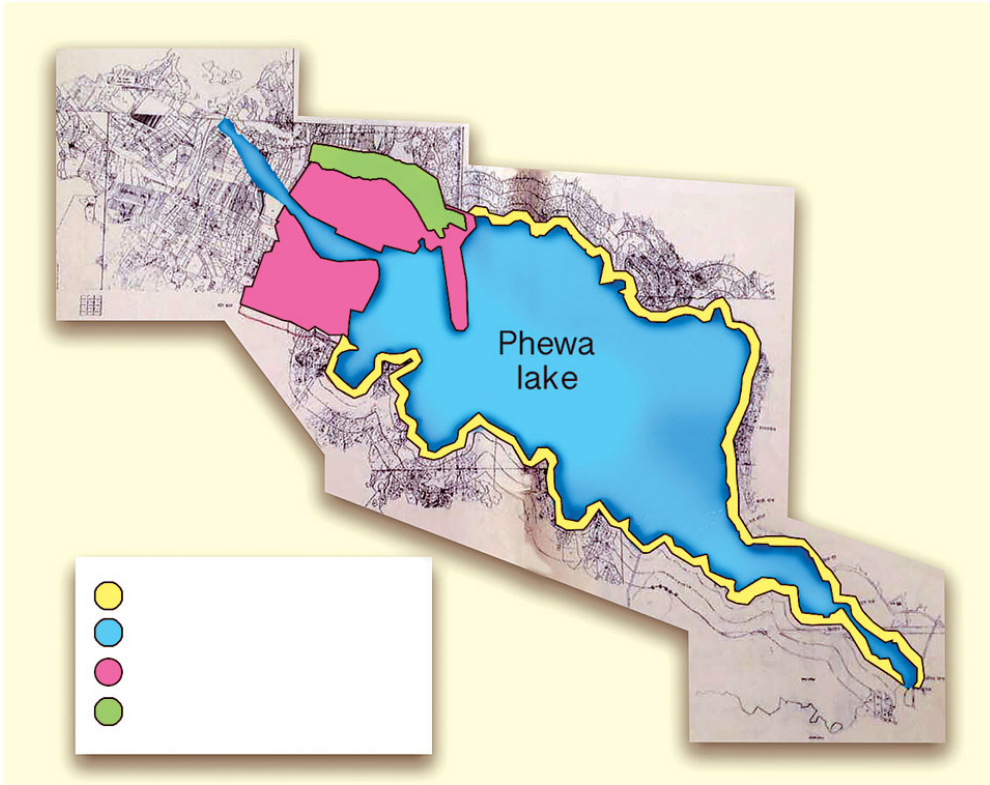
Socio-cultural	Economic	Policy Level	Infrastructure	Insurance	Publicity	Other

**Motivations of Adventure Tourism**

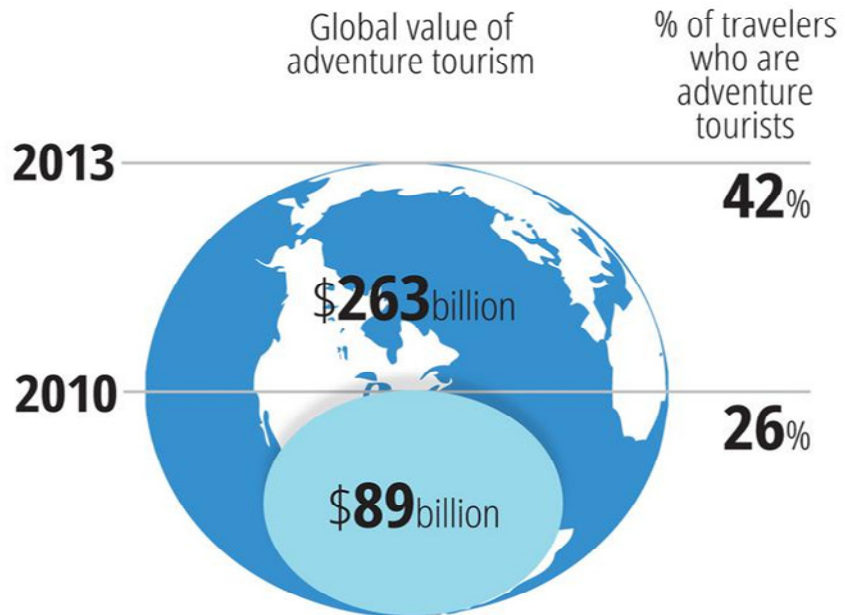

**Safety Experiences of Operators**

Injury Types	Activity environment Client injuries	Mean injuries	Serious harm	Mean client injury	Death

Thank you



**Challenge of Lake Fewa (Photo 1)**



**Status of Global Adventure Tourism (Photo 2)**



**Mahendra Cave, Batulechaur Pokhara (Photo 3)**



**Bat Cave, Lamachaur Pokhara (Photo 4)**



**Hikingspot, Kahu Dharahara with an amazing view of Pokhara (Photo5)**



**View from Sarangkot a hiking place, Pokhara (photo 6)**

“On Earth there is no heaven but there are pieces of it”, a beautiful quote by Jules Renard and probably the quote came into authors mind during the visit to a place like Pokhara. Pokhara is truly a piece of heaven on Earth.



**Fewalake, Pokhara the most Popular Adventure Destination (Photo 7)**



**Visit Pokhara to explore the Himalaya through Paragliding (Photo 8)**



**White Water Rafting, Pokhara (Photo 9)**



**Rock Climbing, Methlang Pokhara (Photo 10)**



**Ultralight -flight in Pokhara (Photo 11)**



**Photo 12**



**Individual Interview to Kumud Dhital Sir Tourism Board Pokhara (Photo 13)**



**Focus Group Discussion in Tourism Council, Pokhara (photo 14)**



**Focus Group Discussion (Photo 14)**



**Individual Interview to the Chair, Pom Narayan Shrestha Pokhara Tourism Council (Photo 15)**



**Filling Questionnaire in High Ground Adventure, Barahi Chowk, Pokhara  
(Photo 16 )**



**Water Hyacinth as a Challenge in Fewalake, Pokhara (Photo 17)**



**Interviewing the Rescue Team, Fewa Lake (Photo 18)**



**Individual Interview with Yedu Raj Pokhrel, Entrepreneur (Photo 19)**



**Seti River George, under K.I. Singh Bridge, Pokhara (Photo 20)**