

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF TREKKING TOURISM IN POST DISASTER SITUATION:

A Case Study of Langtang Valley, Rasuwa District, Nepal

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Prospects and Challenges of Trekking Tourism in Post Disaster Situation: A Case Study of Langtang Valley, Rasuwa District, Nepal** has submitted to the Central Department of Rural Department, Tribhuvan University, is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor. I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of preparing this thesis. The results of this thesis have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other purposes. I assure that no part of the content of this thesis has been published in any form before.

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(7th Asoj, 2073)

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This thesis entitled **Prospects and Challenges of Trekking Tourism in Post Disaster Situation: A Case Study of Langtang Valley, Rasuwa District, Nepal** has been prepared by RupakRisal under my guidance. I hereby forward this thesis to the evaluation committee for final evaluation and approval.

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Dr. Prem Sharma

(Supervisor)

Date: 23rd September, 2016

(7th Asoj, 2073)

APPROVAL LETTER

This thesis work entitled **Prospects and Challenges of Trekking Tourism: A Case Study of Langtang Valley, Rasuwa District, Nepal** submitted by RupakRisal in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree (MA) in Rural Development has been approved by the evaluation committee.

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Date: 23rd September, 2016

(7th Asoj, 2073)

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ABSTRACT

Nepal offers innumerable activities in the field of tourism such as sightseeing, hiking, trekking, rafting, mountaineering, Jungle safari, canyoning, bird watching, animal watching, hunting, boating, paragliding, and many more. Because of this, tourism industry is one of the most rapidly growing industries in Nepal. In countries like Nepal where no other industries have flourished, tourism is seen as an important industry to reduce the alarming rate of unemployment in the country. With trekking trails that takes you to the base camps of some of the highest mountains in the world to various mid hill areas that offer great natural beauty and ethnic heritages, Nepal is widely regarded as one of most popular trekking destinations in the world.

Trekking is regarded as an activity that involves a long and hard journey on foot. Generally, it is done as a hobby in spare time in order to test one's own physical capacity while enjoying natural beauty, ethnic food and culture along with warm hospitality. Trekking is the most chosen activity of all tourists that come to Nepal and Langtang valley is the third most popular trekking destination in Nepal, first and second being Annapurna region and Everest region respectively.

Langtang valley is located inside Langtang VDC in Rasuwa district. The entire VDC is located within the area of Langtang National Park. Langtang VDC borders Tibet, Autonomous Region of People's Republic of China in the North, Sindhupalchok DDC to the East, Nuwakot DDC and Syafu VDC to the South, Timure and Briddhim VDCs to the West. Langtang valley was one of the most severely affected areas by the earthquake of 25th April, which caused a massive landslide in the area. Langtang valley faced a dire situation after the disaster.

Small hamlets inside the valley such as Bamboo, Chunama, Ghodatabela, Thangshep, Mundu located on trekking routes were destroyed by the earthquake whereas the village of Langtang was completely brought down to rubble by the massive landslide. At 175 locals, 80 international tourists, 40 porters, 20 guides and 10 armies were killed, while at least 82 are still missing in the landslide hit area. Most hotels and lodges in the area were casualties of

disaster. This incident saw steep decline in visitors and forced the entire remaining residents of the valley into a safer location temporarily.

However, not everything that happened was bad after the disaster. Though the valley residents lost their houses, business, friends and family in the disaster, they cooperated with each other in hard times. They wanted to go back to the valley to restart their lives again in a hope that they could also revive the thriving trekking industry in the area. A year after the disaster, people of Langtang are getting back on their feet and reconstructions of tourism related infrastructures are almost complete by September. The valley needs some positive media coverage and frequent maintenance and repair of trekking trail segments to gain more benefits from trekking tourism because the nature and locals are ready to welcome the visitors in the valley as before.

However, Nepal is also as a disaster prone area where all kinds of disasters such as earthquake, landslide, flooding, avalanche, GLOF etc. occurs every now and then that takes 100s of lives every year and destroys millions worth of properties. Most of all, it sends negative messages to the potential tourists about such locations if any disaster is ever to occur in or around that area. After the disastrous earthquake of 25th April and 12th May in 2016, tourists visiting to Nepal decreased heavily in number.

This thesis is the result of an extensive research study which is presented in the form of prescribed setting with due consideration to some theoretical explanation, socioeconomic relationship among trekkers, locals, hoteliers and occupational workers related to trekking tourism. This study will help to generate the concept of effects of disasters in popular tourist destinations. There hasn't been done any study in various aspects of trekking tourism in Langtang valley in post disaster situation. Hence it is also necessary to study about situation of different aspects of tourism after the disaster, which directly or indirectly influences the preparedness before and after the disaster in any popular tourist destinations in Nepal or anywhere. Thus, it aims to conduct a study about **Prospects and Challenges of Trekking Tourism in Post Disaster Situation: A Case Study of Langtang Valley, Rasuwa District, Nepal.**

Finally, it is recommended that Langtang valley is an ideal destination for trekking tourism even after suffering from such a huge disaster. In order to promote the potential of trekking tourism in disaster hit touristic areas, this study investigates the potential of trekking tourism Langtang valley in post disaster situation. A continuous and sincere effort on beautification of Langtang village, previously the largest human settlement in the valley, along with timely maintenance of trekking trails will definitely bring the valley back to its pre disaster situation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| AD | - | Anno Domini |
| APR | - | Annual Progress Report |
| B.S. | - | BikramSambat |
| DDC | - | District Development Committee |
| GLOF | - | Glacier Lake Outburst Flood |
| H21 | - | Highway 21 |
| IFRC | - | International Federation of Red Cross |
| INGO | - | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| ISDR | - | International Strategy for Disaster Reduction |
| LNP | - | Langtang National Park |
| M | - | Meters |
| MAF | - | Mission Aviation Fellowship |
| MSL | - | Mean Sea Level |
| MT | - | Mountain |
| NGO | - | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NTB | - | Nepal Tourism Board |
| OM | - | Operations Mobilization |
| TU | - | Tribhuvan University |
| UN | - | United Nations |
| UNWTO | - | United Nations World Tourism Organization |
| VDC | - | Village Development Committee |