

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The desire to explore new places and look for a change of environment and experience has been there ever since the beginning of human civilization. Today, rapid development in the means of transportation and communication has made travelling such an easy affair that it has practically turned the whole world into a small village. With its vast potentiality, tourism sector can be a major role player in economic development of a country. In case of country like ours, it can be a major source of employment both in cities and in rural areas thereby reducing the rampant poverty level. In order to achieve such feat, Nepal has started tourism promotional activities in both domestic and international markets.

Tourism vision 2020 has highlighted the major tourist activities in Nepal. They are, (Aerial) mountain flight, hang gliding, paragliding, cable car, bungee jumping, ultra-light aircraft, hot- air ballooning, sky diving, (Terrestrial) mountaineering, trekking/hiking, jungle safari, wildlife tourism, honey hunting, mountain biking, rock climbing, caving, skiing, golf, elephant polo, motor rally, Himalayan marathon, triathlon, pony treks, and (Aquatic) rafting, kayaking, canoeing, boating, fishing, angling, cascading, jet ski and (Niche) eco-tourism, village tourism, agro tourism, culture tourism, pilgrimage tourism and spiritual tourism, educational tourism, health and wellness tourism, special interest tours etc.¹

Nepal is also blessed with huge range of geographical, cultural and ethnic diversities. Within 200 kilometers of North to South range, one can find location as low as 70 meters (kechana, Jhapa) to altitude as high as 8,848 meters (Mt. Everest, Solukhumbu). Nepal occupies 0.03 percent of the total land area on the earth and 0.3 percent of the Asian continent. However, within such a small geographical area, one can find 8 of the 10 highest mountains in the world and 250 mountains that are higher than 6000 meters. There are 123 languages spoken in Nepal

¹Government of Nepal.(2001). *Tourism Vision 2020*. November 20th, 2015. P. 13

by more than 125 ethnic/caste groups, majority of whom have various distinctively different cultures in practice.²

Climate ranges in Nepal varies from tropical to subtropical in the south and subarctic to arctic in the north. Inhabitants are mainly of Mongoloid and Aryan origin with a small population can trace their origin to Dravidian race. However, majority of Nepalese people today have traces of at least two of these races. Nepalese culture is mostly influenced by Mongolian, Tibetan and one of Indian subcontinent.

These diversities within such a small area of its boundary mean it has immense possibility of growth in the field of trekking tourism. The best way to experience Nepal's unbeatable combination of natural beauty and culture riches is to walk through them. One can walk along the beaten trails or virgin tracks. Either way you are in for an experience for a lifetime. Along with forests of rhododendron, isolated hamlets, and small mountain villages, birds, animals, temples, monasteries and breathtaking landscapes, you will also encounter friendly people of different cultures offering a fascinating glimpse of traditional rural life.

Nepal's geographical varieties and multiple climate ranges has resulted it becoming rich in biodiversity and scenic beauty. Several locations in Nepal such as high Himalayas and valleys up in the north to the gorges, grasslands in the mid-hill regions and dense forests in the south are very appealing in beauty and challenges to trekkers, nationals and internationals alike.

Langtang valley trekking, located in Rasuwa district, is the third most popular trekking destination in Nepal after Annapurna and Everest region. Langtang valley lies in the VDC of Langtang, which entirely lies inside Langtang National Park. The valley is surrounded by several mountain ranges such as Langtang mountain range, Yubra, Yala, Changbu, Kinshung peaks in the North to Baden Powell Scout peak, Naya Kanga peak, Urking Kanggari, Kangja peaks in the South. In the east lie mountains such as Yala peak, Langshisa Ri, Dorje Lakpa mountain range, Ganachenpo peak etc. The valley has the altitude span ranging from 1000 meters (upper tropical

²<http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Population/National%20Report/National%20Report.pdf>. P. 4.

forest) up to 7245 meters (LangtangLirung). Trekking route to the valley follows the beauty of Langtang River from the beginning to the end. Trekkers can choose a rather steep route via Sherpagaun to reach Langtang, by which they can enjoy mountain views throughout their journey. Regardless of the route they choose, trekkers pass through subtropical forest followed by coniferous forest that covers majority of the area. It is followed by the alpine vegetation finally reaching to such altitude where only a few shrubs are found. However, the region is popular for wild animals such as Red Panda, Snow leopard, Himalayan Thar, Deer, and monkeys of more than one species. The valley is characterized by dense narrow forest area to much broader valley as one goes due east towards the highland. Trekkers enjoy the lush green forest along with several mountain peaks at the background in the beginning. As the valley broadens, one can witness the beauty of vast greenery of grasslands, snowcapped mountains in three directions. During winter, when the village and the entire valley are covered with snow, ski lovers from several countries flock in to the valley for winter related recreational activities. Throughout the trek, there are several *Manes*, prayer's wheels and *Gumbas* that represents distinctness in Tamang culture of the locality, which has its root in Buddhism and Bon religion.

1.2 Present Scenario

The valley of Langtang was hit hard by the earthquake of April 25th of 2015. Moreover, an entire section of Langtang village was buried under the rubble of an avalanche caused by the first earthquake. As a result, lodges and tea houses were all destroyed and the entire population of Langtang valley was relocated after the devastating avalanche caused by the earthquake. The avalanche took lives of 175 locals, 80 international tourists, at least 40 trekking guides and 20 porters and 10 army personnel. At least 82 people are still missing(DDC, Rasuwa).

It has already been a year after the earthquake and avalanche. Meanwhile, small hamlets such as Sherpagaun, Chunama, Bamboo, Rimche, Lama hotel, GhodaTabela, thangshyap, Mundu are already half way through the reconstruction process. However, reconstruction of Langtang village, the biggest one, has barely started. Yet, Locals in the valley are waiting to welcome tourists who want to explore a vast region of natural beauty, ethnically and culturally

unpolluted Tamang heritage, and adventure of trekking in one of the most revered locations. Now, Kyanjing village past Langtang village due east has become the final resting village for trekkers who want to return back through the same path.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

When it comes to natural calamities, Nepal is also known as 'Disaster Supermarket'. Natural disasters of all types such as earthquake, landslide, flooding, GLOF, thunderstorm, avalanche, and even a volcano (Dailekh) can be found here. Yearly, 100s of citizens are killed because of these disasters that also destroy millions worth of properties. Disasters are also responsible for ruining natural beauty and destroying livelihood mechanism of an area.

On the other hand, tourism is the major source of Nepal's foreign revenue. Almost a million tourists come to visit Nepal every year, and the number is increasing. This has helped Nepal significantly overcome its foreign exchange deficit, nearly about a half million have gained employment in the hospitality business and Nepal's image as a beautiful country has been spread throughout the world. However, tourism can't flourish where disaster hits every now and then. Because of frequent disasters occurring in several parts of Nepal, it hasn't been able to reap the benefit from tourism in full scale. The earthquake followed by a landslide that occurred in 25th April, 2015 destroyed the valley of Langtang completely, which was a popular tourist destination. More than 25 percent of its population was killed immediately and all houses in the village were turned into rubbles.

Ever since, the valley residents have been trying their best to get the valley back on its feet and revive the tourism industry based on trekking of the Langtang area. This study helps to show the present scenario of Langtang valley with a micro level analysis on its ongoing process of recovery from the disaster and its effect on trekking tourism of Langtang valley area.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

-) To assess the impact on infrastructures related to trekking in the study area
-) To explore the psychological impact of earthquake in the study area
-) To examine the role of trekking tourism on socio-economic status of the local community after the earthquake

1.5. Research Methodology

A descriptive research design was adopted to analyze and interpret the data collected from the study area. This research design primarily focuses on physical and psychological impact on infrastructures, and socioeconomic status of trekking tourism in local community after the disaster. The purpose of this research was to describe the prospects and challenges of trekking tourism in Langtang valley of Rasuwa district in post disaster situation.

1.5.1 Rationale behind the selection of the study area

The study area is the third most popular trekking destination in Nepal for trekking, mountaineering, and exploring local culture and heritage. The researcher had selected this area because out of a few other disasters hit trekking destinations such as Mansalu trek and Gauri Shankar and Rolwaling valley trek, magnitude of destruction by the disaster in this valley was incomparable to any other trekking destinations.

1.5.2 Sampling Procedure

Random sampling was adopted to collect data from the field visit. Depending upon availability of respondents, about 20 hoteliers/locals, 15 trekkers and 10 guides/porters were interviewed. While interviewing hoteliers/locals, always head of households, otherwise educated household members were interviewed in order to get relevant data. Trekkers and guides/porters were interviewed during the field visit and in some cases; they were interviewed after they returned from the field.

Table #1.1
Key informant sample type and population

S.N.	Sample type	Sampling	Procedure
1	Hoteliers	11	Sequentially, from initial point to the last human settlement in the valley.
2	Locals	9	Sequentially, from initial point to the last human settlement in the valley.
3	Porters	3	Selected only those who had visited the valley before and after the disaster.
4	Guides	4	Selected only those who had visited the valley before and after the disaster.
5	Mule herders	3	Randomly selected, none first timers.
6	Trekkers	15	Assorted between first time visitors and ones with previous visiting experience (7 first timers)
	Total	45	

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

1.5.3 Sources of Data Collection

The research was based on both primary data and secondary sources of data. For primary data, questionnaire survey, focused group discussion, self-observations and several interviews of concerned authorities were conducted and for secondary data, relevant libraries, online resources and concerned agencies such as Langtang National Park office, Dhunche Police Office were visited.

1.5.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Structured questionnaire, unstructured interviews and observation methods were applied to generate primary data. Establishing a co-operative and friendly relation with the resource population was essential during the interview to collect data. In many cases, interviewees were notified in advance and asked for their valuable time. Following techniques were used:

Questionnaire Survey

Only by conducting unstructured interviews, it wasn't possible to collect all the information about the respondents. Therefore, major data were collected from a structured questionnaire survey method. A structured questionnaire (scorecard) with 20 odd questions was prepared as a tool to collect primary data in order to achieve the research objectives. Respondents were classified into three different categories of Hoteliers/Locals, Guides/Porters, and Trekkers.

Key Informant Interview

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through key informant interview. Locals from the study area, several authorities, and members involved in reconstruction committee were interviewed in order to collect data to apply in the research. A couple of key informants were interviewed in the later part of the survey, in the month of September. As a result, their answers were differing from their April counterparts.

Focused Group Discussion

In order to get some qualitative information, an informal focused group discussion was conducted among locals. For this purpose, locals who were having a discussion among themselves were asked for permission if the researcher could join them as a student. Later on, the locals were informally asked questions about reconstruction and other challenges faced by the valley residents in the aftermath of the earthquake and landslide. They were also inquired about socioeconomic impact, destruction on cultural, educational and health related structures in the valley.

1.5.5 Data Analysis

The purpose of data collection is to obtain information to keep on record to make decision about important issues and to pass it on to others. Primarily data was collected to provide information regarding the specific topic. Simple statistical tools like tables, graphs will be used for data analysis. Descriptive method is used for qualitative data.

1.6 Importance of the Study

Nepal is prone to earthquakes of larger magnitudes at frequent intervals. It is certain that earthquakes similar or greater in magnitude of 25th April and 12th May will go off in future again. This study aims to contribute in finding ways of mitigation measures of such disasters in future in such popular tourist attractions by assessing socio-economic, psychological and infrastructural changes that followed the earthquake in the study area.

The study aims to analyze prospects and challenges of trekking tourism after the earthquake in the study area. Tourism can be a vital source of public revenue only if proper policy, management and marketing are formulated in favor of local communities with equitable benefit sharing and employment generation. Trekking tourism also contributes to a number of indigenous industries and services by creating direct, indirect and induced employment opportunities and also positively changes people's way of living of the related area.

In addition, findings of this study may be useful for the future researchers and decision makers. It can be an eye opener to the government of Nepal and local communities to more actively participate and contribute in the reconstruction of disaster hit tourist destinations and collaborating public and private sector for the promotion of trekking tourism in the study area.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

-) The research will be limited to trekking tourism, its prospects and challenges in post-earthquake situation only.
-) The research will be limited to one certain area and will not represent the entire earthquake affected area of the country.
-) This study will be based on the data available from the field visit of the study area.
-) Data from different locations in the valley may vary as magnitude of disaster faced in different locations also varies.
-) This research will be limited in a way that exact number of visitors to Langtang valley couldn't be verified as everyone who visited LNP not necessarily visited the valley.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study has been organized into five different chapters.

Chapter one: Introduces the background of study, introduction to the study area, statement of the problem, objectives, research methodology, importance and limitations of the study.

Chapter two: explains the literature review.

Chapter three: explains setting of the study area.

Chapter four: contains data analysis and interpretation, and result of the survey carried out with tourists, hotel owners, porters, mule herders, and site residents.

Chapter five: contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the survey.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literatures on disaster and its relation to tourism in global scale. In addition, it reviews literatures available on secondary impact of disaster, its effects on prospects and challenges of trekking tourism in post disaster situation.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Tourism is generally defined as the movement of people from one place to another whether it may be within own country or other countries for various purposes. Tourism also is the study of someone away from his/her habitat. According to Oxford English Dictionary, tourism is defined as "the business activity connected with providing accommodation, services and entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure".

"Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (UNWTO). Tourism could be defined as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which involves the movement of people to countries or places outside their normal environment for personal or business purposes. These people are called visitors, which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure.

Types of Tourism

In order to understand and learn more about this field, tourism activities have been classified into multiple types and categories. Tourism can be international or domestic based on boundaries between countries. However, tourism has been further divided on the basis of purpose, location and nature of intention of the visit as follows:

Village Tourism

Village tourism is based in special areas such as rural settlements and villages where no urban luxuries are available. Village tourism usually attracts the middle level income tourists and urban citizens who want to get away from hectic urban lifestyles for a while for relaxation.

Pleasure Tourism

Pleasure tourism involves travelling to places away from one's residence to take a break from the busy life schedule, people, take some time off from work. There are two types of sightseeing activities in pleasure Tourism:

Natural sightseeing: includes enjoying beaches, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, mountain, caves, natural views, flora and fauna etc.

Artificial Sightseeing: includes zoos, museums, historical places, religious place, archeological sites, festivals, exhibitions etc.

Nearly 38 percent of tourists visit Nepal for pleasure, and they are mostly from India followed by Japan, UK, and USA.

Agro Tourism

Agro tourism is a new concept in the field of tourism. It is that type of tourism in which people link travel with agricultural products, services, experiences and food system. Agro tourism includes activities like farm bed and breakfast, farm observation, horse riding, fishing, camping sites on farm houses, agricultural fair and festivals etc.

Health Tourism

It is that type of tourism in which visitors like to enjoy healthy environment. Health tourists visit places for treatment and in order to improve their health. Generally, length of stay or duration of health tourism is much longer other than types of tourism. It is prominent during certain seasons. Nepal enjoys plenty of health tourists from rural Indian villages across the southern border for various health treatment activities, particularly in eye hospitals.

Sports Tourism

Sport tourism includes visiting different places for playing of games and to enjoy watching different kinds of sports related activities. Sports provide entertainment for both players as well as audience. Nepal can't welcome many sports tourists as it severely lacks infrastructural development in this field. However, sports activities in natural settings such as elephant polo, Everest and Annapurna Marathon in Nepal attract many visitors every year.

Business Tourism

Business is one of the most important activities in today's world. Many businessmen and traders visit places to meet people related to their field, attend meetings, and advertise and exchange their goods and services. Visiting places in order to perform such business related activities is known as business tourism. Business tourism is usually characterized by short trips but heavy expenditures.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism, the word first coined in Costa Rica in 1983, is a new concept in the field of tourism, which refers to visiting natural places. It is closely related to the concept of sustainable development. It is environment friendly and nature based tourism. Hence it is also known as natural tourism. Eco tourists are quite concerned and sensitive towards local environment. Ecotourism can be considered as one of the important part of the rural tourism. Ecotourism leaves very little or no impact upon the environment, culture, and life style of visited locations.

Space Tourism

Space tourism began after the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin from Russia ventured into the Space in 1961 AD. It was followed by various other experimental expeditions which also lead to the first human landing on the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969 AD. Space as a destination for tourism to everyone began in the beginning of the 21st century. Space tourism involves visiting into the space for studying and observing the earth from there.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism involves visiting to places that has some cultural significance. It educates people about behavior, practice, prejudices and knowledges of different people and their culture. A cultural tourist is interested in having a look on and study cultural resources of a region. Cultural tourists are particularly interested in food, clothing, arts and architecture, handicrafts, language, painting, music, history, traditions etc. of a particular location.

Religious Tourism

Religious tourist is a person who travels for religious purposes. Activities related to arranging needs and facilities for religious tourists also fall under religious tourism. It is also known as pilgrimage. Religious faith of people also has contributed in the development of tourism industry. Roughly, 15 percent of the visitors coming to Nepal are religious tourists. They are mainly from Sri Lanka, India and Japan.

Historical Tourism

This involves visiting historical places, museums, be it to pay respect to historical personalities or places and to educate oneself. Some of the popular historical tourism sites include Rome, Athens, Egypt, etc. Historical tourists are usually scholars, architects and intellectuals who are keen on things of the past.

Recreational Tourism

Recreational tourism is quite similar to pleasure tourism. It mostly takes place on the beach, where people enjoy the view with their loved ones. Activities include swimming and enjoying delicious food. Beaches of Thailand are the most popular recreational tourism destinations.

Adventure Tourism

Some people enjoy doing difficult activities for thrill and to earn good names. Such activities fall under adventure tourism, which will be discussed in detail later in section 2.2.

2.2 Tourism in Nepal

Even though religious tourism was in practice for internal tourists in Nepal for hundreds of years, Nepal was formally opened to international tourists in 1950 AD after the establishment of a democratic government. Tourism in Nepal started at professional level after that as several mountain climbing expeditions came to Nepal as thrill seekers who wanted to summit some of the highest mountains in the world.

Ever since the beginning, Nepal has been praised as an ideal destination for adventure tourism such as mountaineering, trekking etc. Also, geographical disparity within such a small area of its boundary mean Nepal has an immense possibility of growth in the field of adventure tourism and possesses myriad of adventurous activities. Some of them are as follows:

Mountain Climbing

Nepal boasts eight peaks that rise above 8,000m including the highest in the world, Mt. Everest. Ever since the country opened its peaks to climbers in 1950, the Nepal Himalayan has become a great theatre of mountaineering activity and the drama of success and failure have provided impetus to thousands of men and women to meet the ultimate challenge. The Nepal Himalayan has been an attraction to many people, be they saints, philosophers, researchers or adventures.

Rock Climbing

For all those cliffhangers out there, Kathmandu offers a roster of stone walls that make for an experience of a lifetime. Now of late, Rock climbing has become a popular sport not only in Kathmandu, but in several other parts of our country. Nepal offers some really terrific places for rock climbing. Nagarjun, Balaju, Shivapuri and BudhanilKantha are some of the places where you can try this sport inside Kathmandu.

Rafting/Kayaking/Canyoning

Rafting is one of the best ways to explore the typical cross section of natural as well as ethno-cultural heritage of Nepal. There are numerous rivers in Nepal which offer excellent rafting or canoeing experience. So far, the government has opened sections of ten rivers for commercial rafting. Trishuli River is one of the most popular of rivers in Nepal for rafting. Kali Gandaki winds

through remote canyons and deep gorges for five days of intense rapids. Bhotekoshi is twenty-six km of continuous white water and the raging Marshyangdi is four days of uninterrupted white water. Karnali River provides some of the most challenging rapids in the world. Sun Koshi twenty-seven km, requiring eight to ten days to complete, is one of the most challenging rivers. Adventurers are provided with world-class services by rafting agents which provide life jackets, camping and the standard rafting paraphernalia required for world-class rafting. An extremely popular sport in Europe, canyoning is now available in Nepal. Canyoning gives you the freedom to explore some of the most ruggedly beautiful, yet forbidden places in the world.

Bungee Jumping

The ultimate thrill of a bungee jump can now be experienced in Nepal at one of the best sites that this sport can boast of anywhere in the world. Nepal's first bungee jumping site is situated 160m. Over the Bhotekoshi River, inviting you to experience the ultimate and operated by some of the most experienced jumpmasters in the business.

Trekking

The best way to experience Nepal's unbeatable combination of natural beauty and culture riches is to walk through them. One can walk along the beaten trails or virgin tracks. Either way you are in for an experience for a lifetime. Along with forests of rhododendron, isolated hamlets, and small mountain villages, birds, animals, temple, monasteries and breathtaking landscapes, you will also encounter friendly people of different cultures offering a fascinating glimpse of traditional rural life. Based on the level of adventure, trekking has been divided into three types. They are as follows:

Camping trek

It is the most adventurous, fully organized and enjoyable of the three. During this trek, trekkers bring their own gear, all the necessary equipment and food required for the entire trekking period. They build tent themselves and all the activities such as cooking, eating, and sleeping

are performed inside the tent. Hence, it is also known as stay alive trekking. However, trekkers might require additional porters to carry their equipment and gear in this type of trekking.

Teahouse trek

This is the most popular way of trekking in Nepal for both the international and national trekkers alike. Also known as *lodge trekking*, it is a relatively cheap way of trekking in which meals and accommodation are provided in a lodge or a teahouse. In Nepal, trekkers fancy stopping each night at a teahouse to eat and sleep at a local teahouse and start their journey again the next day. Meals will be provided based on the menu at the teahouse.

Guide or porter trek

In this type of trekking, a porter is hired to carry your belongings. If you can't carry your luggage on your own or negotiate the trekking trails that include mountain sides with steep uphill routes, then you need to hire someone. A guide is used when you want to explore the route with some additional assistance.

A brief history of trekking:

The word trek is derived from Boer language (language spoken by the Dutch settlers in South Africa), which means a long hard journey. Trekking has been allowed in Nepal since 1964 when the Nepalese government first allowed foreign visitors to make multi-day hiking tours.³ Since then, mountainous related tourism activities have become an integral part of Nepalese tourism industry and trekking is the major activity of interest among tourists who come to Nepal. There are now trekking trails in Nepal such as a single day hiking trail (several trails around the Kathmandu valley), two to three week trails (trails around Annapurna or Everest basecamps) to once in a lifetime experience of a four and a half months' The Great Himalayan Trail.

³ Stan Stevens. (2003). *Tourism and deforestation in the Mt Everest region of Nepal*. *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 169 No. 3, 255-277. November 10th, 2015.

Adventurers Bill Tillman, Maurice Herzog, Jimmy Roberts were beginners in the field of trekking in Nepal, Roberts's 'Mountain Travel Trekking Agency' being the first trekking agency to be registered in Nepal in 1964 AD. Sir Edmund Hillary once stated, "Nepal is the only country in the world which is also one of the world's great trekking paradises and one of the nicest countries in the world for trekking."⁴

Characteristics of trekking tourism

Trekking tourism has several characteristics that also resemble ones of mountain tourism, adventure tourism and rural tourism. Such as,

-) Trekking tourism doesn't require extravagant expenditure as it usually takes place in geographically remote locations.
-) It is physically demanding and adventurous, and also characterized by unavailability of modern amenities and luxuries.
-) It is a rare chance to enjoy natural settings and support the agrarian economy rural areas where mostly only local products are available.
-) It gives us an opportunity to study and explore locations, cultures and ethnic enclaves that are not polluted from the outside world.
-) It promotes cultural exchanges and sharing of indigenous knowledge of local people by the trekkers and vice versa.

Components of trekking tourism

Location (A setting or an area where the activity can be performed)

Trails (Walkable paths to trek from one destination to the other)

Gears (Necessary equipment and/tools for protection and enjoyment)

Hotels, Homestays, Teahouses or Self-managed comfort facilities (To sleep at night and eat)

⁴(<http://www.nature-treks.com/trekking-in-nepal/>)

2.3 Disaster

Disaster is a natural catastrophe. According to IFRC, 'A disaster is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, disasters can have human origins.'⁵

According to the UN's (ISDR), at least one of the following criteria must be met in order for it to be entered into the UN database as a disaster:

-) A report of 10 or more people killed
-) A report 100 or more people affected
-) A declaration of a state of emergency by the relevant government
-) A request by the national government for international assistance

2.3.1 Disaster and Tourism

Tourism industry is highly vulnerable to all types of disasters and crises, such as hurricane, tsunami, earthquake, terrorist attack, civil war, social conflicts, outbreak of disease etc. Here, crisis implies a phenomenon, which is primarily a result human induced action while disasters are primarily causes of natural activities.

Nishimura et al argue that, "Natural disasters such as large-scale earthquakes can often reduce the number of tourists to a region, even in areas that suffered less damage. The belief is that this reduction in tourism is the result of psychological reasons such as people's uncertainty about levels of service, and so, they prefer to avoid traveling to these regions."⁶

"When a disaster happens, various aspects of international tourism demand can be affected negatively including reduced visitor arrivals, a fall in employment, declines in private

⁵ <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/what-is-a-disaster/>

⁶ Taiki Nishimura, Yoshio Kajitani, Hirokazu Tatano. (2013). Damage Assessment in Tourism Caused by an Earthquake Disaster. October 28th, 2015. P. 01.

sector profits, a reduction in government revenues, and eventually the cessation of further investment.”⁷

It is well known that disaster and pleasure aren't the words that go along together. However, the beautiful world we live in also has to bear human induced conflicts and wrath of nature. There are many incidences where we have found that numerous tourist attractions or popular destinations in our earth have been torn to pieces by various forms of crises and natural disasters. We can take examples such as ancient city of Pompeii destroyed by volcano, popular tourist destination of Banda Aceh, Indonesia or shores of Thailand destroyed by Tsunami, city of New Orleans destroyed by Hurricane or several previously popular tourist attractions now stricken by human conflicts. However, there are always some people who love to visit these places in the aftermath of such disasters or even during the conflict. This has given birth to a new type of tourism activity known as dark tourism. There are many forms of dark tourism, which are mentioned below:

Disaster Tourism

Generally speaking, disaster tourism is defined as the act of travelling to a disaster area as a matter of curiosity. Some scholars even argue that such disaster hit areas offer messages to tourists in order for them to interpret their own life.⁸ According to www.wisegeek.com, disaster tourism is the practice of traveling to areas that have recently experienced natural or man-made disasters. A strong example of disaster tourism site is the city of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where tour operators provided sightseeing facility to tourists in several flooded areas of the city.

⁷Huang Yu-Chin, Tseng Yung-Ping, Petrick James F. (2007). *Crisis Management Planning to Restore Tourism after Disasters*. October 28th 2015. P. 204.

⁸Phillip Stone, Richard Sharpley. (2008). *Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective*. *Annals of tourism Research*, 35(2), 574-595. November 20th, 2015.

Grief Tourism

It is the type of tourism that involves travelling to places that are historically associated with death, tragedy and suffering. It is the term applied to practice of people who visit such places to pay respect to victims. Grief tourism sites include tragic locations such as 'Ground Zero' marking the collapse of the twin towers after 9/11/2001 and several Holocaust sites before the World War II. Government of Nepal also has introduced one destination in the previously war stricken area of Mid-Western region as a tourist attraction, which has been named 'Guerrilla Trek'.

War Tourism

"War tourism is recreational travel to active or former war zones for purposes of sightseeing or historical study. War tourist is also a pejorative term to describe thrill seeking in dangerous and forbidden places (Wikipedia)." All the major historical and current battlefields attract millions of tourists, who inhibit morbid curiosity towards such destinations. War tourists often wish to engage in war related activities indirectly. Examples of such locations are conflict ridden areas of Africa, historical battlefields of Franco-Prussian wars, the Middle East etc.

Many countries have gone through harsh phases of economy after disasters crises due to reduction in tourism related activities as people tend to avoid visiting disaster hit areas for recreational purposes. Such harsh phases can be both primary and secondary. The initial stage of disasters is avoided by tourists simply because the area couldn't be ready to welcome any guests as they would still be busy in rescue operations. At this phase, media can play a great role in influencing people's perceptions to such destinations as no longer risky as various literatures also discuss how negative media coverage can cause a significant level of unwarranted anxiety among potential visitors. This is known as the primary impact of disaster in tourism industry. Secondary impact of disaster in tourism is issues such as reconstruction, psychological impression of the disaster hit area among possible visitors; here are some statistics on disasters and its affect in tourism activities throughout the world in the past 20 years:

Table #2.1⁹
Major disasters affecting tourism in the past 20 years

Year	Country	Casualty, (Missing)	Disaster type	Lose in tourism revenue
1999	Taiwan	2415	Earthquake	Approx. USD 1 billion
2004	Indonesia	126,473, (93,943)	Tsunami	Approx. USD 1.53 billion
2004	Sri Lanka	30,957, (5,637)	Tsunami	Approx. USD 250 million
2004	Thailand	5,595, (3,001)	Tsunami	Approx. USD 1.69 billion
2010	Haiti	Approx. 300,000	Earthquake	NA
2011	Japan	15,894, (>2500)	Earthquake	NA

Disaster in Nepal

Nepal has been hit by many disasters in the past one hundred years. Most importantly, the earthquake of 1934 and the 10 years' Civil War (1996 – 2006) are the two major disasters that hit our country in recent times apart from the earthquake of 25th April and 12th May in 2015. However, the 10 years' Maoist insurgency and the recent earthquake were perhaps the major disasters that took toll on tourism industry of our country.

Nepal lies within the territory of high seismic activity. Other types of disasters that goes off within the territory of Nepal are landslides, avalanches, floods, glacier lake outburst flood GLOF, etc. Every year in Nepal, these disasters takes dozens of lives, destroys millions of worthproperties and livelihood of people. Some major disasters of the past 100 years that occurred in Nepalese soil are listed in the table below:

Table #2.2
Major disasters to hit Nepal in the past 100 years

Year	Location	Disaster type	Casualty
1934	Eastern Region	Earthquake	Approx. 12000
1988	East-Central Region	Earthquake	At least 709
2014	Sindhupalchwok	Landslide	At least 156
2014	Khumbu/ Annapurna Region	Avalanche, snowall	At least 60
2015	Central Region	Earthquake	Approx. 9000

Langtang valley disaster

⁹http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/social_and_economic_impact_of_december_2004_tsunami_apdc.pdf

One of the biggest earthquakes in recent history of Nepal occurred in 25th April 2015. The epicenter of the earthquake was in Gorkha district of the Western region, but much of the effect of the earthquake was observed in the Central region of the country. The earthquake toll reached nearly 9,000 with many more still missing. Rasuwa district where the valley of Langtang lies, was was one of the severely hit districts.

Months of April, May, September, and October are considered as peak season months for all tourism activities in Nepal. On the day of April 25, Langtang valley was in celebration mood with visitors from all over the world. Right then, two separate disasters hit the valley, first the earthquake which turned almost all stone walled houses into rubbles. And the second, a landslide from above the hill which buried the entire hotel area of the village including an army barrack, a health post, a micro hydro project and a police post. According to eye witnesses, the force of the landslide was so strong that people were flown along with the rubbles, many of whom are now never to be found. At least 82 people are still missing as of yet.

As a result, it was observed during the field visit that out of about six trekking agencies visited, none had had any expedition ever since the earthquake and all had cancelled the previously planned treks and tours to the valley. All of the trekking agencies visited were popularly recognized for organizing trekking tours and expeditions. The tables below show how detrimental the effect of the earthquake was to tourism industry of Nepal and subsequently of Langtang valley:

Table #2.3
Foreigners visiting Nepal in the past five years

Calendar Year	Number of Tourists	Change in %
2011	736,215	+22.1
2012	803,092	+9.1
2013	797,616	-0.7
2014	790,118	-0.9
2015	538,970	-31.78

Source: Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2015, Kantipur Daily.

The table above shows that sharp decline in tourist inflow to Nepal occurred after the earthquake, as total number of visitors to Nepal was reduced by 31.78 percent.

Table #2.4¹⁰**Foreign visitors to Langtang in the past five fiscal years:**

Fiscal Year	No. of visitors	Change in %
2067/68	11173	-
2068/69	14315	+28.12
2069/70	13370	-6.6
2070/71	17050	+27.52
2071/72	16593	-2.6

The table above reveals that visitors to Langtang have increased by 48.5 % in five fiscal years. Bear in mind that FY 2071/72 also includes 3 months after the disaster had hit the area.

Table #2.5¹¹**Foreign visitors to LNP, Fiscal Year 2072/73:**

Months	Saarc Countries	Other Countries	Total
Shrawan	3	79	82
Bhadra	5	126	131
Ashwin	7	413	420
Kartik	1	642	643
Mangsir	3	325	328
Paush	6	273	279
Magh	2	187	189
Falgun	1	450	451
Chaitra	10	355	365
Total	38	2850	2888

However, the table above shows that after the disaster total visitors to Langtang area have reached only 17.4 % to the total number of last fiscal year in nine months (Data was taken during the field visit in April).

Areas survived by tourism not only suffer physical destruction but such natural calamities also destroy the livelihood mechanism of the area. This might result into economic imbalance and other factors such as socio-cultural transformation due to mobility and psychosocial nature of

¹⁰Langtang National Park. (2015). Annual Progress Report: Fiscal Year 2071/72. Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Department of National Park and Wild Life Conservation.

¹¹Langtang National Park. (2016). Annual Progress Report: Fiscal Year 2072/73. Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Department of National Park and Wild Life Conservation.

unforeseen issues, which will have detrimental effect on hospitality industry of the area as a whole. No particular literature has been published in case of Nepal's recent earthquake and its effects in the field of tourism. This particular literature tries to show the effects of disaster on Langtang valley's trekking tourism after the disastrous earthquake followed by the landslide in 2015 AD.

CHAPTER THREE

SETTING OF THE STUDY AREA

3.1 General Information about the study area

Rasuwa district is located at Bagmati zone along with seven other districts in the central development region of Nepal. It is about 120 Kilometers drive away to the North from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. This district lies between 27° 55' to 28° 25' North latitudes and 85° 00' to 85° 50' East longitudes. Rasuwa DDC covers the area of 1,544 square kilometers and has the population of 43,300 (2011). It has the population density of 28.04 per square kilometers. The 2011 AD National Census shows that Rasuwa district has 9,778 households. Rasuwa is comprised of 18 village development committees. It is the smallest out of 16 Himalayan districts of Nepal. According to the new Constitution of Nepal 2015, Rasuwa district lies within the territory of province number three.

Despite of it being well known as a Himalayan district, Rasuwa has some areas that have climate similar to tropical and sub-tropical regions. It is because those areas are not 1000 meters above from the sea level. Such area of the district is mainly the Trisuli river basin, which is also the lowest point in the district (614 meters above MSL). The highest point in Rasuwa district is the top of LangtangLirung (mountain), with the elevation of 7245 meters (APR, Langtang National Park, 2071/72). Because of such steeply varying topography, Rasuwa is rich in biodiversity and natural beauty. Some of the major natural tourist attractions of Rasuwa district are Gosainkunda Lake, (4280 m above MSL), Suryakundalake, Langtang mountain range, DorjeLakpaHimal, Tamang Heritage Trail, lush green temperate and coniferous forests, several streams, glaciers, meadows and hot springs etc.

Rasuwa is accessible by road from Kathmandu, the national capital of Nepal via PashangLhamu Highway (H21). Headquarter of Rasuwa, Dhunche is at a distance of about 120 kilometers from Kathmandu. A new highway in the district is under construction which links Nepal with People's Republic of China. This road and several under construction hydropower stations such as Upper Trishuli, Trishuli 3A, Mailung hydroelectric project have been considered vital towards

improving the economy of the district. Because Chilime hydroelectric project (which has already been completed) is located in the district, Rasuwa doesn't have any load shedding problem.

Rasuwa is also colloquially known as 'The land of Tamangs'. About 67 percent of total population of the district belongs to Tamang ethnicity. Rasuwa is widely known for ethnically preserved Tamang hamlets, which has now become a popular trekking route for national and international trekkers alike. The trekking route is now named as Tamang Heritage Trail. Other major ethnicities in Rasuwa include Chhetris, Brahmans, Newars, Gurungs, and Dalits. Majority of the population speak Tamang language as their mother tongue however, most people can understand Nepali.

Langtang is one of the most remote VDCs in Rasuwa district. The entire geographical area of Langtang VDC lies within Langtang national park area. Langtang VDC is surrounded by Sindhupalchok district to the East, Nuwakot district and Syafru VDC to the South, Timure and Briddhim VDCs to the West and autonomous region of Tibet of People's Republic of China to the North. Altitude span of Langtang VDC ranges from subtropical forest at around 1000 meters to 7245 meters (Langtang Li Rung) above the sea level.

3.2 Study area location

Langtang valley area lies within Langtang village development committee in Rasuwa district. It is surrounded by Langtang mountain range, Kyanjin, Tserko, and Yala peaks to the North, Langshisa peak to the East, Baden Powell Scout peak, Naya Kanga, Kangja La Himal and PangenDopku peaks to the south. To the West, the valley narrows down and yield the Langtangriver, which carries all the waters that flows within the valley. The valley is usually entered from the West side, where it is a narrow gorge between high hills. As one travel eastwards passing the village of Langtang, the valley gradually opens up and widens to its maximum width at the village of Kyanjing, the last human settlement in the valley. Langtang valley is not linked by road access to any other part of the country. The nearest point accessible via road to the valley is SyafruBesj, a small market town located at the bank of BhoteKoshi River

(later known as Trishuli). Everything from food to cloths is then transported by mules or porters for the residents of Langtang valley from there.

3.3 Topography

The area of Langtang valley is wider to the East and is narrowed down to the West. Langtang River flows from the East to the West, which is one of the largest tributaries of Bhotekoshi River. There are several other rivulets in the valley such as KyampuKhola, PalphaKhola, and ChangdampariKhola, and one LangtangLirung Glacier. The West side is also at the lower altitude of about 2400 meters above MSL at a small settlement of Rimche, while to the East, the valley altitude rises up to 3830 meters at maximum above MSL at Kyanjing village (for any human settlement). The highest point of Langtang valley is mountain LangtangLirung, which is 7245 meters higher than the MSL.

3.4 Climate

Majority of the study area lies right below the Himalayan range and hence the temperature is mildly warm during summer and extremely cold during winter. The valley gets good snowfall during winter to sometimes as late as April. Average maximum temperature in the hottest month of the year (July) is 12.1 degree Celsius, while the minimum temperature in the coldest month of the year (January) is -0.6 degree Celsius.¹²

3.5 Natural Vegetation

The lower side of the valley is covered with Rhododendron forest, while the upper side due to extreme climate for a long period of the year is only covered with shrubs and grasslands. The mountains in the southern side of the valley are covered with sparsely grown trees while the mountains in the Northern sides are very rocky and little to no vegetation can be observed. As most of the valley area is prohibited for human activities, locals only grow potatoes at some small pieces of land they are allowed for cultivation.

¹²<http://en.climate-data.org/location/498177/>

3.6 Trekking areas

There are trekking routes inside the valley through the East, South and the Western entry points. Through the East, trekkers trek via PanchPokhari to LangshisaKharka via Tilman's Pass to enter the valley. Through the South, trekkers take the route to Kyanjing via Ganja La Pass to enter the valley. To the West, trekkers can choose either the route via Khangjim and Sherpagaun or the route via Bamboo to reach Rimche, from where journey to Langtang valley starts towards the East. Most trekkers prefer the route via Rimche as it is a shorter and easier to other routes. It also helps human respiratory system acclimatize to reduce the possibility of altitude sickness if one takes the route via Rimche. A significant number of trekkers were seemed to be interested in entering via one point and exiting via the other. However, majority of trekkers were, as suggested by guides and trekking agencies took the route via Rimche to Langtang village to Kyanjing and preferred to return the same way back.

Regardless of the routes one chooses to enter the valley, there are numerous other adventurous activities left to enjoy such as mountain climbing, snow skiing during winter, along with sightseeing of beautiful landscapes, flora and fauna and the warm hospitality of local residents and hoteliers. Vast meadows of the valley are also much preferred by trekkers for sightseeing.

3.7 Sociocultural situation

Infrastructure

Before the disaster, Langtang valley had 152 households (2011 Census), which was increasing with the establishment of new hotels targeting the increasing number of tourists every year. The valley also had a micro hydroelectric project, an Army Barrack, a primary school, a health post, a police beat and a Yak Cheese Factory at the village of Kyanjing.

Population

According to National Census of 2011 AD, population of Langtang VDC was 415, with 192 male and 223 female. An unofficial statistic of Langtang VDC's population taken in 2015 AD after the disaster was 673. About 46 percent of the population was male while female comprised 54 percent. Despite the fact that Langtang VDC is the largest VDC of Rasuwa district in area, it is also the VDC with lowest population density.¹³

Table # 3.1
Population distribution percentage based on ethnicity in Langtang VDC

Caste	Population
Tamang	97.34 %
Others	2.66 %

Source: *National Census 2011 AD.*

Language

Most of the valley residents were migrated from across the Northern border hence still hold strong affinity to their Tibetan culture and heritage. Tamang language is spoken here by the locals but the language is said to have been quite different from the Tamang dialect spoken in the other parts of the district. As Langtang valley also hosts national and international trekkers, porters and guides alike throughout the year, Nepali, followed by English is the Lingua Franca of the area.

Religion

Buddhism influenced by Tibetan customs is practiced by all valley residents. Birth ceremonies, marriages, death ceremonies, all are conducted according Buddhist rituals under the guidance of a Lama, Buddhist priest. There were a few monasteries, Mane walls, Chhortens and Prayers

¹³http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Population/VDC-Municipality%20in%20detail/29%20Rasuwa_VDCLevelReport.pdf

wheels that ran from water on the way that showed signs of influence of Buddhism in the area. Many of such shrines were destroyed in the earthquake which now has been reconstructed.

Economy

Tourism and hospitality is the main source of income of Langtang valley residents. Almost all the valley residents benefit from tourism or related industries directly or indirectly. Transportation of goods and services into the valley has also employed significant amount of population. Hotels and homestay services of the valley have given employment to a plenty of non-valley residents as well. Locals are also dependent on the forest area of Langtang National Park for fuel and fodder.

Education and other facilities

There was one primary school at Langtang village, where all the children could go for education. Others who could not access that school would be admitted by their parents to schools in Kathmandu valley. After completing primary level, those children would also join their other valley counterparts in Kathmandu. Langtang village had a micro hydroelectric project that they used for lighting up the village and surrounding area. Remaining households of the valley where transmission line couldn't reach used solar power as source of energy.

Also, there was one Yak cheese production plant in Kyanjing village, which too was destroyed in the earthquake, is now waiting for reconstruction as well as increase in numbers of yaks as many of them were killed by the disaster.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter is dedicated to the study of prospects and challenges of trekking tourism after the disastrous earthquake and landslide in Langtang valley. Direct and indirect beneficiaries of tourism activities in the study area were chosen as respondents. Data collected from the field and from key informants is analyzed and interpreted below in several topics:

4.1 General information about local respondents

This section elaborates general information on local respondents. Tourism, specially trekking is the main source of income of the villagers, which has been promoted and well recognized by the villagers. Hoteliers and locals with their warm hospitality and services have made this area a popular destination for tourists. Beautiful landscapes, challenging routes and opportunity to conquer several high peaks within a short distance are the features of this valley.

Table # 4.1
Local respondent types:

Respondent type	No. of respondents	Total percentage
Hoteliers	10	50
Locals	6	30
Teashop owners	2	10
Other employees	2	10
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above also reveals the occupation of the valley residents. Local residents who don't have permanent employment are also indirectly employed in the hospitality industry as part time workers. Hence apart from one teacher interviewed as locals, all other respondents directly benefit from Trekking tourism.

Table # 4.2

Locality of respondents

Village	No. of respondents	Total percentage
Kyanjing	9	45
Langtang	7	35
Thangsherp	1	5
Riverside	1	5
Rimche	1	5
Bambo	1	5
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Because the level of destruction in the valley varied from one village to the other, respondents from all major settlements were included in the survey. Kyanjing and Langtang being the largest settlements have higher number of respondents and relatively smaller villages have one respondent each.

Table # 4.3
Month of surveys taken

Survey Month	Villages	No. of respondents	Total percentage
April	Kyanjing, Langtang, Thangsep, Bambo	10	50
September	Kyanjing, Langtang, Rimche, Riverside	10	50
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

During the initial field visit in April, it was observed that a lot of under construction process was going in the valley. Hence it was realized that by giving some time for recovery to the villagers and to the entire valley, the outcome of survey would have a different result. So, another survey with the valley residents was conducted in September again.

Table # 4.4
Age of local respondents

Age group	No. of respondents	Total percentage
18-35 years	8	40
36-60 years	9	45
61 and above years	3	15
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Regarding the respondents' age, 45 percent (9) of the respondents were between 36 and 60 years old, while 40 percent (8) of respondents were of age between 18 to 35 years. Remaining 15 percent (3) of the respondents were above 60 years old. Responses from age segregated population could differ from each other even when responding to the same situation because of their positivity and experience.

Table # 4.5
Sex of local respondents

Sex	No. of respondents	Total percentage
Male	12	60
Female	8	40
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Out of 20 respondents, 60 percent (12) were male and 40 percent (8) were female. The survey respondents were intended to be gender balanced in order to understand the perspective of both sexes in similar situation.

4.2 General information about Trekkers

Trekkers who participated in the survey were from all over the world including internal tourists as well. During field visit to the destruction site in the month of April, it was found that no authorized permission had yet been given to Non Nepali citizens. All the international trekkers who participated in the survey were visiting Langtang valley at their own risk. A few were seemingly interested in contributing to revive tourism industry in the valley after the disastrous earthquake and landslide. This survey was conducted in April, 2016, a year after the earthquake and landslide in the valley.

Table # 4.6
Sex segregated data of trekkers

Sex	No. of respondents	Total percentage
Male	11	73.34
Female	4	26.66
Total	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows sex segregated trekkers' data. Due to randomness in selection procedure of respondents in the category, male female sex ratio hasn't been balanced. Out of 15 respondents, 11 were male while only 4 were of female category. It is also because number of male visitors were greater in number than their female counterparts.

Table # 4.7
Age segregated data of trekkers

Age group	No. of respondents	Total percentage
18-25	2	13.34
25-35	9	60.00
35-59	2	13.33
60 and above	2	13.33
Total	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Out of 15 respondents, 9 were of 25-35 years age group (60 %). 2 trekkers each were from 18-25 years, 35-59 years and 60 years and above age groups.

Table # 4.8
Internal and External trekkers' data

Nationality	No. of respondents	Total percentage
Nepali	5	33.34
Non-Nepali	10	66.66
Total	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Only one third of the respondents in this category were Nepali nationals. Despite of negative media campaigning, trekkers from other parts of the world were still coming in to visit Langtang valley in higher percentage than Nepali nationals.

4.3 General information about occupational workers

In this category, workers who are directly or indirectly related to trekking business were chosen as respondents. Especially those who had visited and worked in the valley in both situations, before and after the earthquake, were chosen as respondents. All respondents were male.

Table # 4.9
Age of occupational workers

Age group	No. of respondents	Total percentage
18-25	4	40
25-30	3	30
30-35	3	30
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Since the job description demanded active working age, all respondents in this category were between 18 to 35 years old. Out of which, 4 were between 18 to 25 years, and 3 each were between 25 to 30 and 30 to 35 years old.

Table # 4.10
Occupation segregated data of occupational workers

Occupation	No. of respondents	Total percentage
Porters	3	30
Guides	4	40
Mule herders	3	30
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Out of 10 occupational workers surveyed, 3 (30 %) each were porters and mule herders while 4 (40 %) were guides. There were a few other occupational workers who weren't permanent residents of the valley but had been working there as construction workers, chefs, cook and helpers in hospitality business. Informal interviews were conducted in order to extract some qualitative information from them as well.

4.4 General information about key informants

Local community leaders and people who were knowledgeable about the area and post disaster situation in the valley were chosen as Key informants. They were valuable in obtaining many quantifiable data and also in receiving information about situation of the study area right after the disaster, situation after a year and situation at present.

Table # 4.11
Data of key informants

Designation	No. of respondents
Trekking entrepreneur	2
Reconstruction committee president	1
Journalist	1
Conservationist	1
Total	5

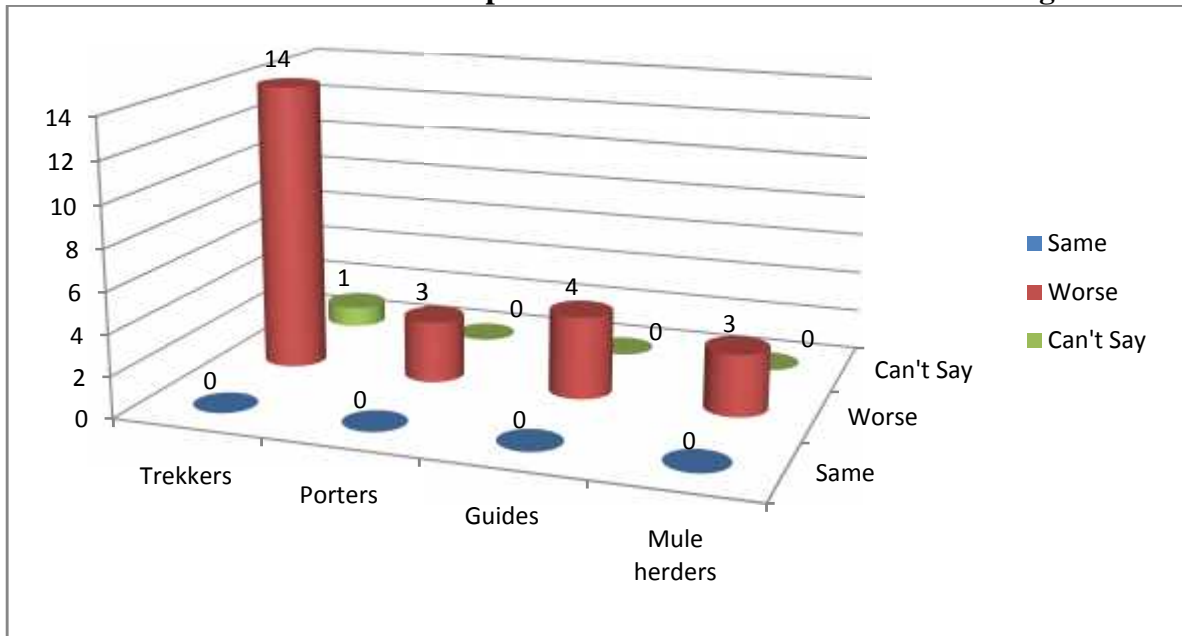
Source: Field Survey, 2016.

According to key informant interviewed in September 2016, rapid reconstruction process is going on in the valley. Langtang village where the landslide had hit, no erect house could be seen a year ago. Now the village has all 12 hotels and 5 tea shops reconstructed, albeit in another location nearby. Those hotels and tea shops have minimum occupancy of 100 guests.

4.5 Information about trekking related infrastructures in the study area after the disaster

7.9 Richter scale earthquake of 25th April had hit Langtang valley hard, which also caused a huge landslide that buried the entire Langtang village under the rubbles. Total of 80 houses, 12 hotels, 5 homestay services were completely buried. During the field visit in April 2016, it was observed that not even a single house stood erect. Beginning from Rimche, several smaller landslides had taken toll on the trekking routes. Small hamlets such as GhodaTabela, Thangsherp, Mundu had only one or two huts left upright in habitable condition. The entire village of Langtang had only 3 new tea shops reconstructed after a year of the disaster. Some new hotels and tea houses in Riverside, Thangsherp and Langtang were being constructed.

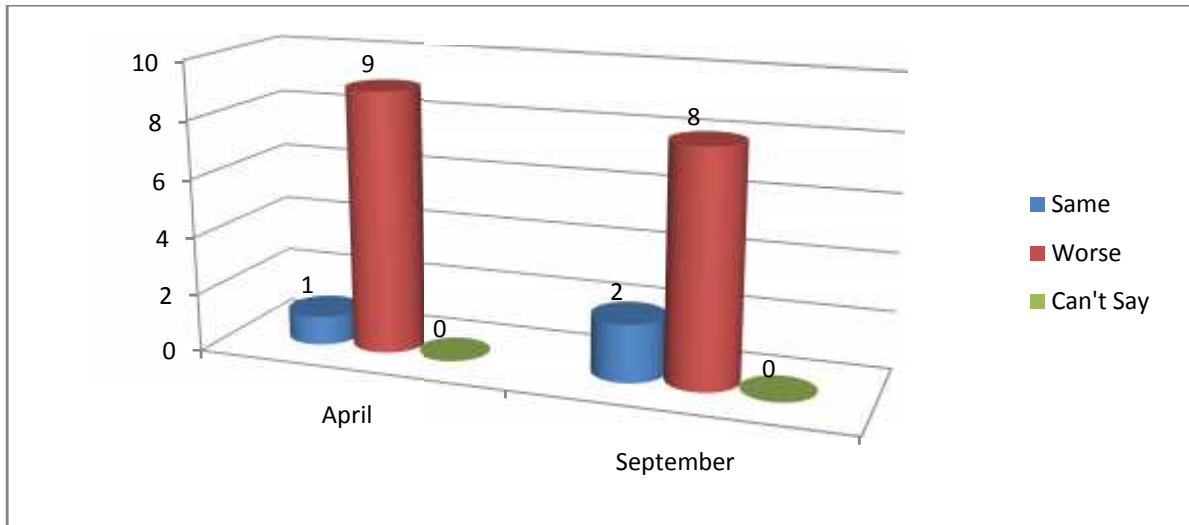
Diagram # 4.1
View of trekkers and occupational workers on condition of trekking trails



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows that apart from one trekker who couldn't be confirm about the condition of trekking trails, all trekkers and occupational workers responded that condition of trekking trails had worsened after the earthquake. However, it didn't mean that the routes were completely blocked or impossible to negotiate as visitors were still able to travel all the way to Kyanjing (April, 2016).

Diagram # 4.2
View of hoteliers and locals on condition of trekking trails

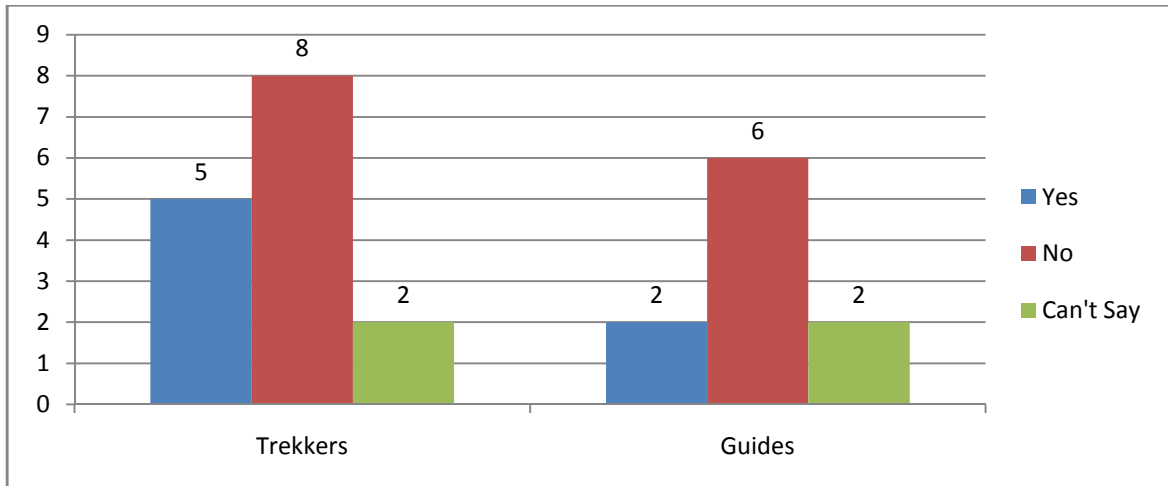


Source: Field Survey, 2016.

This figure above shows that out of 10 hoteliers, homestay owners and locals of the area interviewed in April, 1 thought that the trekking route had remained the same and 9 thought the route had worsened after the disaster. Out of the same number of hoteliers and locals interviewed in September, 2 of whom answered that the route had been improved to previous condition while 8 answered that the condition of trekking routes was yet to be repaired.

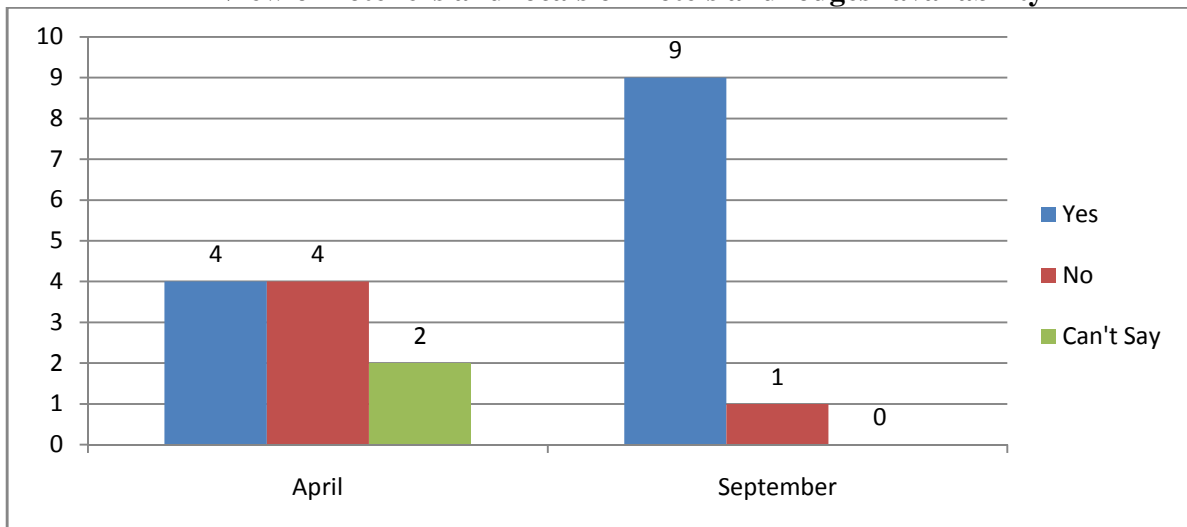
Similarly, a survey was conducted to know about availability of hotels and lodges as many of them in the valley were destroyed in the earthquake and the devastating landslide had buried numerous hotels, lodges and homestay services in Langtang village, the largest settlement in the valley prior to the earthquake. This figure below states that out of 15 trekkers, 8 responded that there weren't enough hotels while 5 answered there were and the remaining 2 couldn't confirm. In the occupational workers category, 6 replied there weren't enough hotels, 2 replied there were while 2 couldn't confirm.

Diagram # 4.3
View of trekkers and occupational workers hotels and lodges' availability



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Diagram # 4.4
View of hoteliers and locals on hotels and lodges' availability

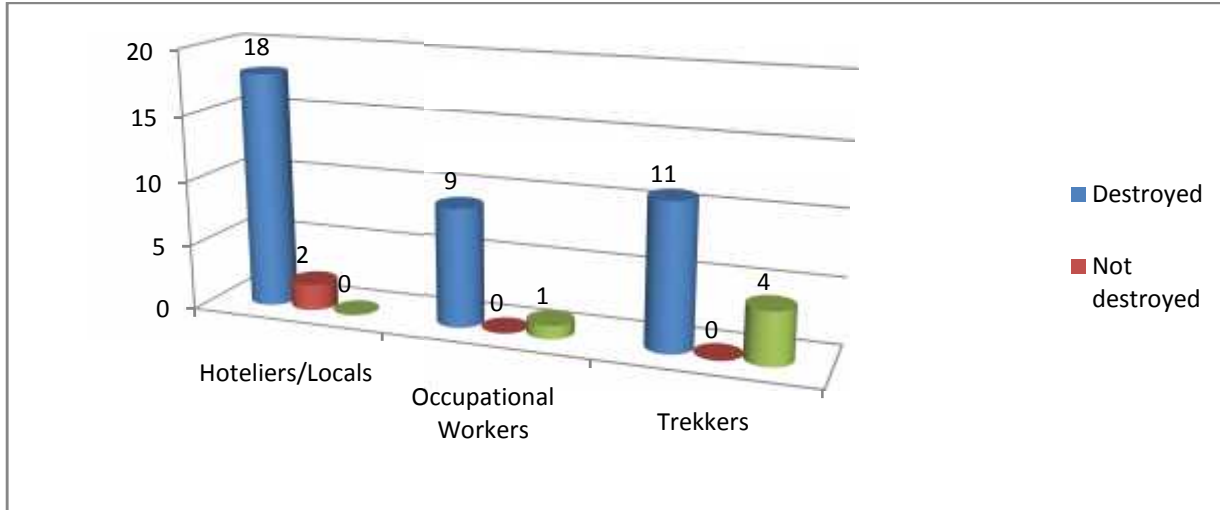


Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The above figure explains that out of 10 hoteliers and locals interviewed in April 2016, 4 said that there were enough hotels and lodges available while 4 said there weren't. The remaining 2 couldn't confirm. Again, out of 10 hoteliers and locals interviewed in September 2016, 9 said that there were enough hotels available while only one said there weren't. Hence as a result of figure 4.5 and 4.6, it can be concluded that until April, there weren't many hotels available but in September, number of hotels, lodges and homestays in the area had increased.

Diagram# 4.5

Views of respondents on disaster's impact in health related infrastructures in the study area

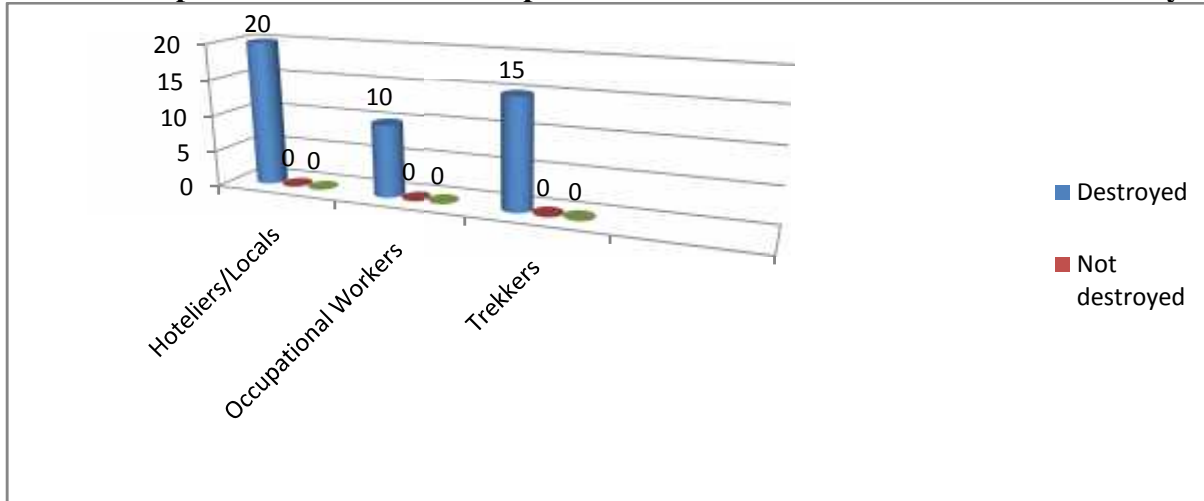


Source: Field Survey, 2016

The above figure shows out of 20 hoteliers and locals, 18 replied that health related infrastructures were damaged from the earthquake while 2 replied no such infrastructures were damaged. Among 10 occupational workers, 9 replied that such structures were damaged while 1 couldn't confirm. And out of 15 trekkers, 11 confirmed that health related infrastructures were damaged by the earthquake while 4 of them had no information about it.

Diagram # 4.6

Views of respondents on disaster's impact in sociocultural infrastructures in the study area



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Above figure (4.6) shows that out of 20 hoteliers and locals, 15 trekkers and 10 occupational workers interviewed, all respondents in unison agree that sociocultural infrastructures in the study area were destroyed by the earthquake and landslide. Apparently, there were numerous *Mane walls*, *Chhortens*, two community halls and two monasteries (Gumba) were destroyed in the earthquake.

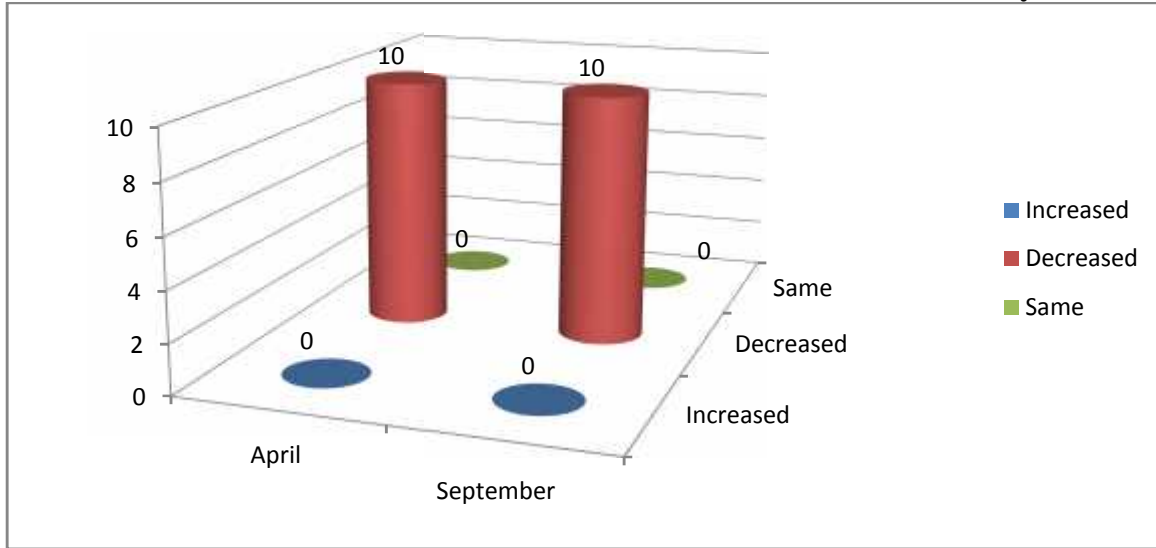
4.6 Information about post disaster situation psychology in the study area

The earthquake followed by the landslide took lives of 175 locals including 13 children, 80 international trekkers, about 40 trekking guides and 20 porters. About 82 people are still supposed to be missing in the disaster (Source, Langtang Valley Reconstruction Committee, verified by none as of yet). Each and every residents of Langtang VDC had to be relocated in a safer and accessible area (in Yellow Gumba, Kathmandu) so as to provide them with basic necessities.

Before the earthquake and landslide, Langtang valley was the third most popular trekking destination in Nepal. After the disaster, aggressive media campaign throughout the world underwent in order to call for help but it also sent a wrong message to tourists iterating that it was unsafe to visit Nepal. It was not clear whether internal tourists were reduced in number as National Park office doesn't keep record of Nepalese nationals. However, only a few number of visitors observed and listening to not so positive word of mouth during the field visit suggested the condition of number of visitors in the area.

Langtang village, the largest human settlement in the valley, was buried under the rubble because of the earthquake and landslide. Trekkers used to spend more time there as they could charge their electronic items and enjoy the hospitality in a safer environment under the protection of Nepal Army and Nepal Police. All of that was destroyed in the earthquake. Hence it was important to examine the psychological impact of the earthquake in the valley because of the devastation the study area had faced.

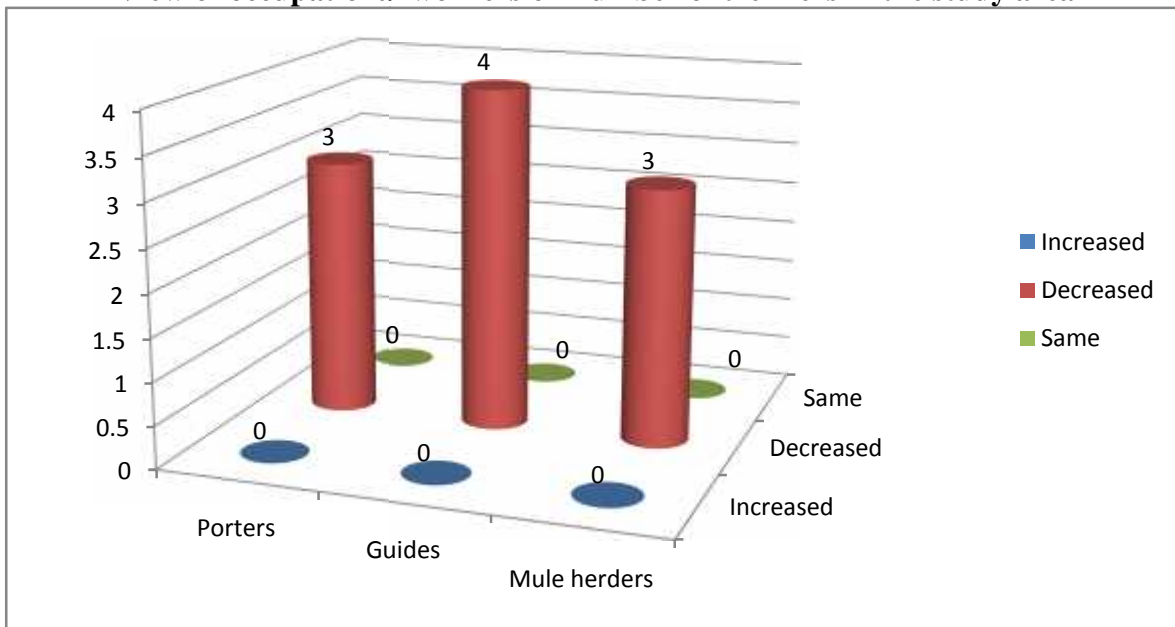
Figure # 4.7
View of Hoteliers and Locals on number of trekkers in the study area



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Respondents in hoteliers and locals category were inquired about the influx of number of visitors in two separate seasons, one in April 2016 and the other in September 2016. All 20 respondents in both months (10 in each month) agreed that number of visitors had decreased.

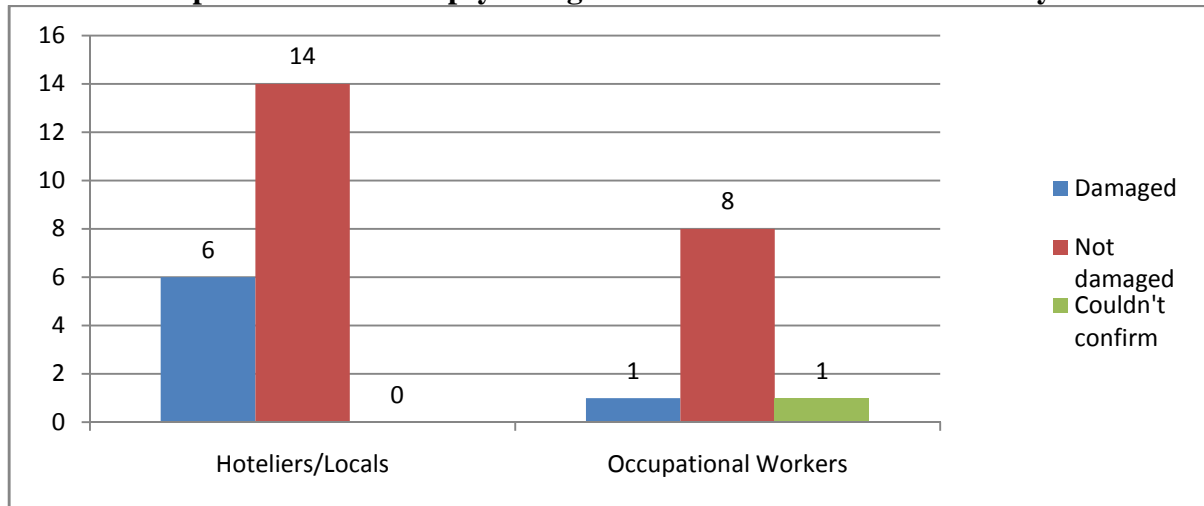
Diagram # 4.8
View of occupational workers on number of trekkers in the study area



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Figure 4.8 reveals that 10 respondents in occupational workers category who were interviewed in April 2016 also answered that the number of visitors had decreased in the area. These two graphs extracted from the surveys and visitors' data from Langtang National Park of B.S. 2072 proves that number of visitors had really reduced after the earthquake and landslide.

Diagram # 4.9
Respondents' view on psychological condition of locals in the study area

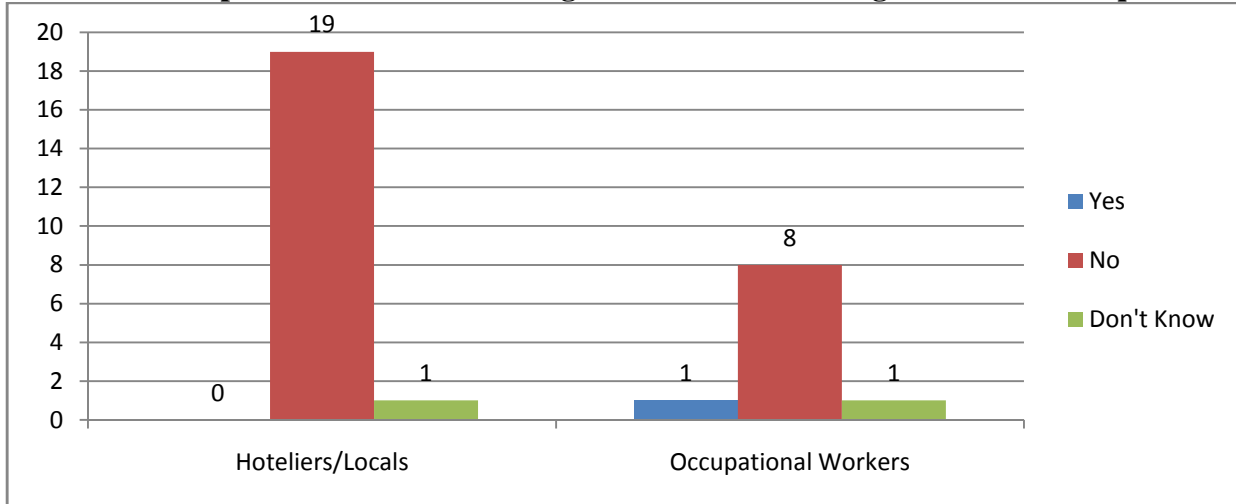


Source: Field Survey, 2016.

In order to assess psychological condition of locals, 20 hoteliers and 10 occupational workers were interviewed. Above diagram shows that out of which, 6 hoteliers and 1 occupational worker said that they had seen someone with psychological damages in the area, 14 hoteliers/locals and 8 occupational workers said that there was no one with such conditions and 1 occupational worker couldn't confirm. Also none of the interviewees said that any psychosocial counseling center was opened in the area after the earthquake.

Diagram # 4.10

View of respondents on locals leaving the area due to damage from the earthquake

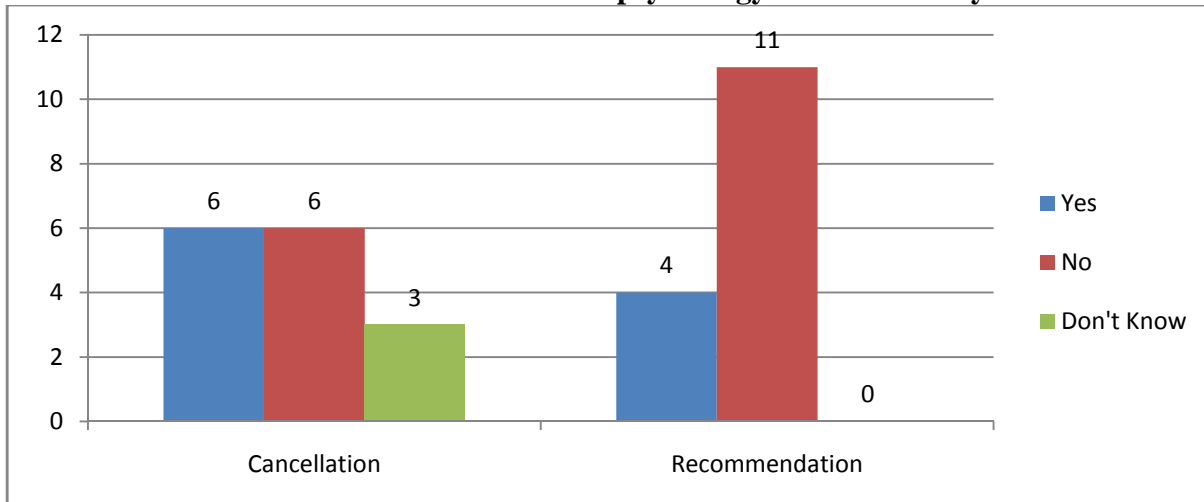


Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The above diagram shows that out of 20, 19 hoteliers/locals said that no one had wanted to leave the area permanently. 1 respondent in this category couldn't be sure if someone wanted to move out of the valley. Similarly, out of 10 occupational workers, 1 said that someone wanted to leave the area permanently, while 8 said no one wanted to move out of the valley and 1 respondent remained unanswered.

Diagram # 4.11

View of trekkers on trekkers' psychology about the study area

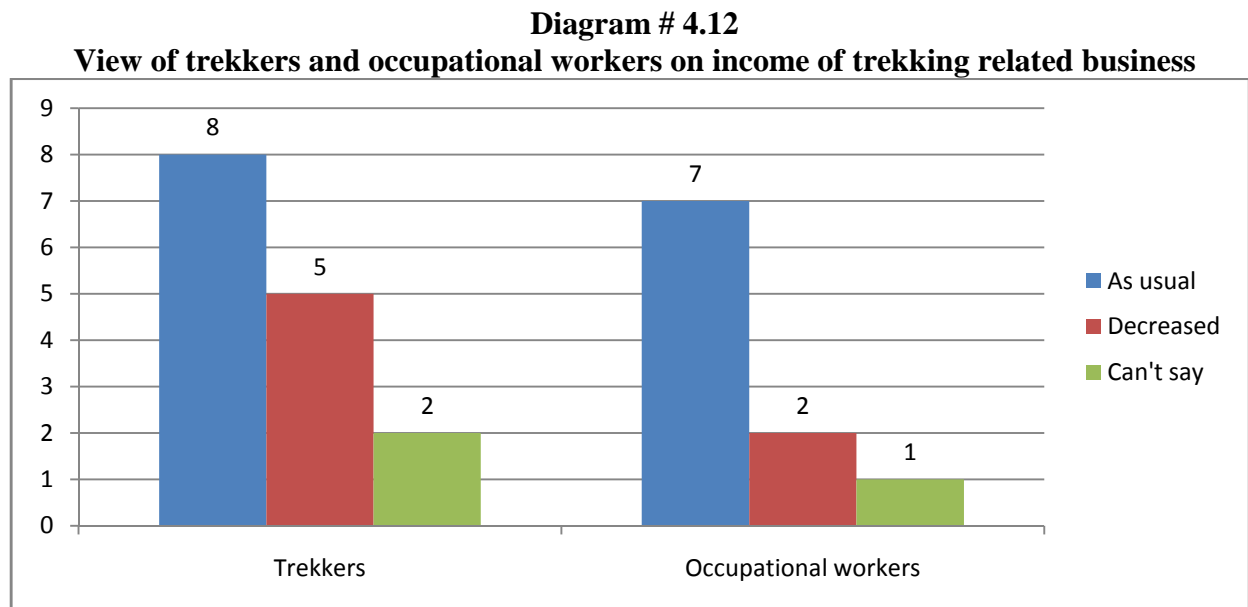


Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Diagram 4.11 shows that out of 15 trekkers interviewed about trip cancellation after the earthquake, 6 responded as they have heard someone cancelling their trip to this area after the earthquake, 6 responded as they haven't heard about anyone who has done that while 3 responded as they didn't have any idea about it. Out of the same 15 trekkers who were interviewed during their visit to the area, only 4 have heard someone not recommending this place for visit to others, while 11 haven't heard anyone of doing so. Hence from this survey, it can be said that there have been a plenty of cancellation of visit to this area after the earthquake, but most trekkers were still recommending the area for potential visitors than asking not to visit.

4.7 Information about socioeconomic condition of the study area in post disaster situation

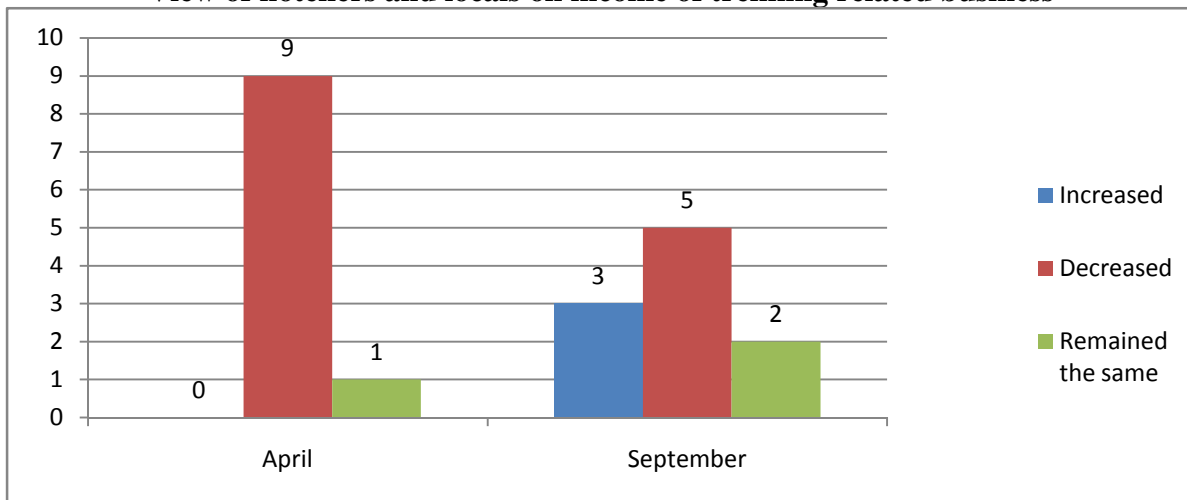
Trekking tourism was the major and perhaps the only source of income of the study area. However, it couldn't have been the same as number of visitors reduced in great number. The indigenous Tamang society of the study area had witnessed so much death and disaster in the earthquake. Keeping this in mind, related questions were asked via questionnaire survey in order to find out the impact of earthquake in the society and its economy of the study area.



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Diagram 4.12 shows that out of 15 trekkers, 8 said income of trekking related business had been as usual (before the earthquake), 5 said that the income had decreased while 2 couldn't be sure. Out of 10 occupational workers, 7 said the income of trekking related business had been as usual, while 2 said it had decreased and 1 couldn't confirm. This data reveals that majority of trekkers and occupational workers agreed the income of trekking related business had remained the same. This survey was conducted in April, 2016.

Diagram # 4.13
View of hoteliers and locals on income of trekking related business



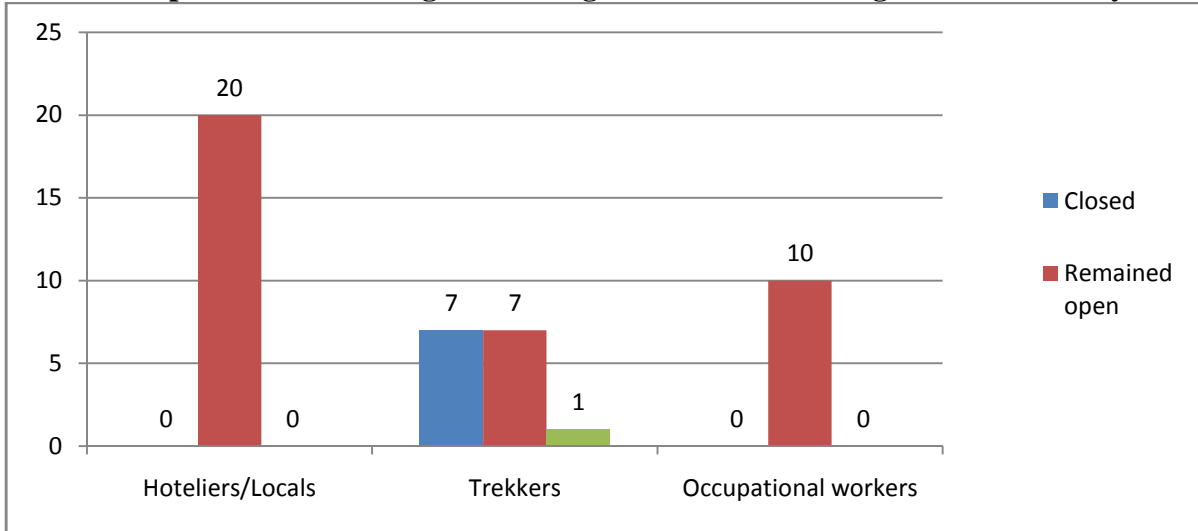
Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Two surveys, one in April and other in September 2016 were conducted. In April, out of 10 hoteliers/locals 9 responded by saying that income had decreased while 1 agreed on it remained the same, no one said the income had increased. Likewise, out of 10 participants of survey conducted in September 2016, 3 said the income had increased, 5 said it had decreased while 2 had said it remained the same. As a whole, this diagram reveals that income of trekking related business had decreased in April but had increased to some extent in September.

Similarly, the diagram below (4.14) shows that out of 20 hoteliers/locals and 10 occupational workers, all of them replied that none of the trekking related business in the study area was closed. While out of 15 trekkers, 7 replied that at least some of such businesses had been closed, 7 replied none was closed while 1 didn't have any information about it.

Diagram # 4.14

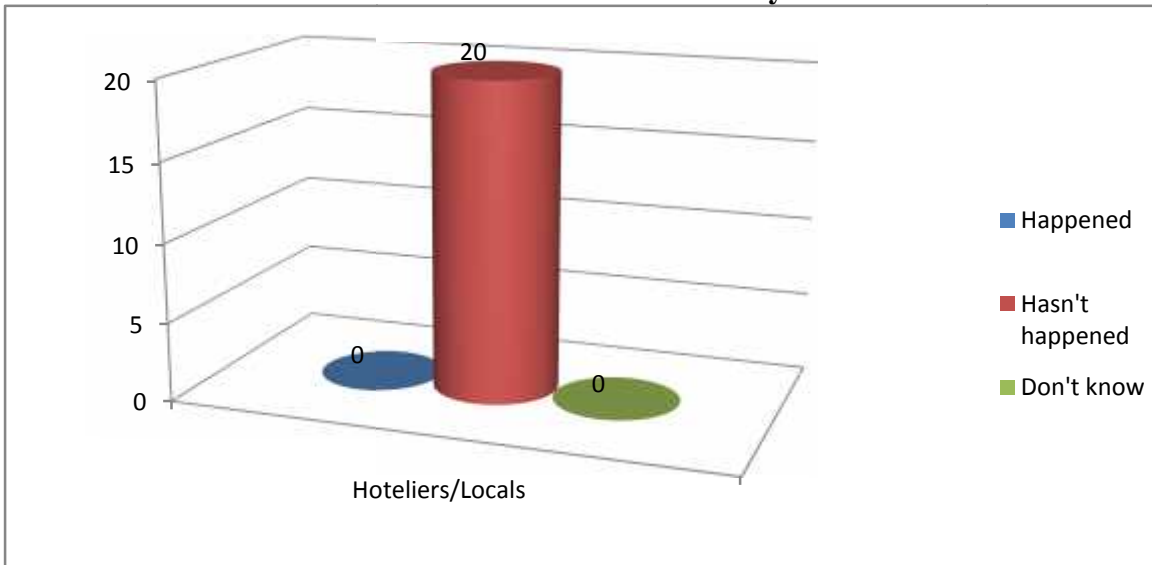
View of respondents on closing of trekking related business targeted for the study area



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Diagram # 4.15

View of hoteliers/locals on divorce cases in the study area after the disaster



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

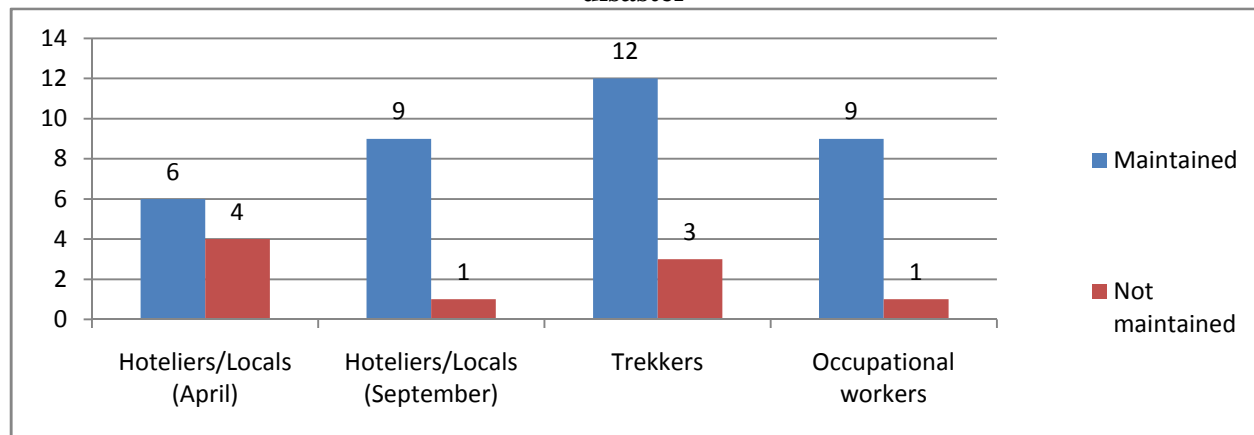
The diagram above shows that out of 20 hoteliers and locals interviewed, all responded by saying no divorce case was reported after the earthquake in the valley. This data reveals that at the time of crises, families members in the area have cooperated with each other by staying strong and united.

4.8 Prospects of trekking tourism in the study area after the disaster

Langtang village in the valley was completely destroyed by the earthquake and landslide. However, there were several other settlements, where the earthquake hadn't caused much damage apart from destroying the houses. It was observed that rapid reconstruction of those houses was in the process. The valley residents were temporarily relocated to Kathmandu right after the disaster. After staying in temporary shelters for six months, they moved back to the valley to restart their lives as usual.

Reconstruction process in Langtang village was also in progress. As of mid-September, all 12 hotels and 5 teahouses have already been constructed at another location, a bit far from the previous hotel area. An INGO, Samaritan Purse has helped in sawing timbers and has provided 1 mule per household for transportation purposes. Other INGOs, MAF (75%) along with OM Nepal (25%) has been assisting in reconstruction by paying for the helicopter services to transport construction materials from Kathmandu or Dhunche to Langtang valley. Government bodies such as Nepal Tourism Board and District Development Committee Rasuwa also have helped in reconstructing trekking trails (1500,000 rupees) and providing timber for free to reconstruct hotels, lodges and houses. All of these assistances are helping Langtang get back on its feet soon.

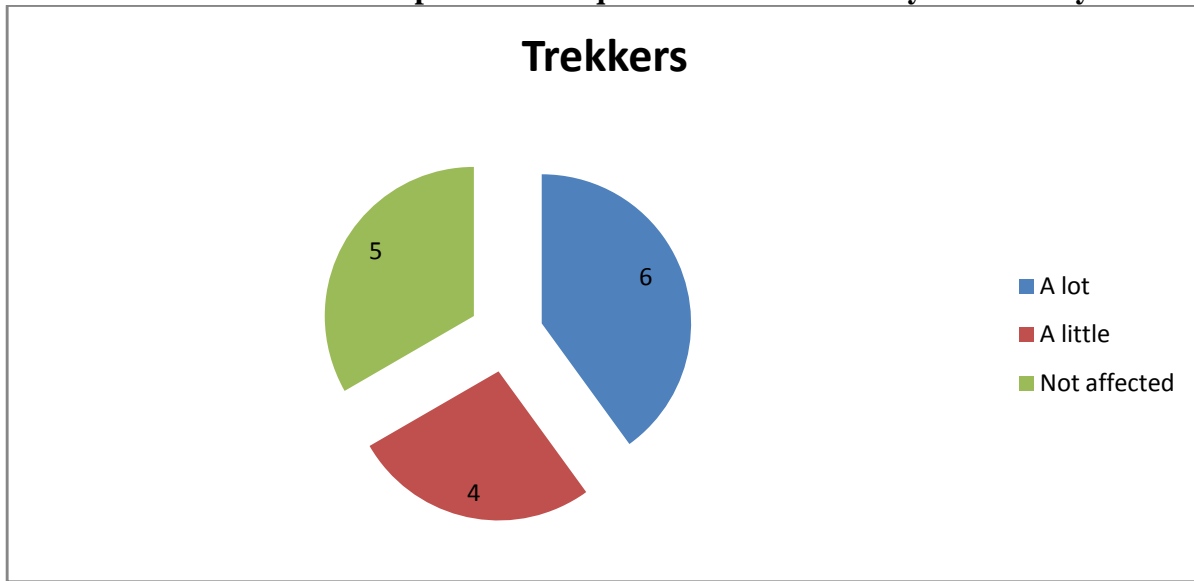
Diagram # 4.16
View of respondents on quality of services from trekking related businesses after the disaster



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Diagram 4.16 shows that out of 15 trekkers, 12 said quality of services was maintained while 3 said it wasn't. Out of 10 occupational workers, 9 said quality of services was maintained while 1 denied. All trekkers and occupational workers were interviewed in April. Out of 10 hoteliers/locals interviewed in April, 6 said quality of services was maintained while 4 said otherwise. Out of 10 hoteliers/locals interviewed in September, 9 said that quality of services was maintained and only 1 disagreed. This shows that although there were fewer trekking related businesses providing services than before the disaster, quality of services has been maintained. In fact, maintenance has improved from of April to September.

Diagram # 4.17
View of trekkers on impact of earthquake on natural beauty of the study area

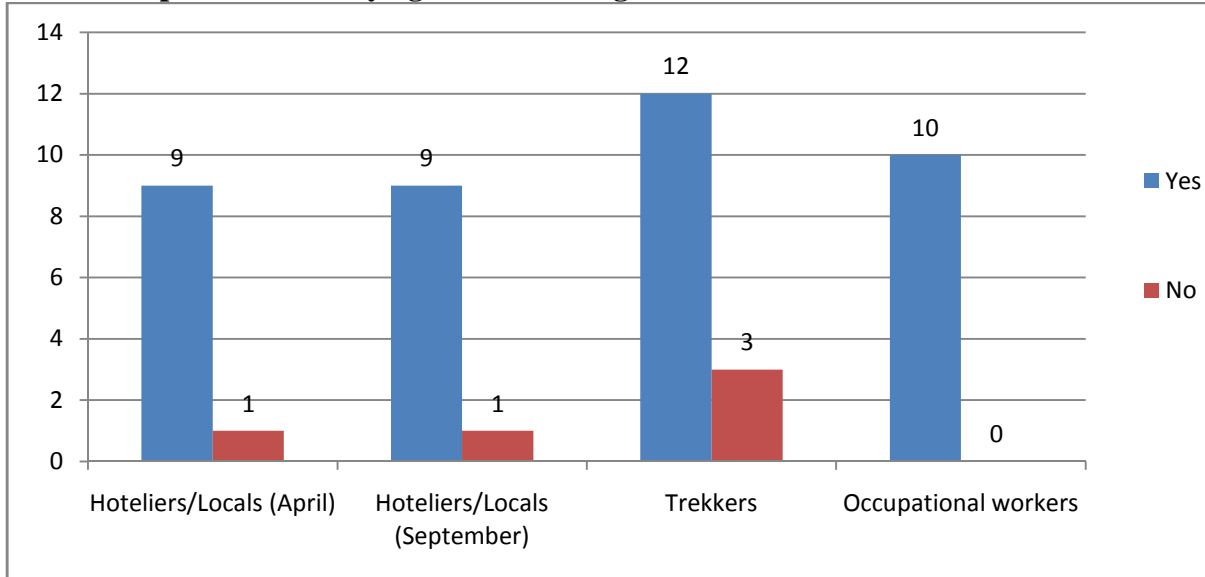


Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The figure above shows that out of 15 trekkers who were interviewed about the impact of earthquake on natural beauty of the area, 6 answered that the impact was a lot, 4 answered that the impact was only a little while 5 answered that natural beauty of the area was not impacted at all. Trekkers interviewed in Langtang village, who had witnessed the landslide caused devastation were more likely to say that the beauty of the valley had been damaged. This reveals that the disaster has had very bad impact on natural beauty in Langtang village, but other areas haven't had any impact.

Diagram # 4.18

View of respondents on any agencies assisting on reconstruction after the disaster



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The diagram above shows that out of 10 hoteliers/locals interviewed in April, 9 agreed that agencies had been assisting on reconstruction of the study area after the disaster while 1 denied. 9 out of 10 respondents from this category interviewed in September agreed that agencies were assisting in reconstruction and here too, 1 respondent disagreed. Out of 15 trekkers, 12 said that agencies had been assisting on reconstruction while 3 denied while 10 out of 10 occupational workers agreed that agencies had been assisting in reconstruction process of the valley. This reveals that the valley is in the process of recovering from the disasters soon.

4.9 Challenges of trekking tourism in the study area after the disaster

Disasters in any area mean discouragement to tourists to visit that area. Without the trekking related business, Langtang valley residents couldn't survive as it is the only source of their income. In order for Langtang valley to survive after the disaster, the valley must be able to welcome the trekkers who come to visit this area and show their hospitality to promote trekking and related businesses. Despite of ongoing efforts, there are still several challenges for trekking tourism of the study area to flourish as before.

Table # 4.12

Hoteliers/locals on challenges of trekking tourism after disaster in the valley in April

Designation	Challenges			
	Lack of labor	Finance	Lack of materials	None
Hoteliers	2	1	1	
Local residents		1	1	
Teahouse owners	1		1	
Others		1		1
Total	3	3	3	1

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows that out of 10 local respondents from the valley in April, 3 said lacks of labor, 3 said finance and 3 others said lack of materials were the major challenges while 1 denied there was any challenge present for trekking tourism in the valley.

Table # 4.13

Hoteliers/locals on challenges of trekking tourism after disaster in the valley in September

Designation	Challenges				
	Lack of labor	Finance	Lack of materials	Beautification	None
Hoteliers	1		1	1	2
Locals	1	2			1
Homestay owners				1	
Total	2	2	1	2	3

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows that out of 10 local respondents from the valley in September, 2 said lack of labor, 2 said lack of finance, and 2 other said beautification of the valley as major challenge for trekking tourism, while 1 said it was the lack of materials. The remaining 3 said there weren't any challenges for trekking tourism in the valley.

These two tables (4.13 and 4.14) combined reveals that challenges were more about lack of financematerials and labor in April, while in September, they had started being concerned about beautification of the valley. It also reveals that reconstruction of trekking related infrastructures have completed, hence the shift towards beautification. These tables also reveal that respondents who were answering there weren't any challenges left has increased from 10 percent in April to 30 percent in September, which concludes that the valley has gotten back to normalcy more in September than in April.

Table # 4.14

View of occupational workers on challenges of trekking tourism after the disaster

Designation	Challenges		
	Trail repair	Reconstruction	Positive media coverage
Porters	3		
Guides		2	2
Mule herders	2	1	
Total	5	3	2

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows that out of 10 occupational workers, 5 see trail repair, 3 see reconstructions of infrastructures as the major challenge while 2 consider media's positive coverage to show the valley's good side as the major challenge of trekking tourism in post disaster situation. During the field visit in April and talking with key informant, it was found that the trail through the bank of Langtang River was repaired with the help of DDC Rasuwa and Nepal Tourism Board. However, mule herders were asked for extra charge to travel via that route and to avoid the charge, they were forced to take a long route that passed through Sherpagaun, a highland village to reach Langtang valley. Sherpagaun is also the nearest human settlement to the valley that grew vegetables, which was carried by porters in the valley to sell to the residents who would then balance their diet as well as that of trekkers. This route is long but full of scenic beauty. However, this route is in dismal condition due to frequent rockslides and dry landslides.

Hence, porters and mule herders have stressed trail repair as the major challenge of trekking tourism in the valley after the disaster. This data also reveals that respondents tend to give more useful answers if they are educated or well informed. In this case, 2 guides who are relatively well informed, have replied positive media coverage of the valley as the major challenge of the trekking tourism after the disaster.

Table # 4.15
View of trekkers on challenges of trekking tourism after the disaster

Trekkers' Nationality	Challenges				
	Lack of labor	Finance	Lack of materials	Beautification	Landslides
National			3	1	1
International	2	2	2	2	2
Total	2	2	5	3	3

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The table above shows that out of 15 trekkers, lack of materials for reconstruction in the area as the major challenge is seen by 5 trekkers, while 3 each consider beautification of the valley and frequent landslides in the area as the major challenge and 2 each consider lack of labor and (lack of) finance as the major challenge of trekking tourism in the valley after the disaster.

This survey was conducted in April, when the government of Nepal and Langtang National Park authority had prohibited the valley residents from cutting down those trees that were uprooted by the force of landslide for timber. However, locals are now allowed to use those trees for timber so lack of materials might not be the biggest issue at present.

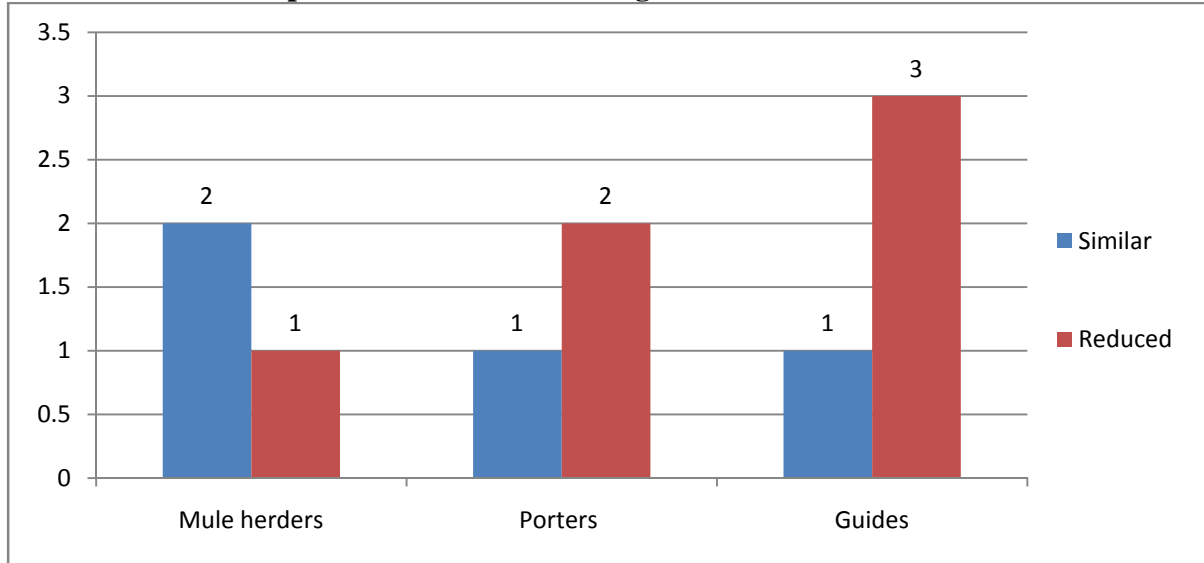
4.10 Role of trekking tourism in economy of local community after the disaster

Lack of visitors in the study area had reduced the economic activity as hospitality business had not revived yet. Destruction of many hotels had matched up with receding number of visitors hence the remaining hotels were still getting okay to good business. Everything had to be transported in the valley via mule, porters and helicopters, despite that the cost of goods and services had not increased.

According to key informants, lots of financial and assistances in other forms were pouring in for revival of tourism industry in the valley. Langtang Reconstruction Committee had bought 45 *Chauris* for valley residents for which Langtang Plan Japan had provided the required fund. MAF Nepal and Samaritan Purse still have been providing financial help in transportation of reconstruction materials via helicopters into the valley. Nepal Army also had helped open up the track of landslide hit trails after the disaster, which has helped valley residents transport daily use and construction items via land.

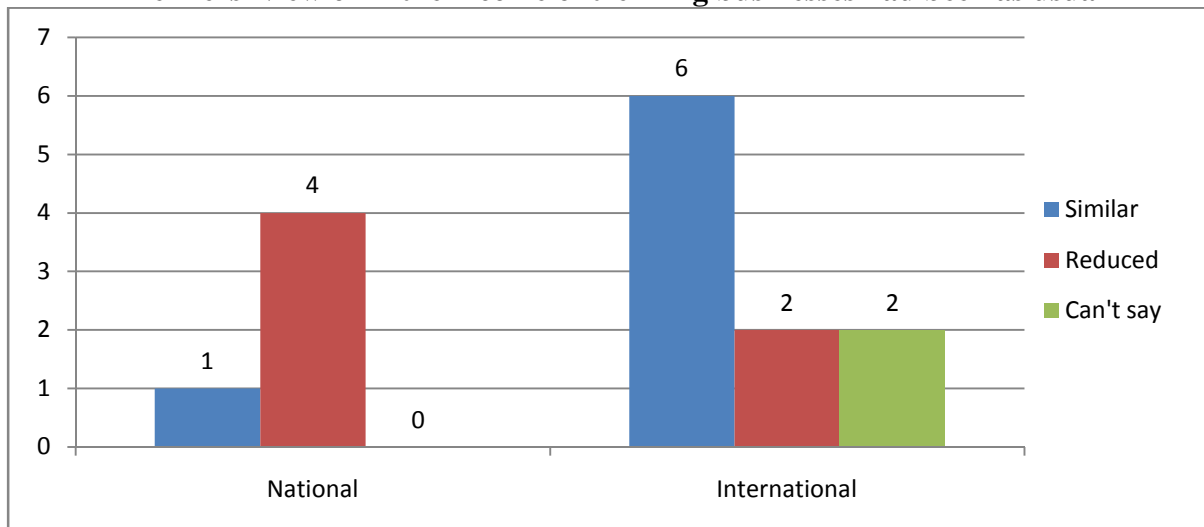
The diagram below (4.19) shows that out of 10 occupational workers, 6 say their income has reduced while 4 disagree. 66.66 percent mule herders said that their income has remained the same as compared to 33.33 percent and 25 percent of porters and guides respectively. This reveals that transportation of goods and services was as it was prior to the earthquake while inflow of trekkers wasn't. Hence apart from mule herders, other occupational workers' income was reduced after the disaster.

Diagram # 4.19
View of occupational workers on change in their income after the disaster



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Diagram # 4.20
Trekkers' view on if the income of trekking businesses had been as usual



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

This diagram shows that out of 5 national trekkers, 4 said that income of trekking businesses had reduced while 1 said it was similar. Out of 10 international trekkers however, 6 said that the income was as usual while 2 said the income was reduced and the remaining 2 couldn't confirm.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

In today's world, trekking is one of the most revered spare time adventurous activities for people around the world. It is enjoyable, healthy and educational. It also gives you an opportunity to experience a cultural setting that is different than one is used to, providing one a chance to acknowledge and understand differences among cultures and civilizations around the world. It is also very beneficial to country like ours that is rich in geographical oddities but poor in terms of financial resources.

After a decade long civil war was over in Nepal, number of tourists visiting Nepal gradually increased. It had started taking momentum and Nepal believed that country can welcome over a million tourists in one year and decided to celebrate Nepal Tourism Year 2011. We have to keep in mind that about 13 years ago, Nepal was targeting merely a half million tourists during the Visit Nepal Year 1998. So we can conclude that tourism in Nepal has a good potential and activities related to tourism such as construction of several luxury hotels, new peaks being opened for climbing and opening of new trekking routes are increasing every year.

However, several disasters that occur every now and then have had an adverse impact in our tourism. A recent avalanche in the Everest in 2014 AD can be taken as an example that had had a very negative impact in tourist inflow to that region, leading to zero Everest climbing expedition after that till the season in 2016 started.

Likewise, number of trekkers visiting Langtang valley reduced by more than 77 percent (Annual Progress Report, LNP) after the earthquake, during the peak season (Ashwin and Kartik) of 2015 than last year. However, Langtang valley trekking is still the third most popular trekking destination to both nationals and internationals trekkers in Nepal despite the destruction caused by the earthquake to the entire area of Langtang village. It is only the rest areas that has

been destroyed, the beauty of the valley along with the mountains, forests, floras and faunas are still intact. Trekkers can enjoy their stay in the village of Kyanjing, where the earthquake has had very minimal impact. Apart from one government owned private building, a cheese factory, not a single building was completely destroyed from the earthquake.

There were two trekking routes that lead to the valley, one longer, and steep trail walk through high hills via Sherpagaon, a hamlet of thirty odd houses. Other one is a lower narrow valley trail by the riverside through dense forest via Bamboo, a small settlement built to provide refreshment for trekkers. Both of these routes unite at Rimche and lead all the way to Kyanging and more. It was observed during the field visit that one organization was repairing the lower trail that was damaged from the earthquake. The trail was damaged at more than two dozen different places from landslides and rockslides triggered by the earthquake and monsoon that followed. However, the organization had started the repairing process in September 2015, as the route is lifeline to the local residents to import goods to run their day to day activities.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to find out prospects and challenges of trekking in Langtang valley after the earthquake of April, 2015. Hence it is very important to give the overview of trekking routes, condition of hotels and lodges, ongoing and future plan of reconstruction by the valley residents, the government and other stakeholders alike.

Reconstruction

The first major challenge for the valley is one of reconstruction. The entire village of Langtang and the hotel area is in such a dilapidated condition that without external help, only the owners can't even think of the reconstruction process. Starting from SyafruBesi which is the last destination for vehicles to Langtang, the transportation of any construction material is possible only via porters or via mule. Cost of one mule for transportation of any goods (one mule can carry 50 kg) up to Kyanjing Monastery is 3000 Rupees. As a result, reconstruction cost goes up by multiple folds from normal rates.

There are locally available construction materials such as stones, mud and timber as well. However, the residents of Langtang can't use any of them as the area lies inside the region of national park, which is a protected area by the government of Nepal. Hence the government of Nepal is one of the most important entities that can help in reconstruction of the village by providing easy access and subsidy to locally available resources. Lately it was found out from one of the key informants (Langtang Reconstruction Committee President) that timbers available from the trees brought down by the avalanche were allowed to use for reconstruction as required by the national park authority.

It was observed during the field visit that there are more than enough of timbers available from the trees brought down by the avalanche. National park authority had been charging 100 rupees per cu. Ft. of timber and also 13 percent vat on top of that before.

Raising Awareness

First inhabitants of Langtang valley and the surroundings migrated some 300 years ago. People share similar language and culture with their northern neighbors. The village of Langtang and Kyanjing, two of the biggest settlements had been residing harmoniously in the valley for a couple of centuries. Tourism was growing rapidly and number of visitors had increased rapidly in the past five years (Table 2.1), significantly contributing in economy of the region. Number of hotels had also increased as number of visitors did, leading to increase in number of valley residents, who came from various neighboring districts and other villages nearby looking for jobs in hospitality, construction and transportation sectors.

These all changed after the earthquake followed by the avalanche. With nearly a quarter of valley residents dead, majority of them being youths of age 18 to 45, specially the village of Langtang is in deep shock. Once a pasture to Yak and sheep herds in summer and ski ready slopes in winter after snowfall has now turned into a huge field of rubbles. Underneath of which 80 houses and at least 82 corpses are buried.

Authorities, NGO/INGOs and psychosocial health workers should understand that this is an immeasurable amount of shock to a village with such a small population. So much so that after interviewing some locals, it was evident they were unsure about whether to return to the village or leave it permanently and resettle somewhere else. As a result, counseling the village residents of Langtang for mental preparedness to rebuild their village and to recover from the shock of disaster to make them able to lead a normal life is one of the biggest challenges to prepare Langtang residents to welcome visitors with smiling faces again.

Restoration of Beauty

There are a few small dry landslides and rockslides that have caused minimal disasters in the valley's natural beauty. Bamboo, a small hotel and lodge area was seen half buried under the rubbles while at places, portions of lush green forests were seen covered with dry landslides causing the forest to look unappealing to visitors' eyes. Most importantly, the area of Langtang village where trekkers and visitors took pleasure in staying overnight looking at green pastures and snow clad mountains is now completely covered with debris from the avalanche. This has made the entire area look like an ugly dreadful desert where no one wants to venture. The very sight of aftermath of that avalanche will shoo away visitors from walking past it to reach the next largest existing human settlement in the village of Kyanjing.

Hence, this issue has to be addressed properly to breathe life in Langtang valley. This doesn't seem to be an easy task however, as no decision has been made yet whether to excavate the area to dig out the corpses or leave it as it is and start building structures on top of the debris. In order to light up the valley with electricity, the destroyed hydro-electric power plant has to be restarted. Likewise, the army barrack and the police station have to be re-established in order to maintain the security of the valley and also to stop poaching and encroachment.

Rehabilitation

The earthquake and the avalanche after that destroyed number of hotels and lodges, which existed prior to the earthquake. Now the number has reduced. This will result into

unavailability of enough beds for trekkers during the peak season. The village of Langtang also had a micro hydroelectric project that ran in full capacity to illuminate the entire valley. The village was provided with security by Nepal Army barrack and a Nepal Police station, which also looked after the illegal poaching of wildlife and any other possible illegal activities inside the national park area. All of which are now under the rubbles of avalanche that was triggered by the first big earthquake. Altogether, 11 security personnel including a policeman had died in that avalanche.

In order to make visitors and residents feel safe as before, both of the barracks and Police station should reestablished. It would give a huge psychological boost to valley residents in returning back who had abandoned the village with a very slim hope of returning back. The village should be linked with at least some form of energy source so that residents can perform their day to day activities.

5.3 Recommendations

Tourism is the major source of foreign revenues in Nepal. Trekkers all around the world flock to Nepal because it provides warm hospitality, unique natural setting, adventurous locale and culturally rich demography. However, in case of disasters like that of Langtang valley is ever to occur again, following are the steps that ought to be taken which I have found during my research study:

-) The disaster that Langtang valley faced was unlike anything ever witnessed in Nepal. However as the country is located in region that is prone to disasters such as avalanche, earthquake, GLOF etc., other tourist/trekking destinations in Nepal might face similar fate in future.
-) It is going to take a great deal of support, contribution and work from broad spectra of concerned bodies in order to revive Langtang to pre-disaster condition. This will help uplift the confidence of people in the valley, who wants their lives back to normal as much as possible so they could perform their trekking related activities again.

-) Area of the valley that was affected the most by the disaster was the village of Langtang, which used to be the major destination for trekkers to rest, but not the last resort. Hence if possible, other areas of the valley, which has enough area for resettlement to establish hotels and other recreational facilities, should equally be promoted.
-) The disaster site, the village of Langtang has a great potential for grief tourism, where people from all over the world could visit and pay respect to the victims. The devastation caused by the landslide followed by the earthquake could also be a sight of shock, which could attract visitors with morbid curiosity, if advertised well.
-) We can't predict such disasters, but we can always be prepared for it. Hence disaster preparedness programs should be conducted in all of such vulnerable but economically important areas of our country, especially when it comes to popular trekking destinations like Langtang valley.
-) Langtang valley area hasn't lost its beauty and its adventurous nature despite of the disaster. However, some of the rest areas and an entire village which was hit by the landslide have to be improved in a great deal so trekkers won't feel they are visiting a disaster hit sites anymore.

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