

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF TOURISM IN FIKKAL:

A Case study of Kholagaun VDC, Sindhuli
district, Nepal

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ABSTRACT

In developing countries like ours where low productivity still prevails in agricultural and industrial sector, tourism can be seen as a greater prospect which can contribute to compensate unemployment and disguised unemployment prevailing in the country as well as Fikkal of Sindhuli district. It comparatively holds more advantages than other industries such as, it has low opportunity cost, it takes low gestation period to give returns, can involve the lower strata of the people of all ecological zone, involves women and ethnic groups and bears direct relation to all dimensions of life like culture, environment, nature, behaviour of people etc.

The history of Tourism in Nepal has become very old, but still the rural population has not been able to be benefited from the tourism industry itself. There are only limited areas like Kathmandu, Chitwan, and Pokhara where tourism has been occupied, so it is necessary to conduct additional micro level studies within alternative areas like Fikkal.

Fikkal holds high potential in the field of tourism as it is a storage area of nature and living culture. The region also plays a crucial role towards tourism development within the country. Fikkal which is also rich in cultural heritage, natural scenery, fairs and festivals, pristine natural beauty, hospitable people, ancient religious and historical monuments make this district one of the most wonderful tourist destinations.

Fikkal offers its traditional culture, life style, scenic beauty and hospitality to tourists. This study has tried to explore the current inflow of tourists, impacts as well as challenges and prospects of tourism.

The main objective of the study is to find the challenges and prospects of tourism in Fikkal. This study has adopted explorative as well as descriptive research design and has been analyzed with both qualitative and quantitative approach techniques. Both primary and secondary data has been used as a source of analysis.

The region is full of high and low hills, plains, gorge etc. On the whole it is a rural area, but in these recent years there has been some social and physical development resulting into urbanization. Most of the settlements are of small sizes and there are limited big settlements as well. The district's main economy is dependent on agricultural sector which is slightly decreasing

these days. Human labour who are engaged in agriculture are either landless or those having very few lands. Only five percent of people have agricultural production sufficient throughout the entire year.

However, Fikkal is the store house of various tourism products as it is covered with rural settlements, mixed forests and rich bio-diversities . There are other famous places like Chanaute, Kholagaun, Tinpokhari and Thuliban which can be more beneficial to attract domestic as well as foreign visitors. Different Tourist models like pilgrimage Tourism, Village Tourism/Urban Tourism, Nature based tourism, Adventure tourism, Health tourism, Floriculture Tourism can be developed in this place. This place is also blessed with hills that embraces amazing scenic beauty , perennial rivers with fresh water which can be appropriate for water rafting and other adventure tourism like Trekking, Rock climbing, Mountain Biking and many more if marketed strategically and developed properly .As a whole this results to huge inflow of domestic as well as foreign tourists that would ultimately contribute in raising the living standard of the rural people.

It is of utmost importance to initiate tourist level facilities in major areas, create awareness and conduct trainings related to hospitality management . Various organizations working in the field of tourism should cooperate for the promotion of the local areas. Accordingly we can also link with institutional agencies that prioritizes women empowerment and tourism development.

On the contrary, there are some hindrances which still exists in this region . Mainly, most of the roads in this area remains dusty and are in a dilapidated condition . Weak infrastructure, lack of access to airlines, lack of coordinated efforts, lack of institutional tourism agencies, lack of awareness, migration, depletion of forest, lack of manpower, degradation of environment and biodivesities, gender inequality, illiteracy etc. are some among them.

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