

AN ASSESSMENT OF ECOTOURISM

(A Case Study of Maipokhari Region in Ilam District, Nepal)

A Thesis Report

Submitted to:

Central Department of Rural Development (CDRD)

Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Master's Degree in Humanities and Social

Sciences in Rural Development

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May, 2010

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This Thesis report entitled “*AN ASSESSMENT OF ECOTOURISM: (A Case Study of Maipokhari Region in Ilam District, Nepal)*” completed by **Mr. Prajpati Khanal** under my full guidance and supervision for the partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Masters Degree of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rural Development. I hereby recommend this work for its evaluation and approval.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Thesis “*AN ASSESSMENT OF ECOTOURISM: (A Case Study of Maipokhari Region in Ilam District, Nepal)*” completed by **Mr. Prajapati Khanal** has been examined by Central Department of Rural Development of University Campus, TU, Kirtipur Kathmandu. It has been declared to be a successful work for fulfillment of the academic requirements towards the completion of Masters of Arts in Rural Development.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I sincerely take this opportunity to thank my research supervisor, teachers, friends, and everyone else who have helped me in the course of conducting this research.

I am infinitely indebted to my research supervisor, Bimal Poudel, Lecturer of Central Department of Rural Development, TU, Kirtipur for his cooperation and continuous guideline in the course of study from very beginning to the last. His suggestions about the technical aspect of the study have been even more remarkable help to me. I am also indebted to Prof. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Khadka for his kind cooperation and intellectual comments during this study period. I am grateful to the all respondents and stakeholders for their active help while data gathering in the field.

I also thankful to Mr. Khadananda Bhattarai, Mr. Rajeshwar Rijal and D.P. Rai, for their cooperation in sharing of information and field visit. I would like to extend my thankfulness to Ms. Kamla Shrestha and many other friends who scholarly supported during this study.

I would like to express my thanks to my wife Ms. Roma Khanal, lovely daughters; Nuna and Jharana, big brother, parents and other family members for their constant support, regular encouragement and valuable cooperation in every stage of this study.

Prajapati Khanal
May, 2010

ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is a recent phenomenon in the Nepalese context. So, the history of ecotourism is not very long in Nepal. In Nepal, conservation activities were started during early 1970s. The ecotourism activities started only after the inception of Chitwan National Park in 1973. Also, trekking tourism arose during the decade 1960s with the development of trekking tourism and conservation activities. In 1994, another ecotourism project KEEP was initiated in Nepal. Ilam is a beautiful hill queen of Nepal. Ilam has strong potentiality for development of ecotourism. Being the various natural resources, green forests, rivers, lakes, mountain, tea garden, forested hills and hills with tea, trekking spots, holy sites etc help to promote the ecotourism in Ilam district. So this study is attempted to examine the economic and cultural aspects of tourism and to find the relation between local people and local tourist activities in Maipokhari region, Ilam, Nepal. The investigation includes the analysis of local people's income, tourist expenditure, satisfaction of tourist and biodiversity conservation through ecotourism. One of the juncture of the ecotourism in Ilam is the Maipokhari region which is situated in southern part of the district headquarter. It is the old heritage of Ilam district lying on the lap of greenery forest. Due to the excessive pressure of the tourist in this eco zone, this site is the crucial one in respect to proliferation of the eco-tourists. This study has dug out that the Maipokhari region is the most important place for Eco-tourism development in Ilam district. About 80 percent foreign tourists involved in eco-tourism have entertained this site as a major destination of Ilam. It was found that 84 percent local respondents viewed that eco-tourism has contributed various types of employment chances including biodiversity conservation. But nowadays the quality of biodiversity is decreasing and the waste pollution is increasing due to unmanaged solid waste. It may harm on tourism in future so government and related agencies must try to solve these problems for bright future of Maipokhari in ecotourism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Recommendation Letter	i
Approval Sheet	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Abstracts	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
List of Abbreviation	x

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1	General Background	2
1.2	Statement of the Problem	6
1.3	Objectives of the Study	7
1.4	Significance of the study	8
1.5	Limitation of the Study	9
1.6	Organization of the Study	10

CHAPTER - II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Defining Tourism	11
2.2	Tourism in Nepal	14
2.3	Concept of Ecotourism	18
	2.3.1 Requirements for Ecotourism	21
	2.3.2 Principles of Ecotourism	21
2.4	Concept of Biodiversity	22
2.5	Ecotourism in the Third World	23
2.6	Regional Scenario of Ecotourism	25
2.7	Potential Eco-tourism Sites in Nepal	36

CHAPTER-III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Research Design	38
3.2	Selection of the Study Area	38
3.3	Sampling Procedure	39
3.4	Nature and Sources of Data	39
	3.4.1 Primary Data	39
	3.4.2 Secondary Data	39
3.5	Tools and Techniques of Data Collection	40
	a) Questionnaire Method	40
	b) Observation Method	40
	c) Key Informant Interview	40
3.6	Techniques of Data Analysis	41

CHAPTER - IV
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1	General Introduction of the Study Site	42
4.2	Tourist Arrivals in Ilam	43
4.3	Profile of the Respondents	44
4.4	Purpose of the Visit	45
4.5	Satisfaction from Different Services	47
4.6	Repeated Visit by Tourist	46
4.7	Food Preferences	47
4.8	Expenditure by Tourists in Maipokhari	48
4.9	Opinion of the Tourist about Local People	49
4.10	Features of Maipokhari	49
4.11	Duration of Stay of Tourist in Maipokhari	50
4.12	Profile of the Local People Based on the Sample Size	51
4.13	Family involvement	52
4.14	Change in Socio-economic, and Cultural Aspects	53
4.15	Contribution to the Economic due to Tourist inflow	54

4.15.1	Employment	55
4.15.2	Occupation	57
4.16	Cultural Impact	57
4.16.1	Change in Religious Activities	58
4.16.2	Contribution to the Cultural Changes due to Tourist Inflow	59
4.17	Types of Cooking Fuel Used in Hotels	59
4.18	Biodiversity conservation through ecotourism	60

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1	Summary	62
5.2	Conclusion	63
5.3	Recommendations	64

References

Appendices

LIST OF TABLE

Table 4.2	: Tourist Arrivals in Ilam	44
Table 4.3	: Profile of the Respondents	45
Table 4.4	: Purpose of the visit	45
Table 4.5	: Satisfaction from Different Services	46
Table 4.6	: Repeated Visit by Tourist	47
Table 4.7	: Food Preferences	48
Table 4.8	: Expenditure by Tourists in Maipokhari	48
Table 4.9	: Opinion of Tourist about Local People	49
Table 4.10	: Most Appreciate Features of Maipokhari	50
Table 4.11	: Duration of Stay of Tourists in Maipokhari	51
Table 4.12	: Profile of the Local People Based on the Sample Size	51
Table 4.13	: No. of Family Member Involved in Tourism Related Field	52
Table 4.14	: Change in Socio-economic, and Cultural Aspects	53
Table 4.15	: Contribution to the Economic due to Tourist inflow	54
Table 4.15.1	: Employment Provided by Hotels in Ilam	56
Table 4.16.1	: Change in Religious Activities Due to Tourism	58
Table 4.16.2	: Contribution to the Cultural Changes due to Tourist Inflow	59
Table 4.17	: Types of Cooking Fuel Used in Hotels	60

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 4.1	: Contribution to the Economic due to Tourist inflow	55
Figure 4.2	: Percentage of people Involving Tourism Related Jobs	56

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACAP	=	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
ADB	=	Asian Development Bank
AT	=	Alternative Tourism
DDC	=	District Development Committee
ECOSOC	=	Economic and Social Council
GDP	=	Gross Development Product
DF	=	Development Facilitator
IYE	=	International Year of Ecotourism
KCAP	=	Kanchanjunga Conservation Area Project
KEEP	=	Kanchanjunga Environment and Ecotourism Project
KMTNC	=	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
LDCS	=	Least Developed Countries
MCAP	=	Manaslu Conservation Area Project
MDCS	=	Most Developed Countries
MOPE	=	Ministry of Population and Environment
NACCRT	=	North American Coordinating Centre for Responsible Tourism
NGO	=	Non-Government Organization
NPC	=	national Planning Commission
NTB	=	Nepal Tourism Board
PPP	=	Public Private Partnership
SPCC	=	Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee
TED	=	Tourist Education Programme
TEEN	=	Tourism European Ecumenical Network
TIES	=	The International Ecotourism Society
TRPAP	=	Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Project
UMCDP	=	Upper Mustang Conservation and Development Project
UN	=	United Nation
UNDP	=	United Nation Development Programme

VDC = Village Development Committee
WTO = World Tourism Organization
WWF = World Wide Fund for Nature