

# **CHAPTER - I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ecotourism is 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 in Nepal was started only after the inception of Chitwan National Park in 1973. In true sense, ecotourism activities started only during the decade of 1990s. Perhaps, Ghalekhark-Sikless ecotourism project was the first ecotourism project in the country which was launched in 1992. Before this project when WWF started its activities in Nepal in 1967, the conservation activities got pace in the decade of 1970s. Also, trekking tourism arose during the decade 1960s with the development of trekking tourism and conservation activities. When Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) was initiated Sagarmatha region in 1992 focused to the conservation of the targeted area. In 1994, another ecotourism project KEEP was initiated in Kathmandu.

In 1995, ACAP started another important project in upper Mustang region of ACA, by the name 'Upper Mustang Conservation and Development Project (UMCDP), two years later, in 1997, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) launched another major project in ecotourism field, Manaslu Ecotourism Project in Gorkha District with the assistance of ADB presently known as Manaslu Conservation Area Project (MCAP). In 1998, WWF launched a major conservation project, Kanchanjunga Conservation Area Project (KCAP) in Kanchanjunga area.

UNDP initiated a project Langtang to improve the quality of tourism and environmental conditions in the region. In the year 2000, ADB approved an ecotourism project known as ADB Ecotourism TA Project. The latest and the

most important endeavor in this direction is the project named Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Project (TRPAP).

The basic aim of this project is poverty alleviation, it contains fundamental elements of ecotourism like involvement of local community, conservation of nature and cultural resources.

But these all projects are not carrying out the norms of ecotourism but there are certain project which contains certain elements of ecotourism in their activities.

Although trekking is the main ecotourism activity in the Himalayan Kingdom, but it is not the trekking alone, that represents ecotourism in Nepal. Actually, the ecotourism in Nepal is the mixture of adventure, culture and ecotourism blended together. The ecotourism in Nepal is the hybridization of adventure tourism, trekking and culture tourism.

## **1.1 General Background**

Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of bio-diversity due to its geographical position and altitudinal variation. The elevation of the country ranges from 60 meter above sea level to the highest point on earth, Mt. Everest at 8,848 meter. All within a distance of 150 km with climatic condition ranging from sub-tropical to arctic. This wild variation fosters an incredible variety of ecosystem, the greatest mountain range on earth, thick sub-tropical jungles teeming with a wealth of wild life, thundering rivers, forested hills and frozen valleys.

Nepal is a small Himalayan Kingdom in between two big economic powers of Asia , China in the north and India in the east, west and south with the open border. Nepal is a least developed, land locked and geographically disadvantageously placed country. Its location is in the northern margin of

south Asia. It is roughly rectangular in shape with a total area of 1,47,181 square kilometer. The absolute location of Nepal lies between 26<sup>0</sup>22' to 30<sup>0</sup>27' north latitude and 80<sup>0</sup>4' to 88<sup>0</sup>12' east longitude. Nepal has an assets of about 23.1 million people, 6000 rivers , 5000 species of plant, 175 species of mammals. Nepal occupying only 0.03 percent of the total landmass of the world. Nepal is a country having great natural beauty and of a rich cultural heritage. It is home to 2 percent of all flowering plants in the world, 8 percent of the world's population of birds (more than 848 species), 4 percent mammals in earth, 11 of the world's 15 families of butterflies (more than 500 species), 600 indigenous plant families, 319 species of exotic orchids (Source: Traveler's Information: NTB, 2007).

Tourism is backbone of economic development of Nepal. It is one of the most thriving industries in Nepal. Tourism is important not only from the point of view of earning foreign exchange but it also enhances scope for various industrial branches, like hotels, motels, other types of accommodation, restaurants and other food services, amusement and other leisure activities, gift shops and large number of other enterprises such as fruit production and processing. So, tourism has another advantage as compared to merchandise export. Tourism industry, being a comparative advantages industry of Nepal, has important role in Nepal's economy. Development of tourism sector has contributed to increase employment opportunities and to improve the balance of payment of the country. Nepal has immense potential for tourism development, as it is full of places that attracts tourist through out the globe. With its natural beauty and cultural heritage, like Mount Everest (Crown of the World), snow peak mountains, birth place of lord Buddha, a number of lakes and rivers. For the nature lovers and pleasures seekers Nepal can provide many attractions, the sight-seeing, jungle safari, trekking, white-water rafting, sport fishing, bunzi-jumping, the friendly and ethnic people are major attraction of the country. Nepal is beautiful destination for international tourists. The snow

clad mountains, different religious believes, different tastes of festivals are the main attraction for the foreign visitors.

A significant recent phenomenon in the tourism industry is 'ecotourism' or 'nature tourism' which is gaining importance rapidly in a number of countries. Ecotourism that involves traveling relatively undistributed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural areas in which the conservation of ecosystem and protection of biodiversity is aimed at, the desired types of tourists visit the protected areas/destination, and the organization and legislation of the tourism development support a sustainable development. This is a kind of small scale tourism which is based on natural and cultural conditions and does not destroy the resources which tourism builds on.

Nepal has also developed another aspect of ecotourism in the form of rural tourism. These provide visitors chance to observe rural hamlets inhabited by different ethnic groups with exotic cultures, visitors can stay in typical Nepali village, eat delicious local food and drink, enjoy comfortable accommodation provided by host family and get to their culture, tradition first hand. In Nepal 'ecotourism' is the leading foreign exchange earner as visitors attracted primarily by the Himalayan Geography. Culture industry experts assert that the tourist's demand should be given top priority. Nature tourism and other forms of specialized tourism are expected to grow faster than general tourism as people became more environment conscious.

Ilam is the far eastern district of the country, inhabited by people of different colors living in peace and harmony. Neighbouring the famous Indian hill town of Darjeeling, it is situated on the foot hills of mount Kanchanjunga, the third highest peak in the world. Maipokhari of Ilam is adorned with an almost

limitless range of lush green tea gardens. The rolling hills covered with tea leaves are simply majestic. Greenery prevails all over the hills of Ilam all around the year. Ilam is charming because it is unspoiled by modernity, pollution and urban bustle. Ilam is the multicultural district, we can find the taste of Newar culture, Brahmin culture, Rai and Limbu culture, Chhetris culture and Gurung's, Magar's, Tamang's and Lepcha's culture too. Ilam has sub-tropical climate with minimum 0<sup>0</sup>C to maximum 31<sup>0</sup>C and average temperature 18 <sup>0</sup>C. We can find almost all types of cash crops grown including some famous cash crops like Tea, Potato, Cardamom, Ginger not to mention different types of medicinal herbal plants.

Ilam is a small hilly town with pristine landscapes of sloped tea gardens, several lakes and ponds, thick natural forests, holy sites and unique culture. Ilam offers an excellent gateway from city life for romantic sunrise and sunset, a brisk walk in the tea garden, tranquil picnic and sightseeing spots, short treks along gentle slopes or trudge into the nearby woods. Ilam is a much sought after tourist destination for travelers of all kinds. It is also famous all over the world for its special brand 'Ilam Tea'.

Geographical distribution is quite unique ranging from about 150 meter sub-foothill to 4000 meter high mountainous range which spreads from south to north. Due to the smooth formation of the sub foot hills, hills and the mountains the climatic condition is also very pleasant to live in. Due to these conditions Ilam accommodates all types of flora and fauna that are found in the rest of the kingdom. Because of the smooth formation of the foot-hills, hills and the mountains, it is one of the best 'Trekking Area' in the country, Nepal. The people who are interested about the study of the flora and fauna, this district is most ideal one because there are so many natural things which still need to be studied and made public. A Botanist, a Bird specialist, a Geologist can research about their respective fields.

A relatively new style of ecotourism is village tourism, the network of home stays, tea houses and small lodges that have emerged in village along Nepal's popular trek routes are among the most successful example of village tourism in Asia. The concept of village tourism has already emerged in Ilam. It provides the gains for the conservation of biodiversity also.

Ilam has strong potentiality for development of ecotourism. Being the various natural resources, greeny forests, rivers, lakes, mountain, tea garden, forested hills and hills with tea, trekking spots, holy sites may help to promote the ecotourism in Ilam district. 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 lies 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. To dig out the role of the ecotourism in biodiversity conservation in Maipokhari region, this study is an important aspect in comparison to other previous study.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Tourism is an important sector to generate revenue in one hand and employment on the other for the sustainable development in our national economy. Tourism is emerging as the most viable industry of Nepal which has been providing direct and indirect jobs to many unemployment people and has helped to reduce rampant poverty in the country. Several plans, programs and policies have been drawing attention of all concerning organizations to develop this sector. But because of weak implementation we are not getting expected results out of the above series of efforts. Tourism not only brings foreign currency but also other things such as it bring changes in attitude and behavior of people. It also brings some negative impacts in the society such as they are forgetting their own culture and copying the imported modern cultures and behaviors'.

Nepal is quite rich in natural and cultural diversities and one can study, inter-link the culture and tourism of the existing area for the development of the destination. In this sense, Ilam is a small natural heritage, tourist arrival to this area is increasing rapidly. Hence, people are more motivated to tourism. However, tourism has brought about many socio-cultural changes on the people at Ilam. Their manner, life style and food habits are directly or indirectly affected by tourism. Generally the natives of the destination area do not like to continue their old traditions because they are gradually influenced by the activities and the culture of the tourists visiting that area. In such a situation, the natives gradually leave their traditions, customs, manners, habits, norms, values and ethics. Of course, there is positive economic impact due to tourism. The question comes, Is tourism fully responsible to bring change in cultural and economic status ? Realizing these problems, the researcher would carry out the research to find out the cultural and economic impact of tourism in destination area mixing with biodiversity conservation.

There are many places and sections, which are distinct and carry equal potential for this. Among them, Maipokhari is such a unique place where there are many natural, cultural and other attraction which can attract tourists both national and international. It has prospect of developing as the viable centre for nature tourism and cultural tourism. The coolly hill, Maipokhari is quite and pollution free.

Even though with all these potentialities concerned authorities are unable to attract handsome number of tourist in Maipokhari. Even Nepalese citizens are not aware of the most excited attractions of Maipokhari. In turn, this concept enables the protection and promotion of wild lives, herbals and aquatic animals.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the research is an assessment of ecotourism in biodiversity conservation in Maipokhari region. The specific objectives are listed as under:

- To examine economic and cultural impact of ecotourism in Maipokhari of Ilam.
- To explore the potentiality of Maipokhari as one of the major ecotourism destination.
- To find out the relation between local people and local tourism activities in Maipokhari.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

The major tourism destination for sightseeing in Nepal at present are the Kathmandu and Pokhara valley. Apart from Kathmandu, Chitwan has emerged as another major tourist destination because of its wildlife and rich culture, Lumbini by virtue of being the birth place of Lord Buddha also attracts a sizable number of tourists every year. As for trekking destination the major area frequented by tourists are Annapurna, Manang, Jomsom, Everest (Sagarmatha Region) and Langtang. A better destination of tourist across the country is much desired specially for reducing the concentration and associated impact in this location and for spreading tourism earning to their less visited area. Apart from well established tourist destinations there are several potential ecotourism sector throughout the country. Based on secondary literature, which include NTB publications, the ADB Ecotourism Project Report and other relevant publications, the following sites are recognized as potential ecotourism destinations in the country.



Trekking is another prime attraction of Nepal. The diversity in Nepal's nature and a range of exotic culture makes this country ideal for trekking. Trekking in Nepal provides an opportunity to observe the local culture of the people and enjoy the beauty of nature undistributed by influence of modernity. Nepal has aptly been called "A Trekkers' Paradise" as her terrain-mountains, hills and the Terai offers some of the most spectacular trekking routes in the world. Protected regions along the Himalayas, like Shey-Phoksundo National Park, Annapurna Conservation Area, Manaslu Ecotourism Area, Langtang National Park, Sagarmatha National Park and Makalu Barun National Park provide excellent trekking options. Trekking in Nepal is as much a cultural experience as a Himalayas adventure. The major trekking region are; Everest region, Annapurna region, Langtang region, Gorkha and Manaslu region, Kanchanjunga region lower Dolpa and upper Dolpa region, Humla and Jumla region, Palpa region and Trekking in and around the Kathmandu valley.

With considering this fact, to promote the eco tourism and developed the Maipokhari region as a major tourist destination in Ilam, this study has a great importance. This area is renowned as the rich in flora and fauna in which a nine corners pond is naturalized. This study will be benefited to generate awareness in local people and may be helpful to policy makers and tourism planners in national as well as local level.

### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

The present study covers only the selected tourist area namely Maipokhari of Ilam district which is located on the eastern development region. The study have following limitations.

- The study is based on the sample. Sampling is done as representative of the whole study area hence the result of findings are based on respondent.
- Due to absence of tourist information center in Ilam records from hotel, Ilam municipality, VDC and DDC were taken as the major source of information for tourist arrival and duration of stay.
- The Nepalese and Indian tourists are not included in the analysis.
- Because of the time and budget constraints the study is not comprehensive one.
- The questionnaire survey was conducted during based on the simple random sampling.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter, which deals with tourism background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance, limitation of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter deal with the review of literature, which incorporates theoretical, historical and relevant studies of ecotourism in Nepal and Ilam. Chapter three examine the research methodology applied by this study. Data presentation and analysis is the four chapter of the study. Summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study are organized in the last chapter i.e. chapter five.

## CHAPTER - II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Defining Tourism

The word "tourism" is derived from the French word "tourisme" which originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and cited for the first time in Oxford English Dictionary in 1811 A.D. Meaning "the business of providing accommodation and services for people visiting a place." Tourism is general develops the movement or journey of human beings from one place to another whether it may be within own country or second countries for various propose (Bhatt, 2006:1)

The origin of the word 'tourist' dates back to the year 1292 A.D. The word 'tourism' or 'tourist' is derived form the Latin word 'tornus' which mean a tool for describing a circle or a turner's wheel. It is from the word 'tornus' the nation of a 'round tour' or a 'package tour' has come in vogue. In 1643, the term was first used in the sense of going round or traveling from places to places around an excursion, a journey including visits to many places in circuit or sequence, a circuitous journey embracing the principal places of a country or region. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word 'tourist' was used as early as 1800 A.D. Tourism is not a new phenomena for Hindus, in Sanskrit literature we find three terms of tourism derived from the root *atan* which means leaving home for some time to other places. They had three different types of tourism known as *Paryatan* (going out for pleasure and a knowledge); *deshatan* (going out to other countries primarily for economic gain) ; and *tirthatan* (going to the places of religious importance). (Kunwar, 1997: 3)

A service oriented industry, has cropped upto be a revolution sing phenomenon, specifically after the second word war displacing the

manufacture and extractive industries from their dominant position and emerging as a catalyst of the development process at the national as well as at the global levels. The terms 'smokeless' industry has become a cliché, but it is doing all that a manufacturing industry does from instance in certain economics, it is the substratum of the environ, especially economic pyramid while in most other it is contributing meaningfully in the general development process and in the solvation of their underlying issue. Tourism is largely examined and questioned for its ample potential to bring about changes in the economic ecological, societal and cultural edifices of a country however two aspects of tourism; its capacity to generate employment both directly and indirectly, and its potential to earn hard international currency for the host country have made this industry greatly desirable for a concerned governments, planners, entrepreneurs and people in general (Krishan K. Karma, 2002:v).

Defining tourism is not easy job as it is an experience rather than a tangible object. There is no widely accepted definition of tourism. Tourism has been defined in different ways by different experts.

World Tourism Organization (WTO) has defined tourist in precise term as "Any person who travels to a country other than that in which he/she has his/her usual residence, but outside his/ her usual environment, for a period of at least one night but not more than one year and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited. This term includes people traveling for leisure, recreation and holiday visiting friends and relative, business and professional, health treatment, religion/pilgrimages and other purposes" (WTO 1996: 24; cited in Bhatt, 2006:5).

In general, tourism denotes the movement of journey of human beings from one place to another, whether it may be within own country or second countries , for various purposes.

Burkart and Medilk define tourism as "tourism denotes the temporary and short terms movements of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities those destination (Burkart and Medilk, 1981:5)

The Tourism Society in Britain defined tourism as; the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at these destination, it includes movement for all purposes as well as day visits or excursions.' (Bhatia, 1994:38)

Upadhyay (2006: 23-24) outlines the following characteristics of tourism.

- Tourism involves a complex set of interrelationship between people, places and products.
- The interrelationship evolves through the transaction of people to various destinations outside of their normal place of residence and their stay at those destinations.
- The duration of visit must generally be of a short-term nature.
- Tourism is essentially a pleasure activity in that it does not involve earning related travel.
- It is a service and is intangible; it cannot be seen or inspected before its purchase.
- Tourism product is not homogeneous. Tour package to a destination may vary in quality, depending upon the

circumstances. For instance a delayed domestic flight could affect the image of the product.

- Tourism product cannot be brought to the consumer but the consumer has to be taken to the product.
- The short-term supply of the product is fixed. The number of hotel rooms cannot be increased overnight to meet the requirements of the season.
- The tourism product is highly perishable. A hotel room or an airline seat not used today is total loss.
- The tourism product cannot be stored for future use.
- Its raw material is inexhaustible.
- The tourism products do not diminish with constant use.

## **2.2 Tourism in Nepal**

Both domestic and international tourism has already been identified as one of the most effective tools for sustained economic development of the country. If promoted and developed properly, it has a great potential in reducing the regional economic imbalances and help raise the standard of living across the nation.

Tourism in Nepal is a recent phenomena, it took its pace after the culmination of democracy in 1950. The first ascent of 'Sagarmatha' ( Mt. Everest) on May 29, 1953 by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Admund Hillary created massive national and international media hype and propelled Nepal as a new potential tourism destination. Toni Hagen was the first foreigner to walk 1400 km along east-west stretch as part of the geological survey under UN assignment. Hagen's book titled "**Nepal: The Kingdom of Himalayas**" compiled never before seen pictures of landscape, people and culture played and instrumental role in introducing Nepal to the outside world. By 1965, there were half a

dozen travel agencies. The start of two five- stars hotels, Hotel Soaltee in 1965 and Hotel Annapurna in 1966 opened the window for high class tourists. The starts of Air Services by RNAC in the year 1960, finally unlocked this landlocked country to outside the world. After the establishment of department of tourism in 1962, some potential destinations were gradually opened and developed. The year 1973 marks a turning point in Nepalese tourism when the first wildlife reserve Royal Chitwan National Park was designated. This is a way gave boost to the image of Nepal as ecotourism destination in Nepal with such activities as jungle safari, elephant ride and ethnic culture. The first master plan in tourism of 1972 provided a planned development of tourism for the first time. In order to develop qualified manpower to meet the demand of growing tourism industry, Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Management was established in 1972. Since then many private colleges and institutions, government institution like Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal Tourism Board have involved in process of tourism development and promotion .

Nepal has immense potentiality in terms of tourism. The mystical Himalayan mountain kingdom on the roof of the world has held a very powerful appeal as a tourist destination. Nepal offers tourists a breathtaking experience of nature and ever present mountain scenery, including Everest, the world's highest peak. Flora and Fauna in Nepal are truly amazing both in terms of their variety and in some cases, their rarity. The friendly populations of the country are generally very happy to share their innate hospitality as well as their many customs and traditions with the visitors. (Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation; 2005: 164)

Tourism has another advantage as compared to merchandise export. This means that many goods consumed by tourist don't have to be transported across international borders and hence face on tariff barrier of foreign countries. Thus,

"greater the domestic product of touristic goods, lesser the leakage of earnings form tourism" (Upadhyay; 2003:29)

Nature and culture are the major tourist resources of Nepalese tourism industry and Nepal's rich bio-diversity renders it ideals as an ecotourism destination. Thus for the sustainable tourism development there is need of conservation of natural environment and environmental heritage i.e. presence of tourist in a particular destination should have as much as possible minimal adverse effect on the natural and cultural environment of that destination. So promotion of a particular tourist destination should go along with the conservation of natural and cultural environment of that destination. Thus, we need to mitigate adverse effects on the natural and cultural environment. This can be done by developing eco-friendly tourism i.e. ecotourism. Thus, the sustainable development so a particular destination is possible through the ecotourism.

Nepal Tourism Master Plan was prepared in 1972, that plan had sketched only the road map for tourism development. But presently we need a comprehensive new tourism master plan to enhance the promotion and development of inclusive tourism in Nepal. Dr. Pushpa Rajkarnikar member, NPC in his recent interview opined 'we already have a tourism master plan so I don't think we need a new master plan now. Rather we should study the old master plan and implement the desirable ones for tourism development in the country.' He gave emphasize to encourage more tourists in the country Nepal should focus on the infrastructure development and the next is certainly political stability once the peace prevails permanently tourist will start flocking in Nepal, in no time.

Nepal has various famous tourist destination but lack of proper policies, management and maintenance these places are loosing their attraction.

Upadhyaya (2000), in his article '*Save Chitwan from Disaster*' attempted to elaborate some of the burning issues regarding culture, nature and adventures.



According to him, there is a great pressure on nature and wildlife because of population influx and haphazard growth of tourism. As a result there is a growing pressure on Chitwan National Park. This is the most crucial problem of Chitwan, which cannot be solved by government alone. Therefore, there is need of people's active participation. Chitwan is also home of unique ethnic groups of Nepal, they create the potentiality of cultural tourism for taking its advantage, eco-friendly programmes should be developed and implemented, Chitwan is also an area of ecotourism. Therefore, there is need of establishing botanical garden, educational and recreational parks, cultural museum, horticulture, floriculture, dairy farms with emphasis on bee-keeping and vegetable farming. Tourism in Chitwan is based on culture and nature. The Narayani and Rapti rivers are the lifeline of Chitwan but they are getting polluted every year. Lack of proper management is a serious national problem and so is the case of tourism and environment in Chitwan also.

When we analyze the data of tourists visiting Nepal, the growth rate of tourists arrivals and the duration of their stay, the number had declined by 2.6 percent from mid December 2004 to Mid December 2005 as compared to the same period of the preceding year. However, the tourist arrivals increased by 4.9 percent during the one year period from mid-December 2005 to mid-December 2006. The duration of stay on average was 9.1 days from mid-December 2004 to mid-December 2005 and 9.5 days from mid-December 2005 to mid-December 2006. Most of the tourists are found to have come to Nepal for recreation, trekking and mountaineering purposes. During the period from Mid-December 2005 to Mid-December 2006, it is found that 42.7 percent came for recreation, 16.4 percent for trekking and mountaineering, 5.9 percent for business, 12.7 percent for pilgrimage, 4.5 percent for official visit and 17.9 percent for miscellaneous purposes. Majority of the tourists visited Nepal from western Europe. Analysis of data for the year from Mid-December 2005 to Mid-December 2006 shows that 26.1 percent tourists came from Western

Europe, 6.1 percent from North America, 2.2 percent each from Australia and Eastern Europe, 26.7 percent came from India alone. The number of tourist from India, Asia and East Europe increased over the previous comparable period. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism sector declined by 8.68 percent to Rs.9,556.0 million in FY 2005/06. During the first eight months of FY 2006/07, Rs.6,176 million was earned from the tourism sector, short of the earnings realized in the corresponding period in the previous fiscal year. The foreign exchange earnings during the first eight months of FY 2006/07 accounted for 14.9 percent of total foreign exchange earned from the export of goods, 9.8 percent of total foreign exchange earned from total exports of goods and services and 4.4 percent of the total foreign exchange earnings. All these three ratios had declined during the similar period in FY 2005/06 (MoF, 2006/07).

### **2.3 Concept of Ecotourism**

Ecotourism is a new concept. It is becoming quite popular in tourism literature and tourism at present. It is becoming popular among academics, researchers and practitioners in different parts of the world ever since the concept was introduced in the early 1980s (Upadhyay, 2004: 1).

Ecotourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on our vulnerable planet. It is typically defined as travel to destinations where the flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Responsible ecotourism includes programs that minimize the adverse effect of traditional tourism on the natural environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, initiatives by hospitality providers to promote recycling, energy efficiency, water re-use and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities are an integral part of ecotourism.

In general, ecotourism is the best available option to develop tourism products with minimum of negative impacts. This is instrumental in opening an access to new and virgin natural regions but steered with an objective to conserve vegetation, its habitant and also by developing linkages to bring for the welfare and well-being of local residents. Travelers themselves begin to be concerned about traveling lightly and not leaving behind a legacy of negative environment and cultural impacts. More visitors are aware of the harm they can do to value of wildlife and to the concerns of local people's (Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation, 2005: 178).

The Ecotourism Society in 1991 defined ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.

By definition, ecotourism denotes nature based tourism but not vice versa. Nature-based tourism activities can not be equated with ecotourism unless they directly contribute to conservation. For example, tourists in wilderness or adventure travel may gain a deeper understanding of the natural places they visit. Their appreciation does not necessarily help those areas, and so can not be defined as ecotourism.

The term ecotourism is defined as traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with specific objectives such as studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery with its flora and fauna as well as any existing cultural manifestations found in those areas (Lascurain, 1981, cited in MOPE, 2004: 3)

Ecotourism has grown with the growth in number of protected areas. While these protected areas provide a safe heaven for flora and fauna, they also serve as catalysts for ecotourism. This also holds time in Central American Countries like Costa Rica is recognized as a world leader in ecotourism enjoyed a

multifold increase in tourism influx between Eighties and Nineties. These holds true for some African countries even exceed that of agriculture throughout eastern and southern Africa, park based tourism is a very important economic activity. Developed countries like Australia and Eastern Europe also feel the importance of nature based tourism. All these findings suggest that ecotourism is no longer confined to a few nations but has spread a cross the world (Upadhyay, 2004: 3).

Ecotourism is also been as an interfacing of conservation concerns and tourism interests, setting free the synergy required to jointly preserve the quality of the environment while protecting nature and promoting tourism. It is a timely strategy that is vital to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems along with economic benefits to any host-area communities therefore ecotourism has been viewed as a new tourism strategy that balances development and economic gains by benefiting both nature and destination areas (Farell and Runyan, 1991, cited in MOPE, Nepal 2004 : 4)

Ecotourism differs form other forms of tourism particularly due to the opportunity for observation and learning it provides to tourists and its contribution to cultural conservation and long term sustainability of communities and natural resources. Therefore, it is a form of sustainable tourism that benefits the community, environment and local economy. This may be achieved through various means such as employment for local people or programs where tourists contribute money or labour to community activities such as free planting or conservation of local monuments or sites (SNV, 2003: 16).

WTO (1993: 23) defines ecotourism as "tourism that involves traveling to relatively undistributed natural areas with the specified object of studying ,

admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural aspects (both of past and present) found in the areas."

Marthe Haney, the editor of '**Ecotourism and Certification**' outlines seven points that define ecotourism as its best. (Haney ed. 2002:7)

- Involves travel to natural destinations, usually remote and under environmental protection.
- Minimizes the adverse effects of development, attempts to limit damage to the ecosystem.
- Builds environmental awareness and insight into natural and cultural history.
- Provides direct benefits for conservation.
- Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people and communities.
- Respect local culture and strives to have a minimal effect on the environment and people.
- Supports human rights and democratic system.

### **2.3.1 Requirements for Ecotourism**

For an activity to qualify as ecotourism it must demonstrate the following characteristics:

- It should promote positive environmental ethics and foster 'preferred' behaviour in its participants.
- It does not degrade the resources.
- It is oriented around the environment in question and not around humans.

- It must benefit the wildlife and environment
- It actively involves the local communities in the tourism process.
- Its level of gratification is measured in terms of education and / or appreciation.
- It involves considerable preparation and demand in depth knowledge on the part of both leaders and participates  
(Source: Lascurain, 1996)

### **2.3.2 Principles of Ecotourism**

Although the scholars have defined ecotourism in various ways, the essence of each definition is more or less same. The principles of ecotourism developed by The International Ecotourism Society presented here by (Shrestha and Walinga, 2003) are as following:

- Avoids negative impacts that can damage or destroy the integrity or character of the natural or cultural environments being visited.
- Educates the travels on the importance of conservation.
- Directs revenues to the conservation of natural areas and the management of protected areas.
- Beings economic benefits to local communities and directs revenues to local people living adjustment to protected areas.
- Emphasizes the need for planning and sustainable growth of the tourism industry and seeks to ensure that tourism development does not exceed the social and environmental does not exceed the social and environmental carrying capacity.

- Retains a high percentage of revenues in the host country by stressing the use of locally owned facilities and services.
- Increasingly relies on infrastructure that has been developed sensitively in harmony with the environment minimizing use of fossil fuels conserving local plants and unbelief and blending with the natural environment.

## **2.4 Concept of Biodiversity**

The word biodiversity is relatively new concept. It originated just 26 years ago. Now, it has become very popular word and also a subject of great interest and importance both for theoretical as well as practical research and other actions. The word is a combination of two words; namely biological and diversity. It refers to the variation that exists at all levels of biological organization of all living organism on the earth.

Biologists have estimated that there may be as many as 30 million species of living organisms in the world today. Of them, about 1.7 million species have been described already so far.

Biodiversity has been the backbone of human food, health, and livelihood security systems ever since human civilization began. Human societies have domesticated a wide range of plants and animals in the process of their interaction with the rest of the living world.

Though, Nepal having an area of 1,47,181 square km, occupies 0.1 percent of the global surface area. It hosts some of the most spectacular natural areas in the world. The country possesses 2 percent of the worlds flowering plants, about 8 percent of the world bird species and about 4 percent of the world's mammals species. In terms of species richness, Nepal is the 11<sup>th</sup> position in Asia and 25<sup>th</sup> position in the world.

## 2.5 Ecotourism in the Third World

A survey has been carried out by the Ministry of Population and Environment entitled **State of the Environment Nepal; Ecotourism (2004: 49-51)**. This report analyzed the development and status of ecotourism in the third world as under;

As a form of alternative tourism the emphasis on ecotourism development in the Third World should be on small-scale. Locally owned activities there are three important features of ecotourism in LDCs;

- ) The facilities in terms of infrastructure and superstructure are simpler and less expensive than those demanded by mass tourism. Hence ecotourism can prove a viable alternative in cases where funding for larger scale tourism development are scarce or unavailable.
- ) It offers market for local products and labor. This has much higher multiplier effects throughout the local economy.
- ) The profits should accrue locally instead of flowing back to the country of origin. This is the most attractive prospect for Third World Countries.

The major initial attempts at alternative tourism development within the less developed world were made by variety of church-related groups through a series of high-profile tourism-related conferences. These events can be collectively described as the first step in an effort to have organized alternative tourism platform. The earliest among these was the 1969 World Consultation of Leisure Tourism, convened by the World Council of Churches in Tutzing West Germany. The event recognized the power of tourism to effect change across a road range of destinations and called for the implementation of alternatives to the conventional mass tourism model (Gonsalves, 1987). More explicit reference to the less developed countries (LDCs) was made during



Penang Conference 1975, sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia. Primary outcome of the conference was a 'code of ethics' for tourists traveling to the less developed countries; clearly addressing the perceived problem by influencing the individual behavior of tourists from most developed countries (MDCs). The approach later formed the basis for initiatives of Just Travel, founded in Australia in 1980 for the benefit of Australians traveling to LDCs.

The Manila Workshop on International Tourism in 1980 introduced the phrase '*alternative tourism*'. This workshop was also sponsored by the church and critically analyzed mass tourism. The workshop was deliberately timed and located to coincide with the world tourism organization (WTO) sponsored Manila conference on tourism, which was seen by the militant Christian sponsors of the workshop to be supportive of the status quo. Other such initiatives were the formation of the Third World Tourism European Ecumenical Network (TEEN) formed in 1981 and the North American Coordinating Center for Responsible Tourism (NACCRT) in 1984. The Alternative Tourism Conference held on Chiang Mai, Thailand in the same year was one of the first major attempts to identify actual alternative tourism strategies in order to advance a process that promoted a just form of travel between members of different communities to achieve, mutual understanding solidarity and equality amongst participants.

The third phase in the evolution of advocacy with in LDCs involved two developments the widespread adoption of Alternative Tourism (AT) principles and philosophies by mainstream tourism institutions and the synthesis of the socio-cultural and environmental mainstreams (Weaver, 2001). The social and environmental perspective of tourism was recognized in Hague in 1989. The WTO Hague Declaration was directed primarily toward the less developed world as:

"Countries should determine their national priorities and tourism role in the ' hierarchy' of these priorities as well as the optimum tourism strategy, within these priorities. This strategy should define, among others, the balance to be sought between international and domestic tourism and take into account the carrying capacity of destinations within the overall national tourism strategy, priority attention should be given to selective and controlled development of tourist infrastructure facilities, demand and overall tourist capacity in order to protect the environment and local population , so as to avoid any negative impacts which unplanned tourism might produce . In tourism planning and area development it is essential for states to strike a harmonious balance between economic and ecological considerations" (WTO, 1989 cited in MOPE, 2004: 50-51).

The popularity and significance of ecotourism for the Third World countries are obvious in terms of tourism revenue when some of the prime ecotourism areas are examined on the table below. A ten- fold growth in receipts was witnessed on Belize over the decade of the nineties similar growth was experienced in Costa Rica and Maldives.

## **2.6 Regional Scenario of Ecotourism**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy and this industry can result in serious environmental and social problem. The United Nations contends that such negative effects can be controlled and reduced.

Ecotourism today is a global phenomenon it is not restricted to any particular region of the world but has been expanded worldwide. The continent wise survey of ecotourism depicts a diverse picture of ecotourism throughout the world.

Ecotourism in North America (Anglo American region which includes USA and Canada), is the high government priority. Although State Governments have much role and central government playing smaller role in USA; however most of the states have high priority for ecotourism development. Thus, ecotourism in North America is on high profile. In Europe, ecotourism is known by the name sustainable tourism although ecotourism is not popular by its own name but people know it by the name sustainable tourism, and also on high priority both at government level as well as in private sector too. Europe has its own definition of ecotourism.

In Asia, picture is diverse; perhaps it is due to the large size of the continent too. There are two extremes; at one end of the extranet are the regions like South East Asian with high ecotourism while on the other end are the countries of west Asia with low ecotourism priority, the other regions fall in between these two externs. The whole regions comprise different sub regions. Among them East Asia (which comprises of Japan North and South Korea, China, Mongolia and Siberia) has diverse status but abundant opportunity for development, while South East Asia with pervasive and high ecotourism priority is a rapid ecotourism growing region in south and ecotourism in this region is synonym to trekking. Trekking and wild life visit represents ecotourism here. The tourism is concentrated along Himalayan range. South West and Central Asia have poorly developed ecotourism religions (Islamic), culture monuments, desert conditions represent ecotourism in the region.

Oceania (Australia, Newzeland and South Pacific) is the region which represents highly developed ecotourism region in the world, particularly Australia (other countries have however, not much developed ecotourism) having well developed on infrastructures, explicit and supporting governmental policies, dedicated private sector and co-operating non-governmental organizations. Australia is leading in innovations and researches in ecotourism.

In Africa, ecotourism is concentrated in protected areas. Kenya and South Africa are leading countries in the region. The ecotourism in the region is in growing phase.

Finally, the region Latin America and the Caribbean consists two diverse patterns in ecotourism. At one extreme are countries of Central America (Costa Rica and Belize) with high profile ecotourism and Caribbean region. To other extreme are countries of South America where ecotourism is in less developed and incipient stage despite its abundant natural asset.

In this way the survey shows that status of ecotourism across the globe is not similar but a diverse picture emerges even in a continent too. However, one thing is clear, that ecotourism, at present is not concentrated to any particular region of the world rather it is a world wide phenomenon.

Shrestha (1999) in her doctoral thesis entitled "Tourism in Nepal: Problem and Prospects" mainly concerned with the problems and prospects of tourism in Nepal. Beside this it also analyzed the trend of foreign demotic predicts. Her study identify the basic problems of tourism in the basis of its contribution to national economy, status of tourism infrastructure, review of the planning and policies of the government and as visualized by both tourist and the expert in the sample. She pointed out Nepal has not been able to introduce and diversify new tourism products. Her study found between the age of 16 to 45 establishing Nepal as a detonation for the young and adults and a mainly dominated by male visitors. The tourist generating regions are Asia and Western Europe. Out of them primary tourist generating countries are India, Japan UK, USA, France, Germany, and Australia. Shrestha put forward that the role of tourism in economic development is significant. The net earnings form tourism are greater than some other sectors.

Kunwar (1997) in his book *Tourism and Development Science and Industry Interface* states that there is no doubt that travel opportunities can enhance the quality of human experience in spiritual as well as material ways, as witness the section headings used in a well-known book on tourism. Here it is shown the important characteristics of travel.

- Travel is recuperation and regeneration.
- Travel is compensation and social integration.
- Travel is escape.
- Travel is communication.
- Travel is broadens the mind.
- Travel is freedom and self-determination.
- Travel is self-realization.
- Travel is happiness.

In this book, he has provided very important insights of tourism management of Himalayan region. In order to develop sustainable tourism in the Nepal Himalayan region, the areas should be developed under the theme of four management prospective first and foremost, the camp site of trekking route should be properly managed in the development contexts. This is known as camp site management. After the management of camp, these area along the trekking trail should also be properly managed. If this would be properly managed the whole trekking areas can be properly protected. To protect the area is to prefect its nature and cluster. This is called protecting management. Thirdly, if visitors could be topologically categorized and be sent to the proper places, this policy will be further enhanced to preserve both culture and ecology on one side and to keep balance environment on the other side. This is known as visitor's management. The fourth one is known as research management tries to give his view about ecotourism as, "For tourism to and in

natural areas, recently a new concept, ecotourism is introduced the use of this concept is not unambiguous. In the past few years, many definition of ecotourism have been introduced. The definition varies from a description of nature tourism to a broader definition where by not only the activities of the tourist are involved but also elements such as the conservation of eco-system and sustainable development". He also adds "Ecotourism seems to be a catch word that means many things to many people. To some it means ecologically sound tourism to others, it is synonymous with nature tourism. Ecotourism is both these things but it must go a step further. It must be a force for sustaining nature resources. Ecotourism is nature travel that advances conservation and sustainable development effort".

Ghimire (2002) in his book *Travel and Tourism* has given more information related to the tourism. Tourism is related to traveling and is naturally a human character. Man needs change and travel provides the change. During primitive period travel was there but tourism was not there. Because at that time and motive was not to seek holiday from the routine work. The primary motive of their travel was trade and commerce or pilgrimage or to explore. The basic concept of tourism 'Pleasure to Leisure' was not there. When people learned to travel for pleasure, the concept of tourism was started. Learning to differentiate between work and Leisure create tourism. So tourism is related to the movement of people from one place to another for the purpose leisure.

He used different techniques to calculate the economic impact of tourism. Mainly he has explained about multiplier effect and input-output analysis. Ghimire further describes about tourism as it is a compound of different elements. It doesn't exist in isolation. To understand tourism is necessary to know about the various components which together make tourism. Tourism is made of 4A's as follows:

- (i) Attraction

- (ii) Accessibility
- (iii) Accommodation
- (iv) Amenities

Ecotourism and nature based tourism have become mainstream in recent years and are widely acknowledged to be a valuable part of the general product mix. Encompassing soft adventure, culture, activity wildlife, village and rural tourism, ecotourism is based on the outdoors, usually in remote and unspoiled natural or cultural surroundings. This interest has come about largely because, over the past two decades, an awareness of the environment in which we live, a concern for the fragility of the planet and an appreciation of tradition cultures has spread from the concern of a few to a pre occupation amongst many educated travelers (National Ecotourism Strategy, 2002, p. 16).

Sing (2004) in his book 'Ecotourism in Nepal' has mentioned that in the area of tourist concentration, deforestation due to increasing fuel needs, pollution of streams and haphazard waste of disposal are becoming evident. In the developed towns, the tourists flow is quite high and will increase further in the future. It sees necessary that some remedial and improvement measures be taken before the environment becomes further polluted, and natural resources are over exploited.

Major findings of the book are:

- Maximum number of tourists are coming from India and lowest from Australia, so we can say that the maximum tourist are coming from developing countries and lowest from western developed countries. So due to this Nepal is earning less foreign exchange.

- Maximum number of tourists arrives in the month of October because the climate is very pleasant in this month.

Chauhan interviewed with 800 tourists, tourist guides and officers of tourism in the month October. From this experience he concluded that:

- The 80 percent tourists said Nepal is a beautiful place for tourism and 20 percent said it is all right. So for these 20 percent Nepal government has to develop more tourist places and facilities to attract them with the help of remote-sensing.
- 60 percent tourists said that the facilities are not adequate. They complained about the cleanliness in hotels, about waiters, traffic and transportation.
- 80 percent tourists said that they are aware about the concept of ecotourism.
- 80 percent tourists said that people of Nepal are friendly with them but 20 percent complained about their hostile behaviour.
- 50 percent tourists told that tourist departments and the tourist guides have friendly behaviours with them, also provide proper details and information about the tourist places but 50 percent complained about their hostile behaviour.
- 40 percent tourists gave positive results for not breaking the branches of trees or plucking flowers but 60 percent gave negative result which is dangerous for ecology.
- 25 percent tourists gave positive results about not teasing the animals but 75 percent gave negative result which is very harmful for faunal diversity of Nepal.



- 80 percent tourists know about the air and water pollution acts but practically found that these tourists are not obeying these acts properly. 20 percent do not know about these acts.

So, above results are positive towards the ecotourism in Nepal but still we observed many problems associated with tourism and environment.

He has enumerated following recommendations for promoting ecotourism in Nepal. They are,

- Trekking permits should be given on the basis of carrying capacities of the area.
- Tracks and trails at higher altitude should be properly regulated as to geology and structure.
- Suitable places for toilet facilities should be provided along the main tracks and halting places.
- Proper arrangement for litter dumping and waste disposal should be made.
- Group leaders of trekking parties, Sirdars and local people should be fully educated about environmental matter and hygiene.
- Alternate energy resources (Solar, biogas, hydropower) should be provided to protect and preserve the remaining forests. The use of efficient stoves should be promoted to reduce firewood consumption.
- The trial or road sides be planted with soil bindings trees to check soil erosion.

- Tourist Education Programme (TED) should be enforced in the mountain areas so as to protect the area from further determination.

Tourism Master Plan formulated by ministry of commerce and industry (1972) has focused the potentiality of sightseeing and trekking as well as combination of both. This plan provides a comprehensive policy suggestion for the tourism sector. It was the first detailed document for tourism in Nepal. Tourism master plan had provided guideline for tourism development in Nepal. The plan shows the potentiality of sightseeing tourism, trekking tourism, recreational tourism as well as internal pilgrims in the country.

Cruz (1999) has studied about *The Impact of Ecotourism in the Annapurna Region* a case study of 'The Baragaon, the Annapurna Sanctuary, and Sikles Sector by using Primary data, in his research paper major findings are;

- In the Annapurna Sanctuary, ACAP and the LMC have been able to not only create strong conservation rules, but also to follow them. Lodges are regulated, and there is an effective ban on cutting down wood.
- A large portion of tourism revenue is put back into community, infrastructure and development.
- ACAP's focus on the community and local level decision making and involvement have proven to work here. None of the three sites is showing serious social/cultural degradation, or wide scale deterioration of the environment.

Niroula Director, NTB, in his vision paper named *Tourism Development in Nepal: Our challenges and Strategies* presented in NTB has highlighted various aspects of tourism. This paper is divided into two parts. In the first part

he has mentioned about tourism development in Nepal and in the second part he has attempted to present existing challenges and future strategies to be undertaken by Nepal.

In above paper Mr. Niroula has opined that tourism is the fastest growing largest industry worldwide. It creates demand for multiple goods and services having a strong multiplier effect. Roughly, the contribution of tourism is 3 percent of GDP. It covers 11 percents of total foreign exchange earnings. More than 4 lakhs people of Nepal are directly employed in tourism. Presenting about global trends, he mentions that tourism accounts for 10 percents of the world GDP. It provides job to over 230 million people worldwide. Tourism and travel business will generate US \$ 1 million pull in 2007. Emerging concepts like pro-poor, community based, participatory and sustainable tourism in Nepal's product strength.

Tourism industry has so many challenges:

- The terrain is a bottleneck and limited accessibility of air transportation.
- Lack of awareness and understanding among people and even policy level.
- Creating the inventory of qualified human resources.
- Inadequate funds for constant vigorous marketing and adherence to traditional marketing.
- Poor implementation of plans and programmes by the government.
- Challenges related to public private partnership (PPP).

- Regional and global challenges.

To overcome these challenges, Subash Niraula has prescribed some strategic options. Product development strategy, marketed and promotional strategy service development strategy, resources generation and mobilization strategy are some of the strategy that the government should follow for the betterment of tourism sector.

Initial Draft of Three Year Interim Plan (2064/65 to 2066/67), prepared by National Planning Commission aims to average 5.5 percent economic growth, lower incidence of poverty by 7 percent from 24 percent, increase per capita income by 3.3 percent on annual average and set a target of limiting inflation to 5.6 percent during the plan period. The interim plan aims to spend Rs.587.7 billion. Tourism policies under three year interim plan (2064/65 to 2066/67) are:

- By introducing new tourism area and tourism product, employment opportunities and economic activities will be promoted.
- Information of physical and non-physical cultural heritage will be collected throughout the country.
- Airport in remote areas will be constructed; expanded and reformed.
- Construction of an international airport will be initiated. As per necessity, new airport in regional and local areas will be developed and constructed.
- Existing literature, art, language, music and other cultural heritage will be preserved and promoted.

- By increasing the volume of local people participation in tourism industry, poverty will be minimized.
- Specific identification of Nepal will be preserved by promoting cultural, archaeological and religious assets.

## **2.7 Potential Eco-tourism Sites in Nepal**

The major tourism destination for sightseeing in Nepal at present are the Kathmandu and Pokhara valley. Apart from Kathmandu, Chitwan has emerged as another major tourist destination because of its wildlife and rich culture, Lumbini by virtue of being the birth place of Lord Buddha also attracts a sizable number of tourists every year. As for trekking destination the major area frequented by tourists are Annapurna, Manang, Jomsom, Everest (Sagarmatha Region) and Langtang. A better destination of tourist across the country is much desired specially for reducing the concentration and associated impact in this location and for spreading tourism earning to their less visited area. Apart from well established tourist destinations there are several potential ecotourism sector throughout the country. Based on secondary literature, which include NTB publications, the ADB Ecotourism Project Report and other relevant publications, the following sites are recognized as potential ecotourism destinations in the country.

Trekking is another prime attraction of Nepal. The diversity in Nepal's nature and a range of exotic culture makes this country ideal for trekking. Trekking in Nepal provides an opportunity to observe the local culture of the people and enjoy the beauty of nature undistributed by influence of modernity. Nepal has aptly been called "A Trekkers' Paradise" as her terrain-mountains, hills and the Terai offers some of the most spectacular trekking routes in the world.

Protected regions along the Himalayas, like Shey-Phoksundo National Park, Annapurna Conservation Area, Manaslu Ecotourism Area, Langtang National Park, Sagarmatha National Park and Makalu Barun National Park provide excellent trekking options. Trekking in Nepal is as much a cultural experience as a Himalayas adventure. The major trekking regions are; Everest region, Annapurna region, Langtang region, Gorkha and Manaslu region, Kanchanjunga region lower Dolpa and upper Dolpa region, Humla and Jumla region, Palpa region and Trekking in and around the Kathmandu valley ([www.welcomenepal.com](http://www.welcomenepal.com)).

The important sites of the area are Antu Danda, Maipokhari, Sandakpur, Kanyam and Fikkal Bazar, Siddithumka, Gajurmukhi and Pathibhara. However, careful planning is needed to develop this area as an attracting and competitive ecotourism destination of Nepal.

Maipokhari has its own scope for tourism development. The fundamental attraction of tourism in Maipokhari are natural sceneries, pleasing weather, short-trekking routes, tea estates, small hills with greeny forest, snow capped mountains and hospitable people. Apart from natural beauty, this is a region of ethnic diversity and cultural heritage. Maipokhari offers some of the most usual and delightful trekking. Tourist who come to Maipokhari can make their tour more exciting and pleasant through such trekking. Being these all attractions Maipokhari has strong potentiality for development of ecotourism.

Despite the various literatures visited in this study, the researcher has not met empirical study of this topic on this study region. There are so many literatures which are related to this topic in National level however in the local context, the lacuna is found in the study period.

## **CHAPTER-III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is the most important aspect of research work. Authenticity and reliability of any research depends upon the tools and methods used for data collection. Hence, the primary purpose of this chapter is to discuss and design the framework for the research.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study is based on descriptive research design as well as questionnaire survey. The former has applied to describe the information obtain from the field visit and secondary sources. Likewise, questionnaire survey method is used for HHs survey in sampled population.

#### **3.2 Selection of the Study Area**

Selection of the study area is an important task for a researcher. If a researcher could not select the suitable study area, his/her research wouldn't find what he/she wants to the study. Ilam is a hilly district situated in the Eastern Nepal in which Maipokhari is a popular tourist destination with rich flora and fauna and cultural diversities. Out of the various tourism destination Maipokhari area is remarkable region for ecotourism. Sightseeing, trekking, taking photograph, pilgrims, village tour, sunrise and sunset view are the major attraction of this region. So there is very high potentiality of ecotourism. Hence, for the promoting Maipokhari one of the model ecotourism center, the researcher has selected this site on his research.

### **3.3 Sampling Procedure**

The total universe or total households including hotels and lodges near Maipokhari wetland area is 200 and tourist arrived (visited) in this year is about 50. From above universe this study is selected by applying purposive sampling. In case of respondents selection random sampling was applied in 25 local households, 5 local hotel owners and 10 foreign tourist.

### **3.4 Nature and Sources of Data**

The present study is based mainly on the primary data supported by secondary data.

#### **3.4.1 Primary Data**

The primary data were collected during the field work by questionnaire and interview with tourists, local peoples, hotel owners and local government bodies, field survey was conducted from July 20 to Aug. 5. There are several scientific techniques are used to fulfill the requirements of the study in this field.



### **3.4.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data have also been used to make this research much relevant and comparative and for understanding the comparative situation of ecotourism as well as tourism activities in the study area. Following are the main sources of secondary data collection.

- J Nepal Planning Commission.
- J Nepal Tourism Board.
- J Ministry of Finance.
- J Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation.
- J Internet/newspaper.
- J Ilam Municipality, Information Section.
- J District Development Committee, Ilam.

Besides these, other related books and reports to ecotourism contributed by different scholars have also been collected from different libraries such as, Central Library, T.U., Kathmandu, ICIMOD Library, Lalitpur, Nepal Tourism Board Library, Kathmandu, DDC Library Ilam. These information are used for the purpose of analysis and comparison.

### **3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data collection**

This study is based on the following research tools and techniques as;

#### **(a) Questionnaire Method**

To find the information regarding opinion of tourist about Maipokhari, Ilam about tourism, tourist's satisfaction, visitor's perception on sites etc. prepared the structure and unstructured questionnaires were asked to the sample households, tourists and hotels.

**(b) Observation Method**

With the motive of collecting necessary and additional information observation method was also used during field survey.

**(c) Key Informants Interview**

To acquire the more information about ecotourism in Maipokhari region, key informant interview was applied. For this process some key persons of that area was selected such as: teachers, chair person of Maipokhari conservation committee, members of hotel association, leader of local political parties, leader of mother groups etc. then made the check list and filled that form according to their view.

**3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis**

The data and information collected from questionnaire were transformed into a master sheet and raw data were tabulated on the basis of master sheet. Information was grouped, sub grouped and classified as necessary so as to meet the objective of the study.

The systematic analysis has been done by using both quantitative and descriptive techniques. To analyze the quantitative data, simple statistical tools such as percentage, average have been used, besides these, maps, tables, charts, bar diagram, pie charts are also used for the presentation of the findings. Study is mainly descriptive and the analysis of the result is described logically.

## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 General Introduction of the Study Site**

Ilam is a small hilly district, which is located in Eastern Development Region of Nepal with an area of 1703 sq km. Extending from 26<sup>0</sup>40' to 27<sup>0</sup>8' north latitude and 87<sup>0</sup>40' to 88<sup>0</sup>10' east longitude. The altitude of this district ranges from 250 meter to 3636 meter above from the sea level. The district and zonal head quarter is the Ilam bazaar. Mechi Highway links the Ilam bazaar with the Mahendra Highway at Charati of Jhapa district. Ilam district has one municipality and 48 VDCs.

Ilam has subtropical climate with minimum temperature of 0<sup>0</sup> Celsius to maximum 31<sup>0</sup> Celsius. Ilam is charming because it is unspoiled by modernity, pollution and urban bustle, Ilam is multicultural district because it is the homeland of different ethnic community like Limbu, Rai, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Sherpa, Lepcha. Ilam is very rich in terms of natural, cultural and environmental perspective. Ilam has various natural resources, greeny forests, rives, lakes, mountain, holy sites, tea gardens and hospitable people. Being these all assets, Ilam can provide an ecotourism destination for the nature lovers.

Maippkhari as the richest biodiversity in Ilam has extended in three VDCs of Ilam district namely Maipokhari itself, Sulubung, and Sumbek. It is also included in Ramshar treaty recently. Due to its abundance natural landscapes and nine corners lake, it is renowned in the national for biodiversity and ecotourism.

Maipokhari as one of the major touristic products of Ilam possesses religious, archaeological and touristic value for the promotion of Ilam as a model ecotourism centre. Maipokhari, the famous lake with nine angular points which covers an area of 1.6 hectares. Maipokhari is situated at an altitude of 2150 meters above the sea level. It is an important watershed area. The pond surrounded by thick forest of fir, juniper, birch and pine is home to a variety of flora and fauna. Various species of orchids, rhododendron, herbs, rare animals like musk deer, leopard, porcupine, jackal; numerous migratory birds and rare insects, are found in the region. An annual fair is held here every autumn around the month of October or November. Maipokhari is about 11 km north from Ilam bazaar, which is about an hour drive. Foot trekkers can enjoy by viewing enchanting views of 'Jasbire Bhanjyang' which lies in the way to Maipokhari. Maipokhari is about 4 hours on foot from Ilam bazaar.

Maipokhari is a diversified region where more than a dozen castes are inhabited. The majority caste is the Rai in this region. There are different types of plants, animals that is why it is said that it is a rich region of biodiversity in comparison to other zones of Ilam district.

It is a famous destination for pilgrimage and sightseeing. The pond at the top of the hill with green forest around it and colors of different flowers, Maipokhari has become a prime source of attraction for the tourists. It is situated on the northern part of Ilam bazaar. Because of a large pond with dancing colorful fish in fresh water of spring it has become a famous picnic spot for domestic tourists. Everybody says 'aha' viewing the continuous ripples in the pond that provide cool air to refresh tired viewers and guests. This place has immense potentialities to establish a botanical garden and make itself as a center for researchers.

#### **4.2 Tourist Arrivals in Ilam**

Tourism activities depend on the arrival of tourists in the destination. Tourist visits is the importance aspect of any tourism product. The inflow of tourists in Ilam district has been presented in the following table as;

**Table 4.2 : Tourist Arrivals in Ilam**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of tourists</b>
2002	270
2003	480
2004	310
2005	380
2006	460
2007*	390
2008	560
2009	870

\* From January to July.

*Source: Ilam Municipality, Ilam, 2010.*

Table 4.2 shows the trend of tourist arrivals in Ilam. The data are recorded by Ilam municipality and hotels. The above table shows that there is highest tourist arrival i.e. 480 in the year 2003, the main reason was 'Ilam Festival' was held in the same year. With the data from January to July of 2007,2008, and 2009 it can be estimated that the arrivals in this year will be high as compared to previous year. Data shows that there is very low tourist turnover in this region. This table shows the increasing trend of tourist arrival in the study region. It also states that some special festivals and event attracts tourist much more than normal period. So joint efforts to promote Maipokhari in order to increase tourist arrivals is highly recommended.

### **4.3 Profile of the Respondents**

Population of the study is an important to sketch out its real result. It is not possible to survey to all households in the study period as a result, population sampling is taken. The profile of the sampling population has been listed below the table:

**Table 4.3 : Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tourist	10	25%
Local people	25	62.5%
Hotel/lodge owner	5	12.5%
Total	40	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.3 shows the main respondents from which primary data were collected. The main respondents are tourists, the sample size is 25%, for local people sample size is 62.5%, hotel owner's sample size is 12.5%. The above table give the brief profile about the respondents.

#### **4.4 Purpose of the Visit**

Tourists have many purposes for visit of any place. The main purpose of visit by tourist is dependent on their psychology, economic status and education level The main purpose of visit by respondent tourist is given below:

**Table 4.4: Purpose of Visit of the Respondent Tourist**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Purpose of Visit</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Research	6	60%
2.	Entertainment	4	40%

Total		10	100%
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Source: Field Survey, 2010

From above table, we can say that the main purpose of tourist visit in this region is research or study about the ecology, culture and religion of this area. Among all respondent visitors, some visitors for entertainment like: pleasure environment, scene of this region etc.

#### 4.5 Satisfaction from Different Services

The satisfaction of the tourist is important for the promotion of the tourist products. There are various products by which tourist had got satisfactions. The following table presents it:

**Table 4.5 : Satisfaction from Different Services**

Services	Satisfied		Ok		Bad		Total Respondents
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Accommodation	5	50	5	50	-	-	10
Transportation	4	40	4	40	2	20	10
Food & Beverage	5	50	4	40	1	10	10
Information	4	40	3	30	3	30	10
Physical Security	5	50	5	50	-	-	10
Tour	6	60	4	40	-	-	10
Guides	6	60	4	40	-	-	10
Total	35		29		6		70

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Table 4.5 shows the satisfaction level of tourists regarding in different services of Maipokhari. Few tourists are not satisfied with information service, food and beverage and transportation. Regarding other service, tourists are found satisfied or ok. In this case, the respondents viewed more than one responses.

#### 4.6 Repeated Visit by Tourist

Naturally Nepal ‘once is not enough’ this slogan also proves that eco-tourism is important for repeated visit in Nepal. But in this region most of researcher tourists are repeated for their further study and those tourist who are coming just for entertainment are also repeating because of natural beauty and hospitality of that area. The following table represents the number of tourist who are repeated their visit according to their purpose of visit.

**Table 4.6 Repeated Visit by Tourist**

No. of Visit	No. of Tourist	Percentage
First Time Visit	6	60%
Second Time Visit	4	40%
Total	10	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 4.6 shows that there is 60% tourists visit this area for research and entertainment and about 40% tourists visited second time for their further study and entertainment.

#### 4.7 Food Preferences



Tourism is an industry like other industries. So to improve this industry host community must be maintain and fulfill the desire of tourist. Most of the foreign tourist interested to taste the local food and some are interested in other food. Priority items of the food given by tourist is given below:

**Table 4.7 Food Preferences Given by Tourist**

S.N	Food Items	No. of Tourist	Percentage
1.	Local Food (Dhindo and Masu)	4	40%
2.	Nepali Khana	2	20%
3.	Other Food (Chinese, Indian etc.)	3	30%
4.	Local Alchoal (Raksi, jaand, Tumba)	1	10%
Total		10	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Above table 4.7, shows that most of the tourist gave the priority local dhindo and local cock's meat.

#### **4.8 Expenditure by Tourists in Maipokhari**

The expenditure pattern of the tourist is depends up on the facilities of hotels, lodges and many other entertainment able things. Expenditure of tourist also depends up on the economic status and income of tourist. The expenditure pattern of tourist in Maipokhari is given below:

**Table 4.8 : Expenditure by Tourists in Maipokhari**

<b>Types of tourists</b>	<b>Range</b>
Foreigners	Rs. 500-1000

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.8 shows the expenditure pattern of the tourist, expenditure by a tourist is minimum Rs.500 and maximum Rs.1000 in this region, which is moderate expenditure.

#### **4.9 Opinion of Tourist About Local People**

The tourist's perception towards the local people of the Maipokhari region is positive. Most of the tourist are satisfied from local people.

**Table 4.9 : Opinion of Tourist about Local People**

<b>Opinion of Tourist</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Positive</b>	10	100%
<b>Negative</b>	-	-
<b>Not Any</b>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	-	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

The above table shows the tourist's perception towards the local people. The people of Maipokhari have positive behaviour and very friendly to the tourists.

#### **4.10 Features of Maipokhari**

Maipokhari area is enlisted in Ramsar site (wetland) from 2008. So this region is famous for biodiversity as well as religion (holy) place. There are many appreciative features of Maipokhari, which are given below:

**Table 4.10 : Most Appreciate Features of Maipokhari**

Features	Excellent		Good		Bad		Don't Know		Very Bad		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Natural Beauty	6	60	4	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100
Cultural Heritage	5	50	5	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100
Commercial Ag. Farming	5	50	5	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100
Homely Environment	5	50	5	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100
Tea Garden	5	50	5	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100
All of Above	5	50	5	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.10 shows the most appreciating aspects of Maipokhari. For most of the visitors natural scenic beauty is the most excellent features. And all above mentioned features is also appreciative factors. This results shows for the

promotion ecotourism in Maipokhari, conservation of its natural beauty and presentation of cultural heritage is very much important.

#### **4.1 Duration of Stay of Tourists in Maipokhari**

The stay duration of tourist in this region is a crucial factor because it plays an important role to determine the amount of tourist's expenditure in the host community. The time period stay by tourist in Maipokhari area is given in the following table:

**Table 4.11 : Duration of Stay of Tourists in Maipokhari**

<b>Duration of stay</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One day	-	-
One-two	6	60
Two-four	2	20
A week	2	20
> A week	-	-
Total	10	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

The length of stay is a crucial factor that plays crucial role to determine the amount of tourist expenditure in the host community. Table 4.11 shows the duration of stay of tourists in Maipokhari. More than 50 percent tourists stay for one-two day, there is no found any tourist stay more than a week.

#### **4.12 Profile of the Local People Based on the Sample Size**

This study as a part of the promotion of the eco tourists in Maipokhari , has been taken the following sample size in the local people to its socio-cultural impacts.

**Table No. 4.12 : Profile of the Local People Based on the Sample Size**

Characteristics	Sex				
	Male 15 (60%)			Female 10 (40%)	
Occupation	Student	Job holder	Teacher	Businessman	Farmers
		12 (48%)	2 (8%)	2(8%)	4 (16%)

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.12 shows the sample of local people, the sample size is 25. Out of total sample size 60 percent are male and 40 percent are female. Majority of respondents are students. Other respondents are farmers, job holder, teacher and businessman.

#### **4.13 Family involvement**

The involvement of the family in tourism sector has crucial in determining the level of income . The following table shows the familial involvement out of the total respondents;

**Table No. 4.13 No. of Family Member Involved in Tourism Related Field**

No. of family members	No. of respondents	Percentage
No one	12	48
One	8	32
Two	3	12
Three	2	8
> Four	-	-
Total	25	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.13 shows the family member involved in tourism related field. It shows that very few of the family members of the sample unit are involved on the tourism related field. 48 percent of total respondent are not involved in tourism related field. Only 32 percent in sample unit i.e. 8 whose one family member is involved in tourism sector. This table clearly shows that there is comparatively low number involved in tourism. Similarly commercialization of tourism product is necessary.

#### 4.14 Change in Socio-economic, and Cultural Aspects

One of the aspect of ecotourism in this site is the changing pattern of socio-economic and cultural life of the local people. It has been shown in this table:

**Table No. 4.14: Change in Socio-economic, and Cultural Aspects**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Positive Impact</b>	–	–
Employment opportunities	21	84
Income generation	15	60
Change in life style	21	84
Interacting with outsider	15	60
<b>Negative Impact</b>		
Environmental Degradation	12	48
Rapid change in socio-cultural values	15	60
Increase in Inflation	18	72
Misuse of Community Property	–	–

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.14 shows the perception of local people regarding the socio-economic, cultural and environmental aspects of Maipokhari. Most of them have positive impacts i.e. employment opportunity income generation and change in life style is noticed by 84 , 60 and 84 percent respectively. Few of them have noticed negative impacts i.e. increase in inflation is noticed by 72 percent of total respondent.

#### **4.15 Contribution to the Local Economy due to Tourist inflow**

There is some contribution of tourist in economy to local community. Tourist's inflow and their expenditure during their stay period helps to change the economic status of host community. Contribution to the economy to the local people due to tourist inflow is given in the following table:

**Table 4.15 : Contribution to the Economy due to Tourist inflow**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	-	-
Little bit	12	48
To some extent	11	44
No change	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.15 shows the contribution to the economic change due to tourist inflow. It states that 48 percent of total respondents responded that inflow of tourist contributed to change in economic value to some extent. 44 percent were infavour of little bit change in economic value due to tourists' inflow.

Only 8 percent were see that there is no role of tourist in change of economic value in maipokhari region.

#### **Figure 4.1 : Contribution to the Economic due to Tourist inflow**

##### **4.15.1 Employment**

Since tourism industry is a labour intensive industry, it may provide a large number of employment to the people of different levels. Generally, there are two types of employment in tourism industry: direct and indirect. Direct employment in tourism constitutes employment in hotels, travel trekking, tourist guide, airlines, souveneirs sellers and other types of direct involvement. Indirect employment includes farming and food supply, entertainment industry. Thus tourism is an important source for employment in Maipokhari too.



It was observed that tourism has created employment opportunity to locals, 25 percent of respondents were found to be directly/indirectly related to tourism related occupation. The primary employment generated by tourism is from hotel and lodge business. Cooks, helper, waiters, receptionists, manager employed to these hotel and lodges, other secondary jobs generated by tourism includes porters, guides, carpenters, builders shopkeepers.

Among all of the respondents 25 percent were found to be directly/indirectly related to tourism related occupation.

**Figure No. 4.2**  
**Percentage of people Involving Tourism Related Jobs**

Hotel owners also agree that the tourism has created job opportunity. The main source of employment opportunity in maipokhari is Hotel/lodge.

**Table 4.15.1 : Employment Provided by Hotels in Ilam**

<b>No. of employees</b>	<b>No. of hotels</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Up to 5	2	40
6-10	2	40
11-20	1	20

> 20	-	-
Total	5	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

The table shows that out of selected 5 hotels from where records were taken, 40 percent of them have employed up to 5 persons where as another 40 percent employed 6-10 persons. There is not any hotels which employed more than 20 persons. 20 percent hotels have 11-20 employees. Thus, it shows that most of the hotels in the study site are small in terms of employment offered.

#### **4.15.2 Occupation**

Tourism has brought changes in the traditional occupation and created new job opportunities. Before the development of tourism in this area, agriculture, animal husbandry and foreign service were the main occupation. But due to development of tourism, local people are attracted towards tourism related business. Because this business is economically more profitable than others. They can earn foreign currency and fulfill their basic requirement easily. Thus tourism has played a prominent role to change the occupation of local people. Tourists want to take local products to their country as gift of Nepal by paying reasonable price which has played crucial role to uplift the economic standard of local women, because in handicraft industry, women are highly participated. In the study it is found that there is 10 percent of respondents are involved to tourism related business and 90 percent of respondents are not related to tourism related business.

#### **4.16 Cultural Impact**

Culture includes language, food habit and dress pattern, arts, cultural behaviour, religion, traditional customs, beliefs and myth. Tourism can

enhance local cultural awareness. Being the multicultural land in the study area may get more benefit from tourism in cultural sectors . In this study various questions were asked with the respondents to know their perception about the cultural costs and benefits of tourism in Maipokhari. The impact of tourism on local cultural traditions and values is difficult to assess. Not only tourists but also other factors such as local people traveling for education, trade and other purposes may bring new ideas and attitudes. Likewise television, film, school/college are other factor to bring cultural change in the community.

#### **4.16.1 Change in Religious Activities**

The majority people of the study region are Hindus. Besides Hindu, Kirat, Buddhist, Christian and other religion are found in Maipokhari. They have their own myth and culture.

Most of the teenagers of this area are lured to western cultures in terms wearing fashionable clothes and enjoying different celebrations as valentine day, Christmas and the so on. Parents responded these as negative habits. In query of it, majority local respondents blamed it to the tourism activities. But, in the view of key informants, this is a type cultural development because they not only taking fashions but also reducing the traditional cultural patterns of locality.

Due to tourists and western movies the religious activities are changed. Like marriage ceremony, birthday ceremony, new year, valentine day are much influenced by tourism. Sixty percent of respondent were in favour of change religious activities of local people while they are associated with tourism sector and 40 percent had opponent view towards it.

**Table 4.16.1 : Change in Religious Activities due to Tourism**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Change in Religious Activities	15	60%
Not Change in Religious Activities	10	40%
Total	25	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

#### **4.16.2 Contribution to the Cultural Changes due to Tourist Inflow**

Cultural changes and characteristics of local people may be change due to tourist inflow. So this table presets the tourist impacts on the cultural heritage in this region:

**Table No. 4.16.2 Contribution to the Cultural Changes due to Tourist Inflow**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	9	36
Little bit	6	24
To some extent	10	40
No change	-	-
Total	25	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2010.*

Table 4.16.2 shows the contribution to the cultural changes due to tourist inflow in Maipokhari. The table shows that 50 percent of total respondents answered that tourist inflow contributed to cultural change in Maipokhari to some extent. Thirty percent of total respondents felt that there is very much change in cultural value of Maipokhari.

#### **4.17 Types of Cooking Fuel Used in Hotels**

There are many types of cooking fuel used in hotels. Some of them are given below:

**Table No. 4.17 : Types of Cooking Fuel Used in Hotels**

<b>Types of cooking fuel</b>	<b>No. of hotels</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Electricity	-	
L.P. Gas and firewood	2	40
Fire wood only	2	40
Solar	0	
Kerosene and Firewood	1	20
Total	5	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

Table 4.17 states the type of cooking fuel used in the hotels of Maipokhari. Out of the total hotel owners, 40/40 percent were used L.P. Gas and firewood and

Fire wood only. The rest used kerosene plus firewood in cooking meals. This table indirectly states the change in economic condition of hotels. Before introducing tourism in Maipokhari most of the hotels used kerosene and firewood but after the development of tourism business they started to use L.P. gas due to their up going economic status.

#### **4.18 Biodiversity Conservation Through Ecotourism**

In the query of researcher about the role of ecotourism in biodiversity to key informants i.e. local environmentalists responded that this place has been getting high in terms of its biological richness. According to them, this is because of local people saving the wilderness for attracting more tourists. A respondent named Mr. Khadananda Bhattarai, in-service in DDC, Ilam as DF said that the role of ecotourism in biodiversity conservation is not calculable. He further enforced that this area is renowned in the national level due to the high percentage of ecotourists destination. In turn, the level of local people income has been increasing day by day.

Natural beauty, pleasant environment, tea gardens, sunrise and sunset view, hills with greeny forest, cultural heritage and friendly people are the major attraction of Ilam. Tourists are satisfied with existing physical services of Maipokhari. Food and beverage, transportation and information service cannot give them fully satisfied. Tourist found Ilam as a cheap destination. All around the year Ilam is good place to visit.

Local people of Maipokhari are very friendly to tourists. They have very positive attitude towards tourism, tourists and ecotourism. They are very much willing to develop eco friendly tourism in Ilam. According to them the presence of tourists is not sufficient level. tourist has brought lots of positive economic impact or change in socio-cultural values of Ilam. For example,

people can get opportunity to learn new language, behaviour, culture and dress pattern too. Similarly increase in employment opportunity, income generation, interaction with outsiders.

# **CHAPTER - V**

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Summary**

The research work is summarized in following numbers:

- Maipokhari has very high potentiality of developing tourism and ecotourism and inhabited of many endangered animals including red panda.
- Natural beauty, unpolluted environment, diversity in flora and fauna and best weather help to promote Maipokhari as a unique ecotourism destination.
- Tourists inflow in Maipokhari is in increasing trend.
- There still connected with only earthen road as a result, the activities of tourism were becoming seasonal. It means, the vehicles can drive only in winter season.
- Maipokhari is very rich in natural resources and cultural heritage. So, the most preferred attraction of this site is its natural beauty and cultural diversity of different ethnic groups.
- Sixty percent of local people responded that they are benefited from tourism in terms of income and 40 percent of local people answered they have nominal impact of tourism.
- Religious and cultural activities are found to be changed due to tourism in Maipokhari region. It is also an aspect of biodiversity conservation and promotion.



## **5.2 Conclusion**

Maipokhari is very picturesque mixing with biological richness because one does not have to travel a long distance in order to view a beautiful landscape. The socio-economic situation of the area is good and ranks above average of many rural areas in Nepal. The people of the area are more interested in development and conservation natural landscape. Maipokhari is the first choice to those people who want to know about cultural heritage, religious, customs and model agro tourism as well as village tourism across the Ilam.

Ilam itself is decorated by nature in which Maipokhari offers a high value of bio-assets with high ecotourism destination in terms of the natural, cultural and scenic attributes. Because of its location, enchanting views, best weather, hospitable people, diversity in flora and fauna and good access, Maipokhari could present itself a model ecotourism destination in Nepal. But the area is lagging behind the ecotourism development. There is lack of collective leadership for ecotourism, poor transportation and communication facilities, lack of standard hotels and resorts, lack of manpower, lack of marketing.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Ilam has various touristic assets but it is lagging behind the publicity throughout the national as well as international level. There is necessity of intensive desire of government, local peoples, stakeholders to promote ecotourism in Maipokhari. Proper plans, policies and programs should be made in this regards.

From the experience gained through the study, personal interview with the tourist, local people, hotel operator and local government bodies, following recommendations are made to increase the role of ecotourism in biodiversity conservation in Maipokhari region.

- Maipokhari should be developed as a center for the eco-tourist of Ilam and included in World heritage.
- Local as well as national government should encourage the environment protection programs.
- For the development of ecotourism there should be an airport in Ilam which helps to increase the flow of external tourist in this region.
- To make Maipokhari a famous tourist destination and develop it as a model ecotourism center. For this, there is a need a tourism information center.
- Maipokhari offers an excellent gateway for the trekkers to Sandakphur. So there need to be reconstructed and added the trekking routes.

- Maipokhari has cultural diversity, for the conservation and promotion of cultural values there need to be established cultural museum.
- Pilgrimage should be developed as the alternative solution to combat with poverty.
- Awareness of local people in different destinations need to be aware about the hospitability with tourists.
- The publicity of tourist destination is important. For this, local people with NTB make plan for attracting tourists.
- Efforts should be made to develop trained and skilled manpower at local level in order to provide efficient services up to the satisfaction of tourists.
- More recreational facilities need to be created in this region.

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## APPENDIX I

### QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TOURIST

Nationality ..... Age .....

Place of origin ..... Occupation .....

Name: ..... Sex:.....

1. How do you know about Ilam as a tourist destination ?
2. What is the purpose of your visit to Ilam ?
  - i. sight seeing ( )
  - ii. Peaceful environment ( )
  - iii. Natural beauty ( )
  - iv. Research ( )
  - v. Official works ( )
  - vi. Others ( )
3. Is it your first visit to Ilam ?
4. How many days will you stay in Ilam ?
5. What type of food do you prefer ?
  - i. Nepali ( )
  - ii. Chinese ( )
  - iii. Indian ( )
  - iv. Continental ( )
  - v. Others .....
6. What mode of transportation you used to reach Ilam ?
  - i. Local bus ( )
  - ii. Car ( )
  - iii. Travel coach ( )
  - iv. Motor cycle ( )
  - v. Other if any .....
7. If you are a frequent visitor which is the best season to visit Ilam ?
  - i. Spring ( )
  - ii. Summer ( )
  - iii. Autumn ( )
  - iv. Winter ( )
8. How much do you think you will spend here ?



9. Are you satisfied with the service level available in Ilam ?
10. How do you evaluate the existence infrastructure facilities in this area ?

Excellent = 1                      Good =2                      Don't know = 3  
 Bad = 4                              Very bad = 5

- i. Transportation (road condition) ( )    ii. Communication ( )  
 iii. Electricity ( )    iv. Water supply ( )  
 v. Conservation of assets ( )    vi. Security management ( )  
 vii. Hotel and lodge ( )    viii. Toilet facility ( )  
 ix. Health service ( )    x. Cleanness of place ( )  
 xi. Services ( )    xii. Guest house ( )  
 xiii. Local foot trail ( )  
 xiv. Behaviour of local people ( )  
 xv. Home stay ( )    xvi. Local market/shops ( )  
 xvii. Tea garden ( )

11. Which of the following made you more satisfied during the visit ?

- i. Sight seeing ( )    ii. Tea garden ( )  
 iii. Natural beauty ( )    iv. Peaceful environment ( )  
 v. Village and villagers ( )

12. How did you find the perception of tourists among the local people ?

- i. Positive ( )    ii. Negative ( )    iii. Not any ( )

13. Will you refer to visit Ilam to your acquaintances or others ?

- i. Yes ( )    ii. No ( )

14. Are you satisfied with service of guest room ?

- i. Yes ( )    ii. No ( )

**APPENDIX II**  
**QUESTIONNAIRES FOR HOTEL/LODGE OPERATOR**

Name of the Hotel / lodge .....

Name of the hotel / lodge owner .....

Establishment year .....

Situated in .....

Permanent address .....

1. How many staffs are there in your hotel / lodge ?
2. How many rooms and beds are available in your hotel / lodge ?
3. How many tourist visited / stayed in your hotel / lodge annually ?
4. Which is the peak season of visiting tourists?
5. For how long the tourist stay in your hotel / lodge ?
  - i. One-two day ( )
  - ii. Three-four ( )
  - iii. Five-a week ( )
  - iv. More than a week ( )
6. What is your rent for room and beds ?
  - i. Double bed room .....
  - ii. Single bed room .....
7. What o you fell about the numbers of tourists in this area ?
  - i. Sufficient ( )
  - ii. Insufficient ( )
  - iii. Don't know ( )
8. How much a tourist normally spends per day on average except room charge ?

9. What is your opinion about the satisfaction of tourist after visiting this place ?
- i. Fully satisfied ( )                      ii. Satisfied ( )  
 iii. Dissatisfied ( )                      iv. Don't know ( )
10. Which type of cooking fuel used in your hotel ?
- i. Electricity ( )    ii. L.P. gas ( )    iii. Fire Wood ( )  
 iv. Solar ( )                      v. Kerosene ( )
11. Do you feel there is any culture changes in your society due to tourism ?
12. There is any changes in your economic status due to tourism?
13. What suggestions would you like to give for the development for ecotourism in Maipokhari?
14. What are the major problems of tourism in Maipokhari?
15. How are you feeling about the people and culture of Maipokhari?
- i. Very good ( )    ii. Good ( )                      iii. Average ( )  
 iv. Bad ( )    v. Very bad                      vi. Others ( )
16. Which is the most appreciate features you found in Ilam ?
- i. Natural scenic beauty ( )    ii. Accommodation facilities ( )  
 iii. Homely environment ( )    iv. Culture ( )  
 v. Commercial agriculture farming ( )    vi. All of the above ( )  
 vii. Others .....
17. How do you see future prospect of tourist in Maipokhari?

i. Excellent ( )    ii. Good ( )    iii. Don't know

18.            Would you like to give some suggestions for the development of ecotourism in Maipokhari?

## APPENDIX III

### QUESTIONNAIRES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

1. Introduction of Respondents

Name:..... Gender:.....

Age:..... Occupation:.....

Religion:..... Education:.....

2. What is your main source of income ?

i. Agriculture ( )

ii. Business ( )

iii. Service ( )

iv. Tourism related business ( )

v. Others.....

3. Are you satisfied with your occupation ?

i. Yes ( )

ii. No ( )

4. Are you familiar with tourism ?

i. Yes ( )

ii. No ( )

5. Are you involved in tourism related business ?

i. Yes ( )

ii. No ( )

6. If yes ,how many of your family member involves in tourism related business ?

i. Hotel / lodges services ..... ii. Shops for tourist produce .....

iii. Trekking .....

iv. Tourist guide .....

v. Others .....

7. Does your family benefited from tourists visiting this area ?

i. Yes ( )

ii. No ( )

iii. Don't know ( )

8. In your opinion, what things attract the tourists in Maipokhari?

- i. Natural beauty ( )
- ii. Sight seeing ( )
- iii. Tea gardens ( )
- iv. Sunrise & sunset view ( )
- v. Local culture ( )
- vi. Greeny forests ( )
- vii. All of above ( )

9. Are there any changes in the religious activities of local people while they are associated with tourism sector ?

- i. Yes ( )
- ii. No ( )

10. Do you think tourism is fully responsible to change your culture ?

a) If yes, are you antagonist with the tourist ?

- i. Yes ( )
- ii. No ( )

b) If no, what are the other factors which bring about changes in your culture ?

- i. Yes ( )
- ii. No ( )

11. What are the things that you have benefited from the tourist ?

- i. Income ( )
- ii. Get job opportunities ( )
- iii. Learn new things i.e. how to behave, how to speak how to eat, how to dress up. ( )
- iv. Enlargement of the market and increase in production ( )
- v. No things ( )
- vi. Others.....

12. Do you feel any economic or cultural change due to tourism ? If yes what and how they are ?

13. What kind of bad habits are seen among local people because of tourist arrivals ?

- i. Crime ( )
- ii. Begging ( )
- iii. Gambling ( )

iv. Prostitution ( )      v. Cultural Hazards ( )      vi. Others.....

14.            Is there any changes in socio-economic, cultural and environmental aspects due to tourism ? If yes What are the positive changes and What are the negative changes

i. Employment opportunities ( )      i Environmental degradation ( )

ii. Income generation ( )      ii. Rapid change in socio cultural values ( )

iii. Change in life style ( )      iii. Increase in Inflation ( )

iv. Interacting with outsider ( )      iv. Misuse of community property ( )

15.            What are your suggestion to increase the volume of tourists in Maipokhari?