

Book Review

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Abstract

Book Title: *Tourism in Pokhara Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity*

Editors: Bishnu Raj Upreti, Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya and Tikaram Sapkota

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The natural beauties of a destination along with sound environment attract people for making their holiday experiences. Nepal has tremendous tourism potentials to develop tourism and attract more tourists. There are several places in Nepal which are very famous for its own beauty. Pokhara, one of the best potential tourist destinations for both domestic and international tourists has been gradually becoming renowned for favorite tourist destination within and outside Nepal. While focusing on the development of tourism, one cannot neglect the hidden impacts brought by the tourism therefore the identification of issues, challenges and gaps is a must. The book *Tourism in Pokhara Issues, Trends and Future Prospects for Peace and Prosperity* edited by Bishnu Raj Upreti, Pranil Kumar Upadhyaya and Tikaram Sapkota explains tremendous potentiality of Pokhara in developing tourism along with existing issues, challenges, trends and future potentiality of Pokhara with recommendations in enhancing sustainable tourism in Pokhara. This book is a collection of different thematic issues in relation with tourism in Pokhara such as natural attractions, cultural heritage, tourism events, marketing and promotion, women's participation, challenges of Fewa lake, codes of conduct in relation with tourism practices, etc. Furthermore, this book also analyzes the trends of tourism in Pokhara for the purpose of balancing both quantity and quality of tourism in Pokhara. This book is a complete packages to readers those who want to know about tourism in Pokhara. There are thirteen chapters which are based on different thematic issues. All those chapters are well organized which gives a sense of completeness to readers.

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Chapter one is entitled 'Tourism in Pokhara: Nepal's pride and means for peace and prosperity' offers Pokhara as a paradise from the perspective of tourism. The huge socio-cultural diversity and physiographic uniqueness of Pokhara have made it unique from other destinations. The authors quite beautifully present how the situation of Pokhara has been changed. Before Pokhara was developed as a professional destination, the credit goes to a French National Maurice Herzog and a team of mountaineers who introduced Pokhara as a mountainous tourist destination when they ascended Mt. Annapurna in 1950. They also explain some of the achievements of Pokhara during its development from the perspective of tourism. At present, Pokhara is well known for city tourism orientation along with famous major tourist destination for adventure tourism and the departure point for the globally known trek route for Annapurna circuit. Despite recognizing Pokhara as a hanging paradise on the earth, the authors present number of challenges. Therefore, there is need of balancing both quantitative and qualitative aspect of tourism in order to maintain its brand. The authors also give some recommendations such as working together, developing trust, mutual respect and complementarities for creating win win situation of all the sectors.

Chapter two, "Historical review of natural and cultural heritage of paradise Pokhara" explains historical, cultural and natural heritages of Pokhara. Pokhara is blessed with natural beauties which help in creating uniqueness of Pokhara. The different natural beauties of Pokhara are Mount Fish-Tail and Annapurna range, various lakes like Fewa, Rupa, Begnas, Seti river George, David's Fall, amazing caves such as Bat's cave, Mahendra cave and adventurous hill-top like Sarangkot, Kaskikot, Pangdurkot, Foksingh and Kahunhot. The cultural heritages of Pokhara add attractions over natural beauties and some of the cultural heritages are Tal Barahi, World Peace Stupa, Gupteswar Mahadev, Bindyabasini, Bhadra-Kali, Bhairav Temple, monasteries and Nepal Christian Church. Pokhara is also rich in cultural diversities. Various ethnic communities are inhabited with peace and harmony. They have their own culture, tradition and lifestyle which are like rainbow but they have great respect to each other. Each festival has its own importance and meaning. The various festivals those are celebrated in Pokhara are Nepali New Year Day, Buddha Jayanti, Krishnaastami, Teej, Bada Dashain, Kojagrat Purnima, Tihar, Tamu Lhosar and many more. The various museums of Pokhara are also contributing their part in making Pokhara as a historical city enhancing natural beauties. Therefore, the blending of all these natural and cultural richness recognizes Pokhara as a "Hanging Paradise on Earth".

Chapter three "Tourism planning, development, management and envisioning future of Pokhara" critically analyze the planning, development and management of tourism in Pokhara. The author presents major milestones in the course of the planned development of tourism in Pokhara. In 1972, Pokhara was declared the headquarter of Western Development Region during the fourth five year plan. Regarding the Tourism Master Plan of 1972, the various propositions came out for the development of Pokhara in terms of tourism but many of the propositions are yet to be implemented. The various researches are also conducted in Pokhara in order to find out challenges in the development of tourism in Pokhara. The concerned organizations such as The Pacific Area Travel Association, Nepal Rastra Bank, Pokhara Branch, and United Nations World Tourism

Organisation (UNWTO) come up with their findings and recommendations for the development of tourism in Pokhara. The formulation of tourism plans and consultation with technical experts from conservation, environment, economics and culture should go together for the smooth implementation of plans and successful outcome. Therefore, the author presents some steps for envisioning tourism plan of Pokhara, they are assessment of tourism resources, envisioning, setting tourism goal, tourism strategy and objectives, development of tourism plan, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the tourism plan.

Chapter four "The economic impact of tourism in Pokhara" analyzes the growth pattern of tourism in Pokhara. Tourism is one of the major resources to build up the economy of Nepal and in context of Pokhara, it has played an important role in the economy of Nepal. With the use of trend function, the author finds that the total tourist arrivals in Pokhara increased at 5.4 per cent per annum during the period of 1976 to 2010. The income of Pokhara has grown with 17 per cent per annum. The income of Pokhara depends on grants by the government on development and regular expenditure, local taxes, services and fees. The Mahendra cave, David Falls and Paragliding have also contributing in increasing of tourist arrival and generating income. Likewise, investment and business enterprises are helping to create employment opportunities in the tourism sector of Pokhara. In regard to the effects of tourism at national perspective, earning of trade, hotels and restaurants are prime factor to determine the growth of GDP of Nepal. It is seen the positive results of the effects of tourism on income, employment and investment in Pokhara but still needs efforts to develop in transportation, electricity, accommodation, trekking, sight-seeing, paragliding and supplying the efficient and moral manpower.

Chapter five is entitled with "Marketing and promotion of Tourism in Pokhara". As the title suggests the importance of Nepal and Nepal as a hot spot destination for adventurous and has potentiality to grow more. The organized his article by giving the concept of marketing in tourism and then gives the importance of advertisement as an effective tool in tourism marketing and promotion. The beauty of Pokhara is the crux in the tourism of Nepal so it is a unique selling destination. He presents the historical overview of marketing in Pokhara. The history of Pokhara began with the trekking and for this the contribution goes to Maurice Harzog. Tourism marketing and promotion is very crucial for the overall growth of tourism. The various concerned agencies, organizations and stakeholders played remarkable role for the marketing and promotion of tourism in Pokhara. The author discusses the role of internet marketing, Nepal Tourism Board, various promotional campaigns, Pokhara Tourism Council, Paschimanchal Hotel Association Pokhara, Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal, Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents, Restaurant and Bar Association of Nepal Pokhara Chapter, role of various tourism association, role of media, non tourist organizations and role of individual tourism entrepreneurs for the marketing and promotion of tourism in Pokhara. He presents some recommendations to strengthen the promotion and marketing aspect of Pokhara.

Chapter six is entitled with "Socio- cultural impact of tourism in Pokhara" presents very important views on tourist cultures always dominate the host culture and bring socio cultural diffusion, infusion, acculturation, assimilation and environmental and economic

influences. Tourism acts as an agent of change. The changes can be seen in socio-cultural values and norms of a society which as a result can bring ranges of change and modification in society and culture. The socio-cultural impacts of tourism are numerous and varied. The author selects thirteen variables for impact assessment and analysis. Those variables are given a short form " FIDELL TALCADS" which is an acronym of those thirteen variables. Those thirteen variables are family structure and social composition, indigenous profession, dining pattern and menu priority, emotion, attitude and behavior, lifestyle and fashion, labor division, traditions, values and norms, arts, crafts, curios and music, language, crime and theft, alcoholism, smoking and gambling, drug abuse and smuggling and sex and prostitution. In conclusion part, the author presents that impact can have deep and lasting consequences which can weaken the socio-cultural system. Therefore, the author proposes for Community Based Responsible Tourism (CBRT) to have balanced tourism growth.

Chapter seven "Women's participation in tourism in Pokhara" emphasizes the women workforce as an additional advantages for tourism industry. The entry of women in tourism industry is recent phenomena. The important factors that determine the socio-economic condition of women in tourism business include income, family, support, training, professional satisfaction, growth in skill and capacity, changes taken place in every day affairs, problems related to the business, problems faced in the commencing phase, difficulty in language and gender inequalities. She presents data which reveals the involvement of women in tourism sector along with the challenges and opportunities for women in tourism sector. Some of the challenges are socio-economic status of women, dual responsibility status of working women in general, inequality as the structural reality in tourism, unfavorable social setting, unbalanced participation and poor work environment, prejudiced appraisal to women, weak social status of women, lack of capacity building related intervention and empowerment. Similarly, she also presents some opportunities which have been observed with increase in women's knowledge, awareness, working skills, sensitization and increasing job opportunities. It is seen that there are positive aspects of women entrepreneurs in tourism and positive features of working women. She also presents some limited interventions made by government and non government organizations to empower women in tourism sector. So, the author has given recommendations to all stakeholders to play constructive roles for development of women and empowerment in tourism.

Chapter eight "Environmental aspects of tourism in Pokhara" presents the intimate relationships between tourism and environment as tourist friendly environment is most important for recognizing any place as tourist destination. The author briefly presents geographical setting, tourist statistics and population of Pokhara. Although Pokhara attracts both domestic and international tourists but the other side, it is equally facing the pressure of environment pollution. The author describes the major causes of pollution in Pokhara which harm tourist environment and they are solid waste management, air pollution, noise pollution and pollution at Fewa Lake. If the condition of pollution goes with no prevention then the Pokhara will lose tourism business and main tourist hub will be faded. The author presents the initiations taken by different organizations for the preservation of tourism in Pokhara such as Hotel Barahi, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge,

Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Pokhara Tourism Council. In order to preserve environment for being more degraded, the author presents some strategic plan which mainly focused on hotel owners, local people, farmers, business men, government workers, political parties, CBOs, NGOs and major stakeholders of tourism for making Pokhara eco friendly and responsible tourism destination.

Chapter nine “Tourism events and facilities in Pokhara: Current status and future potentials” discusses tourism related events and services in Pokhara. The events associated with natural environment, culture and tradition play a great motivation factor for tourists. The author presents different range of tourism related events which are making a live tourist destination. The activities which are different and special to tourists are city sightseeing tour overlapping with soft walking, hiking as a day trip in surrounding mid hills, trekking, rock climbing and mountaineering, general sports, air sports which includes paragliding, ultra light mountain flight and Zip-Line., social tourism related events such as English New Year street festival, Holi Purnima, Nepali New Year fewa festival, Ashare ropain festival and various other events. There are number of tourism service providers to the visitors and those facilities are health related facilities, education related facilities, rural tourism and home-stay related facilities. Similarly, the author, discusses on the potential of tourism events such as potential of health, education and sports tourism related events, potential for volunteer tourism, nature based tourism products and related events, cultural heritage based tourism events, village tourism linked tourism events and services, exploring additional trekking routes and additional adventure sports events,

Chapter ten is entitled of Ethical aspects (codes of conduct) for responsible tourism management in Pokhara. This chapter analyzes moral and ethical aspects which are the foundation for responsible tourism management in Pokhara. The development of tourism without the notion of sustainability has challenged tourism sector so the ethical foundation and a commitment to sustainability should be considered which can minimize the negative impacts that may encounter in tourism. The author gives concept of responsible tourism with highlighting importance of ethical issue of responsible tourism. Without considering ethical values in planning, development, operation and management of tourism, it is certain that some damages will occur in tourism industry. Despite being a second biggest tourist hub for both domestic and international tourists in Nepal, Pokhara is also not far from enjoying challenges such as unsustainable uses of biophysical resources, degradation of socio- culture environments, unhealthy competition among tourism entrepreneurs and conflict at inter and intra-organizational level. Therefore, the author seeks the importance of ethical codes of conduct for marking responsible and sustainable tourism in Pokhara. Similarly, the author also highlights issues of ethical aspects and earlier interventions for the formulation and implementation of ethical codes of conduct along with the current collaborative approach of tourism practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders in introducing and strengthening the ethical aspects of tourism at destination level in Pokhara.

Chapter eleven “Role of tourism in urban-rural integration: Reflections from trekking (adventure) tourism in Pokhara” come up with the concept of integration of urban-rural in tourism and need of this integration in tourism in Pokhara. The integration of urban-rural areas is getting wide in sustainable planning issues which mostly focus on the various levels of the responsible organizations and between the organizations and the

stakeholders. The contributions are given by pioneers in context of trekking and adventure related mountain tourism and the role of tourism for urban-rural integration in Nepal. Those pioneers are Ekai Kawaguchi, Boris Lissanevitch, Bill Tilman, Maurice Herzog, Jimmy Roberts and Jhalak Thapa. There is need of integration of rural-urban tourism in order to uplift the living standard of the people through tourism. The authors also highlight number of trekking tourism destinations with many facets of such urban-rural integration such as Round Annapurna, Annapurna Sanctuary, Ghandruk- Ghorepani, Machhapuchhre Model trek and Maradi Himal, Jomsom- Muktinath, Nar- Phoo, Upper Mustang, Dhaulagiri round and Dolpa. The authors put some recommendations in order to reduce the factors that weaken the strength of the urban-rural integration concept through tourism in Pokhara. Those recommendations are the concept of Pokhara as a regional tourism hub to be up-scaled, exploration, development and conservation of unique identity of rural areas (villages), some explicit interventions at rural level, offering more benefits to the locals, initiation to gastronomy (food) tourism in rural areas, inclusion of excluded rural communities, joint promotion of urban-rural areas, trainings and workshops, human resource development, entry fees at Annapurna Conservation area Project (ACAP) area and closure of tourism businesses after 11 pm in Pokhara.

Chapter twelve "Fewa Lake and tourism in Pokhara" put forward the interrelationship between Fewa Lake and tourism in Pokhara. Fewa lake is not only the central means of attracting tourists in Pokhara but also a source of income, employment and livelihood for number of entrepreneurs and workers in Pokhara. The authors present the interesting myths and legends about the formation of Fewa lake and how was Fewa lake named. The authors also present geographical features, demographic elements, vegetation aquatic and wild animals of Fewa lake together with comparison of past and present situation of Fewa lake. At present, numerous changes can be seen in Fewa lake area. Although, it is the center of tourism in Pokhara, the Fewa lake is facing challenges caused by natural calamities and anthropogenic. The challenges caused by natural calamities are burying, decrease of deepness and shrinkage. The challenges caused by anthropogenic are pressure on land use, increased physical construction, unplanned settlement, sporadic overpressures on the boating management, lack of moral and ethical practices by nearby settlers. There are various organizations while some are active and some are passive but most of the organizations are working for the protection of Fewa lake. The authors urge for the protection of important heritages of Fewa lake so they offer some recommendations to government, concerned bodies, political parties and preservation experts to give attention for preservation and sustainable development of Fewa lake.

Chapter thirteen "Annapurna conservation: The crux of tourism in Pokhara" explains Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) arguing that the Annapurna region and Pokhara are interconnected and inseparable from each other and for this ACAP has played a catalytic role. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) is an experimental model which is developed in order to promote the concept of "Conservation Area" through an "Integrated Conservation and Development Programme" approach in the country and abroad. The author also briefly describes the management zones of Annapurna Conservation Area which are divided into four zones. Those zones are intensive use zone, protected forest grazing zone, special management zone and wilderness zone. The author shows

how the ACAP works with the support from various commercial and professional tourism associations such as Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN), Pokhara Tourism Council (PTC), Tourism Management Sub- Committees and other tourism related organizations in implementing tourism related programs in Pokhara. The ACAP is a successful project for effective combination of resource conservation with ecotourism promotions and it is promoting community- based tourism focusing effective participation of the local people and other relevant stakeholders. Despite all these achievements, still there are some challenges, for which author presents some recommendations especially for National Trust for Nature Conservation and Annapurna Conservation Area project for the effective management of tourism in Annapurna Conservation Area.

The book is a complete package for those who want to know about the overall issue of tourism, present situation, challenges and future potential of tourism in Pokhara. The book based on the different thematic issues presents detail description on the issues of tourism in Pokhara. The main concern of this book is to identify the challenges that are hindering on the way of tourism development and providing future possibilities for the overall development of tourism in the destination both in quantity and quality. The book clearly guides the readers on all the aspects of tourism in Pokhara as each chapter has highlighted the each issue of the destination. After reading this book, one can feel that if all the sectors coordinate with each other then development is not very far to achieve.

Having acknowledged all these efforts, there are some shortcomings in this work. The first issue is as this book has focused on various thematic issues but it itself has not given a clear concept on thematic. Secondly, the first and second editors are scholars of conflict and peace but there is lacking of peace-tourism as a discourse in this work. It would be a justice to this book if anyone had linked with anyone of the chapters with some theoretical approaches on peace- tourism as already developed by different scholars. This book seems just a profile of tourism in Pokhara but lacks theoretical analysis and approaches. Only very few chapters are theoretically strong. In their acknowledgements, it is written that "This tourism-related target in recent times is also associated with prospect of achieving holistic peace and progress through tourism". Similarly, the word 'build peace', 'peace sensitive', 'socio- political stability and peace' are used in few chapters but does not much engaged in how to build peace and prosperity to achieve holistic peace and progress through tourism or tourism through peace. The wrong use of reference misleads the readers in finding resource for further research (see p.171, ref. Achary, M. "Women in the tourism and related sectors" is not the major title of the research paper, it is just a sub heading of the paper, 2001). There are also some spelling errors as well, e.g. "Devi's Fall" in several chapters and so on.

Despite all those mishaps, the book has highlighted the overall issue of tourism in Pokhara which can be a good guide. This is the first book of Pokhara which gives full information about one of the golden triangles of Nepal. The recommendations provided by the authors are very helpful for government and tourism related organizations for developing effective plans and policies for the development of tourism in Pokhara. Those recommendations are also equally important for academics and researchers for further research. The authors have presented the details in a very well organized way which is

the strength of this book. Likewise, the other strength is all the chapters and contents within the chapter are coherent and well organized along with very simple and understandable lyrical writing. The book will be very useful resource for researchers, students, academics, government officials and all tourism related organizations.