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## The Role of Architectural Landmarks in the City Identity of Pokhara

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### Abstract

Pokhara, with its astonishing natural beauty, mysterious cultural heritage, religious sites, and adventure sports, embodies the essence of a tourist city. Recently declared as a tourism capital of Nepal, it stands as a testament to its allure and attractions. Architectural landmarks are also serving and emerging as popular tourist attractions. As architectural landmarks form a major part of tourism, their role in city identity should be recognized. This paper aims to study such architectural landmarks in terms of their role in city identity by analyzing three different cases from Pokhara, Nepal. Key informant interviews were held with officials from each landmark, along with a questionnaire survey of visitors. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results show that architectural landmarks significantly contribute to the city's identity by providing a unique identity, complimenting natural beauty, discovering unexplored places, and providing settings for various activities. The study further unveils that the majority of visitors comprise domestic tourists, also emphasizes the significance of digital marketing and the visitors' opinion towards the addition of more architectural landmarks into the cityscape. Therefore, the study offers stakeholders with valuable insights into the potential of architectural landmarks to promote the identity of Pokhara as a tourist destination.

**Keywords:** Architecture Landmark, City Identity, Tourist City

### 1. Introduction

City identity is all about the essence of the city and gives its citizens a sense of belonging. The various characteristics expressed by the city can be used to identify the city's identity. This may be evident in social and cultural values, as well as city characteristics like exclusivity, hierarchy, size, coherence, and heterogeneity. However, cities are losing their original identities as a consequence of rapid urbanization, and they are also unable to acquire new ones (Huang, 2019). The architectural landmarks, which are taken as individual or groups of buildings are often characterized by their uniqueness in terms of structure, specification, and artistry (Kosenkova, Litvinov, & Kosenkova, 2019), and can also construct a city identity. Architecture on the certain natural features of the city can provide a distinctive identity like Central Park in New York City and Emerald Necklace in London. Architectural landmarks can encapsulate the identity of the city and allow sharing of the experiences of the city (Jones & Svejnova, 2017). On the other hand, architecture and the tourism sector are very closely related to each other. Architecture is one of the key disciplines that play a significant role in tourism. Through architecture, various requirements of the tourism sector are serviced. For instance, investment facilitating, providing spaces for comfort, recreation, and other activities. So, architecture not only helps in the creation of

the identity of the city but also creates imagery and iconography related to tourism branding (Çetin , 2011). By emphasizing the city's tourist potential, the city's image as a tourist city will be strengthened. By creating an identity, the city can compete with other cities for resources, investment, and tourists (Chan, Suryadipura, & Kostini, 2021). Pokhara is one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations. The city has been recently declared as the tourism capital of Nepal in March 2024 (Republica, 2024). Spreading over 123 sq km in central Nepal, the place is blessed with unparalleled natural beauty, cultural mystery, and biological diversities. It is a gateway to world-famous trekking routes and has noteworthy natural attractions like; spectacular views of the Himalayan range, scenic lakes, thrilling Seti gorge, strange caves, and amazing falls are noteworthy natural attractions. Along with natural beauty, various religious sites, ethnicity-based cultural heritage, and museums of natural and cultural importance are added attractions of the place (Upreti, Upadhyaya, & Sapkota, 2013). Despite this, the full tourism potential of the place has not been explored yet. Along with these other prevailing issues like; environmentally degrading scenic sites, the vanishing of old Bazar and a haphazard assortment of concrete buildings resulting decreasing number of quality tourists (Upreti et al., 2013). Due to this, the proportion of budget tourists with shortened lengths of stay is increasing. Additionally, the peak tourist season (September to November) has shrunk to just a month. Thus, along with promoting and conserving natural sites, there should be a variety of activities to attract tourists from the international market (Pokharel, 2018). Thus, to deal with the current issues and plan better for the future the role of various aspects of tourism should be recognized. By acknowledging the significance of architectural landmarks in tourism, one may learn more about how they contribute to Pokhara's identity as a tourist city. Furthermore, it is helpful while planning architectural landmarks, and its expected contribution to the city's identity should be considered. To find out the role of architectural landmarks in enhancing the identity of Pokhara as a tourist city. Specifically, the objectives of the study are;

- Find out the characteristics of architectural landmarks under study
- To understand visitor demographics and their perceptions of architectural landmarks.
- To gather visitors' opinions on the role of architectural landmarks in city identity.

This paper has been structured as follows. First, this paper starts with an introduction and includes a brief literature review on city identity, architectural landmarks, tourist city, and their interrelationship. The case studies include three architectural landmarks of Pokhara namely; Tal Barahi Temple, Pumdikot Kailash Dham, and the International Mountain Museum. Data for the study was collected through key informant interviews and visitor questionnaire surveys. Then the data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Before concluding, the key findings, the research's limitations, and recommendations for future research are provided.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Introduction to Study Area



**Figure 1:** Tal Barahi Temple



**Figure 2:** Pumdikot Kailash Dham



**Figure 3:** International Mountain Museum

To find out the role of architectural landmarks in defining the identity of Pokhara as a tourist city, three architectural landmarks were studied. The selection is made as per the unique characteristics of the site from each other. Tal Barahi Temple is selected as one of the most popular historic and religious sites, Pumdikot Kailash Dam is selected as the most recent attraction in the city and International Mountain Museum is selected for cultural and knowledge values.

### **Tal Barahi Temple**

Tal Barahi Temple also known as 'Lake Temple' or 'Barahi Temple', is a Hindu temple dedicated to the goddess Barahi. Along with pilgrimage, the temple is a must-visit tourist attraction in Pokhara (Upreti et al., 2013). The Temple is located on a tiny island of area about 1796.41 Sqm in Phewa Lake. Initially, the temple premise has no proper temple structure but after king Mahendra built the temple in its present form the place became more popular (Acharya123himal, 2023). The temple is unique in the whole of Nepal as it is built entirely within the lake. The temple is famous not only among pilgrims but much admired by both heritage and nature lovers. Anyone visiting Pokhara is highly recommended to sail to the island and explore the temple and its surroundings (Outfitter Nepal Treks & Expedition Pvt. Ltd., 2022).

### **Pumdikot Kailash Dham**

Pumdikot Kailash Dham lies at an altitude of approximately 1500m from sea level. The original shrine of Bhumeswor Mahadev has been worshipped since ancient times, whereas the gigantic statue of Lord Shiva is the recent addition to the place. The motive for this is to attract visitors to this picturesque location. For ease of access, various pedestrian and vehicular routes have been opened (KailashDham Mahadev Pokhara, 2023). The place is not only important from religious and historical aspects but also provides the opportunity to explore intriguing scenic views of the Himalayan range, lake, and valley. Along with spiritual ambiance, its location provides the opportunity to view sunset, sunrise, and clouds (Bhatta, 2021). The addition of unique features to the site has attracted many international and national tourists. Some tourists visit Pokhara just to see the gigantic statue of Lord Shiva (Unique Path Trekking , 2023).

### **International Mountain Museum**

Located in Rato Pairo, Pokhara, International Mountain Museum was officially inaugurated in 2004 with the objectives of recording, documenting, and chronicling mountaineering and related areas. The layout of the museum consists of Mountain People Gallery, Mountain Gallery, Mountain Activities Gallery, Lakhang, Associates Gallery, and Living Museum (International Mountain Museum, 2022). Spreading over a hundred Ropanies (1 Ropany=508 Sqm) of land, the premise consists of a beautifully designed museum building and a perfect landscape providing scenic views of the Himalayan range (Pujari, 2010).

## **2.2. Methods**

This study emphasizes the role of architectural landmarks in the creation of Pokhara city's identity as a tourist city. The study starts with a literature review on architectural landmarks, city identity, tourist cities, and their interrelationship. Three different architectural landmarks have been selected for the purpose. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches has been used to gather data. Data for the study was collected using key informant interviews, questionnaire surveys,

observation, and secondary sources. An official from each landmark was interviewed as a key informant to get detailed official information about the particular case. The interviews focused on the aspects of history/background, unique features, number and nature of visitors, events/festivals, opening time, accessibility, visit reasons, spaces, activities, facilities, linkage, and plans and programs. In addition to this, a questionnaire survey was conducted in December 2022 and January 2023, comprising 50 random visitors at each landmark. In total, 150 visitors were surveyed. The questions were developed after a thorough review of the relevant literature and getting basic information about the cases. The questions were mostly close-ended and covered information regarding the source of information about the landmark, interesting aspects, and contribution to city identity. Furthermore, field observation and data from secondary sources were also collected to get additional supporting data for the study. The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The survey results were processed statistically using Microsoft Excel 2016.

### 3. Results and Discussions

All together three key informants (one from each case) were interviewed, along with 150 questionnaire surveys with 50 visitors from each landmark. The visitors were selected on a random basis, whereas the key informants are the officials from the respective cases. The collected data shows the following results;

**Table 1:** General information on architectural landmarks

| Description                        | Tal Barahi Temple  | Pumdikot Kailash Dham  | International Mountain Museum  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Date of establishment</b>       | 2017 BS  | 2022 AD  | 2004 AD  |
| <b>Established by</b>              | King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev  | Pumdikot Kot Development Committee   | Nepal Mountaineering Association   |
| <b>Operation and management by</b> | Shree Talbarahi Temple Guthi Management Committee                                  | Pumdikot Kot Development Committee   | International Mountain Museum -Pokhara   |
| <b>Goals &amp; objective</b>       | Religious tourist attraction   | Promote religious tourism  | Recording, documenting, and chronicling mountain, mountaineering, and related activities                       |
| <b>Land area</b>                   | 1796.41 sq m   | 11192.22 sq m  | 50873.7 sq m   |
| <b>Unique features</b>             | -Temple on the island<br>-Pray goddess for wishes fulfillment<br>-Watch local fish | -Tallest lord Shiva statue in a sitting position<br>-Tallest Damaru<br>-Moving the statue of lord Ganesh | -Designed mountain museum building<br>-Mountain culture, activities<br>-Geological formation, flora, and fauna |
| <b>Average per day</b>             | 3000   | 3000   | 1000   |
| <b>Maximum during</b>              | September to May, visitors-10,000  | September to May, visitors-10,000  | Sep-Dec, Visitors-4000   |
| <b>Minimum during</b>              | June-August, visitors-500  | June-August, visitors-1000   | Feb-Aug, Visitors-500  |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Nature of the majority of visitors</b> | 1. Nepalese<br>2. Indian<br>3. Foreigner  | 1. Nepalese<br>2. Indian<br>3. Foreigner                                 | 1. Nepalese<br>2. Indian<br>3. Foreigner   |
| <b>Special events</b>                     | Kojagrat Purnima Mela, visitors-10/12,000<br>Nepali New Year, visitors-8/9,000<br>Time-5:00 am-7:00 pm (summer)/6:00 am (Winter)<br>All day | Shivaratri, Shrawan, Teej, Visitors-80,000<br>6:30 am-7:00 pm<br>All day | International Mountain Day, Visitor-25,000<br>Mountain festival-5000<br>8:30 am-5:30 pm<br>All day |

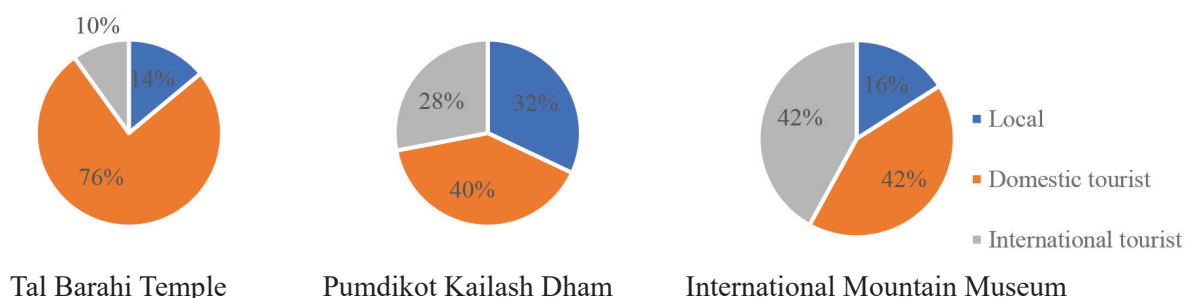
**Table 2:** Features of architectural landmarks

| Description                           | Tal Barahi Temple   | Pumdikot Kailash Dham   | International Mountain Museum  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Accessibility</b>                  |   |   |  |
| <b>Most preferred option</b>          | 1. Private/Rented vehicles<br>2. Public transportation<br>3. Cycling<br>4. Hiking   | 1. Private/Rented vehicles<br>2. Public transportation<br>3. Hiking<br>4. Cycling   | 1. Private/Rented vehicles<br>2. Public transportation<br>3. Cycling<br>4. Hiking  |
| <b>Most prominent reason to visit</b> | 1. Religious<br>2. Sight Seeing<br>3. Educational   | 1. Religious<br>2. Sight Seeing<br>3. Educational   | 1. Educational<br>2. Sight Seeing<br>3. Religious  |
| <b>Spaces inside the premise</b>      | 1. Barahi temple<br>2. Ganesh temple<br>3. Secretary office<br>4. Guthi office<br>5. Hawankunda<br>6. Waiting   | 7. Washroom<br>8. Flower shop<br>9. Souvenir shop<br>10. Photo studio<br>11. Shoe rack  | 1. Museum Building<br>2. Ticket counter<br>3. Rock climbing wall<br>4. Miniature of Mount Manaslu<br>5. Village<br>6. Gardens<br>7. Restaurant                         |
| <b>Facilities</b>                     | Parking (Ghat area), washroom, drinking water   | Parking, washroom, drinking water   | Parking, washroom, drinking water  |
| <b>Activities</b>                     | Worship, rituals as per Hindu religion (Marriage, Bratabandha, Annaprasan, etc), sightseeing, video filming, Photoshoot, fish and Pigeon feeding, etc | Worship, rituals as per Hindu religion (Marriage, Bratabandha, Annaprasan, etc), sightseeing, watching sunrise and sunset, video filming, Photoshoot, etc | Observing the museum display, exhibition, conference, sightseeing, praying/meditation on Lakhang, enjoying the garden, video filming and photoshoot in the garden, etc |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Linkage plan with other tourist attractions</b> | None  | None  | None   |
| <b>Plans and programs</b>                          | Reconstruction of Barahi Temple<br>Removing unnecessary metal structures<br>Improving the overall aesthetics of the premise | Introduce 3D projection technique to display Lord Shiva’s history, religious school, international yoga training, Shiva Garden, chair car, places for religious rituals | Introducing archery, mini zip lining, and tree climbing activities |

**Table 3:** Demographic characteristics of respondents

|        |            | Tal Barahi Temple | Pumdikot Kailash Dham | International Mountain Museum | Total |
|--------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Male   | Frequency  | 23                | 30                    | 23                            | 76    |
|        | Percentage | 46%               | 60%                   | 46%                           | 53%   |
| Female | Frequency  | 27                | 20                    | 27                            | 74    |
|        | Percentage | 54%               | 40%                   | 54%                           | 47%   |



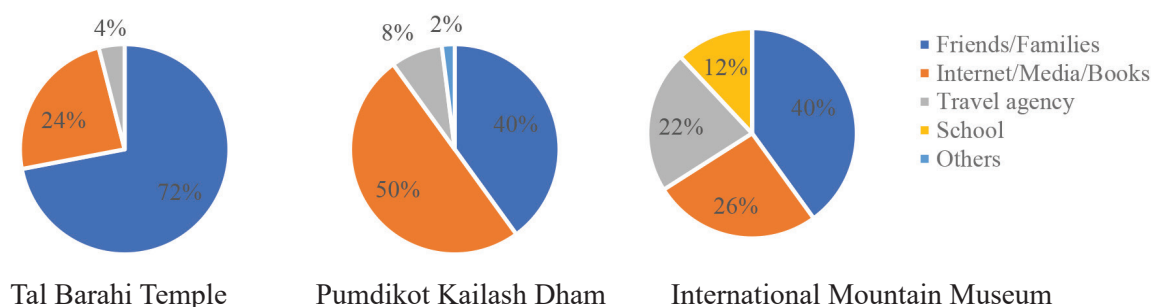
**Figure 4:** Architectural landmarks wise nature of visitors

In the cases of Tal Barahi Temple and Pumdikot Kailash Dham, local (visitors from Pokhara) visitors are the majority of respondents, while international respondents make up the least proportion. However, in the case of the International Mountain Museum, international tourists and domestic (Outside of Pokhara in Nepal) tourist respondents are equal in number and contribute the highest portion of the respondents. In all three cases, local respondents are the minimum in number.

If we compare the proportion of local visitors at the architectural landmarks under research, Pumdikot Kailash Dham (32%), International Mountain Museum (16%), and Tal Barahi Temple (14%), the share is comparatively greater in the case of Pumdikot Kailash Dham. Similarly, Pumdikot Kailash Dham had the lowest percentage of domestic tourists (40%), whereas Tal Barahi Temple had the largest percentage (76%). For all three locations, the International Mountain Museum had the largest percentage of foreign visitors (42%), followed by Pumdikot Kailash Dham (28%). Overall, domestic visitors comprise the majority of responders (52%), followed by foreign tourists (27%), and then locals (21%).

**Table 4:** Overall nature of visitors

| Name of architectural landmark | Tal Barahi Temple | Pumdikot Kailash Dham | International Mountain Museum | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Local tourist                  | 7                 | 16                    | 8                             | 31        | 21%        |
| Domestic tourist               | 38                | 20                    | 21                            | 79        | 52%        |
| International tourist          | 5                 | 14                    | 21                            | 40        | 27%        |

**Figure 5:** Source of information about the landmarks**Table 5:** Source of information

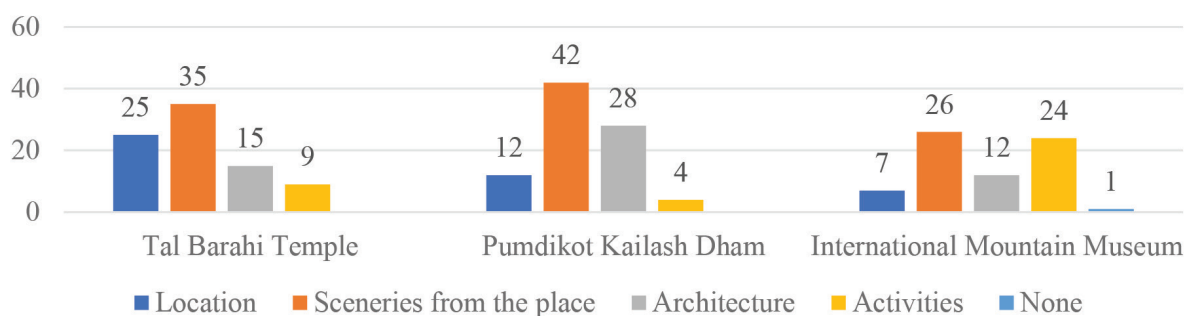
|           | Friends/Families | Internet/Media/Books | Travel agency | School/College | Others | Total |
|-----------|------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|--------|-------|
| Frequency | 36               | 12                   | 2             |                |        | 50    |
| %         | 72%              | 24%                  | 4%            |                |        |       |
| Frequency | 20               | 25                   | 4             |                | 1      | 50    |
| %         | 40%              | 50%                  | 8%            |                | 2%     |       |
| Frequency | 20               | 13                   | 11            | 6              |        | 50    |

Figure 5 illustrates that the majority of the respondents of Tal Barahi Temple came to know about it through friends and families (72%), followed by internet/media/books (24%), and the remaining through a travel agency (4%). When it comes to Pumdikot Shiva Dham, things are different since 50% of respondents first learned about the location through the Internet/Media/Books, followed by 40% from friends/families, 8% from travel agencies, and 2% from other sources. In the other group, the responder claimed that he first learned about the Dham while sailing on Phewa Lake. In the instance of the International Mountain Museum, 40% of the respondents got information about the place from friends and families, 26% from the internet/media/books, and 22% from a travel agency. This case is unique since 12% of the respondent got information from their school/college. So, considering all three cases, two major sources of information are friends and families (51%), the and internet/media/books (33%).

**Table 6:** Source of information about the architectural landmarks

| Source of Information | Tal Barahi Temple | Pumdikot Kailash Dham | International Mountain Museum | Total     |     |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----|
|                       | Frequency         | Frequency             | Frequency                     | Frequency | %   |
| Friends/Families      | 36                | 20                    | 20                            | 76        | 51% |
| Internet/Media/Books  | 12                | 25                    | 13                            | 50        | 33% |

|                |           |           |           |            |            |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Travel agency  | 2         | 4         | 11        | 17         | 11%        |
| School/College |           |           | 6         | 6          | 4%         |
| Others         | 1         |           |           |            |            |
|                | 1         | 1%        |           |            |            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>50</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>100</b> |



**Figure 6:** Landmarks wise most interesting things

Figure 6 above shows that, in each of the three cases, sceneries from the place are considered the most prominent things among other options by the majority of the respondents. The highest count on the same is noted in the case of Pumdikot Kailash Dham (42), followed by Tal Barahi Temple (35) and International Mountain Museum (26). The architecture of the Pumdikot Kailash Dham is liked by more respondents (28) than in the other two cases. Likewise, activities in the International Mountain Museum are appreciated by more respondents (24) than the rest. The location of Tal Barahi Temple is found interesting by more respondents (25) than those in the other two cases. One of the respondents of the International Mountain Museum said he did find nothing interesting about the place. Combining all the data for all cases, sceneries from the places are found most interesting thing, followed by architecture, location, and activities.

**Table 7:** Overall most interesting things about architectural landmarks

| Name of landmark              | Location  | Sceneries from the place | Architecture | Activities | None     |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|------------|----------|
| Tal Barahi Temple             | 25        | 35                       | 15           | 9          |          |
| Pumdikot Kailash Dham         | 12        | 42                       | 28           | 4          |          |
| International Mountain Museum | 7         | 26                       | 12           | 24         | 1        |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>44</b> | <b>103</b>               | <b>55</b>    | <b>37</b>  | <b>1</b> |

All of the respondents said that Tal Barahi Temple has helped in the creation of the identity of Pokhara as a tourist city (Table 7). Whereas only 98% of the respondent of Pumdikot Kailash Dham and International Mountain Museum agreed on the same. Overall, 99% of the total respondent think that the selected architectural landmarks have helped in the enhancement of the identity of Pokhara as a tourist city. However, a local respondent of Pumdikot Kailash Dham has said the place has encroached the nature and an international tourist respondent of the International Mountain Museum believes that Pokhara should be promoted for its natural beauty not for its buildings, as a reason to disagree with the role of respective architectural landmarks in the city identity.



**Table 8:** Perception of the role of architectural landmarks in enhancing the identity of Pokhara as a tourist city

| Name of landmark              | Role in Identity |            |           |            |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                               | Yes              |            | No        |            |
|                               | Frequency        | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Tal Barahi Temple             | 50               | 100%       |           |            |
| Pumdikot Kailash Dham         | 49               | 98%        | 1         | 2%         |
| International Mountain Museum | 49               | 98%        | 1         | 2%         |
| Total                         | 148              | 99%        | 2         | 1%         |

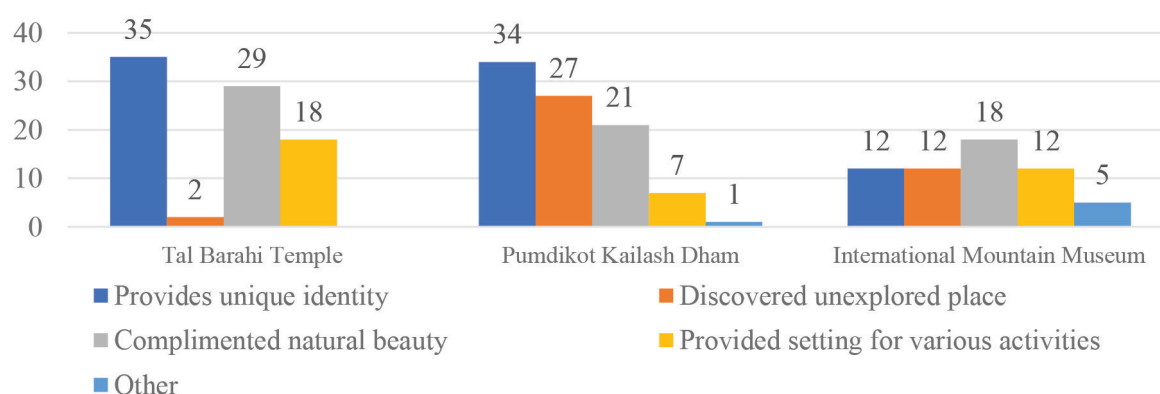
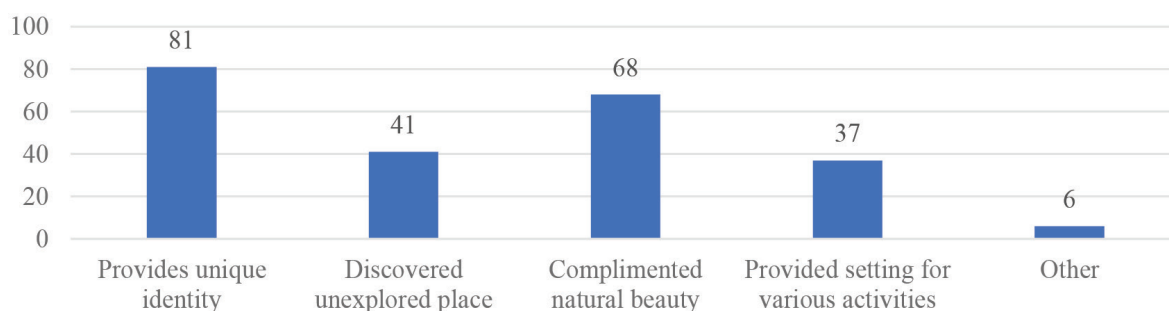
**Figure 7:** Reason for identity

Figure 7 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (35 of 50 respondents) in the case of Tal Barahi believe that by providing a unique identity to the city, the place has helped in the identity of Pokhara as a tourist destination. The reason is followed by complimenting natural beauty (29), providing settings for various activities (18), and discovering unexplored places (2). In the case of Pumdikot, except for the main reason the other reason pattern is a bit different than the previous. The main reason for enhancing identity by providing a unique identity (34) is followed by discovering unexplored places (27), complementing natural beauty (21), by providing a setting for various activities (7) and others (1). However, in the case of the International Mountain Museum, the main reason noted is by complimenting natural beauty (18). The rest of the reasons, in this case, weigh the same by the respondents except for other reasons (6).

In the case of the other option, the reason found in the case of Pumdikot Kailash Dham is by promoting Hinduism to enhance the city's identity (1 international tourist). Whereas in the case of the International Mountain Museum, the reasons are; providing information (1 domestic tourist), providing knowledge on mini-Nepal (1 local), creating a peaceful environment (1 domestic tourist), and providing information on culture (1 domestic tourist). Here one international tourist respondent has no idea about this.



**Figure 8:** Reasons for providing identity (combined for all three cases)

Analyzing data from all three cases (Figure 8), the main reason for enhancing the city identity of Pokhara as a tourist city through architectural landmarks under study is found to be the unique identity it provides to the city, 80 respondents believe this. Similarly, other reasons include; complimenting natural beauty (68), discovering unexplored places (41), providing settings for various activities (37), and others (6).

Most international tourist respondents think that Tal Barahi Temple and Pumdikot Kailash Dham have enhanced the city identity of Pokhara as a tourist city by complimenting natural beauty, whereas in the case of the International Mountain Museum by discovering unexplored places. However, local respondent believes that Tal Barahi Temple has enhanced the identity of the city by providing a unique identity, in the case of Pumdikot Kailash Dham by discovering unexplored places, and in the case of International Mountain Museum by providing settings for various activities. Whereas, domestic tourist respondents found the main reason for identity by providing a unique identity in the case of Tal Barahi Temple and Pumdikot Kailash Dham, and by complimenting natural beauty in the case of the International Mountain Museum.

Table 8 displays that, overall, 92% of respondents of Tal Barahi Temple think that there is a need for more architectural landmarks in Pokhara. Those who disagree on this believe that with more architectural landmarks nature encroachment issue arises (2 Domestic tourists +1 Local) and the value of landmarks may diminish with too many options (1 local). In the case of Pumdikot Kailash Dham and the International Mountain Museum, 96% of the respondent agree on the necessity of architectural landmarks. Whereas two respondents of Pumdikot Kailash Dham (1 local+1 domestic) and two respondents of International Mountain Museum (2 international respondents) think that there should not be more architectural landmarks as they may encroach the nature. Overall, 95% of the surveyed respondent considered the addition of more architectural landmarks in Pokhara.

**Table 9:** Perception regarding the necessity of the addition of architectural landmarks in Pokhara to enhance its tourist city identity

|                               | Yes       |            | No        |            |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                               | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Tal Barahi Temple             | 46        | 92%        | 4         | 8%         |
| Pumdikot Kailash Dham         | 48        | 96%        | 2         | 4%         |
| International Mountain Museum | 48        | 96%        | 2         | 4%         |
| Total                         | 142       | 95%        | 8         | 5%         |

The study shows that different natures of architectural landmarks were established in different periods by the government, non-government organizations, and a group of locals. They are established with the common goal of attracting visitors through different approaches like recreation, religion and knowledge. Each of the landmarks is unique on its own and provides opportunities for various activities. Though peak tourist season spans from September to November, the landmarks are attracting visitors beyond this time in the maximum number through space events and festivals. To attract more visitors in every case, have their plans and programs.

The majority of the visitors to the architectural landmarks are Domestic tourists, followed by locals and international tourists. The main source of information in the case of the recent landmark i.e. Pumdikot Kailash Dham is through the internet/media/books shows its importance in communicating city identity. As in all cases, the most interesting thing is the sceneries from the place, the role of architecture noted in terms of complimenting natural beauty, discovering unexplored places, and providing settings for different activities. The role of architectural landmarks in the identity of the city (Jones & Svejnova, 2017) is evident in all three cases. The main reasons are providing a unique identity (Kosenkova et al., 2019) complimenting natural beauty, and providing the setting for various activities. The addition of a new landmark in the city attracted more locals and helped in the discovery of unexplored places, which is clear in the case of Pumdikot Kailash Dham. Similarly, for the promotion of the city's identity as a tourism destination (Chan et al., 2021), the addition of more architectural landmarks is recommended. While contributing to city identity, the issues of encroachment over nature should be considered beforehand. The limitations of the study are that it is based on three selected cases. The results can be different depending on the nature of the cases. Additionally, the data sample for each case is only 50 respondents which is only a small fraction of the total visitors. While believing that these limitations have not impacted the main objectives of the study, future research on more diverse cases of architectural landmarks, and with more sample size is recommended. Additionally, more parameters of the study will also be of great value.

#### 4. Conclusions

This paper has discussed the role of architectural landmarks in enhancing the identity of Pokhara as a tourist city. The study demonstrates that architectural landmarks, regardless of their nature, contribute to the city's identity mainly by providing a unique identity, complementing natural beauty, discovering unexplored places, and providing settings for various activities. With proper planning of events and festivals, the landmarks attract visitors, making the city vibrant even in the off-season. Additionally, these places provide platforms for religion, culture, knowledge, and various activities.

As domestic visitors constitute the largest portion of respondents, it indicates the importance of catering to this demographic in our tourism strategies. Interestingly, locals of the city are found to be particularly drawn to the new landmarks of the city over other destinations, showing the curiosity of locals to explore new places. Similarly, foreign visitors are found to be interested in knowledge-related activities (in this case Museum) compared to other groups of visitors. This emphasizes the value of cultural and historical institutions in attracting international tourists and enriching their experiences. Moreover, the study highlighted the crucial role of digital marketing in promoting the new landmark. Additionally, the significance of selecting a site with beautiful scenery when planning a landmark is emphasized by the fact that scenery is considered the most important aspect by visitors. The strong consensus among respondents highlights the important role that landmarks play in shaping the identity

of the city. Furthermore, the opinion to add architectural landmarks reflects a collective wish to enhance the city's character and identity through its architectural landmarks.

### Acknowledgements

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